

Precarious Work in Temporal Perspective

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- Precarious work is generally regarded as an invidious weakening of employment security, with negative implications for both daily life and life satisfaction in the long run.
- Such precariousness in employment is regarded as a recent and growing phenomenon.
- The literature suggests that precarious work is incurred more by women than by men.
- Longitudinal data sets like Canada's General Social Surveys that incorporate time-use and subjective data about everyday life in surveys - and that also cover a wider range of socio-economic information - have the potential to shed light on the occurrence, distribution, and impacts of precarious work.

The ideal is for all relevant variables to be present and in similar depth and format throughout the various surveys over time.

This is only partially the case with Canada's General Social Surveys, with limitations to the extent of literal longitudinal analysis of precarious work as a phenomenon.

The extent of detail in specific surveys varies, giving some of the surveys more potential for detailed analysis of some aspects of precarious work and its impacts on individuals.

Nonetheless, Statistics Canada's General Social Surveys offer the potential to examine and understand some central aspects of precarious work from its surveys over recent years.

Precarious employment can reflect different sources of uncertainty in employment status, such as seasonal employment, term employment, and casual or on-call employment. Recent research in Hamilton, Ontario, also included an absence of extended health benefits and pension plans among important aspects of job precarity (c.f. Hennessy and Tranjan, 2018). In the 2005 Canadian General Social Survey, the question, “Is your job permanent?” resulted in a yes or no code. In the 2015 survey, the breakdown of “terms of employment” consisted of 1) *regular employee* (no contractual or anticipated termination date), 2) *seasonal employee* (intermittent), 3) *term employee with a set termination date*, and 4) *casual or on-call employee* – the latter three all being aspects of the work situation considered as precarious (and which likely also includes an absence of health benefits, pension plans, and other aspects of job security within the latter, *precarious* categories). A comparison of the results for the 2005 and 2015 surveys shows that the permanent (or regular) employee segments in the two surveys were nearly equal in proportion, while the small segment labelled in 2005 as nonpermanent (9%) was nearly equivalent to the sum of the three non-regular segments in 2015 (7.2%). As a consequence, precarious employment (and its absence) can be approximately identified in otherwise differing surveys as a contrast between employment permanence (a.k.a. regular employment) and contrasting terms of employment (sometimes called *gig* employment). THIS PAPER focusses on what can be assessed by contrasting outcomes of this overlapping array of precarious work aspects with those found among workers with permanent employment.

For those ages 25-64 living in larger Canadian cities and employed, what percentage have permanent jobs (i.e. without a contractual or anticipated termination date), by year of General Social Survey and gender?

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According to the data in Table 1, the percentage of employed urban Canadians with permanent employment has increased steadily between the years 1992 and 2015. The percentage of men having permanent employment has exceeded that of women in each survey, but this gender difference has progressively narrowed

Table 1.--Percentage of Employment that's Permanent, by Gender and by Year of Survey among those Canadians aged 25-64 living in Large Cities and Currently Employed

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
<u>1992</u>	84.70%	78.90%
<u>2005</u>	91.90%	89.90%
<u>2010</u>	92.60%	90.20%
<u>2015</u>	93.30%	92.20%

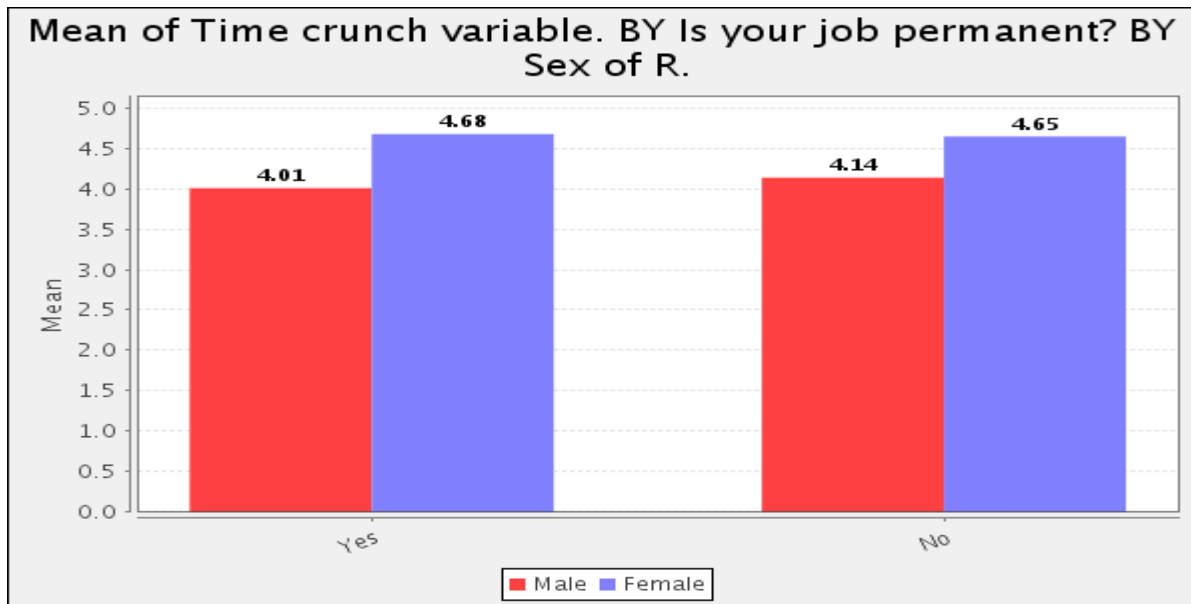
What can analyses of data from the General Social Surveys tell us about the validity of assumptions that so-called precarious work has negative implications for both daily life and life satisfaction in the long run and that these outcomes are incurred more by women than by men?

All the General Social Surveys contain a limited number of outcome variables. GSS19, from the year 2005, has both such variables, together with additional pertinent variables. Therefore, our focus will be more heavily focussed on data from the year 2005, with extension to other years as justified by the selection of data available in other data sets.

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Figure 1 shows remarkably little relationship between job permanence and feelings of time crunch among employed men and women aged 25-64 living in larger Canadian cities. Nonetheless, women in this subsample report significantly higher time crunch than men for the weekday involved.

Figure 1



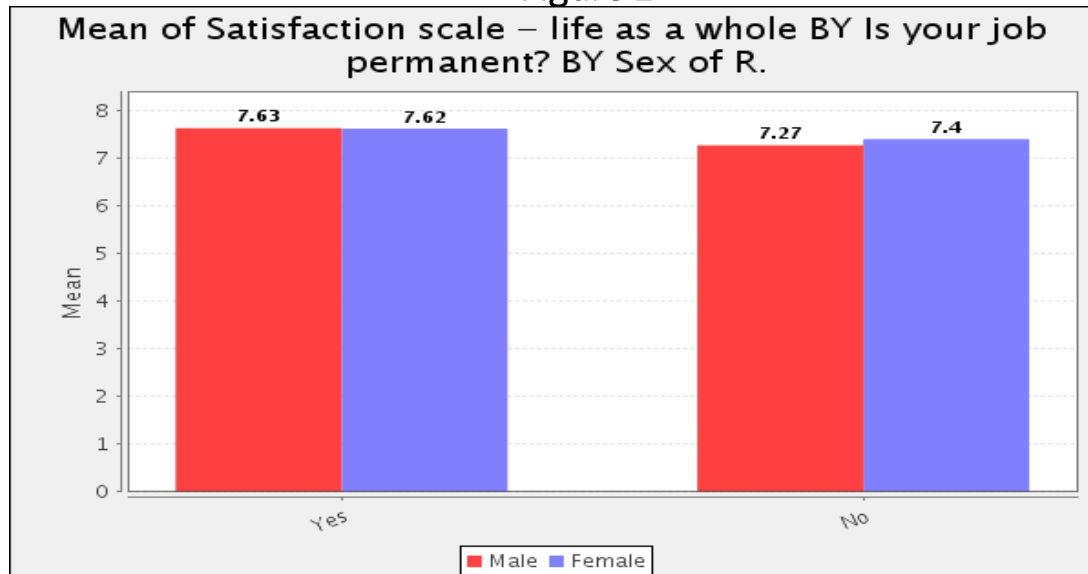
Analysis of Variance

	SSQ	Eta_sq	df	MSQ	F	P
Main effects	642,235.250	.017	2	321,117.625	35.366	.0000
Job permanence	1,104.535	.000	1	1,104.535	.122	.7273
sex	638,547.095	.017	1	638,547.095	70.325	.0000
Interaction	3,314.699	.000	1	3,314.699	.365	.5457
Residual	37,817,988.230	.983	4,165	9,079.949		
Total	38,463,538.178	1.000	4,168			

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Turning to the outcome variable of *life satisfaction*, that refers to a larger time frame in people's lives than the time crunch on a particular day, a highly different dynamic is evidenced. Job permanence accounts for significant differences in life satisfaction, while gender does not. Figure 2 shows that life satisfaction is significantly related to job permanence but not to gender.

Figure 2



Analysis of Variance

	SSQ	Eta_sq	df	MSQ	F	P
Main effects	41,515.355	.003	2	20,757.678	5.861	.0029
Job permanence	41,484.785	.003	1	41,484.785	11.714	.0006
sex	1.954	.000	1	1.954	.001	.9813
Interaction	2,239.510	.000	1	2,239.510	.632	.4265
Residual	14,664,861.558	.997	4,141	3,541.382		
Total	14,708,616.423	1.000	4,144			

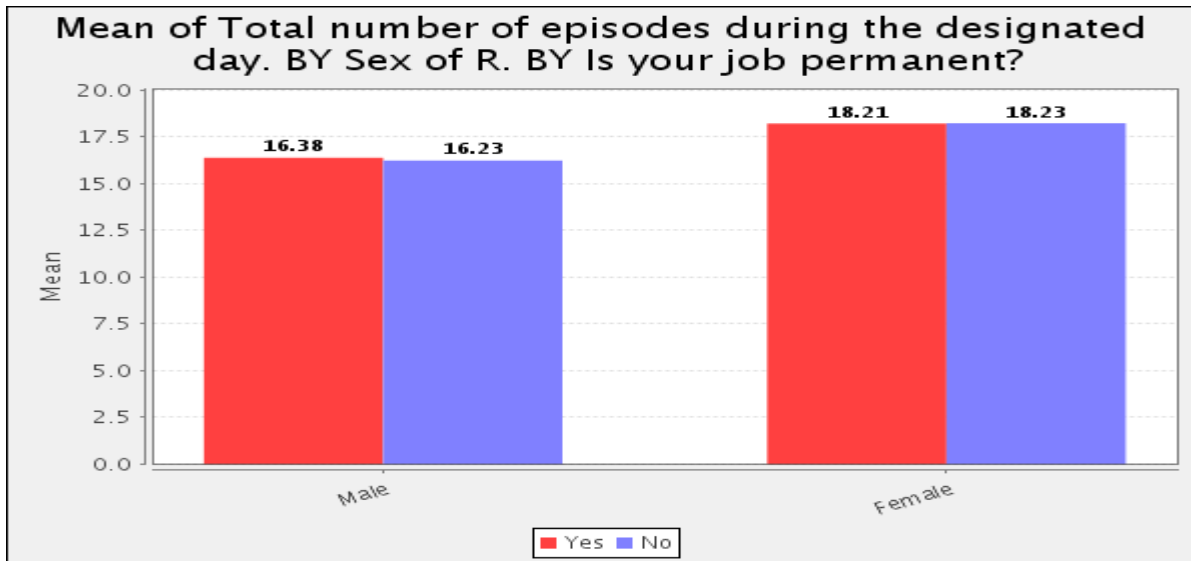
The gender difference in *time crunch* among employed men and women is also documented in the more recent 2015 General Social Survey. However, gender difference in *life satisfaction* cannot be calculated for 2015, due to modifications in the definition of this latter concept in the 2015 survey.

The 2005 time-use data set, moreover, contains additional variables that enable a greater depth of understanding of the findings on gender differences in time crunch.

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For example, employed women perform a greater number of episodes in the day than employed men, regardless of the permanence or precariousness of their jobs, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3



Analysis of Variance

	SSQ	Eta_sq	df	MSQ	F	P
Main effects	5,107,591.285	.028	2	2,553,795.642	60.370	.0000
sex	5,106,563.274	.028	1	5,106,563.274	120.715	.0000
Job permanence	2,080.315	.000	1	2,080.315	.049	.8245
Interaction	3,241.541	.000	1	3,241.541	.077	.7819
Residual	176,190,192.826	.972	4,165	42,302.567		
Total	181,301,025.652	1.000	4,168			

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At least equally important as number of episodes in the day is for what activities these episodes are allocated. Among Canadian men and women for whom paid work is the main activity in the previous week, there are significant differences by gender in time spent at working for pay at their main job both by gender and job permanence. Statistically, men exceed women, and both are greater if in permanent jobs. But this does not eliminate other obligations in the daily time budget. Domestic work is significantly greater for women regardless of job permanence, while caregiving to children under 15 years old is significantly greater among women and those with permanent jobs. Men spend significantly more time on media and communications activities, whether or not in permanent work situations. Travel time does not vary significantly by either gender or job permanence. These result are detailed in Figure 4.

Figure 4.
Mean Duration of Selected Activities by
Gender and Whether Job is Permanent

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Job permanence</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Significance levels</u>
Paid work at main job	Permanent	449.54	404.05	Permanence .0294 Gender .0000
	Not permanent	428.79	376.97	
Domestic work activity	Permanent	61.48	102.37	Permanence .8095 Gender .0000
	Not permanent	58.08	102.99	
Child care	Permanent	24.11	31.02	Permanence .0284 Gender .0003
	Not permanent	16.83	23.57	
Media/communication	Permanent	120.64	105.52	Permanence .6240 Gender .0000
	Not permanent	117.80	102.79	
Travel time	Permanent	87.08	83.71	Permanence. 7340 Gender .1922
	Not permanent	83.91	84.05	

While it is useful to know how much time employed men and women spend doing specific activities and how this varies by job permanence, this information does not necessarily indicate how, in particular, people *feel* they are impacted by these activities – and how these reactions vary by employment status and gender.

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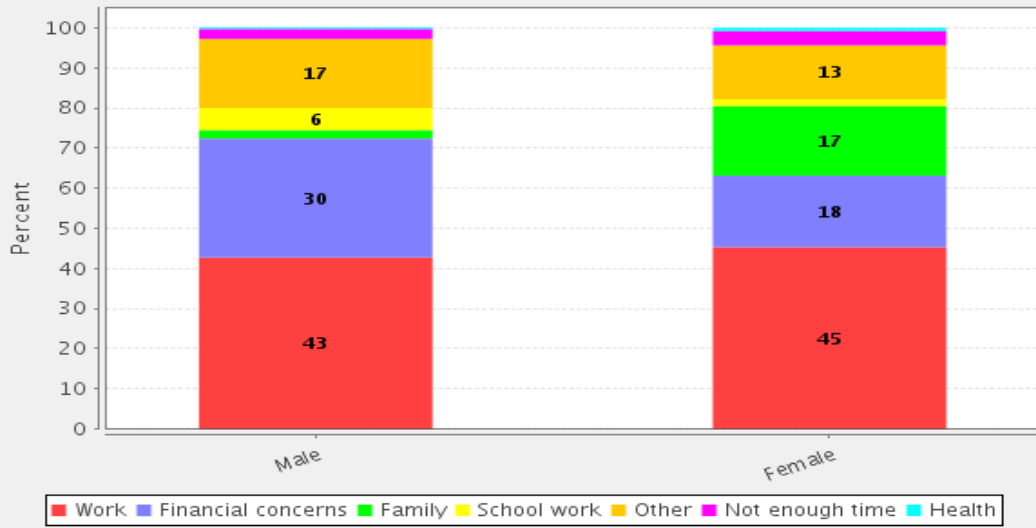
The next series of analyses, in Figure 5, focusses on differences by job permanence in what men and women feel is the main source of stress in their daily routine. The main source of stress in the day is considered to be their paid work, more for those with permanent jobs (particularly more among men in that situation) than for those without job permanence. Not surprisingly, financial concerns are a greater source of stress among men and women without job permanence than among those having permanent work. Women are more likely than men to feel that family is the main source of stress regardless of degree of precarious work.

A focus on full-time paid work in the day triggers immediate feelings of stress, while longer-term financial concerns prevail among those not having permanent work (particularly among men).

Figure 5

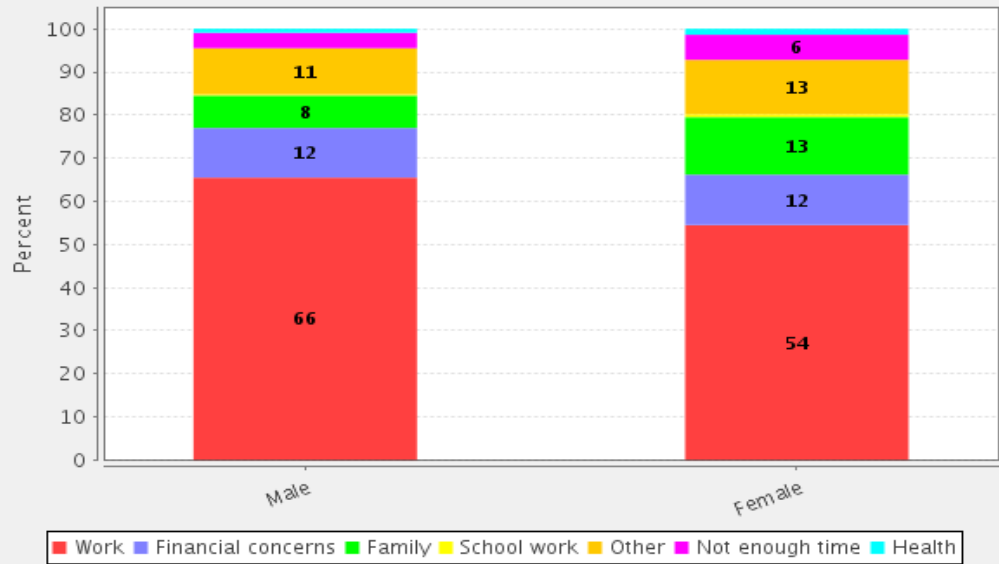
Job not permanent

Main source of stress BY Sex of R.



Job permanent

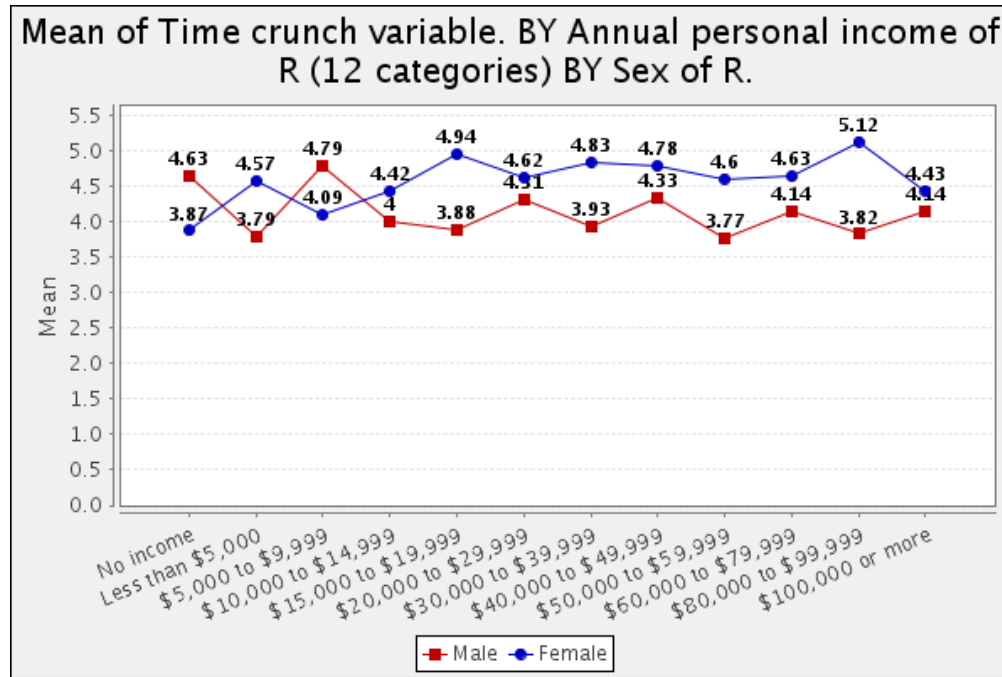
Main source of stress BY Sex of R.



Figures 6 and 7 bring in a consideration of income to confirm the importance of understanding which subjective variables apply to which contexts in people's lives. What people find subjectively relevant varies by the time frame.

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Figure 6



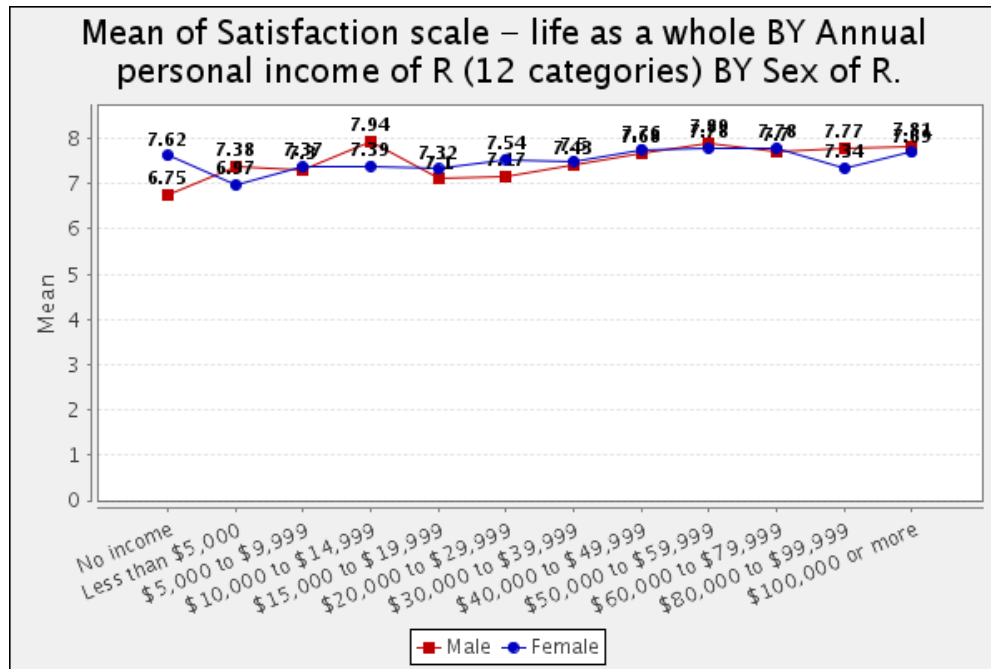
Analysis of Variance

	SSQ	Eta_sq	df	MSQ	F	P
Main effects	656,004.751	.018	12	54,667.063	6.030	.0000
income	87,183.682	.002	11	7,925.789	.874	.5653
sex	505,936.095	.014	1	505,936.095	55.805	.0000
Interaction	152,273.341	.004	11	13,843.031	1.527	.1146
Residual	36,582,164.299	.978	4,035	9,066.212		
Total	37,390,442.392	1.000	4,058			

As would now be expected, feelings of time crunch encountered during the course of a day vary significantly by gender, with women showing higher levels than men, reflecting the nature and extent of what is expected of them; as was the case for categories of precarious work, income level is not a primary determinative factor in this explanatory context.

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Figure 7

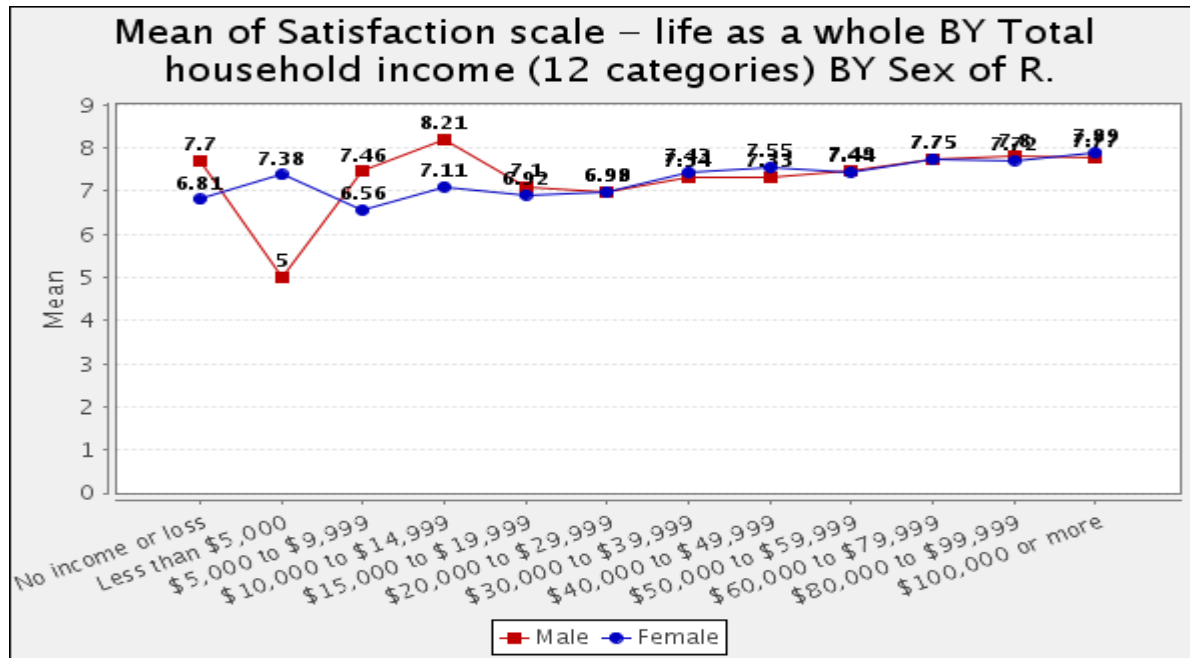


Analysis of Variance

	SSQ	Eta_sq	df	MSQ	F	P
Main effects	185,665.954	.013	12	15,472.163	4.440	.0000
income	182,710.339	.013	11	16,610.031	4.766	.0000
sex	1,846.522	.000	1	1,846.522	.530	.4667
Interaction	65,355.528	.005	11	5,941.412	1.705	.0661
Residual	14,043,953.606	.982	4,030	3,484.852		
Total	14,294,975.088	1.000	4,053			

On the other hand, when the focus is on life satisfaction, potentially extending out into the future, it is annual personal income that is found statistically related and more logically germane to life satisfaction, unlike gender.

Figure 8



Analysis of Variance

	SSQ	Eta_sq	df	MSQ	F	P
Main effects	331,608.539	.023	12	27,634.045	8.157	.0000
Household income	331,009.466	.023	11	30,091.770	8.882	.0000
sex	1,033.351	.000	1	1,033.351	.305	.5808
Interaction	44,782.783	.003	11	4,071.162	1.202	.2797
Residual	13,930,617.085	.974	4,112	3,387.796		
Total	14,307,008.407	1.000	4,135			

The income factor in Figure 7 is amplified in Figure 8, when the dependent variable is household income instead of personal income.

Our studies require a choice of subjective variables that fit the dynamics to which they are applied. This is certainly logical but not made obvious in the data sets customarily available. We are grateful when subjective data are collected. But it is essential to recognize how specific subjective variables apply to different temporal contexts. An understanding of precarious work requires reference to more than a single time frame.

- **Precarious work is not viewed primarily at the scale of everyday life and its immediate subjective outcomes – but rather in the framework of the longer life span and people’s perceived ability to live it to the full, not least as a function of economic means and stability.**