

# **WORK-FAMILY BALANCING AND WORKING TIME: WHAT MEASURES ARE AVAILABLE TO CANADIAN WORKERS AND WHAT MEASURES SHOULD EMPLOYERS DEVELOP?**

Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay, Université du Québec à Montréal  
Elmustapha Najem, Université du Québec en Outaouais  
Renaud Paquet, Université du Québec en Outaouais

## **ABSTRACT**

This article examines work-family balance. Data from the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) was used to assess the overall situation of this phenomenon in Canada. Representative statistical data was used to determine to what extent employers have taken the work-family challenge into account. Our data indicate that the progress observed regarding the social debate on work-family balance has not necessarily translated into a marked improvement in facilitating conditions in workplaces and that there have even been setbacks. Indeed, the number of workdays per week has slightly increased, reaching almost 5 days on average for men and 4.6 days for women in 2002. Moreover, a significant percentage of the Canadian workforce is on flexible work schedules or rotating shifts, which were identified as a source of difficulty for work-family balance. On the other hand, a great proportion of Canadian workers report that they work a number of hours at home, which may foster balance but can also be a source of encroachment on private life. The WES data show that people work at home because of work demands and not for reasons of work-family balance. In brief, work spills over into their personal lives. Moreover, although the most pressing desire of Canadian parents with children under the age of 3 is that employers offer help with daycare and on-site childcare services, barely more than one-quarter of Canadian workers report that their employers offered childcare services in 2002. Also, employers offer help with eldercare services to only one-tenth of Canadian workers. As regards the impact of the number of children, its effect on work time, schedules and preferences related to work time is ambiguous. As regards interest in work time reduction, the effect is also ambiguous but workers with one child or two children expressed a slightly greater desire to reduce their work hours. On the other hand, a link was found between the number of children and the desire to work extra hours since the more children workers have, the less they want to work extra hours.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Several studies in recent years have shown that many employed parents are having difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities and that this is a source of stress for them (Duxbury et al., 1993, 1994; Nelson and Quick, 1985; Galinsky et al., 2001; Tremblay, 2004, 2003, 2002a; Tremblay and de Sève, 2002; Paquet and Najem, 2005). Indeed, the organization of workers' lives and their time outside of work has been greatly affected by changes which have occurred in the labor market over the last 30 years. These changes, which translate, in particular, into work intensification, and the diversification of types of employment (temporary, self-employment, on call, casual) and schedules (part-time, split schedules, etc.) further intensify the difficulties that parents are experiencing linking work and family.

A whole range of studies, developed mainly in Europe, focus on the temporal dimension of the relationship between work life and life outside of work and the resulting difficulty in balancing these. Some of these studies show that the measures of work-family balance most sought by parents with young children are those related to flexibility in work schedules (Lero et al., 1993; Tremblay, 2004). Drawing on the perspective from which these studies were approached, the present article examines work schedules, the impact of work-family

balance measures centered on working time arrangements, and other types of work-family balance measures affecting Canadian workers.

Surveys conducted on work-family balance generally involve small samples, often just a few hundred people (Descarries and Corbeil, 1995, 1996; Descarries et al., 1995a, b; Guérin et al., 1997; Tremblay and De Sève, 2002). Although this method has the advantage of providing an accurate portrait of and precise information on those most directly concerned by work-family balance -- working parents -- the data are not representative of the working population as a whole. Thus, in order to fill this gap concerning general representativeness of the Canadian workforce, data from the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES) were used to assess the overall situation in Canada based on representative statistical data.

A first version of this paper was published in French in *Enfances, familles et générations*, a Québec online journal. This constitutes the first part of a France-Canada comparative research study aimed at determining the work-family balance measures which exist in both countries and their potential impact on women's participation in the workforce and work hours. This research was funded by DARES (Direction de l'analyse, de la recherche et des études statistiques) of France's ministère du travail (labour ministry), to which we would like to express our thanks. This article is divided into three parts. Part 1 reviews the literature; Part 2 examines the data used and Part 3 presents the research results. The scope and limitations of our main findings will be discussed in the general conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It is difficult to briefly summarize everything that has been written over recent years on the issue of work-family linkage or "conflict" and the stressors associated with this situation. "Conflict", which is usually used by psychologists, refers to role "conflict"; it is not necessarily the best way to approach the phenomenon of work-family linkage, as was observed in the qualitative part (interviews) of the studies conducted. Indeed, according to some studies (Tremblay, 2004, 2003), parents do not identify with this expression. Nevertheless, we have used it here when the authors used it themselves.

We will therefore present only the main writings relevant to the subject of study identified above. Thus, while some studies consider that work characteristics are influencing factors in work-family *conflict* (Guérin et al., 1997), other studies emphasize the importance of socio-occupational category as a factor which differentiates men's participation from women's participation in parental and professional responsibilities (Nelson and Quick, 1985). Since these two spheres are necessarily interrelated, greater involvement in one sphere often occurs at the expense of the other sphere. Of course, balance and equivalent participation exist among some couples, but this is not generally the case even though men's participation in family activities has increased in Quebec and Canada (Pronovost, 2005).

As has been stated previously, several studies attest to the feeling, expressed by parents of young children, that they lack time, and demonstrate that a great proportion of employed parents suffer from stress related to their difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities. According to Carlson et al. (2000), studies conducted to date have highlighted three types of conflict: time-based, strain-based and behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflict results from multiple-role overload and the difficulty in coordinating the competing demands of each of these roles, and this is our main subject of interest. However, it must be specified that strain-based conflict comes from the stress experienced in one role which affects participation in another role, interfering with the latter. Behavior-based conflict occurs when behavior specific to one role is incompatible with that expected in another role and the individual has not made the necessary adjustments to them. Since the latter two elements are the main focus of interest of psychologists, we will concentrate more on work-family balance from the perspective of possible time arrangements.

The factors which influence the extent of work-family conflict can be grouped into three broad categories: those related to work, employees and the family. As regards the factors related to work, we will consider the work environment and work characteristics, including the existence of “work-family” balance practices. Other work characteristics include: type of job, nature of tasks and roles, number of hours worked per week and work schedule; these last two factors proved to be influential in several studies (Guérin et al., 1997; Tremblay, 2004, 2004b).

Based on a literature review, Nelson and Quick (1985) present a model of stressors among employed professional women. It shows that a great number of variables are linked to work organization and that many elements are associated with the individual’s particular position. Another study conducted in 2001 on a sample of 1003 American workers aged 18 or older (Galinsky et al., 2001) examined the factor of work overload by assessing the various aspects of their work which make workers feel they are affected by this situation, that is, the number of hours worked per week and their preferences, the number of days worked per week and their preferences and, finally, employees’ belief that they cannot adapt their work schedules (in terms of hours and days) according to their preferences. In brief, it is largely the gap between expectations and what is offered which is the source of the problem. We are particularly interested in this last aspect and will return to it in the presentation of results in Part 3 of this article.

In Quebec, Guérin *et al.*’s study (1997) of 1345 unionized employees belonging to the CSN (Confederation of National Trade Unions) with at least one dependent child (75.6 % of women and 24.3 % of men) examined the effect of job type, role conflicts, job ambiguity, work overload, work schedule, and travels to and from work on employees’ stress levels, with work overload and work schedules found to be determining variables.

Other authors have focused on work characteristics. The organization of work time (long hours, rotating shifts, changing work days or hours) has been shown to be a stressor for employees in numerous activity sectors because it has an impact on their work life while disrupting their life outside of work, often having a negative impact on their health (Families and Work Institute, 1998, Galinsky et al., 2001). We therefore decided to analyze the dimensions of work hours, rotating shifts, and changing work days or hours by using the WES data on this subject.

As regards the factors related to family, several stressful factors can be identified in the family. Guérin *et al.* (1997) identified some factors related to children which turned out to be determining in work-family conflict (number, average age, presence of a disabled child, total responsibility related to children). This study showed that work-family conflict increases with the number of dependent children and, consequently, our analysis of the WES data will be differentiated according to the number of children.

We also reviewed the literature on the influence of measures available to assist employees and their families. Among the practices which exist to facilitate work-family balance, Guérin *et al.* (1994) identified childcare services, voluntary part-time work and home working, extra pay and maternity leave. We will thus examine childcare services offered by organizations, the reduced or compressed work week, and home working. Indeed, the data presented in this article will show how these practices have spread and who is benefiting from them ten years after Guérin *et al.*’s study. In fact, as was observed (Paquet and Najem, 2004; Tremblay, 2004), there is often a wide gap between the availability of a practice in a company and the possibility for employees to take advantage of it, hence the importance of analyzing its impact.

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

In order to answer, in an informed way, the questions raised in this article, we used the data of Statistics Canada's *Workplace and Employee Survey* (WES) which provide researchers with empirical data that is representative of the Canadian labor market. For the purposes of this research, we used data which were merged together, that is, those collected from employers and employees' answers to the survey. In fact, the WES includes two databanks - one for employers and one for employees - which together contain several hundred indicators. The WES targets a representative sample of the Canadian labor market, except the federal, provincial and municipal public services which are excluded from it. Its data were collected from more than 6000 companies and some 23,000 employees working for these companies (Statistics Canada, 2004). The data banks are constructed in such a way that they can be merged, yielding all the available information on an employee and the company which employs him or her. The results presented in Part 3 of this article stem precisely from these two merged databanks.

For the purposes of this research, we used weighted results which make it possible to generalize the data to the Canadian labor market, with, as already mentioned, the exception of the public services. The data used come from the 1999 and 2002 surveys. On a longitudinal basis, this period is relatively short (4 years) but nevertheless allows us to clearly grasp the labor market trends, especially since these four years were marked by an important societal debate on the issue of work time and work-family balance. If practices within companies followed the social trend of ideas and debate, changes should be seen over the period examined.

The data for 1999 were chosen because it was the first year of the WES. At the time of our analysis, data for 2002 were the latest data available since 2003 and 2004 survey data are not yet accessible to researchers. It should also be mentioned that SAS software was used to pair the two databanks (employers and employees), to recode information and to construct composite variables as well as for the univariate and bivariate statistical analyses which are presented here.

The WES data are, of course, highly reliable. However, as we will see in Part 3 of this article, since this survey involves workplaces and employees' work, it could, in the analysis of results, lead to findings that are quite different from those produced using data from, for example, Statistics Canada's *General Social Survey* (see Robinson, 2004). This latter survey studies time use and time taken up by work, thus involving the entire population and not only employed people, as is the case of the WES. As this research was conducted in the context of international comparisons with France, we dealt with Canadian data and not Quebec data, especially since Statistics Canada restricts the dissemination of results when there are not enough respondents in a given case; Canadian data are based on a greater number, thus reducing the number of unavailable data. We will return to this last point in the presentation of results.

## RESULTS

Based on our literature review, Part 3 will present the analyses which we conducted in order to determine whether work schedules vary according to gender or the number of children and whether employees with family responsibilities have longer or shorter work schedules than other employees. We will then examine individuals' preferences related to work time (would they like to extend or reduce their work hours?) and, in particular, the reasons they gave for their interest in reducing work time, most notably family responsibilities. Lastly, we will consider the impact of measures related to working time arrangements, including the reduced or compressed workweek, a measure known to be conducive to a degree of balance. We will then look at how the situation presents itself based on gender and the number of children. In this last section, we will also present the data on the measures offered in childcare or eldercare services.

Work Hours According to Gender and Number of Children

Table 1 presents the hours normally worked, by gender, in 1999 and 2002. It shows that women usually work fewer hours per week than men, that is, 33.88 hours in 2002 for women versus 39.51 hours for men during the same year, which suggests that many women reduce their work hours in order to balance work and family responsibilities. Moreover, as will be seen below, more women than men would like to reduce their work hours, more often for family reasons. During the same period, the number of unpaid or paid extra hours decreased. However, the number of workdays per week increased slightly, reaching almost 5 days (an average of 4.93 days for men and 4.6 for women in 2002).

Home working is sometimes perceived as a way to balance family and work responsibilities (Tremblay, 2002), although it can further blur the boundaries between work time and personal or family time. This may also be viewed as a negative intrusion into private life (Baines and Gelder, 2003). Between 1999 and 2002, the number of work hours at home increased for men and women, with both groups performing on average 6.14 and 6.13 work hours at home respectively. Although this phenomenon is considerable and corresponds to almost one workday per week, this average must be interpreted with caution because it conceals a degree of polarization where, on the one hand, some employees never work at home while, on the other hand, other employees bring work home everyday because they cannot accomplish their tasks within the normally scheduled work hours.

Table 1: Work Hours by Gender, 1999-2002

	<b>Women 1999</b>	<b>Men 1999</b>	<b>Women 2002</b>	<b>Men 2002</b>
<b>Hours normally worked</b>	33.97	39.51	33.88	39.51
<b>Unpaid extra hours</b>	1.71	2.42	1.26	1.65
<b>Paid extra hours</b>	0.51	1.63	0.13	1.17
<b>Nr of workdays per week</b>	4.11	4.53	4.60	4.93
<b>Weekly work hours at home</b>	5.34	5.80	6.14	6.13

Although several studies report that the number of children has a significant effect on the difficulty of balancing work and family responsibilities, the data in tables 2a and 2b show that this effect is ambiguous, to say the least. Indeed, although the increase in the number of children is accompanied by an increase in the number of unpaid extra hours for workers with up to two children, this latter number subsequently drops slightly for those with three children. On the other hand, for both 1999 and 2002, the number of paid extra hours tended to increase with the number of children although their overall numbers were lower than those cited for unpaid extra hours. The effect on home working is even more differentiated. Although, when compared with the absence of children, the presence of a child translated into an increase, the number of hours dropped for individuals with 2 children and even more for those with 3 children. It thus seems that the presence of more children tends to reduce the number of hours that employees work at home.

It is important to note that several realities are hidden behind the averages related to the number of hours worked by number of children (when gender is not considered). First, the small differences could be the result of a decrease among women compensated by an increase among men, as found by Robinson (2004). Moreover, given that the WES targets employed people only, the averages do not take into account the fact that some women leave the labor market temporarily.

Table 2a: Work Hours by Number of Children, 1999

<b>1999</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Hours normally worked</b>	35.88	38.01	37.09	37.35
<b>Unpaid extra hours</b>	1.86	2.06	2.45	2.14
<b>Paid extra hours</b>	0.91	1.09	1.15	1.55
<b>Nr workdays per week</b>	4.26	4.43	4.22	4.21
<b>Weekly work hours at home</b>	5.31	6.75	5.40	5.38

Table 2b: Work Hours by Number of Children, 2002

<b>2002</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Hours normally worked</b>	36.17	37.36	37.25	36.81
<b>Unpaid extra hours</b>	1.32	1.51	1.74	1.40
<b>Paid extra hours</b>	0.51	0.66	0.91	0.75
<b>Nr workdays per week</b>	4.74	4.81	4.80	4.73
<b>Weekly work hours at home</b>	6.45	6.67	5.81	4.92

Moreover, some working time arrangements can be a source of additional difficulties, as shown by the studies mentioned in the literature review above. Schedules of rotating shifts and changing work hours or workdays may also represent challenges for those who seek to balance their personal and family responsibilities with work.

The WES data presented in Table 3 indicate that, between 1999 and 2002, the number of rotating shifts increased for both women and men and that this increase was more significant among women. On the other hand, women more often worked the same days each week and the same hours each day than was the case for men in 2002, while the reverse was true in 1999. The data are not highly diversified by number of children, except that in 2002, rotating shifts were less frequent as the number of children increased, dropping from 53% with the presence of one child to 47% for two children, and 40% for three children.

Table 3: Diversified Work Schedules, by Gender, 1999-2002

	<b>Women 1999</b>	<b>Men 1999</b>	<b>Women 2002</b>	<b>Men 2002</b>
<b>Rotating shifts</b>	34.11	46.40	48.09	48.73
<b>Same hours each day</b>	56.00	60.99	76.82	64.98
<b>Same days each week</b>	54.49	65.43	68.72	66.95

It can be concluded that a significant percentage of the Canadian workforce work on flexible schedules or rotating shifts, which have been identified in other studies as a source of difficulty in balancing work and family responsibilities (Guérin et al., 1997; Tremblay, 2002a; Tremblay and De Sève, 2002). The number of extra hours is in general not very considerable and individuals can apparently work a number of hours at home, which may foster work-family balance but can also be a source of encroachment on private life (Taskin and Vendramin, 2004).

#### Preferences Related to Work Time

Preferences related to work time have been widely debated in Canada and elsewhere. A survey conducted in the 1990s by Human Resources Development Canada indicated that only 6% of the Canadian population would like to reduce their work hours (Human Resources Development Canada, 1997). On the other hand, a survey conducted on this subject by the CEQ in the 1990s highlighted the fact that, with partial wage compensation, 66% of members of the *Centrale de l'Enseignement du Québec* (Quebec teachers' federation) were in favor of reducing in their work hours. Moreover, 48.8% of those interviewed for a survey conducted by the FTQ said that they would accept a reduction in their work hours without compensation or with partial wage compensation. Since the latter two surveys were conducted on small samples which were not representative of the general population, we decided to compare them with the WES data, especially since these data also indicate the reasons behind the desire to reduce work hours, in particular, family responsibilities.

The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4, which shows that the majority of workers were satisfied with their work hours, since in both 1999 and 2002, only around one out of five men and women expressed a desire to work extra hours, whereas approximately 10% of each group expressed a desire to reduce their work hours in 1999, and only 7.6% of men and 7.95% of women wished to reduce them in 2002. As regards the reasons behind the desire to reduce their work hours, family responsibilities ranked first for women (47% in 1999 and 59% in 2002), whereas relatively fewer men than women cited this reason. However, it should be noted that the percentage of men who expressed a desire to reduce their work hours because of family responsibilities increased from 36% to 42% during the same period.

Moreover, the data in tables 5a and 5b highlight the fact that the presence of children has an impact on the desire to reduce work time, but this effect is also ambiguous. Fewer employees with 3 children or more wanted to increase their work time, but also fewer of them wanted to reduce their work time, undoubtedly because of the effects on income. However, employees with children most often cited family responsibilities to explain their interest in reducing their work, when they did want to reduce their work time, hours, especially in 2002. The desire for more leisure time ranked second, followed by work-related stress which they wanted to reduce.

Table 4: Preferences Related to Work Time, by Gender, 1999-2002

	<b>Women 1999</b>	<b>Men 1999</b>	<b>Women 2002</b>	<b>Men 2002</b>
<b>Wanted extra hours</b>	19.55	18.62	18.33	21.89
<b>Wanted to reduce their hours</b>	9.13	10.37	7.95	7.60
<b>Reasons: family responsibilities</b>	47.75	36.03	58.92	41.99
<b>Work-related stress</b>	17.90	17.96	33.45	28.74
<b>Health reasons</b>	5.82	4.58	17.60	12.99
<b>More leisure time</b>	47.24	61.29	56.52	62.82
<b>Other</b>	11.16	14.30	7.19	10.65

Table 5a: Preferences Related to Work Time, by Number of Children, 1999

<b>1999</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Wanted extra hours</b>	20.87	17.09	18.04	15.01
<b>Wanted to reduce hours</b>	8.42	10.59	12.02	10.23
<b>Reasons: family responsibilities*</b>	22.77	46.37	63.06	63.50
<b>Work-related stress</b>	18.77	20.48	13.47	21.85
<b>Health reasons</b>	5.66	7.55	3.36	3.78
<b>More leisure time</b>	62.46	50.93	44.70	49.98
<b>Other**</b>	18.17	9.42	8.63	4.82

### Work-Family Balance Measures

This section will first deal with work-family balance measures centered on working time arrangements which have been identified as the main facilitating factor sought by parents (Lero et al., 1993; Tremblay and Amherdt, 2000). We will then examine childcare services and eldercare services since the former were identified as the main demand of Canadian parents of children under the age of 3 and the latter appears to be increasingly important since a growing number of workers today must care for an aging parent (Lero et al., 1993; Tremblay, 2004)



Table 5b: Preferences Related to Work Time, by Number of Children, 2002

<b>2002</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Wanted extra hours</b>	22.03	19.63	17.67	15.50
<b>Wanted to reduce hours</b>	6.57	9.07	9.47	8.22
<b>Reasons: family responsibilities*</b>	29.33	65.96	72.14	58.56
<b>Work-related stress</b>	34.10	34.85	21.79	36.88
<b>Health reasons</b>	21.86	8.43	9.51	16.11
<b>More leisure time</b>	66.19	53.03	58.75	43.98
<b>Other**</b>	12.16	6.06	5.09	9.99

\*Family responsibilities included caring for children or other family members and other personal or family responsibilities.

\*\*Other reasons included seeking better working conditions, gaining time and saving money.

It was mentioned above that home working is sometimes perceived as a way to balance family and work responsibilities (Tremblay, 2002), but it can also be perceived as a negative intrusion of work into private life (Baines and Gelder, 2003; Taskin and Vendramin, 2004). The data in Table 2 show that, between 1999 and 2002, the number of work hours at home increased for men and women, with both groups performing on average 6.14 and 6.13 work hours at home respectively or almost one workday per week.

The data in Table 6, on the other hand, indicate that, for both men and women, home working is mainly explained by work demands, as cited by approximately two-thirds of those who bring work home. Thus, it does not seem that home working is used first and foremost as a way to balance professional and family demands.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that, between 1999 and 2002, the number of women who cited work-family balance as a reason for home working declined (from 6.08 to 4.71% of women who brought work home) whereas the number of men citing this reason increased (from 2.28 to 6.75% of men who brought work home). Since studies on telework show that men in general, professionals or managers occasionally work at home, mainly to accomplish tasks that they did not manage to finish at the office (Taskin and Vendramin, 2004), it is plausible that they choose to do more work at home because they want to be present, even if they are not actually available for the family during this time. It can also be underlined that men are becoming more and more sensitive to the issue of work-family balance (*Politiques sociales*, 2003; Tremblay, 2003), such that this reason is now more readily cited by them than it was in the past.

Family responsibilities thus do not emerge as a main reason for home working. Moreover, it should be noted that, in addition to work demands which accounted for two-thirds of responses, “other” reasons were cited by 30% of employees who resorted to home working. Other studies on telework have indicated that saving time and money was the main reason cited (Cefrio, 2001; Taskin and Vendramin, 2004), and this also seems to be true here for a large percentage of Canadian women and men.

Table 6: Measures Related to Working Time Arrangements, by Gender, 1999-2002

	Women 1999	Men 1999	Women 2002	Men 2002
<b>Home working</b>	24.66	28.97	24.49	26.70
<b>Reasons for home working:</b>				
<b>Work demands</b>	66.80	64.65	65.31	62.29
<b>Family responsibilities*</b>	6.08	2.28	4.71	6.75
<b>Other**</b>	27.12	33.07	29.97	30.95
<b>Compressed workweek</b>	6.08	12.88	5.25	7.93
<b>Reduced workweek</b>	15.98	10.35	10.33	4.90
<b>Flexible schedule</b>	36.03	43.51	37.94	37.62

\*Family responsibilities included caring for children or other family members and other personal or family responsibilities.

\*\* Other reasons included seeking better working conditions, gaining time and saving money.

As regards workweek arrangements, fewer workers took advantage of the compressed workweek in 2002 than in 1999. This was particularly obvious among men, for whom it dropped from 12.88% to 7.93%, while among women, it dropped from 6.08 to 5.25%. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the data in Table 1 highlight the fact that, compared to men, women's average workweek is 6 hours less (33.88 hours versus 39.51 for men), such that they already work an average of one fewer workday per week. Table 7, below, shows that the presence of children has an influence on the use of the compressed workweek, since this arrangement is more frequently used by workers with children than by those without children, with employees having one child or two children being the highest users.

The use of the reduced workweek by special arrangement with the employer has also dropped among both men and women, such that this measure currently seems to be less available for employees or less sought by them. However, as will be seen below, employees more often choose a reduced workweek as the number of their children increases.

Flexible-hours means that, while you must work a certain number of core hours, you can vary your times of arrival and departure as long as you work the equivalent of a full work week. As per working flexible hours, it seems that somewhat fewer men took advantage of this option in 2002 than in 1999, while the number of women who benefited from it increased slightly. Nevertheless, almost 40% of individuals affirmed that they made use of this type of schedule.

Tables 7a and 7b indicate that home working was more frequent among workers with one child or two children, with both these groups more often citing work-family balance as the reason, and that the percentage of those citing this reason even increased from 1999 to 2002. Work demands still ranked first regardless of the number of children, but work-family balance was the reason cited by almost 15% of workers with one child and by 8.5% of workers with two children. The percentages were close to only 6% in 1999.

As regards workweek arrangements, it was noted above that fewer workers took advantage of the compressed workweek in 2002 than in 1999, but that the percentages remained slightly higher among groups with one child or two children. Although use of the reduced workweek by special arrangement

with the employer dropped between 1999 and 2002, it nevertheless increased markedly based on the number of children, from 5.29% to 7.9% and then to 8.23% with the transition from 1 child to 2, then 3 children.

As regards flexible hours (i.e., the possibility to vary one’s times of arrival and departure), between 35% and 40% of workers used this measure and this percentage increased slightly as the number of children went up from 1 to 2, then 3.

Although the most pressing desire of Canadian parents with children under the age of 3 (Lero et al., 1993) is that employers offer help with daycare and on-site childcare services, barely more than one-quarter of Canadian workers reported that their employers offered help or support in this matter in 2002. Moreover, it should be noted that the WES question related to this subject is unfortunately very comprehensive since it asks if the employer offers “help for childcare either through an on-site center or assistance with external suppliers or informal arrangements.” This last element is rightly very broad, but it is hard to see what type of informal arrangement is suitable for parents on a regular basis, since children need to be cared for everyday when parents work everyday. This therefore suggests that these percentages refer mainly to on-site centers or external suppliers and informal childcare arrangements must not be very common.

Table 7a: Measures Related to Working Time Arrangements, by Number of Children, 1999

<b>1999</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Home working</b>	23.35	26.76	33.56	29.77
<b>Reasons for home working:</b>				
<b>Work demands</b>	63.76	69.50	67.22	64.20
<b>Family responsibilities*</b>	2.43	5.79	5.79	4.47
<b>Other**</b>	33.81	24.71	27.00	31.33
<b>Compressed workweek</b>	7.78	12.49	8.83	8.56
<b>Reduced workweek</b>	13.04	12.71	15.52	16.28
<b>Flexible hours</b>	40.39	37.50	39.06	40.20

\*Family responsibilities included caring for children or other family members and other personal or family responsibilities.

\*\* Other reasons included seeking better working conditions, gaining time and saving money.

Although comparable and representative data for Quebec only are not available, the surveys conducted in Quebec show that parents of young children are not necessarily seeking childcare in the workplace, because the system of Centres de la petite enfance (early childhood centres) is well developed in Quebec and there is a fairly large number of daycare centres in neighbourhoods, which are subsidized by the government (childcare services with reduced contribution, i.e., \$7 a day in 2005). Also, in studies conducted in Quebec on this subject, the presence or absence of daycare centres did not prove to be a determining variable or facilitating factor related to the difficulty of balancing work and family responsibilities (Tremblay, 2004)

Table 7b: Measures Related to Working Time Arrangements, by Number of Children 2002

2002	No children	1 child	2 children	3 or more children
<b>Home working</b>	21.72	26.20	30.61	33.64
<i>Reasons for home working:</i>				
<b>Work demands</b>	63.34	53.34	67.50	71.62
<b>Family responsibilities*</b>	0.71	14.93	8.48	4.70
<b>Other**</b>	35.94	31.74	24.01	23.67
<b>Compressed workweek</b>	6.21	6.31	7.94	5.71
<b>Reduced workweek</b>	8.18	5.29	7.90	8.23
<b>Flexible schedule</b>	38.23	35.81	37.45	39.82

\* Family responsibilities included caring for children or other family members and other personal or family responsibilities.

\*\* Other reasons included seeking better working conditions, gaining time and saving money.

Other measures conducive to work-family balance

Table 8, interestingly, shows an increase in the percentage of companies offering this type of assistance since, in 1999, only approximately one out of five workers reported that their employer offered this type of service. It is also interesting to note that between 1999 and 2002, this increase affected both men and women.

Moreover, although in 1999, compared to women, men more often made use of help with childcare in their companies, the situation reversed in 2002 since 8.59% of women were found to use this type of service in their companies versus 6.21% of men.

It should be added that there is increasing concern about what is referred to as the “sandwich generation” based on a recent Statistics Canada article which indicates that more and more Canadian parents are simultaneously caught between dealing with childcare problems and caring for their aging parents. On this subject, the WES asked workers if their employers offered “help with eldercare services” (this is exactly how the question is formulated, which is not very precise but nevertheless gives a first indication of this issue which has not received much attention in studies).

Table 8: Other Work-Family Balance Measures, by Gender, 1999-2002

	Women 1999	Men 1999	Women 2002	Men 2002
<b>Existence of help with childcare</b>	20.75	18.03	29.51	26.46
<b>Used help with childcare</b>	5.30	6.11	8.59	6.21
<b>Existence of eldercare services</b>	12.36	10.35	12.89	12.80
<b>Used eldercare services</b>	5.98	11.75	6.54	1.87

Thus, the offer of these services has increased slightly in organizations, steadying at around 12%; and their use has apparently increased among women, while the data show a sharp decrease among men, which is somewhat surprising.

Examination of the issue in terms of presence or absence of children and number of children shows that, between 1999 and 2002, the offer of help with childcare services increased markedly for groups having no children or one child. These groups most likely include the youngest workers, who may have children in coming years. Moreover, they may have chosen a particular employer partly for this reason, as shown by some studies. This issue should be examined further. However, the WES data at least provide a first indication.

The offer of eldercare services has also slightly increased and, in 2002, this increase was more pronounced for groups with no children (especially) or one child; it went down for workers with 2 children and hardly changed for workers with 3 children. Data on use of this measure are not available by number of children. The number of respondents in the non-weighted sample of 23,000 people is less than five in some boxes in this distribution and, therefore, the data cannot be divulged for confidentiality reasons, according to Statistics Canada rules.

Table 9a: Other Work-Family Balance Measures, by Number of Children, 1999

<b>1999</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Existence of help with childcare</b>	17.82	16.23	22.90	22.91
<b>Existence of eldercare services</b>	12.80	8.01	11.20	9.64

## CONCLUSION

The data presented in this article indicate that, on the whole, the progress observed regarding the social debate on work-family balance has not necessarily translated into a marked improvement in facilitating conditions in workplaces. Moreover, there have even been setbacks in some respects, making it even more difficult to balance conflicting demands.

Table 9b: Other Work-Family Balance Measures, by Number of Children, 2002

<b>2002</b>	<b>No children</b>	<b>1 child</b>	<b>2 children</b>	<b>3 or more children</b>
<b>Existence of help with childcare</b>	33.12	26.62	18.50	28.77
<b>Existence of eldercare services</b>	15.26	12.76	9.35	9.93

As regards work hours, based on these four years examined, the trends have not been moving in one direction only. However, it is noted that women work fewer hours than men, and more women than men would like to reduce their work hours, and more often cite family reasons for this desire. During the

period studied, the number of unpaid or paid extra hours decreased. On the other hand, the number of workdays per week increased slightly, reaching almost 5 days on average for men and 4.6 days for women in 2002.

It can also be added that a considerable percentage of the Canadian workforce work on flexible schedules and rotating shifts, which were identified in other studies as a source of difficulty in balancing work and family. Moreover, a great number of Canadian workers report that they work a number of hours at home, which may foster work-family balance but can also be a source of encroachment on private life. The WES data on this subject speak for themselves since they clearly demonstrate that workers do not work at home in order to better balance their responsibilities, but rather because of work demands. To sum up, it can be seen that work is spilling over into personal life instead of being a practice which offers individuals greater flexibility in organizing their time.

Moreover, although the most pressing desire of Canadian parents with children under the age of 3 is that employers offer help with daycare and on-site childcare services, barely more than one-quarter of Canadian workers report that their employers offered childcare services in 2002. Also, employers offer help with eldercare services to only one-tenth of Canadian workers.

As regards the impact of the presence of children, the assessment of its effect on work time, schedules and preferences related to work time shows that the effect of the number of children is often ambiguous. Thus, an increase in the number of children translates into an increase in the number of unpaid extra hours up to two children, but this number decreases with the presence of three children. As regards the effect on home working, the number of hours worked at home increases with one child, as compared to workers without children, but this number decreases for workers with 2 or 3 children. As regards the desire to reduce work time, the effect is also found to be ambiguous. Between 1999 and 2002, this desire declined among women and men, with more workers expressing a desire to increase their work hours, and the presence of children did not seem to increase the desire to reduce work time, contrary to what might be expected. Workers with one child or two children expressed a slightly greater desire to reduce their work hours. On the other hand, a link was found between the number of children and the desire to work extra hours since the more children workers had, the less they wanted to work extra hours. Moreover, although use of the reduced workweek by special arrangement with the employer decreased from 1999 to 2002, this use increased with the number of children. It thus seems that parents limit their extra hours and use the reduced workweek more without seeking to further reduce their work hours. Working time arrangements are thus relatively limited, since the use of both the compressed workweek and the reduced workweek declined from 1999 to 2002 for both women and men.

To sum up, it appears that management in organizations is still based on a model which presumes that family responsibilities are matters which do not concern employers. It seems that, although work-family linkage is discussed in the public sphere, it is still seen as belonging to the sphere of private life, involving personal adjustments on the part of employees, and even, in some circles, as being a “matter for women” rather than a “societal matter.” Yet, the problem of work-family linkage will only become more acute in the future, not only because women are increasingly working full time, with this phenomenon being particularly marked among women with children, but also because more difficulties are emerging related to the care of parents who are old or sick. Arrangements within the family will thus become increasingly complex. Thus, in order to ensure a fair integration of women into the labor market and an equal participation of men in parental and family responsibilities, it is important to identify the factors and measures which can help workers achieve balance in work-family responsibilities. To this end, it would be useful to subsequently conduct more detailed econometric analyses in order to identify the explanatory factors behind the impact of work-family balance measures.

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## BIOGRAPHY

Diane-Gabrielle is a professor at Télé-université, UQÀM and director of Canada Research Chair on the Socio-Organizational Challenges of the Knowledge Economy.

Elmustapha Najem and Renaud Paquet are professors in the Département de relations industrielles at Université du Québec en Outaouais and researchers at the Centre d'études et de recherche sur l'emploi, le syndicalisme et le travail.

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