

Towards squaring the circle: Work-life balance and the implications for individuals, firms and public policy ^[1]

Choices, volume 12, number 3

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Source: Institute for Research on Public Policy

Format: Report

Publication Date: 20 Jun 2006

AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

Summary in pdf ^[3]

Excerpts from the report:

In this report, Richard Chaykowski reviews the Canadian evidence and identifies the various issues associated with work-life balance. His objective is to clarify the policy stakes in order to help define the appropriate role for governments in addressing these issues, relative to the roles of firms and of individuals.

The paper considers whether and how problems of work-life balance run across the whole spectrum of the working population, depending on whether one is older or younger, male or female, has standard or nonstandard hours. Does the problem of balancing work and other responsibilities take on different features according to age, sex, or hours? Do some work-life conflicts arise out of a lack of revenue rather than a lack of time? The author examines the profiles of people who typically take time off work (again, by gender, age, family type, and type of work), and of those who are more likely to be stressed out because of time pressures. He also asks whether there is a significant gender equity issue.

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Four key conclusions emerge from the paper. First, more research is needed to assess the extent and costs of work-life conflict, especially among employees in the private sector. Second, we need to further evaluate the costs and benefits of the various policy alternatives, such as new regulations. Third, we should determine more precisely which segments of the workforce are experiencing work-life conflict, in order to design policies that are better targeted toward those who need them most. Finally, the policies we develop vis à vis both the private and public sectors should be framed within the broader context of the whole life-cycle as opposed to the more limited perspective of the family.

Related link: Choices, volume 12, number 2: Working for working parents -- The evolution of maternity and parental benefits in Canada ^[4]

Region: Canada ^[5]

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