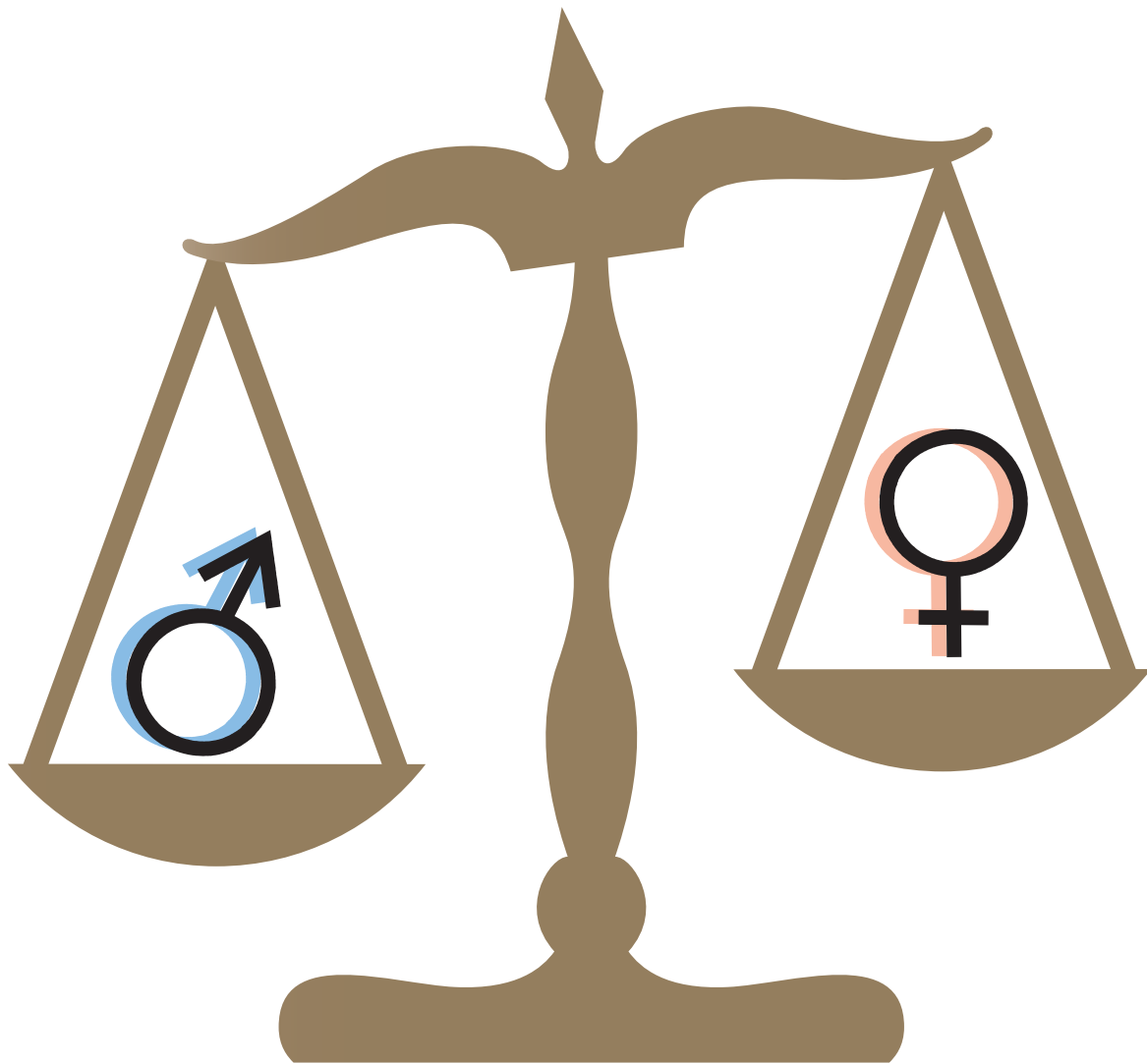


Balancing the Scales of Pay Equity: The Need for Gender Analysis and Budgeting

By Sara Hawryluk and Tricia Bakken



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Introduction

Women have made significant progress in terms of equality within the last decade in Canada. Specifically, within Saskatchewan, a significant number of women have entered the workforce over the last three decades. In Canada “in 2004, 58 percent of women aged 15 and over were employed, while the participation rate among women with children under three (65 percent) and children three to five (70 percent) has effectively doubled since 1976.”¹ Despite this dramatic increase in participation, women’s presence in the workforce has not amounted to equal pay for women compared to men. Women’s income has considerable consequence because economic security is important to women and

their children’s welfare and equality. Pay gaps can and do result from cultural preconceptions of the value of particular jobs, reinforced by comparisons with other employers operating on these assumptions, not from objective analysis of job characteristics as a guide to pay levels.² Presented here is information on the gender gap in Saskatchewan, broken down into economic gender equality indicators, and an argument for gender budgeting. A significant body of evidence suggests that gender budgeting will help governments understand how they need to adjust their policy priorities and allocate resources to fulfill their past commitments to gender equality.³

What is Gender Budgeting?

Defining Gender Budgeting

To define gender budgeting first there must be a definition of gender and sex and an explanation of the differences between the two. Gender is the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of men and women and the relationships among and between them.⁴ Sex refers strictly to biological differences. For example, women in Canada take on a larger share of the unpaid child-care. This is not a biologically determined phenomenon, but arises because of the different social behaviour expected of men and women in Canada. Because of social norms and expectations, there is a definite impact on programs and policies, which may affect women adversely.

According to Status of Women Canada (SWC) "gender equity refers to the process of being fair to both men and women."⁵ Furthermore, "gender equality means that women and men have the ability to enjoy full human rights and potential to contribute to national social, economic, cultural, and political development and to benefit from these results."⁶

Gender-based policy analysis is employed to study the differential effects of budget decisions on women. The SWC states that "in order to address the inequality gap between men and women requires a dual approach: developing policies, programs and legislation that are women-specific as well as ensuring that legislation, programs and policies that are not specifically targeted for women do not maintain or exacerbate any equality gap."⁷ This process is known as gender-based analysis (GBA) and will be used as a tool of analysis in this paper.

Gender Neutral versus Gender Blind

A gender budget is a budget that accounts for the direct and indirect effects of a government's budget expenditures, revenues and allocations on both men and women.⁸ Many economists argue that budgets are gender-neutral policy documents since budgets do not mention men or women.⁹ Budgets, however, are not gender neutral they are 'gender-blind'.¹⁰ Gender-blind budgets ignore the differing effects that budget decisions have on both men and women. Importantly, gender-blind budgets do not consider that men and women have different roles and responsibilities.¹¹ For example, an income tax reduction may affect men and women differently given that income distribution among male and female-headed households differs with female-headed households being in the lower income bracket.¹² Thus, a gender budget can hold government accountable to its gender equality commitments. As long as the imbalance between

Women and Poverty in Canada:

- In 2001, 1 in 6 Canadians lived in poverty
- 42.4 percent of single mothers experience poverty, the rate is 19.3 percent for single fathers
- Unattached women over 65 have a poverty rate of 45.6 percent
- Families with more and younger children experience higher poverty rates
- For every dollar earned by an Aboriginal woman, a non-Aboriginal man earns \$2.34

Information retrieved from:
<http://www.genderandhealth.ca>

men and women persists in social, political and economic structures, women will be disadvantaged. Brodie and Bakker argue that “the erasure of gender has significant implications for other key policy commitments, such as child poverty”.¹³ A provincial gender budget would recognize the underlying inequalities between men and women and redress them through policy change and the allocation of public resources.

Why is Gender Budgeting Necessary?

Government and the budgets that they produce have an important part to play in gender equality. “A budget is the most comprehensive statement that a government makes in regards to social and economic plans and priorities.”¹⁴ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) also notes that budgets determine who benefits from public resources and how. And although budgets are viewed as gender-neutral, a closer inspection reveals that this is not the case.¹⁵ An assumption is still often held that as long as genders are treated equally, a policy has achieved its desired outcomes. Therefore, GBA should be employed in order to implement a gender budget in order to address the fact that the budget is gender blind and must be analyzed through a gendered lens. The issue of women’s economic equality must be addressed in order for women to gain equality with men and a gender budget can begin to analyze the ways that budget decisions affect men and women.

Government Failure to Live Up to Commitments on Gender Equality

1976: SWC was created to integrate the concerns of women into the overall government decision-making process.¹⁶

1993: Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced

that social policy reform would be a priority for his majority government. By 1995 this was eclipsed by “federal budgetary manoeuvres that effectively dismantled the fiscal foundations of Canada’s post-war social security and welfare systems.”¹⁷

1995: Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. Nations developed an ambitious political declaration and platform for action outlining objectives and actions required of signatories of countries in terms of equality between men and women.¹⁸

1995: SWC noted “the federal government has put in place two five-year plans on gender equality. The first being the Federal Plan on Gender Equality (1995-2000).¹⁹

2000: Agenda for Gender Equality (2000-2005) was Canada’s adoption of a second five-year plan on gender equality.²⁰

2005: SWC found that the use of gender-based analysis across government departments has been uneven.²¹ “The lack of binding obligations to conduct gender-based analysis, internal resistance and the lack of shared responsibility have led, over time, to a decreased interdepartmental capacity to ensure gender equality.”²²

2006: A minority Conservative government “declared that the goal of gender equity had been achieved and then purged any reference to gender equality from the mandate of Status of Women Canada.”²³

2007: The Harper government eliminated funding to women’s groups who advocate for equality and closes 12 of the 16 Status of Women Offices in Canada.²⁴

2008: The Harper government denies women employees their democratic right to non-discrimination in the workplace. Harper’s proposed new rule would have unions become jointly responsible for pay equity settlements or awards.²⁵

Analysis of Saskatchewan Women's Income

Using Status of Women (SWC) Economic Gender Equality Indicators (EGEI)

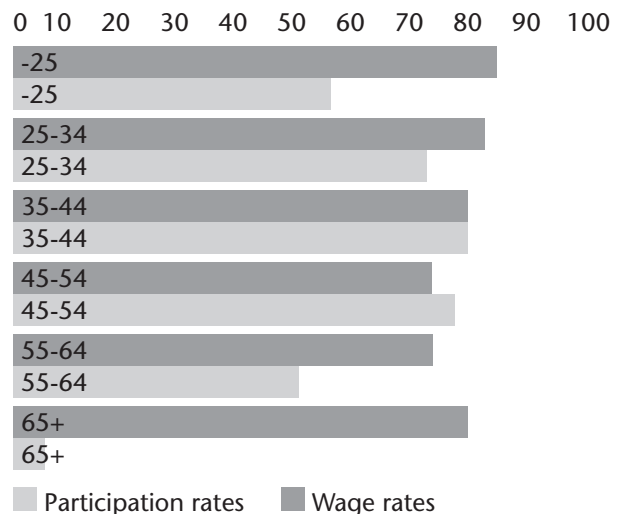
The analysis of the data presented in Sask Trends Monitor study on women in the Saskatchewan labour market has been grouped into three different categories: income, work, and education. Income uses the EGEI indicators of age, job structure, industry and union membership as variables to show the wage inequity between males and females. Work uses family structure, job type and occupational group. Learning uses completed education and student status as variables. This analysis will better illustrate the reasons that Saskatchewan should implement a gender budget to improve women's economic equality with men.

Income

The following chart shows that with age women's participation rates in the labour force increase, and a significant wage gap between men and women exists. Up to the age of 45 on average equity of pay between men and women does not change significantly. However, after age 55, the wage gap increases again, from about 84 percent to 76 percent, to the point of retirement. This data cannot be explained by tenure, as the Sask Trends Monitor study claims wage increase based on continuity of employment stands at about 85 percent for women²⁶. However, because a significant number of women still take time off to give birth and raise children, there may be less tenure for females than for males, and this could be a partial explanation as to why, after age 45, when women are done raising children and go back to the workforce, their wages decrease even though

they may still hold the same job. Their continuity of work was broken and promotion becomes more difficult.

Income Differentials Related to Participation Rates

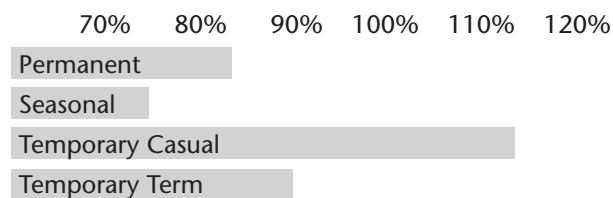


Information retrieved from: Sask Trends Monitor (2006) *Women in the Saskatchewan Labour Market: A Comparison of Wage Rates*.

After age 65, there is an increase in income equity once again. There is little evidence as to why this increase happens. There is speculation that it could be due to the smaller numbers of people in this age category who retain employment.²⁷ As well, because Saskatchewan is a farming province, and agriculture is a low profit industry, an average of \$11,131 per year according to Statistics Canada²⁸, many farmers do not retire at age 65 and continue earning low wages.

Job structure and income relate to the type of employment held. The chart below shows that permanently employed female workers in Saskatchewan earn about 84 percent of what males earn. The seasonal worker wage gap is much higher and is possibly due to the fact that a majority of seasonal work is construction, and is usually done by males. The wage for males in 2005 for construction was \$32,041, and for females, \$21,120, which amounts to females making only 65 percent of their male counterparts.²⁹ The reason for this inequity has not been explained, and is one of the largest inequalities in all professions.

Income Differentials Related to Job Structure



Information received from: Sask Trends Monitor (2006) *Women in the Saskatchewan Labour Market: A Comparison of Wage Rates.*

More than one in four women (26.1 percent) work in part-time or precarious forms of work in Saskatchewan.³⁰ An interesting factor involved in casual or part-time positions is that wage rates are 11 percent (casual) to 16 percent (part time) higher than men. The reason for this is uncertain, as it is the only area where women's wage rates are higher.³¹ Part-time employment is a double edged sword in that it allows for flexibility for the worker, yet it does not provide the consistency needed to attain increases in wage, promotions and health benefits that are associated with tenure. Shorter job tenure is one indicator of more precarious employment and can reflect periods spent outside of the paid labour force caring for children.³² Although females working part-time earn more than males, this doesn't mean that they are actually earning enough to take care of themselves, as their work is still part-time.

When comparing wage rates for males and females, even in female dominated professions, an interesting factor comes to light. Statistics Canada states that in clerical occupations men still earn \$3,577 more per year, which amounts to women earning 90 percent of men's income.³³ In nursing, men earn \$4,338 more per year, with a wage parity of 93 percent for women.³⁴ One of the groups found in Statistics Canada's data included social work and education along with religion and paralegals. The fact that these very different workers are grouped together may skew the results to some extent, as three of the four groups are female dominated. In this category men earned \$38,712 per year, while women earned \$22,428, for a wage parity of a mere 58 percent.³⁵ Between 2000 and 2005, the women in this group saw a 8.7 percent wage decrease, while men saw a 1.5 percent increase.³⁶

Wage parity is more evident in agricultural, health care and accommodation and service industries.³⁷ Although the health care and accommodation and service industries are female dominated,³⁸ they are also some of the lowest paying jobs available, and therefore greater wage parity in these particular fields may not tell the whole story. Sask Trends Monitor study found that "accommodation and service industry are areas of work that have disproportionately more women working part-time and this can explain the higher wages on average for this cohort and why they would choose these part-time jobs."³⁹ Of the 32.5 percent of all women who are professionals, two in three are employed in predominately public sector/female dominated occupations such as the ones mentioned above.⁴⁰ It is noteworthy to mention that Statistics Canada could not report on the incomes of men in either the child care and home support worker category or the secretary category for 2000 or 2005, where women's wages were \$19,742 and \$31,571 per year respectively.⁴¹

Formalized systems, such as unions operating in the workplace, have been shown to counter gender discrimination to some degree and many unions have actively worked to equalize the wages of workers in male and female dominated job classifications through bargaining and, where available, pay equity legislation.⁴² Unfortunately Saskatchewan has no pay equity legislation governing equal pay for work of equal value in the private sector.⁴³ Both men and women who have union membership have an increased hourly wage, as compared to non-union employment and it is more equitable for women as the rate is 90 percent, while both national and provincial averages are only 84 percent. Sask Trends Monitor study found that “union membership narrowed the difference between men and women’s wages.”⁴⁴ These findings point to the fact that in Saskatchewan unions have an important role to play in gender equality for women in terms of women earning a similar wage to men.

Work

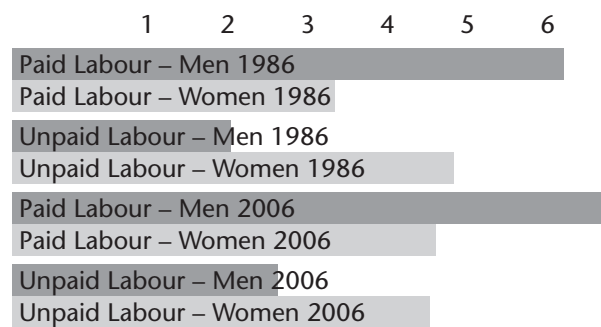
This EGEL domain is used to explain the ways that people choose to divide their time between work, leisure and family. The variables that will be analyzed here are family structure, job type and occupational group. Family structure is possibly the most important variable in determining time that is spent on various tasks. It is shown that in single parent headed households, the time spend on each activity was approximately the same regardless of whether the parent was male or female. The wage for single parent households is also approximately the same, \$14.10 per hour “which is lower than the average of a two-parent headed household.”⁴⁵ In Canada it has been reported that in 2003, 38 percent of lone parent mothers lived below the poverty line, while 13 percent of single fathers, and 7 percent of two parent families fell in that category.⁴⁶ Single parent families also have the entire responsibility for home and child-care. Time conflict and the fact that the majority of household tasks, including errands,

child-care, cooking, cleaning, etc., still fall disproportionately to women, particularly in two-parent households, can result in women taking on more part-time work. The necessity of unpaid work, and the persisting social expectations of women caring for the home and family leaves women in this part-time and casual work mode. This is one of the key factors in explaining the persisting wage gap.

Statistics Canada reported hours spent on wage work as compared to unpaid work for the years 1986 and 2006. Family structure and responsibility have historically fallen to women, and despite the increased paid workload of women, it still remains one of their key responsibilities. “Labour market policies have failed to reflect the realities of women’s lives therefore, women who work at paid labour continue to take on most of the responsibility for care and work at home”.⁴⁷

As shown in the following chart, men and women’s division of labour has not changed drastically over the course of twenty years. Although men have increased their participation in unpaid work by 0.4 hours per day, and women have decreased their unpaid work by 0.5 hours per day, women have also increased their paid work by 1.1 hours, while men’s working hours have also slightly increased. Statistics Canada also reports that in 1985 only 53 percent of married

Hours Spent on Paid and Unpaid Labour for Men and Women



Information retrieved from: Statistics Canada 2007, “Converging Gender Roles”. *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Vol 7, No 4.

men participated in household chores, but by 2006, 7 out of 10 married men were participating.⁴⁸ As well, it has been noted that the higher a female's income within a marriage, the more equal the division of unpaid labour becomes. The reason given for this may be due to higher income couples hiring outside help for domestic work and possibly differing attitudes regarding division of family labour in low income and high income families.

Another factor involved in the division of paid and unpaid labour revolves around occupational groups. It has already been noted that of the five lowest paying occupations, women occupy a high percentage of employees, and there is a wide wage differential between men and women. Sask Trends Monitor study found that "within these lowest paying five occupations the gap between men and women's wages is more pronounced than the five highest paid occupational groups."⁴⁹ An unfortunate fact is that many of the lowest paying female dominated jobs are for childcare and domestic help, which shows the limited value that our social system places on supporting families.

Learning

The last domain analyzed is how income differentials vary according to education. The variables of analysis are completed education and student status. The correlation found in this survey between education and wage rates is one of the strongest examined. The statistics show that women with a university degree earn, on average, more than double that of women with a grade 12 education.⁵⁰ The data also shows that the differential between men and women is narrower for those who are post-secondary graduates.⁵¹ It decreases from "77 percent for those with a grade twelve education or less, to 92 percent for those with a bachelor's degree."⁵²

Even though there has been a significant increase in women's post-secondary attainment rates, a

recent study looking at the years 1981, 1991 and 2001 found that the wage gap between men and women increased in the period between 1991-2001. In 2001, university educated women earned an average of 18.4 percent less than the average earnings of comparable men.⁵³ This statistic differs slightly from the Sask Trends Monitor study of only an 8 percent difference. Statistics Canada reports that for senior management positions, finance administrative positions, and judges, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, ministers of religion and policy and program officers, the wage gap is quite large, ranging from 72 percent to 90 percent depending on

Case Study:

Laura is single mother of three kids. She is trying to complete a post-secondary degree. If she takes a full course load, her student loan will compensate her for tuition and \$975 per month for living expenses. Her Canadian Child Tax Benefit provides her with another \$700 per month, for a total of \$1,675.

Laura's monthly expenses amount to \$1,000 for rent and utilities and \$600 for groceries, which leaves her with \$75 for transportation and other incidentals. And at the end of the day student loans must be repaid.

The economic realities facing women lead many to resign themselves to part-time enrollment. However, even with part-time school the debt load is incredible, as one university class costs approximately \$500 to \$600, and a person is not eligible for funding with less than a 60 percent course load.

For single mothers like Laura there is a need and a desire for higher education. It comes at a very high cost in the way of long term debt, time and stress.

which of the three professional, and presumably university qualified categories one reviews.⁵⁴ It is still shown that even though women are increasingly earning post-secondary qualifications, and this is correlated to higher wages on average, they are still earning significantly less than their male counterparts.

Current student status also plays a role in women's income levels. The CLC data suggests that women who are full-time students are employed in low-paying jobs and those that have a part-time course load are in better paying positions. This is a paradoxical situation for women because if they want a university education it

would be faster, and more economical, to be enrolled in a full-time course load. However, the total earnings are better for women if they attend part-time school and work full-time. Caring for children, working, and attending post secondary education creates a situation wherein women may decide to defer their education and a higher paying job in the future in exchange for a higher paying job in the present. Therefore, it is evident that for women to achieve the benefits of post-secondary education, financial assistance in the form of grants and bursaries are needed to complete their education in a reasonable time frame.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence presented, women's wages continue to be far less than men's, thus policies need to be in place to address this inequality. As previously highlighted, the government has undertaken a number of commitments to gender equality that clearly have not resulted in women's equality — economic or otherwise. Our government has failed to address such issues as pay equity, inflexible work hours and lack of access to affordable child and elder care.

There are many possible remedies to rectify this inequity. The Canadian Labour Congress has suggested that pro-active, as opposed to complaint based pay equity legislation, is more effective. "The pro-active approach covers all workers; recognizes that inequity in pay is systemic; changes organizational structures; combines human rights with labour and human resource plans; combines legislative direction; collective bargaining and enforcement with the option of neutral adjudication of any dispute."⁵⁵ A second approach recommends closing the wage gap between men and women through first: the creation of a gender budget and second: amend

the *Saskatchewan Labour Standards Act* to require employers to offer available hours of work to their current part-time workforce before hiring new part-timers (CLC, 22). The latter recommendation would specifically target women who are in vulnerable economic positions because a large proportion of women are in these part-time jobs.

With regards to policy changes in education, there needs to be more compensation for single mothers who are attending post secondary institutions. As shown in the case study, there is no other option for these women except to work, or to attend part-time classes, as the student loan funds do not cover even the basic necessities for living. When women obtain their post-secondary certificates, their compensation is not equal with men, making it more difficult to pay back student loans and take care of their families. If women are to attain economic parity with men, the government must take the initiative to design and implement innovative policies directed at addressing women's equality, specifically economic equality.

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