

***Round Table  
Roadmaps to the Future :  
Rethinking Institutions for Work***

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Jane Jenson

Canadian Policy Research Networks

and

Département de science politique

Université de Montréal



# Time and its institutionalisation

Lots of talk about work-life balance -

Propositions for this presentation:

- the issue is **one of time, not money**
- and we need to change the way  
**time - and times - are institutionalised :**
  - working time
  - family time
  - time for citizenship



# Two findings

## 1. Economists have found that :

– in rich countries, the **feeling** of well-being is decreasing, despite increasing wealth of countries

- In the Europe of 12:

% of individuals “very satisfied” with their life

|      |      |
|------|------|
| 1973 | 22 % |
|------|------|

|      |      |
|------|------|
| 1997 | 19 % |
|------|------|

- In United States:

% of individuals “very happy”

|      |      |
|------|------|
| 1970 | 36 % |
|------|------|

|      |      |
|------|------|
| 1999 | 29 % |
|------|------|



# Two findings

2. Economists have also found that:
  - the relation between income and well-being is not necessarily linear:
  - At a certain income level, we see a “plateau”

# It's time, not money

## Working time

There has been an increase in the hours of work  
eg: % of individuals working more than 50  
hours per week in Canada

|       | 1976 | 2000 |
|-------|------|------|
| men   | 11 % | 14 % |
| women | 4 %  | 7 %  |

## Family time

... \*

\*Blanchflower and Oswald (2000)

"Is something wrong with work-life balance?"



# Preferences for family time

|                            | <b>Much more time with family</b> | <b>Same amount of time with family</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Bangladesh</b>          | 5%                                | 50%                                    |
| <b>Canada</b>              | 26%                               | 29%                                    |
| <b>Germany (west only)</b> | 26%                               | 26%                                    |
| <b>Japan</b>               | 9%                                | 54%                                    |
| <b>Sweden</b>              | 32%                               | 24%                                    |
| <b>United States</b>       | 46%                               | 14%                                    |



# Time is a “men’s issue”

- less than 1 in 5 Canadian men thinks his job permits a balance between work and family\*
- women ARE stressed by work-family balance
- BUT Canadian women are more likely than men to say that their job permits them to balance work and family\*

\* G. Lowe, « Quality of Work, Quality of Life »



# Time is a workers' issue

- A job that allows them to balance work and family is among the top 5 factors identified as making a job a **good job** - well ahead of pay, job security and benefits.
- But women and men (and their organisations) have always used different strategies for managing time.
- These strategies are institutionalised in public policy, with different gender consequences :
  - family policies
  - labour regulations
  - retirement and pensions

# Time management and times of life

“Women’s way” of managing time:

- reducing working time to balance work and family
  - part-time work
  - self-employment
  - parental leaves

“Men’s way” of managing time:

- reduced working time at the end of working life
  - reduction of the retirement age
  - early retirement

# Perspectives for the future

We should “feminise” time management:

- reduced working time for all
- better sharing of “family time” - that is family responsibilities
- recognition by employers and other decision-makers that time management is a not only an issue for women and families with young children
- recognition that citizens need time to engage in their community