

Gender Equity in the Genuine Progress Index

Ron Colman

GPI Atlantic, Halifax

**Prepared for Made to Measure: Designing Research, Policy and
Action Approaches to Eliminate Gender Inequity,
National Symposium, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 3-6 October 1999**

This project was funded by Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (MCEWH). MCEWH is financially supported by the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program, Women's Health Bureau, Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of MCEWH or the official policy of Health Canada.

© Copyright is shared between the author and MCEWH, 1999.



PO Box 3070
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3G9 Canada
Telephone 902-420-6725
Toll-free 1-888-658-1112
Fax 902-420-6752
mcewh@dal.ca
www.medicine.dal.ca/mcewh

The Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health is supported by Dalhousie University, the IWK Health Centre, the Women's Health Bureau of Health Canada, and through generous anonymous contributions.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
The Invisibility of Unpaid Work	5
Gender Division of Labour	6
The Work Burden of Employed Mothers	7
Policy Implications	8
Wage Discrimination	8
Other Forms of Economic Discrimination	9
Poverty Rates of Single Mothers	9
Time Stress and Work	11
Gender Dimensions of the GPI	13
References	15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Because the Gross Domestic Product counts only goods and services exchanged for money, unpaid work is invisible in our measures of progress, and most of the work performed by women is therefore unvalued. Caring work, voluntary community service, household production, and child-rearing are more essential to our standard of living and quality of life than much of the work done in factories, offices and stores. Because this unpaid work is effectively de-valued in our measures of progress, essential policy issues of vital concern to women receive low priority on the policy agenda.

Gender equality is a core value in the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index, and unpaid work is explicitly valued. The GPI found that, despite a doubling of women's participation in the paid work force, women still do two-thirds of the housework, a ratio that has hardly changed in 40 years.

The double burden of paid and unpaid work has produced an absolute loss of free time for women, and higher levels of time stress. Statistics Canada found that one-third of employed mothers are "extremely time stressed" and more than 70% feel rushed on a daily basis. Time use surveys, on which four of the 20 GPI components are based, reveal that employed mothers average more than 11 hours of paid and unpaid work on weekdays and another 15 hours of unpaid work on weekends. A shift to paid child care also means that parents have less time with their own children than ever before. The invisibility of unpaid work ensures that the social, psychological and health costs of this double burden on both parents and children receive scant attention in the policy arena.

Other policy implications for gender equality of valuing unpaid work include:

1. Child care, house cleaning and other types of work traditionally regarded as "free" fetch very low rates of pay in the market economy, producing continuing wage inequities between men and women. In Nova Scotia women working full-time earn 66 cents to the male dollar.
2. Access to credit, pension plans, employment insurance, and even court awards are generally based on paid work only. Failure to value unpaid work, most of which is still done by women, therefore perpetuates subtle economic discrimination.
3. Single mothers dependent on the household economy put in more than 50 hours a week of productive household work. Because it is unvalued, social supports are inadequate and more than 70% of Nova Scotian single mothers live in poverty. More than half of Nova Scotia's 50,000 poor children live in single parent families.
4. There is an urgent need for family-friendly workplaces that enable an easier balancing of job and household responsibilities. Canada has much to learn from Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and other European countries in this area.

The Genuine Progress Index also includes a gender dimension in other components to ensure that gender equality is clearly seen as an essential component of the quality of life and a core measure of well being and progress.

THE INVISIBILITY OF UNPAID WORK

Most work performed by women has no value in our current measures of progress, which recognize only goods and services exchanged for pay. Unpaid work, the vast majority still done by women, is invisible.

That invisibility has significant policy implications. Policy attention and taxpayer subsidies are directed towards stimulating and supporting the market economy, on which prosperity and well being are assumed to depend. Issues of vital importance to the well being of women are simply not on the policy agenda. High poverty rates among single mothers and their children, wage inequities, time stress, discriminatory workplace arrangements, and the failure to assign policy priority to these issues, all have their roots in the lack of value assigned to productive household work and unpaid care.

But work performed in households is more essential to basic survival and quality of life than much of the work done in offices, factories and stores, and is a fundamental precondition for a healthy market sector. If children are not reared with attention and care, and if household members are not provided with nutritious sustenance, workplace productivity will decline and social costs will rise. Physical maintenance of the housing stock, including cleaning and repairs, is also essential economic activity.

Yet this huge unpaid contribution registers nowhere in our standard economic accounts. Although it is clearly productive activity, it does not show up in the gross domestic product (GDP), in employment statistics, or in any economic output measure, because money is not exchanged. When we pay for child-care, elder care and housecleaning, and when we eat out, this adds to the GDP and counts as economic growth and “progress.” When we cook our own meals, clean our own house, and look

after our own children, elderly parents or sick relatives, it has no value in our measures of progress.

According to one report:

The market economy cannot exist without the shadow economy. The market economy is dependent upon people (mostly women) to maintain those who work in the formal economy, to care for those who are unable to care for themselves, to raise children, and to support and operate voluntary and charitable services. But the market economy pays nothing for this work. In effect, then, the shadow economy, or the informal economy, subsidizes the market economy.¹

One women’s group stated the paradox simply: “They don’t count women’s work, but they count on women’s work.”²

Statistics Canada has now also officially recognized the historical omission:

Since women do most of the unpaid household and volunteer work, their significant contribution to overall production and economic welfare is grossly understated in the major economic aggregates.³

Conventionally the household is not even recognized as a unit of economic production. Virtually every economics textbook describes the economy as one in which “firms produce; households consume”. Yet the entire history of industrialization and “economic growth” has in effect been the shift of productive resources from households to production in the market. Despite the shift, household meal preparation, household cleaning and laundry, and servicing the household economy by means of shopping, are still today the three largest areas of industrial and service operations in the economy measured on an hourly basis.⁴

What we measure is a sign of what we value – a visible symbol of what *counts* in our social system. By measuring unpaid household work, child and elder care, and voluntary work in the community, we quite literally assign value to this work, focus the spotlight on vital policy issues currently hidden, and identify the social supports necessary for this unpaid work to function effectively. The Genuine Progress Index brings these valuations directly into the core measures of well being and prosperity. Among the 20 GPI components, therefore, are four “time use” variables, measured by time diaries, all of which have critical implications for women.

Though time use data stand on their own and require no economic elaboration, the GPI does assign explicit monetary values to unpaid work according to its replacement value in the market economy. This is done only in order to draw attention to the value of this work in terms currently accepted in the policy arena. Thus, for example, the GPI notes that unpaid work contributes \$325 billion worth of services to the Canadian economy annually, and points out that the recent decline in volunteer hours costs Canadians \$2 billion a year in lost services.

GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

The policy implications of measuring unpaid work, particularly for women, emerge clearly and naturally from the actual time use studies. The issues include:

- wage and economic discrimination
- access to credit, pension benefits, employment insurance and legal compensation

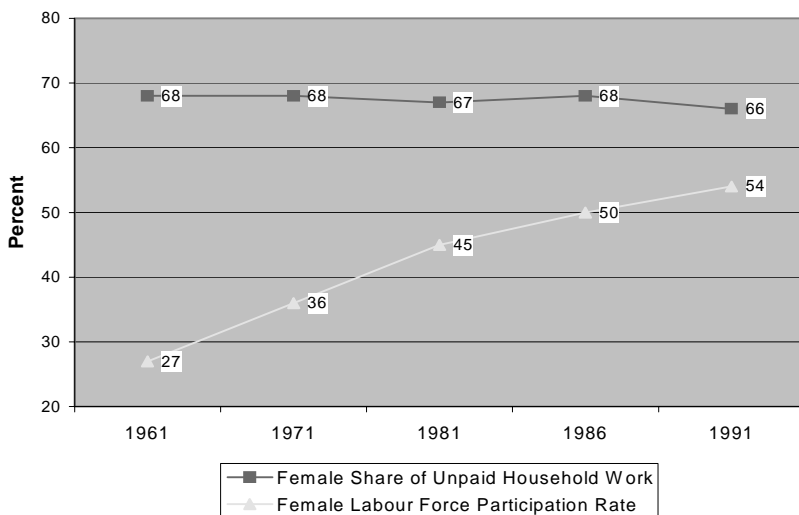
- social supports for those dependent on the household economy
- time stress issues and the need for work arrangements, including flexible work options, that facilitate the balancing of job and household responsibilities
- the costs of shifts from the household to the market economy

These will be examined in turn below, but all are dependent on an understanding of the gender division of labour in the household.

Time use surveys reveal that Canadian women spend about twice as much time on total unpaid household work, including child and elder care, as men. They spend three times as long cooking and washing dishes, and nearly seven times as much time cleaning house and doing laundry.⁵

Despite a doubling of the female labour force participation rate, women still do about two-thirds of the housework, almost unchanged from 40 years ago (Chart 1).⁶ Women’s share of house cleaning has actually increased steadily across the country since 1961.⁷ While the

Chart 1: Women’s Share of Household Work in Nova Scotia Has Remained Almost Unchanged Despite Dramatic Increases in Paid Work⁸



dramatic increase in female labour force participation has often been welcomed as a sign of women's growing freedom, the continuing inequitable distribution of housework means that women have experienced an absolute decline in their free time.⁹

THE WORK BURDEN OF EMPLOYED MOTHERS

The unequal division of labour in the household has left employed mothers with an unpalatable choice – to see their children receive less parental care and attention or to put in more total work hours at the expense of their sleep and free time. The time use surveys show that both trends are in fact occurring.

Since 1961, there has been a significant shift from unpaid parenting within the household economy to paid child-care in the market sector, and parents today spend considerably less time directly caring for their own children than a generation ago. The child-care industry has been one of the fastest growing sectors of the Canadian economy, gaining an average of about 8% a year from 1981 to 1994. In fact the only industries that have grown faster in Canada are computers, electronics, and trucks and vans.¹⁰

In the last 20 years Canadians have doubled the amount of money they spend on paid child-care. Families with pre-school aged children spend more than 5% of their income on child-care, and single mothers spend 12%. According to Statistics Canada, children in families with high incomes are more likely to be left either at a day-care or with a sitter than are children with lower incomes, and for longer periods.¹¹

Throughout Canada there has been a particularly dramatic growth in the employment of women with infants. In 1961 only 25% were in the work force, compared to 63% today.

Employed mothers with children under age 5 spend an average of one hour and a half less per day caring for their infants and toddlers than those who are not employed.

As well as spending less time with their children, women are working longer hours and have less free time. When mothers come home from their jobs, their work day is far from over. Employed mothers with young children put in more than 11 hours a day of paid and unpaid work on weekdays, and an additional 15 hours of unpaid work on weekends.¹² Because our economic accounts do not register unpaid labour time, there is also no accounting of the social, psychological, health or time costs of all these extra work hours, either on parents or on children.

Full-time employed married mothers effectively put in an extra week of unpaid work averaging 33 hours and 36 minutes a week, or nearly five extra unpaid work hours a day seven days a week, in addition to their regular jobs. Not surprisingly, a Statistics Canada study reports that “one out of three full-time employed, married mothers suffered from extreme levels of time stress” and fully 70% “felt rushed on a daily basis”.¹³

Real wages in have been on a downward slide for 20 years, and personal disposable income per capita has been declining steadily for ten years, even while household spending has continued to rise. Higher rates of female labour force participation have certainly helped to challenge the traditional gender division of labour in the market economy, but they are also clearly a function of increased household spending and perceived economic necessity. Two incomes per household are frequently regarded as necessary to maintain household income levels.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The data clearly indicate that while our exclusive emphasis on market statistics has focussed attention on the transition to a new era of growing equality for working women, the invisibility of unpaid household production has left unresolved the inequities of the previous era. The resulting contradictions include wage and subtle gender discrimination in the economy, costly investments in “labour-saving” household devices that have not actually saved time, inaccurate estimates of real growth, and longer working hours for women. Workplace arrangements inherited from the single-earner era have not yet adjusted to the realities of the dual-earner work force.

These contradictions are now having a direct impact on our daily quality of life in the form of high levels of poverty for single mothers, children and unattached elderly women, rising levels of time stress, and declining levels of parental care time for young children.

The evidence argues clearly for a more efficient and equitable distribution of time, resources and housework responsibilities, and for adequate social supports for those working long hours without pay in the household economy. The data also clearly point to the need for flexible workplace arrangements for both men and women that allow work and family responsibilities to be balanced more effectively to ease the intense time pressures on working women and to enhance the overall quality of life. Let us briefly examine these policy implications in turn.

WAGE DISCRIMINATION

Failing to value women’s unpaid work can produce a subtle wage discrimination by devaluing women’s work as a whole. The invisibility of unpaid work in the home and the fact that housework and child care are assumed to be part of a “woman’s role” has contributed to

gender inequality in the labour market and to female poverty.¹⁴

For example, work that is similar to that traditionally done “for free” in the home, such as cleaning, cooking and child care, also brings particularly low wages in the market economy. Child care workers, performing what is probably one of the most demanding and highly skilled professions, earn an *average* of only \$7.58 an hour in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia women employed full-time still earn only 66 cents to the full-time male dollar. For all earners the ratio is less: 56.5 cents to the dollar.¹⁵ 19% of all women in Nova Scotia live with incomes that fall below the low-income cut-off.

In fact, the very kinds of market work most akin to household work are still explicitly devalued by legislation in some provinces, including Nova Scotia. According to the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code of 1972, revised and amended in 1991, paid domestic service workers who put in less than 24 hours a week, are exempted from the minimum wage laws. According to the law, this includes “housework, property maintenance, supervision or service, including help or personal care for the comfort, safety or convenience of one or more members of the household,” who are not related to the care-giver. The Labour Standards Code provision therefore excludes both child care and elder care, as well as cooking, cleaning, laundry and other household tasks from minimum wage requirements.

This kind of work is still overwhelmingly performed by women, with the part-time provision of the law particularly affecting women with children who are unable to work full-time because of their own unpaid household responsibilities. What this means, in effect, is that working mothers can be paid less than \$5.50 an hour, the minimum wage in the province. In this way, the failure to value unpaid work has been carried by law into a

devaluation of paid work traditionally done by women and long assumed to be “free”.

By contrast, women’s groups have argued that measuring and valuing unpaid work will not only raise pay equity issues but support adequate compensation for skills acquired in household work that are also valuable in the market economy, including the ability to carry out multiple tasks, conflict management and organizational skills.¹⁶

OTHER FORMS OF ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION

Failing to value women’s unpaid work can also adversely affect women’s access to credit, and produce other subtle forms of economic discrimination. “Historically,” writes Robin Douthitt, “policy makers have neglected to consider the implications of home production and its value to the family and society when developing social programs.”¹⁷

For example, since Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and benefits are based on paid work, many women tied to the unpaid household economy have insufficient security in old age. 47% of unattached women in Nova Scotia over age 65 live below the “low income cut-off”, popularly called the “poverty line”, compared with only 8% of senior women living in families.¹⁸ The difference in part reflects dependence on pensions tied to earnings and the inadequacy of provisions for CPP contributions and benefits based on unpaid work. In Nova Scotia, 37% of women aged 65 and over live alone.¹⁹

Provided they are labour force participants, the Canada Pension Plan does make provision for women to raise their own children at home from infancy to elementary school age, counting these years as contributions to the plan in calculating retirement benefits. But there are no provisions for women who do not enter the labour force, nor for contributions based on the substantial housework and child care time of

part-time workers or for parents of school age children. In actual practice, as Douthitt points out, the benefit of this CPP child rearing provision falls largely to middle class families, since working poor families often cannot afford for one parent to stay home full time with young children.²⁰

Also, changes to employment insurance qualifications mean that it now takes longer for most part-time workers, especially those working less than 25 hours a week, to qualify for benefits, a policy that has disproportionately affected women who work these hours in order to care for children and keep house. The Government of Canada has recently publicly acknowledged that women have suffered most from the new E.I. qualifications.

The failure to value unpaid work, until very recently, produced subtle forms of discrimination in court awards. It was not until 1992 that the Canadian Supreme Court for the first time awarded direct compensation to a Saskatchewan woman, Verna Fobel, for lost capacity to do unpaid work. Prior to that, compensation was typically awarded to a husband for loss of his wife’s services.²¹

Women’s rights groups noted that even in this landmark case, the court assessed the replacement rate of Verna Fobel’s work at \$5.50 an hour for a 15-hour week, even though the average provincial rate for domestic services at the time was \$7.54 an hour, and the actual hours of housework considerably more than 15. Advocacy groups also referred to the Aitken job evaluation plan, used by human resource consultants, which valued unpaid housework at the equivalent of \$32,000 a year.

POVERTY RATES OF SINGLE MOTHERS

Despite women’s increased work load in the last 30 years, female and child poverty levels, particularly in households headed by single mothers, remain well above average. This

policy outcome is supported by the lack of value assigned to household production, which is frequently the only viable means of survival for single mothers. Lone parent families with pre-school age children spend 12% of their income on child care, compared to just 4.4% for two-parent families. When other work expenses, including transportation, taxes and eating out, are added, the child care costs may reduce disposable income to the point where paid work is barely viable.

In addition, working single mothers spend only an hour and 10 minutes a day, or seven hours and 42 minutes a week, on average directly caring for their infants and toddlers, less than half the time available to their non-working counterparts.²² It is not surprising then that paid work is not seen as an option by many single mothers. Since single parents have only half the time of married couples to meet fixed household time costs, paid work can produce extreme time stress and neglect of basic household functions.

Robin Douthitt has demonstrated convincingly that time use considerations have a direct impact on actual poverty levels in Canada and that they should be taken into account in assessing poverty thresholds.²³ Defining “time poverty” as time below the minimum necessary for basic household production, including food preparation and cleanup, house care and cleaning, laundry and shopping, Douthitt finds that when time and income are both considered, poverty rates of working single mothers are 70% higher than official estimates and approach the poverty rates of their unemployed counterparts. When sleep deprivation is taken into account, working single mothers experience nearly twice the absolute time poverty rates of their non-employed or married counterparts.²⁴

For this reason, only 31% of single mothers with children under three and 47% of those

with a child age 3 to 5 are employed. Despite the fact that non-employed single mothers average 7.1 hours a day seven days a week of productive household work (or 50 hours a week), 70% of Nova Scotian single mothers live below the official low income cut-off.²⁵ These 7.1 hours include 1.6 hours cooking, 1.9 hours housekeeping, 2.5 hours directly caring for their children, 42 minutes shopping and 25 minutes volunteer work per day averaged over a seven day week, none of which are valued in our conventional economic accounts.²⁶ If Douthitt’s “time poverty” measure is included, the poverty rate for single mothers jumps to more than 80%.

The lack of recognition and support accorded this unpaid work directly affects our children. Children of single mothers are 13.7% of all children in Canada, but 41.5% of all children in low income families.²⁷ In Nova Scotia 17% of all families with children are headed by female lone parents.²⁸ And 27% of Nova Scotian children under the age of 12 live in families below the low income cut-off, the third highest rate in the country.²⁹ There are also many hidden costs of poverty borne disproportionately by single mothers and their children.

Current policy debates and prevailing attitudes on social welfare support rarely consider the long hours of productive household labour performed by welfare recipients, including the caring, nurturing and parenting work that is even more invisible than housework. By contrast, valuing the unpaid labour inputs into household production as bona fide work changes the view of such social support programs altogether. From the GPI perspective, supports for women dependent on household production, such as family resource centres, training programs, financial incentives, and women’s health programs, are seen as essential social infrastructure for the household economy rather than as “welfare handouts”

which are often the first targets of service cuts in fiscal restraint initiatives.

The GPI describes this infrastructure as akin to the access to raw materials, labour and markets required for the business sector. When taxpayer dollars are used to grant subsidies to business for job creation programs, to give interest-free loans, or to send our leaders on overseas trade missions, or when business loans are forgiven, these policies are not classed as “welfare” payments to business. Similarly, the measurement and valuation of household work can change the biases and attitudes that have produced an “underclass” of welfare-dependent single mothers and others tied by necessity to an invisible, unrecognized household economy.

Douthitt concludes that

recognition of the economic value of home production activities in developing social welfare programs is long overdue....Public assistance programs aimed primarily at poor mothers neglect to account for the fact that as time spent in the paid labor force increases, so do the economic demands faced by the family as less time is available...to prepare foods from scratch and care and maintain a home.³⁰

She recommends that welfare reform efforts explicitly recognize time poverty and its relationship to money poverty, and that public assistance payments increase when program recipients enter paid employment. She notes that, at a replacement cost rate of \$5 an hour, time adjusted poverty thresholds for families with children would be about 50% higher than current official levels.³¹

Adjusting the low-income measure to account for essential home production activities would therefore significantly reduce child poverty levels. Since poverty is also positively correlated with poor health, nutrition and educational attainment, eliminating child poverty

would constitute a substantial investment in human capital and sustainable development.

TIME STRESS AND WORK

Overcoming gender discrimination clearly raises vital questions about a more equitable distribution of housework within families. Without it, argues John Myles, we will face a “crisis of care-giving”:

The economy and society as a whole obviously benefit from the additional labour time families put into the market and the pursuit of equality for women depends upon it. But as over a decade of research has shown, the costs to women are high. Women’s ‘double day’ of paid work and unpaid domestic labour is now a well-documented fact of modern life. Neither men nor public policy have changed to accommodate this new reality. The results is that the end of the 20th century society faces a crisis of care-giving, a direct result of the ‘time crunch’ that now characterizes the female life course.³²

The rising time stress and the overall decline in women’s free time, both in absolute terms and relative to men, remain invisible in our current accounting system. Subtly, however, the costs are already coming back to the economy in higher heart attack rates and other health effects among women, costs that ironically make the GDP grow and are thus counted as “progress” in conventional market statistics.

There is an urgent need for businesses and unions to consider the needs of the household economy in discussing flexible workplace arrangements for both men and women that accommodate family needs. Job-sharing, flexible hours, working from home, and other family-friendly work options have been shown to increase actual productivity while easing the stress of juggling household and paid work duties.

A provincial conference on flexible work arrangements, including representatives of businesses, workers, women's groups and government, would be a sound first step to reducing time stress, particularly for employed mothers, without turning back the clock on hard-earned gains towards gender equality in the market economy. The conference target could be a joint statement of "best practices" for Nova Scotia employees, to provide a standard towards which employers can strive and by which they can work.

GPI Atlantic has recommended that the Nova Scotia government give an annual award to the business that makes the most progress in creating family-friendly work arrangements that accommodate household responsibilities and reduce employee time stress. It would be a cost-free gesture that would focus attention on an area critical to our quality of life and could be used by the award-winning business as a marketing tool, thereby encouraging others to follow suit.

Unlike the almost exclusive attention given to wage issues in this country, these workplace arrangements are high on the collective bargaining agenda in many European countries, particularly in Scandinavia. High quality workplace child care and generous parental leave options for both men and women have eased the strains of paid work and promoted a greater sharing of household responsibilities in Sweden.

The Danes spend nearly eight hours less per week on unpaid household work, and have 11 hours more free time each week than Canadians. By reducing and redistributing work hours, the Netherlands has achieved a 3.4% unemployment rate and the lowest annual work hours of any industrialized country, thus significantly reducing time stress.

We clearly have something to learn from the Europeans here.

Without proper care, there is a real danger that part-time work options specifically designed to accommodate women striving to balance job and family responsibilities may undermine career prospects and create a new and subtle form of job discrimination – the so-called "mommy track". There are four clear antidotes to this danger:

- Ensure that workplace reforms are gender-neutral, as in Sweden, where parental leaves and child-care days apply to both parents equally.
- Ensure that family-friendly jobs are also "good" jobs, as in the Netherlands, where legislation prohibits discrimination against part-time workers, who thus receive equal hourly pay, pro-rated benefits, and equal career advancement opportunities.
- Challenge the gender division of labour within the household that has remained almost unchanged in 40 years. In some cases, household "strikes" may be necessary to re-negotiate the rota!
- Most importantly, we can stop confining equity concerns to male-defined areas of success, such as linear single-minded career paths that frequently involve overwork, stress, hierarchical relationships, increased consumption, and environmental destruction. Instead of regarding traditional female tasks as something to be abandoned, we can assert the positive value of nurturing and caring work, of direct investments in human capital, and of voluntary and community service.

If we focus solely on career equity, we will unwittingly foster the movement of these vital family and community roles into the market economy and allow the market increasingly unfettered access to the household. It is at least worth a vigorous social debate whether rising

levels of paid child care, domestic service, and paid food service, mostly performed by low-wage women, are good for children, families or communities. Interestingly, “family values” is an arena that transcends ideology, where “left” and “right” can come together with common purpose.

In the long run, the measurement of unpaid work can prevent its subtle devaluation and trivialization in our scale of values, and restore appreciation of the contribution of vital household work to our social well being. The long-term historical shift from the household to the market has appeared so inexorable for so long that we no longer balance the costs of the shift, either in social or economic terms.

A simple step like measuring and valuing unpaid household work places our market-based economic activity in a much larger perspective and provides a more accurate description of our total economic world that begins to correspond to people’s actual experience of the economy. Introducing even a single limiting factor like time use, with the inherent natural boundaries of a 24-hour day, cuts through the narrow fixation on the market economy and begins to show a way out of the what Juliet Schor calls the “squirrel cage” of working and spending ever more.³³

GENDER DIMENSIONS IN THE GPI

This paper has focused on the gender inequality that is perpetuated by failing to value most work that women do. And it demonstrates the critical policy issues that arise when the GPI begins to measure and give explicit value to that work. However, it is recognized that gender equality issues pervade all aspects of our quality of life, and efforts are therefore made to include a gender dimension in the other components of the Genuine Progress Index.

One example will suffice here: the cost of crime module recently released noted that women committed only 10% of violent crimes, 7% of robberies, and just 5% of break and enters and motor vehicle thefts in Nova Scotia. In every criminal category men significantly outscore women, and 95% of those incarcerated are male.³⁴ In federal prisons 98% of inmates are male, indicating that men overwhelmingly commit the most serious crimes.

From an economic perspective, the GPI report concluded, this effectively means that women are subsidizing the costs of crime committed by men, even though Nova Scotian women working full-time earn only 66 cents on average to the male dollar.³⁵ Female tax dollars pay for prisons and police, and women bear substantial costs of victim losses, theft insurance, higher prices due to crime, and home security expenditures – costs incurred largely because of male crime. From the GPI perspective, women would have a case for arguing for a public justice tax rebate in proportion to their lower crime rates. As “user pay” principles are increasingly applied to public facilities, prisons might be included.

This brief example illustrates the attempt that will be made throughout the construction of the Genuine Progress Index to include a gender dimension wherever applicable, and indicates the underlying view that gender equality is a core value in the index as a whole. Since it has significant implications for our overall quality of life, as the discussion of household work demonstrates, it is not regarded here as only a “women’s issue”.

Rising time stress and a loss of free time for working mothers, for example, is an actual loss of freedom for society at large that negatively impacts the lives of all adults and children. Aristotle noted that leisure time is a prerequisite for free discussion, contemplation, and active citizen participation in the life of the

political community. Its loss, wherever it occurs, is a loss for civil society as a whole.

Similarly, high poverty rates among single mothers and among their children will carry costs in health care, poor educational attainment, delinquency and crime, and in workplace productivity that will be borne by all taxpayers. The failure to value and provide social support to the productive work of those dependent on the household economy is therefore of direct concern to everyone. Conversely, progress in reducing poverty and inequality, improving environmental quality, increasing security and free time, and advancing gender equality is a gain for everyone.

That interdependence is understood in our market economy where tax dollars are used to provide incentives for job creation and to cut deals for business abroad in the name of overall growth and progress. Unfortunately, equity issues are still too often regarded as special interest causes, with each group left to champion its own particular interests. It is a fundamental purpose and function of the Genuine Progress Index to demonstrate the interdependent linkages that exist between all elements of our environment, society, paid and unpaid economy, health and quality of life.

“Human rights,” says Czech President Vaclav Havel, “are universal and indivisible. Human freedom is also indivisible: if it is denied to anyone in the world, it is therefore denied, indirectly, to all people.”³⁶ Incorporating gender equality directly into our core measures of progress can advance that fundamental understanding.

Ultimately, however, the purpose of the Genuine Progress Index is not philosophical but practical. Shining the spotlight on aspects of our collective well being that have been hidden by the dominance of market statistics can place them squarely on the public policy agenda where they belong. Expanding what we count

and measure denotes a profound shift in values that can provide a practical basis for building the just, sustainable and equitable society we genuinely wish to inhabit and leave for our children in the new millennium.

REFERENCES

1. Economic Justice Report, "Out of the Shadows: Policy Principles to Recognize Women's Unpaid Work," *Economic Justice Report*, volume 8, no. 3, October, 1997, pages 1-8.
2. Selma James, "Counting Women's Unwaged Work," *International Women Count Network*, August, 1995.
3. Statistics Canada, *Households' Unpaid Work: Measurement and Valuation*, catalogue no. 13-603E, 1995, page 3.
4. Marilyn Waring, cited in Jan Joel, "The invisible work-force: Marilyn Waring challenges the way nations traditionally account for the work done by women," *Briarpatch*, volume 26 (3), April, 1997, pages 13-15.
5. Statistics Canada, *Initial Data Release from the 1992 General Social Survey on Time Use*, Table 1: Nova Scotia.
6. One minor factor that also contributes to keeping women's share of hours up is that their share of the population 15 and over in Nova Scotia has increased from 50% in 1971 to 51.3% in 1997 (Chris Jackson, Statistics Canada, personal communication, 14 September, 1998).
7. Statistics Canada, *Households' Unpaid Work*, pages 49 and 72.
8. Sources: Statistics Canada, *Households' Unpaid Work*; Statistics Canada, *Historical Labour Force Survey*; Statistics Canada, CANSIM database; Historical extrapolations, 1961-1975, from Statistics Canada, *Charting Canadian Incomes: 1951-1981*, catalogue no. 13-581E, pages 10-11; Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada*, 3rd edition, catalogue no. 89-503E, page 88; Statistics Canada, *Women in the Workplace*, 2nd edition, catalogue no. 71-543E, page 10.
9. Total work hours and the valuation of leisure time will be examined in module 4 of the Genuine Progress Index after consideration of trends in paid work hours in module 3.
10. Statistics Canada, *Canadian Economic Observer*, February, 1995, catalogue no.11-010. Note that these figures, and those in chart 7 below, reflect direct spending on child care and are not controlled for the declining birth rate. It would be very interesting to compare average child care expenditures per female of child-bearing age over time, an estimation not undertaken in this study.
11. Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, Autumn 1991, catalogue no. 11-008-XPE, page 14.
12. Harvey, Andrew, et al., *Where Does Time Go?*, Statistics Canada, catalogue no. 11-612E, #4, table 19, page 117.
13. Judith Frederick, *As Time Goes By*, Statistics Canada, pages 28-31.
14. The following references to this issue are provided by Stella Lord, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women: Pat and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work*, Patricia Connelly, *Last Hired, First Fired*, 1979, Patricia Evans, "The Sexual Division of Poverty: The Consequences of Gendered Caring" in Carol Baines (ed), *Women's Caring*.
15. Statistics Canada, *Women in the Workplace*, 2nd edition, catalogue no. 71-534, page 42.
16. *Economic Justice Report*, *ibid*. See also *The Daily News*, Halifax, 26 August, 1998, on pay equity appeal by Michelle Falardeau Ramsay, Q.C. Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.
17. Douthitt, Robin, "The Inclusion of Time Availability in Canadian Poverty Measures", in ISTAT. *Time Use Methodology: Toward Consensus*, Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, Roma, Italy, 1993, page 90.
18. Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada*, 3rd edition, catalogue no. 89-503E, page 85; Statistics Canada, *Selected Statistics on Women in Nova Scotia*, August 1995, catalogue no. 89-503.

19. Statistics Canada, *Selected Statistics on Women in Nova Scotia*.
20. Douthitt, op. cit., page 90.
21. Waring, Marilyn, *Three Masquerades: Essays on Equality, Work and Human Rights*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997, page 86 citing Fast, Janet, and Brenda Munroe, "Towards Eliminating Gender Bias in Personal Injury Awards: Contributions from Family Economics, *Alberta Law Review*, 32, 1, 1994; see also *Toronto Star*, 9 May, 1993.
22. Statistics Canada, *Women in the Workplace*, pages 50 and 55.
23. Douthitt, Robin, "The Inclusion of Time Availability in Canadian Poverty Measures", ISTAT, *Time Use Methodology: Toward Consensus*, Istituto, Nazionale di Statistica, Roma, Italy, 1993.
24. Douthitt, op. cit., pages 88 and 90.
25. Statistics Canada, *Selected Statistics on Women in Nova Scotia*, catalogue no. 89-503.
26. Judith Frederick, *As Time Goes By... Time Use of Canadians*, Statistics Canada, catalogue no. 89-544E, page 25.
27. Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada*, 3rd edition, catalogue no. 89-503E, page 86.
28. Statistics Canada, *Selected Statistics on Women in Nova Scotia*, August 1995, catalogue no. 89-503.
29. Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, Spring, 1997, catalogue no. 11-008-XPE.
30. Douthitt, Robin, "The Inclusion of Time Availability in Canadian Poverty Measures", in ISTAT, *Time Use Methodology: Toward Consensus*, Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, Roma, Italy, 1993, pages 90-91. Time poverty is defined as time less than the minimum necessary for essential basic household production, including food preparation and cleanup, home care and cleaning, laundry and shopping.
31. Idem., pages 85-87.
32. Myles, John, "Women, the Welfare State and Care Giving", *Canadian Journal of Aging*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1991, pages 82-85, cited in Frederick, *As Time Goes By*, page 7.
33. Schor, Juliet, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, HarperCollins, USA, 1991, chapters 5 and 6, in which she analyzes the pitfalls of the "work-and-spend cycle" and suggests ways of breaking the pattern.
34. Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Denyse Carriere, "Adult Criminal Court Statistics, 1996-97", *Juristat*, catalogue no. 85-002, volume 18, no. 7, April, 1998, page 1; Statistics Canada, Robinson, David, et. al., "A One-Day Snapshot of Inmates in Canada's Adult Correctional Facilities," *Juristat*, catalogue no. 85-002, volume 18, no. 8, gives the male percentage as 96%.
35. Statistics Canada, *Women in the Workplace*, 2nd edition, catalogue no. 71-534, page 42.
36. Vaclav Havel, *Summer Meditations*, Vintage Books, Random House, Toronto, 1992.