

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

**Work and degrowth**Social Forces <http://doi.org/cmwt> (2018)

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Policies to reduce carbon emissions will have to contend with how to decouple employment and environmental impacts, as the time and energy that a nation's people spends working plays a major role in its economic growth and attendant resource usage.

Jared Fitzgerald and colleagues at Boston College analysed state-level data in the United States for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions regressed against average individual weekly working hours and a host of other control variables such as workforce size, energy consumption, and region of the country. They found that when looking at the effect working hours have on the contribution to GDP through outputs and consumption, each one per cent increase in working hours leads to a

0.65 per cent increase in carbon emissions; when looking at the relationship between working hours and household behaviour (hypothesizing that more time off work leads to a less ecologically intensive lifestyle), each one per cent increase leads to a 0.55 per cent increase in emissions. The findings suggest that reducing labour time on the part of the workforce, either through automation or through 'degrowth' policies, could be a critical component of mitigating environmental impacts.

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