

# **The relationship of parents' work schedules and gender to leisure and well-being**

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# Context of the Study

- Structural transformations in the workplace
  - Globalization, technological advancements
- Most mothers and fathers are employed.
- Culturally situated parenting practices:
  - Intensive mothering (Hays, 1996)
  - Involved fatherhood (Marsiglio, 1995)
  - More monitoring due to heightened perceptions of risk (Fullagar & Harrington, 2008)

# Research Problem

When parents have little control over the timing of their work day, the amount and nature of leisure may be affected as well as their overall quality of life.

This may affect mothers and fathers differently because gender influences work, family and leisure.

## QUESTIONS

1. How do work schedules affect the amount of time mothers and fathers have for leisure and with whom it is spent?
2. What is the relationship between different work schedules to perceptions of well-being?

# Theoretical Framework

## Gender relations perspective (Thompson, 1993)

- Gender is expressed through four levels of analysis: individual, interactional, institutional and socio-historical
- Change in one level influences how gender is perceived or enacted in other levels

# Method

- Secondary data analysis of the 2005 Canadian General Social Survey (GSS) – Cycle 19 (Statistics Canada)
  - “. . . to identify working conditions that balance employees’ work and family obligations”
- Data collected from 19,597 Canadians age 15+ for all 12 months of 2005 using a computer assisted telephone interview
- Sub-sample of  $n = 2,062$  employed parents of children ages 5-17; all parents were interviewed on a work day
- Descriptive and multivariate analyses
- All data are weighted

# Work schedules

*“What best describes the hours you usually work?”*

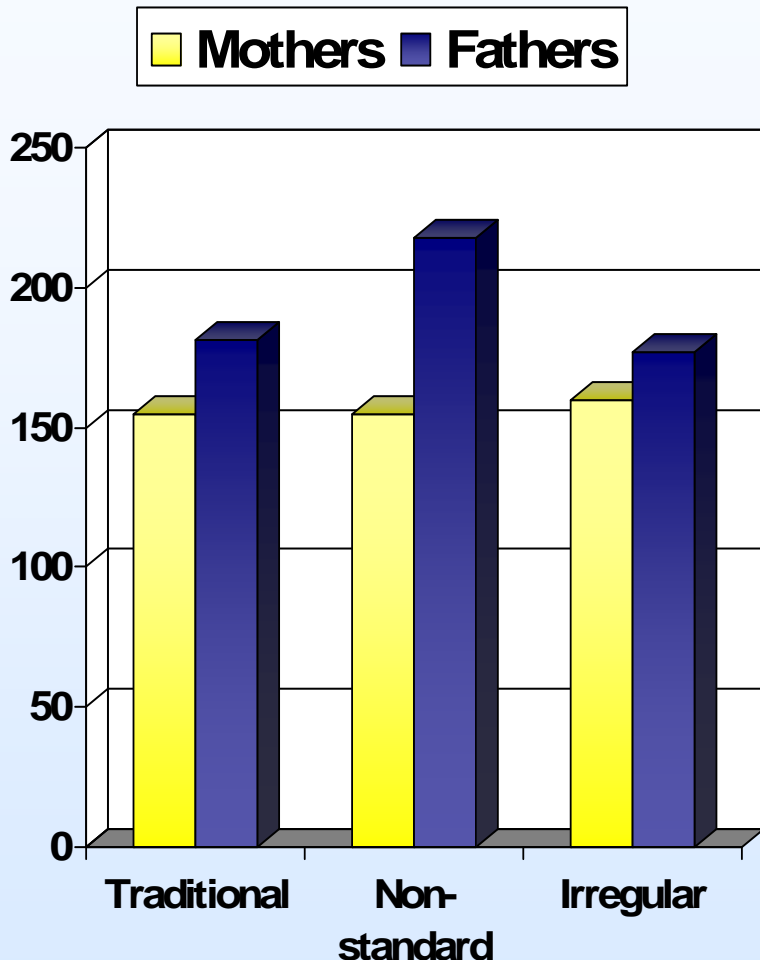
- **Traditional (68.4%)**
  - Monday-to-Friday, regular daytime hours
- **Non-standard (17.9%)**
  - Regularly scheduled afternoon, evening and rotating shifts
  - Includes weekends
- **Irregular (13.8%)**
  - Irregular (unpredictable), “on call”, casual, and “other”
  - Mainly Monday-to-Friday, but some weekends

# Measurements of time use, leisure and well-being

- **Time use**
  - 24-hour time diary measured in minutes per day
  - Main categories and subcategories of time use derived from the many possible daily activities
- **Leisure**
  - “Free” time after all paid & unpaid labour, child care and personal needs accounted for
  - Social contacts – “Who was with you?”
- **Subjective well-being**
  - Work-life balance – satisfied or dissatisfied?
  - Time pressure index – composite of 12 items,  $\alpha = .73$
  - Well-being index – composite of 8 items,  $\alpha = .77$

# Leisure

(minutes per day)

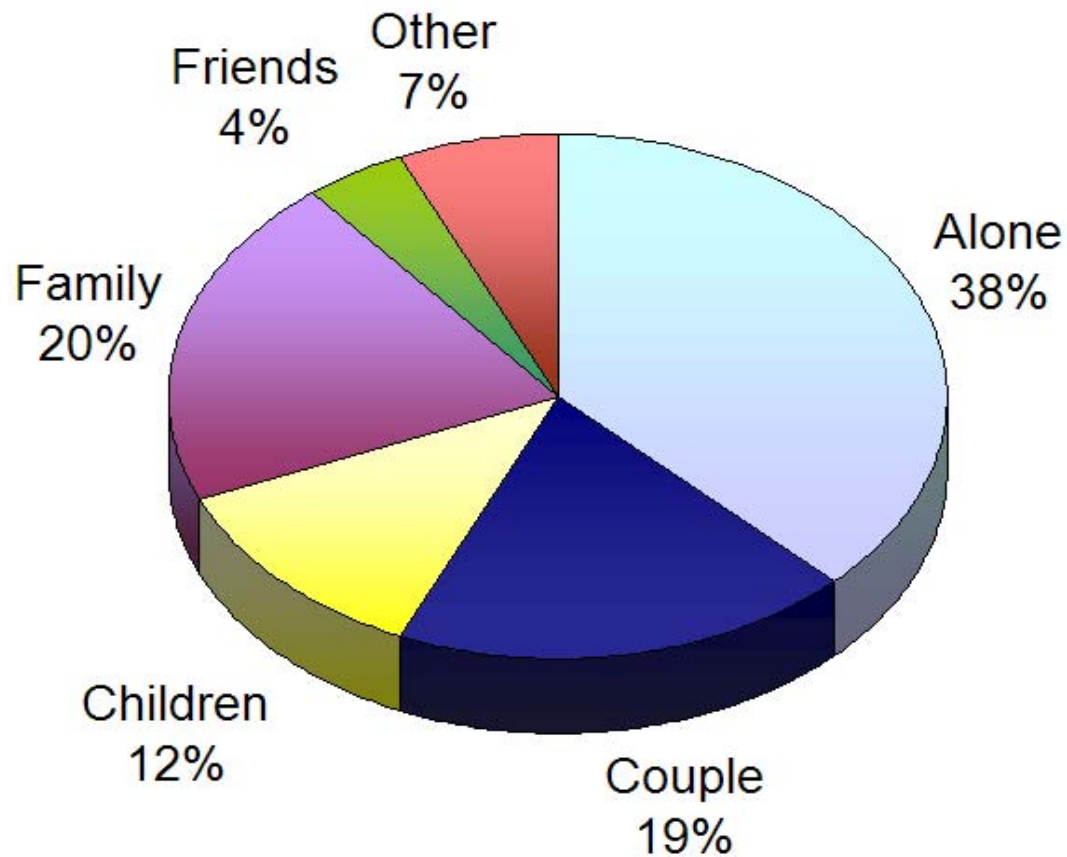


- Gender was highly significant in a 2-way ANOVA
- Women's leisure time remained stable regardless of the timing of the work day
- Men with non-standard schedules enjoyed sig. more leisure than any other group
- Predictors
  - **More leisure:** being male
  - **Less leisure:** having a preschooler; more than 2 children at home; traditional or irregular work schedule

# Relationship between leisure and subjective well-being

- Positive associations of leisure with subjective well-being were stronger for mothers than for fathers
- More leisure is significantly associated with:
  - Better work-life balance
  - Less time pressure
  - Somewhat enhanced well-being (mothers)
- Physical activity
  - positive relationship for work-life balance only for mothers
- Watching TV – significantly related to:
  - Decreased time pressure for all parents
  - Greater satisfaction with work-life balance for women

# Social contacts during leisure as a percentage of total leisure time (total sample)



# Effect of work schedule on social contacts during leisure

- *In all work situations*
  - Mothers spent a significantly higher proportion of their leisure with children only - 21.0% versus 9.3% for fathers.
- *For all parents*
  - Non-standard schedules meant less time alone or with “others” and more time in family leisure.
- *Mothers*
  - Irregular schedules meant a greater proportion of time alone or with children only.
- *Fathers*
  - High degree of similarity among men with traditional and irregular schedules – more time alone, less time with family members

# What difference do social contacts make during leisure?

## Mothers

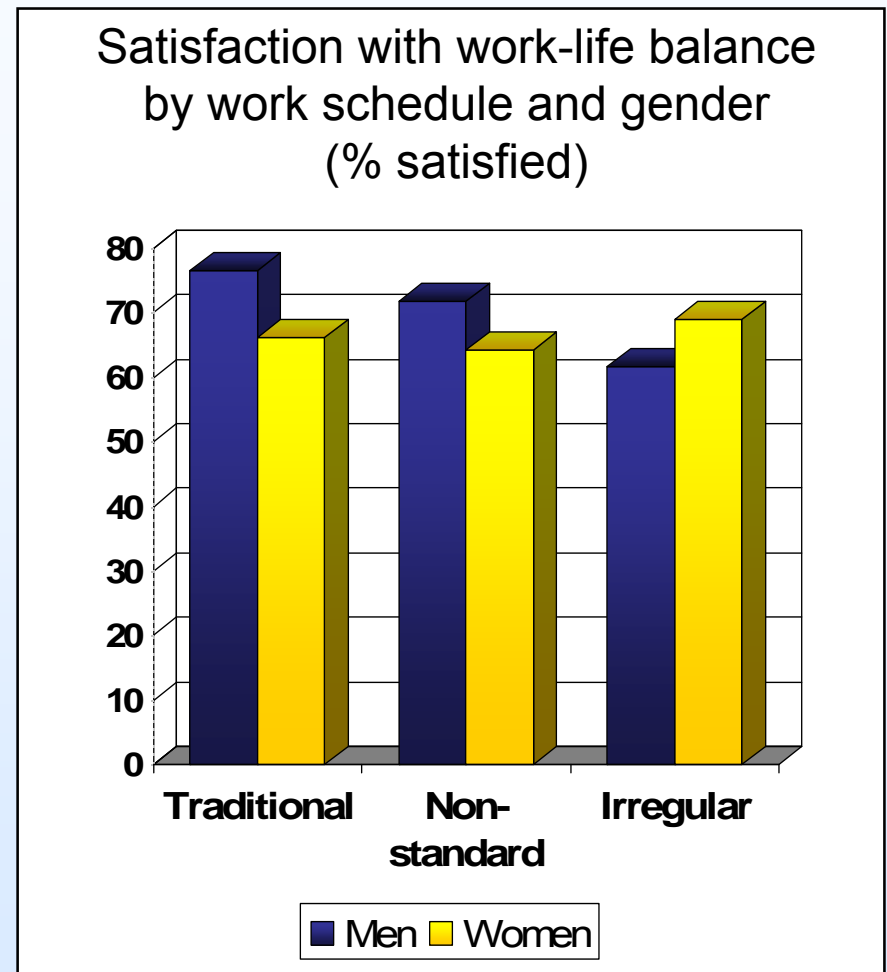
- Couple leisure was associated with greater satisfaction with work-life balance & improved well-being
- Leisure with friends was correlated with decreased time pressure and improved well-being
- Family leisure enhanced well-being somewhat
- No. sig. effects found for leisure with children only

## Fathers

- Spending more leisure time with children only related to:
  - Higher levels of time pressure
  - Decreased well-being
  - Less satisfaction with work-life balance
- Family leisure was positively related to work-life balance

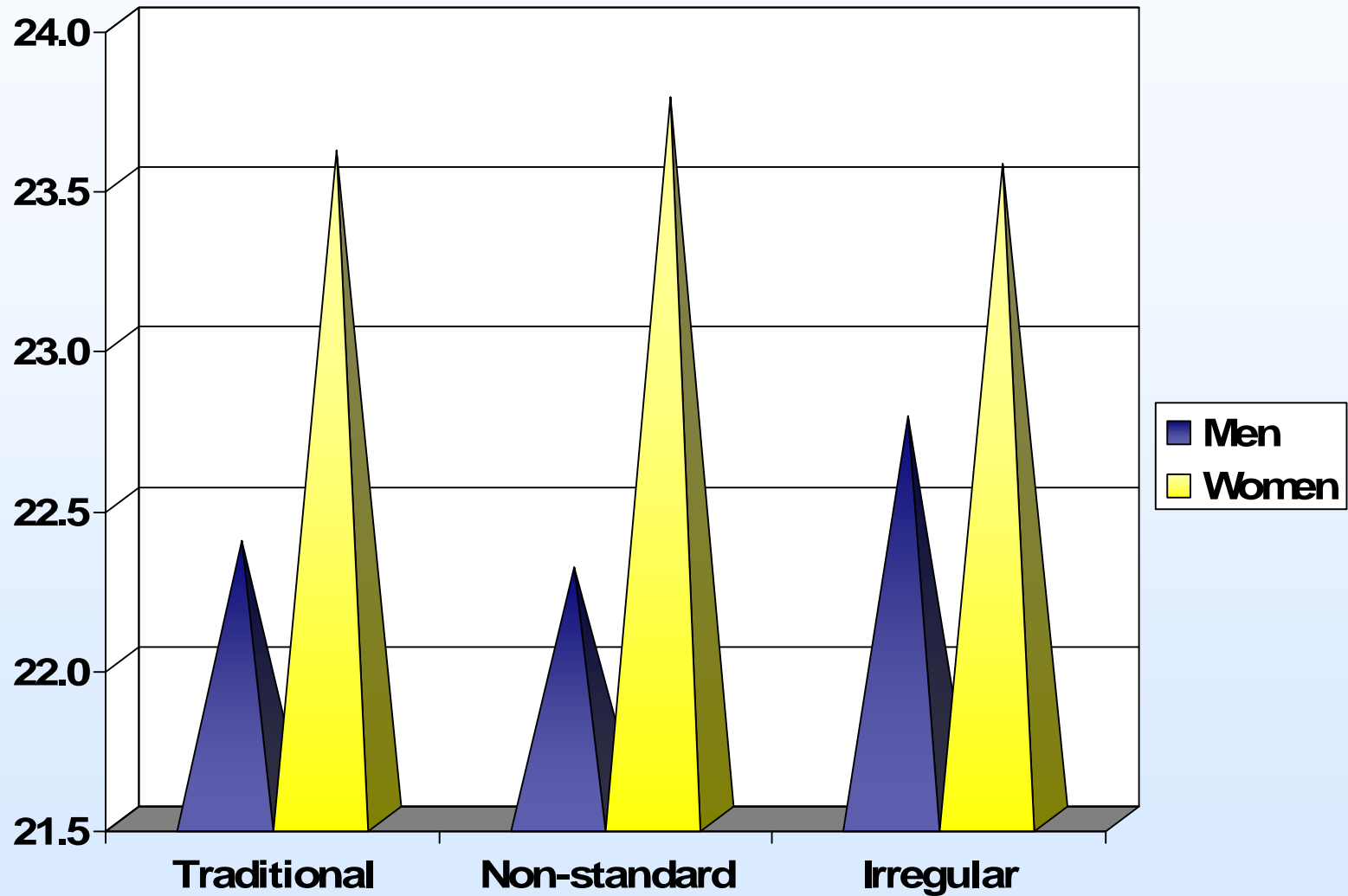
# Work-life balance

- Work schedule was only significant for fathers ( $\chi^2 = 16.23, p < .001$ )
- Men significantly more satisfied with work-life balance than mothers ( $\chi^2 = 12.17, p = .002$ )
- Predictors of **satisfaction**: dual-parent household, summer time, flexible schedule (women only)
- Predictor of **dissatisfaction**: irregular work schedule



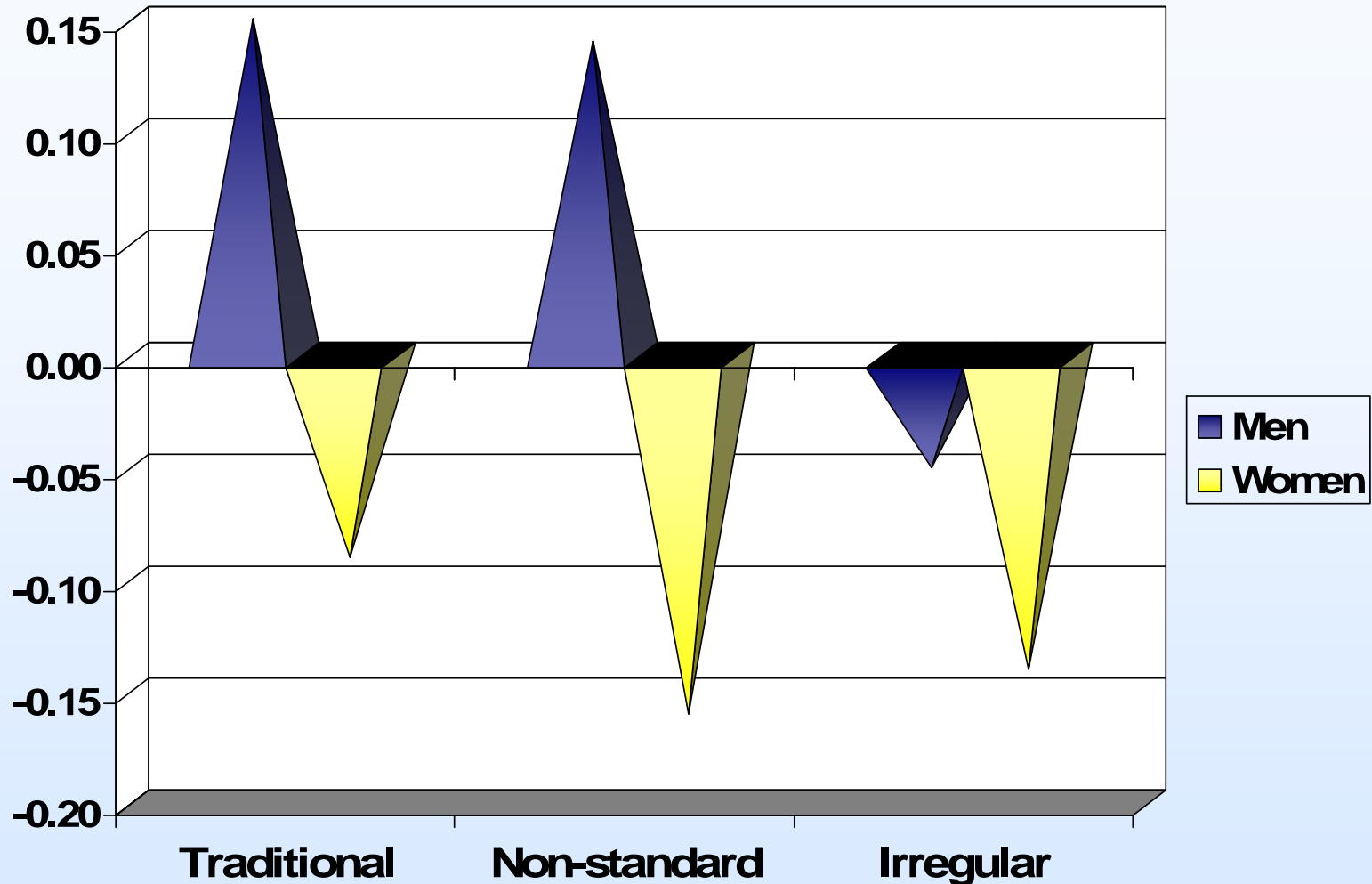
# Time pressure by gender and work schedule

(mean score, range 8-29)



# Well-being by gender and work schedule

(Mean score – standardized index)



# Main findings

- More leisure time was positively related to overall subjective well-being particularly for women.
- Irregular schedules were the most detrimental to men's well-being.
- Non-standard schedules affected women most negatively.
- A traditional schedule was associated with greater satisfaction with work-life balance and improved well-being. It provided a better 'fit' with family routines, activities, and parents' role expectations.

# Implications

- Institutional level change did not translate into different gender behaviour at other levels.
  - Mothers were still disadvantaged in the amount of leisure time and spent a significantly higher proportion of their leisure with children.
  - Less evidence of ‘involved fatherhood’.
- But, institutional level change did affect work-life balance, time pressure and well-being for parents of school-age children.

**Questions?**