

# Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value: Some Theoretical Criticisms

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Paye égale pour travail de valeur égale (EV) est actuellement une question controversée au Canada. Cet article ajoute à la littérature économique et juridique existante en se concentrant sur certains aspects de EV comme mode de pensée. Notre analyse démontre que EV est entaché d'erreurs philosophiques d'animisme, de réification, et de volontarisme. Ces problèmes intellectuels rendent problématique l'application de EV dans le domaine de la politique publique.

Equal pay for work of equal value (EV) is currently a controversial issue in Canada. This paper supplements the existing economic and legal literature by focussing on certain aspects of EV as a mode of thought. Analysis shows that EV is beset with the philosophical errors of animism, reification, and voluntarism. These intellectual difficulties make EV problematic as public policy.

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The concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value' (EV) is currently a matter of controversy in Canada. There is also a large American literature on EV, or 'comparable worth' as it is called in the United States. Much of the literature has been produced by economists and sociologists, who have tried to discover whether a 'wage gap' can be measured between work performed by men and work performed by women. A good deal has also been written about formal job evaluation methods, and whether they can contribute to closing the wage gap. Finally, there is a legally oriented literature on the implications of various human rights and equal-pay statutes.

This paper, written by a political theorist, strikes out in a different direction by examining certain aspects of EV doctrine as a mode of thought. It will be shown that EV, as a way of looking at the world, is marked by three characteristics usually regarded as philosophical errors: animism, reification, and voluntarism. These

intellectual difficulties make EV problematic as a public policy.

## History and Meaning of EV

Although recently much debated, EV is not a new idea. Its first appearance seems to have been in the Peace of Versailles, 1919, which affirmed 'the principle that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value' (article 427). The International Labour Organization, founded the same year, embraced EV from the beginning and embedded the phrase in its Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951. Canada abstained on the original vote but subsequently ratified the Convention in 1972 (Niemann, 1984).

Although EV terminology has existed for most of this century, it was for decades not clearly distinguished from the concept of 'equal pay for equal work' (EW). International documents as well as domestic legislation often used

both terms together or as synonyms for one another. Many jurisdictions seemed to think they could comply with ILO norms by enacting EW statutes, as happened in Canada at both federal and provincial levels during the 1950s and 1960s.

A clear distinction between EV and EW only began to emerge in the 1970s. In that decade, with encouragement from the Common Market, many European countries, including the major powers of Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, enacted EV legislation, as did Australia and New Zealand. In practice, however, these laws are often enforced loosely or in such a way as to make them equivalent to an EW standard (Livernash, 1984:137-72; Goodwin, 1984).

The main development in the United States has been a trend for state and local governments to apply the concept of 'comparable worth' to their civil service employees. Numerous state and local authorities have had or now have comparable worth projects (Stewart, 1985). Feminist attempts to use the courts to read EV into existing federal Civil Rights and Equal Pay legislation have not achieved a decisive result, although some interim victories have been achieved, such as *American Federation of State, Country and Municipal Employees v. Washington*, 378 F. Supp. 846 (1983). The Reagan administration remains unalterably opposed to the idea, and the presidentially appointed Chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights has called comparable worth 'the looniest idea since Looney Tunes came on the screen' (*New York Times*, November 17, 1984). The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission also adjudicated against it in 1985 (Block & Walker, 1985:88).

Movement towards EV in Canada can conveniently be dated from the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women* (1970). That document criticized existing EW legislation as ineffectual and called for reforms in the direction of EV, without identifying the concept precisely (66-77). The first jurisdiction to respond was the province of Quebec, which used the term *travail équivalent* (equivalent work) in its Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, 1975 (s.19). Enforcement of this equivocal

phrase has been weak, although at least a few cases could be considered to exemplify the EV principle (CDPQ, 1980). The next breakthrough was the inclusion of s.11(1) in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, proclaimed March 1, 1978: 'It is a discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees employed in the same establishment who are performing work of equal value'. The Act covers federal employees and federally regulated industries, about 11 per cent of the work force. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has enforced s.11 by responding to complaints as they are made. As of summer 1985, the Commission had settled about 20 complaints; most of them were small but a few involved multi-million dollar backpayments to hundreds or thousands of workers (CHRC, 1984).

Although human rights advocates continued to press for enactment of EV legislation in other jurisdictions, nothing much happened until 1984, when the release of the Abella Report, *Equality in Employment*, coincided closely in time with the federal general election. Feminist issues were prominent in the campaign, as symbolized by the special television debate. The leaders of the three major parties vied with one another in pledging commitment to EV, making it sound like a reform still to be achieved rather than a statute already on the books. The Treasury Board is now studying a pay equity project for the federal civil service, but details have not yet been made public.

In the wake of the federal election, EV has also made gains provincially. Manitoba passed *The Pay Equity Act*, 1985, for its public service, including hospitals and universities. EV was also a major issue in the Ontario provincial election of 1985. The Liberal government first released a Green Paper on Pay Equity and introduced legislation to apply the principle of EV to the public service. Before that was passed, the government also introduced Bill 154 to apply pay equity to employers in the private sector with more than 10 employees. Depending on the size of the firm, employers will have from three to six years to develop an EV plan. Annual costs of increased compensation for women will not be

required to exceed 1 per cent of the previous year's payroll (*University Affairs*, March 1987, p.40).

The subtle distinctions between 'equal pay for work of equal value,' 'comparable worth,' and 'pay equity' need not concern us here. All three share a commitment to EV that differentiates it from EW. The difference is readily illustrated in statutory wording. The United States *Equal Pay Act*, based on EW, provides:

No employer ... shall discriminate ... between employees on the basis of paying wages ... less than the rate at which he pays wages to employees of the opposite sex ... for equal work on jobs the performance of which requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions (29 U.S.C. 206 (d)(i)).

The wording of the Act implies that skill *and* effort *and* responsibility *and* working conditions must all be equal, or at least similar, before the pay of two jobs can be compared. This means in practice that the EW criterion can be invoked only for jobs that are completely or nearly identical. Two persons pumping gas at the same station would qualify; but if one fixed flat tires (or cleaned washrooms, or ran the cash register) and the other did not, a tribunal might well hold that EW did not apply.

In contrast, s.11(2) of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* stipulates:

In assessing the value of work performed by employees ... the criterion to be applied is the composite of the skill, effort and responsibility required in the performance of the work and the conditions under which the work is performed.

Introduction of the term 'composite' into the formula changes its meaning radically. Job evaluation now becomes a matter of adding skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions to each other to produce a single index of comparison rather than comparing jobs on four separate dimensions.

This interpretation is confirmed by the Canadian Human Rights Commission publication *Methodology and Principles for Applying Sec-*

*tion 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act*. It sets forth a model procedure in which point scores for skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions are awarded to jobs and then totalled additively. This approach makes EV far more sweeping than EW, for it allows comparison of the 'value' or 'worth' of jobs that, on the surface at least, seem to have little or nothing in common. As two Canadian management consultants have put it, 'You *can* compare apples and oranges' (King and Vallee, 1982).

The final proposition in EV doctrine is that remuneration ought to be proportional to the point totals of jobs. Allowances can be made for seniority, productivity bonuses, and so forth, but there should be a trend line in which remuneration is proportional to arithmetically determined value. Illegal discrimination occurs if two equally scored jobs are compensated differently and if the incumbents are of different sex; there is no illegality, however, if the incumbents are of the same sex. Where prohibited discrimination exists, the remedy is to raise the wage of the lower-paid job; EV (like EW) legislation always prohibits downward adjustments.

The above describes the simplest type of EV situation, where a woman complains on her own behalf and compares her job to one or more jobs of allegedly equal value held by men. Also possible are group complaints, in which a range of jobs dominated by women is compared to a range of jobs dominated by men. This requires an operational definition of gender dominance, which has been set at values from 50 to 70 per cent in different jurisdictions and under different circumstances. Finally, the current trend, as exemplified in the Manitoba and Ontario legislation, is not to wait for complaints but to revise the salary structure of the entire public service in proportion to the results of an EV job study.

A relatively simple example of a group complaint is furnished by the first major case settled by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, a comparison of federally employed librarians (female-dominated) and historical researchers (male-dominated). Median salaries were regressed upon job point scores for the two groups separately. The regression lines showed that, for any value of job except the very highest, the

researchers tended to receive higher pay than the librarians. The remedy was to raise the pay of the librarians, most of whom were women, thus making their trend line coincide with that of the researchers, most of whom were men (Remick, 1984:179-81).

Real-life cases involve many fascinating questions. Should linear or curvilinear regression models be used? How should outlying data points be treated? How is justice to be achieved when more than two groups are involved? Should female-dominated groups be raised to the level of the worst-paid male group, the best-paid, or somewhere in-between (CHRC, 1985)? Should male groups be downwardly adjusted to female-group means (a valid theoretical question, even though it is never permitted by legislation)?

We can proceed from these complexities to focus on the main point of EV: the triumph of the job evaluation scheme over the market. An employer's instinctive response to charges of EV discrimination is to say that one pays whatever is necessary to attract and retain the needed work force. If it happens that one can get secretaries more cheaply than janitors, even though both jobs may have identical scores on a job-rating plan, that is not discrimination, that is supply and demand. EV proponents, however, regard the market as itself discriminatory. In the words of the Canadian Human Rights Commission:

Since the demand for 'male' qualifications has been greater than that for 'female' ones, wages for so-called men's jobs have risen out of proportion to wages for so-called women's work. This has led to a shortage of male labour. The [Canadian Human Rights] Act, thus, challenges the economic principle of supply and demand ... (CHRC, n.d.:4).

EW legislation is also an imposition of regulatory goals upon the market, but EV goes much farther in this direction. EW lays down a simple, relatively clear rule in advance, whereas EV permits retroactive challenges to virtually any wage bargain.

### Three Aspects of EV

#### 1 *Animism*

Thomas Sowell has written:

With unlimited time, either the processes of nature or the competition among men may lead to an intricate pattern of results unplanned by anybody .... Some events are in fact the result of purposeful activity toward the goal achieved, but the general presumption that this *must* be the case can be classified as 'the animistic fallacy' (Sowell, 1980:97).

What Sowell calls *animism* is also often called 'anthropomorphism,' which originally meant the attribution of human characteristics to the Deity, but now also refers to any attribution of human traits to natural, impersonal, or social processes.

The literature of EV is permeated with the animistic fallacy. *The Ontario Green Paper on Wage Equity*, for example, claims there is a 'wage gap' between men and women caused at least in part by 'discrimination,' 'occupational segregation,' and the 'undervaluation' of women's work (p.ii). Each of these terms expresses the animistic fallacy.

The root meaning of 'gap' is that of a space or opening between boundaries. In modern English, however, it is almost always used in phrases such as 'the missile gap,' 'close the gap,' or 'the gap between expectation and performance,' referring to situations where the space is at least potentially under human control. The phrase 'wage gap' in context thus implies that something ought to and can be done to close it.

'Discrimination' originally referred to an act of judgment. In the late nineteenth century, it began to refer to differential treatment of groups based on unjustifiable preconceptions - still within the realm of conscious human decisions. More recently, 'discrimination' is often used to refer to patterns of results that depart from some distribution expected on a priori grounds. Canadian theorists of such 'systemic discrimination' cite the dictum of Justice McDonald that discrimination can exist 'even in the absence of present or past intent to discriminate on the ground of sex. It is the discriminatory result which is prohibited and not a discriminatory intent' *Re Attorney General for Alberta and Gares* (1976), 67 D.L.R. (3d) 635, at 695). But legislative and judicial approval does not mean that a phenomenon exists, as thousands of

'witches' could testify. 'Systemic discrimination' is an oxymoron, an animistic explanation for states of affairs that arise without being under anyone's conscious control or design.

'Occupational segregation' might better be called 'occupational congregation,' for it refers to the well-known fact that women predominate in certain jobs, such as waitress, nurse, school-teacher, social worker, or secretary. One dictionary meaning of 'segregation' is simply a factual state of separation, but that meaning is hardly what comes to mind in this connection. 'Segregation' cannot escape the connotations of the legal system of racial separation that once prevailed in the American South. Analogous considerations would apply to the phrase 'pink collar ghetto,' often used in discussions of EV. To use the term 'ghetto,' which originally referred to legally defined places of Jewish residence, inevitably suggests that deliberate human agency has brought about job congregation.

This is not to deny that women have been adversely affected by deliberately constructed legal and administrative barriers to their career advancement. But even as such barriers have been gradually struck down by the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, occupational differentiation by sex has not disappeared. Indeed, that is precisely why proponents of EV deem it such an important measure, because they expect 'men's work' and 'women's work' to persist in the foreseeable future, even if all illegal discrimination is removed (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981:65).

'Undervaluation' of women's work logically implies that there is a standard in relation to which it can be shown that women's wages earned in the market are too low. But what is this standard? One objective standard is market value, which is objective in the limited sense that it emerges from the interaction of an unknown number of subjective decisions to buy or sell. It is not objective in a transcendental or absolute sense, and indeed no such standard of economic worth exists. To speak of 'undervaluation' in this context is to imply animistically that an entity called the market performs an act of valuation that can be judged by some other standard. But in fact the only other standard is subjective opinion.

Naive advocates of EV speak as if employers can set wages arbitrarily at whatever levels they choose. More sophisticated proponents, being aware of supply and demand and the theory of wage determination by marginal productivity (i.e., that in the long run factors of production, including labour, are rewarded proportionally to their incremental contribution to production), have proposed accounts of why and how the market fails to recognize the true value of women's work. This is vital because, if market mechanisms work as they should, the existence of large numbers of 'undervalued' workers is an invitation to other employers to hire them away. These employers should be able to pay something closer to the marginal productivity of these workers and still make attractive profits (Sowell, 1984:113). If such raiding does not take place, EV doctrine would seem to be falsified, unless market failure can be adduced.

The most-plausible theory emphasizes rigidities in the labour market on both supply and demand sides. On the demand side, one factor alleged to be important is the existence of internal labour markets in large firms. Market forces do not act freely and directly upon employees who have spent years acquiring experience useful in a specific environment, who have (possibly nontransferable) pension rights, etc. Competition may exist at the initial recruiting level for 'port of entry' jobs, but thereafter rigidities are said to grow in importance (USCCR, 1984:204-06).

On the supply side, we encounter the choices of women themselves. They may be socialized to prefer traditional women's work; or they may seek jobs which allow them time off for child-bearing, childrearing, and other family obligations. Individually making choices, they may crowd into certain occupations, thus depressing the remuneration (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981:53).

There is undoubtedly some truth in both of these contentions. There are rigidities in labour markets, and men and women are not fungible modules of labour power. Society is more complex than the abstract model of perfect competition used by economists. As Hayek has written, 'most of the markets in the existing world are undoubtedly very imperfect' (Hayek,

1973-79:III:67). But even if an imperfect market does not fully accord with an ideal model, imperfection is not non-existence. To the extent that it does exist, a market means that results arise through complex interaction and cannot be attributed to human intention.

The point at issue is the anthropomorphic turn of mind that leads proponents of EV to interpret the world's less-than-perfect conformity to an abstract model as evidence of 'discrimination,' albeit 'systemic.' In the end, this is an elaborate way of saying that someone must be at fault if the world is not what they would like – if workers cannot respond instantaneously to better opportunities; if women persist in marrying, having children, and spending time raising them, thus being cut off from some high-paying jobs; and if employers persist in paying men and women according to these 'discriminatory' market signals.

## 2 Reification

Treating conceptual abstractions as if they were concrete things is one kind of reification. In this context, it refers to the treatment of job evaluation methods by proponents of EV.

Formal job evaluation methods were introduced in the United States during World War II to help rationalize the administration of controlled wages by the National War Labour Board. Subsequent to the War, job evaluation systems have been found useful by many large employers, in both private and public sectors. Some plans, such as the Hay and the Aiken, are well-known and widely used. It must be emphasized, however, that in this voluntary mode of application, job evaluation remains subordinate to the market in determining compensation. Employers use market data to determine baseline compensation rates for certain 'key' jobs. They then use the results of the evaluation system to arrange other jobs in groups and hierarchies around the key jobs. Ideally the outcome is a system of compensation which is both externally responsive to the market and internally fair in relating jobs to one another (Livermash, 1984: 88-93:111-18).

The position of EV advocates is that, if the market and the evaluation system yield different

pay levels for jobs, and if those jobs are predominantly held by different sexes, then the evaluation system must take priority over the market. To see whether job evaluation procedures will bear this weight, we must examine them more closely. The most sophisticated 'point' systems involve, in highly simplified outline, the following steps:

- (1) analysis of jobs into a number of dimensions related to skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions. There can be many subscales, e.g., physical effort, mental effort.
- (2) award of points for the value or difficulty of the job on each subscale. A variant of the Aiken Plan used by Treasury Board and the Canadian Human Rights Commission uses point ratings of 5 to 150 on each subscale (King and Vallee, 1982:56).
- (3) aggregation of the point totals for each job, most often by addition of the subscale scores.
- (4) ranking of jobs against each other and determination of compensation.

Like most measurement efforts in the social sciences, job evaluation is fraught with subjectivity. First, the choice of dimensions and subscales is open-ended. One plan may have several subscales reflecting the physical aspects of work, while another may be keyed to mental or emotional features. Large employers usually have to rely on more than one plan whose results are not necessarily comparable or compatible. Second, the award of points is subjective. The points are at best an ordinal indicator of rank, not an equal-interval type of measurement (Livermash, 1984:89). Third, the addition of such points is statistically dubious. 'There is,' writes Sowell, 'no way to add apples and oranges to get a total of fruit. Giving so many points per strawberry, so many for mangoes, so many for pears, etc., does nothing more than put numbers on a misconception' (Sowell, 1984:107). Finally, even if the point totals for jobs were meaningful in themselves, there would be no a priori reason to think them related in linear or other simple fashion to pay rates, as long as pay is understood as a signal of demand for the product. Changes in taste and technology can render even highly skilled jobs, such as carriage-maker or cooper, unremunerative.

Similar criticisms could be made of most attitude scales and other measurement devices in the social sciences. This does not mean that all are worthless, simply that their validity is conjectural and that they should be considered no more than heuristic devices. On merit, it seems presumptuous for advocates of EV to tout them as means to be preferred over the market for setting wages. To attempt to elevate a consciously designed analytical tool, having a certain utility within a larger network of relationships, is to misunderstand the role of conceptual abstractions.

The proponents of EV usually devise job evaluation systems which show female-dominated jobs to be underpaid. They insist that the techniques of job evaluation be freed of possible male bias, that scales be inserted to measure nurturing skills like sympathy and encouragement, and so on (USCCR, 1984:105). There are, in contrast, approaches to job evaluation, known as 'policy-capturing,' which attempt to weight subscale point scores so as to reflect existing, market-driven pay scales; this circumvents, at least partially, the criticism that addition of point scores is arbitrary. But EV advocates object that 'the weights will ... necessarily reflect any biases that exist in market wages' (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981:76). EV advocates will, however, use a policy-capturing approach if it is applied in the first instance to male-dominated jobs, on the theory that no discrimination exists in that arena, and if the derived weights are then applied to female jobs (Remick, 1984:127-33). In the same vein is the proposal by the authors of the National Academy of Sciences study on comparable worth to include a term for 'percent female' in the regression equation used to predict wages from weighted factors. If this term is demonstrated to have a statistically significant effect on wages, that is taken as evidence that the factor weights were discriminatory (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981:82-86).

No matter how sophisticated the methodology, the underlying reasoning is circular. Women's work is 'known' to be undervalued by the market, so the only acceptable job evaluation schemes are those which will demonstrate the gap. The reifying trust in the consciously de-

signed instrument is motivated by the animistic belief that the market is discriminatory.

### 3 *Voluntarism*

Voluntarism refers to the belief that future events can be moulded by human will; Lenin's theory of revolution is an often-cited example. Voluntarism is a logical consequence of animism and reification. If past events can be attributed to conscious human intention, and if intellectual constructs are elevated over the untidy flux of reality, it is consistent to believe that the future lies within human control, to be shaped according to a rational plan.

Voluntarism is, of course, not wholly false. Almost everyone, and certainly this author, believes that we can influence the future by understanding social processes and acting accordingly. Voluntarism in the sense criticized here is the direct attempt to attain preconceived goals for society. A more cautious view, advocated by authors such as Hayek, is that goals are best approached indirectly by the improvement of rules of conduct within which social processes take place (Hayek, 1973-79:II:24-7). Such improvements cannot be effective if they merely represent a 'wish list'; they must be compatible with the whole complex of existing rules of conduct. Such theorists stress the likelihood that unintended and undesirable consequences will arise from incongruous rule changes.

An extreme example of voluntarism is this statement by Mao Zedong at the time of the Great Leap Forward (1958):

Apart from their other characteristics, China's 600 million people have two remarkable peculiarities; they are, first of all, poor, and secondly, blank ... A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful picture can be painted on it (Schram, 1963:253).

Proponents of EV do not go nearly this far. They do not advocate the remodeling of society as a whole, but they do believe it is possible to refashion wage relationships to conform to their preferences about the 'value' of work. Typical of voluntarism in a liberal-democratic polity, their approach tends to exalt legislation and formal

statements of public policy while ignoring the unintended consequences of such policy. Yet such consequences are bound to arise because society is a complex system of interaction in which governmental initiatives evoke countless personal reactions. The consequences of EV, while perhaps unintended, need not be unforeseen. Economists have already used neo-classical theory to forecast the results of EV legislation (Livemash, 1984:105-6). Such predictions need to be checked by empirical studies, but they are plausible speculations to the extent that they accord with generally accepted principles of market behaviour.

EV is a particular type of minimum wage. Unlike the ordinary minimum wage, it applies only to women, and its value varies according to the situation and cannot be known in advance of an exhaustive job evaluation; but it has similar effects in other respects. It will raise the earnings of some women who are already employed, but in the long run it will tend to induce unemployment among women. Raising the remuneration of female-dominated jobs above market level sets up incentives for employers to economize on the use of such labour. Possible strategies include increased capital investment to make more expensive workers more productive, thereby requiring fewer of them; transfer of 'women's work' to men to avoid the EV hassle; and removal to jurisdictions in which EV has not been legislated. Such effects are already well-documented in the minimum-wage literature (West and McKee, 1980). Sophisticated proponents of EV admit both the analogy to minimum-wage laws and the possibility of 'unanticipated and unintended effects' (Treiman and Hartmann, 1981:67-8).

There are formidable obstacles to effective implementation of EV in the private sector, which comprises hundreds of thousands of employers, most of them running small operations with no formal job evaluation plan. Large employers have such plans; indeed, they have them to excess, from a regulator's point of view. Employers may have multiple plans, and one employer's plans are generally not compatible with another's. It is hard to see how small employers can be touched at all. Large employers are more vulnerable, and some private-sector

complaints have in fact been processed under Quebec and Canadian legislation. However, there appear to be inherent obstacles even for large private-sector firms. An EV settlement imposed on an employer with a large female work force could put that employer at a competitive disadvantage; to be workable, settlements would either have to be confined to small numbers of workers in restricted job categories or would have to be industry-wide so that the costs could be passed on to the consumer. An industry-wide approach might also be unstable, at least in sectors where international competition is intense or where product substitution is an easy possibility.

The initial problems of implementation are not nearly so great in the public sector. Federal and provincial governments are large employers, as are many Crown corporations, universities, hospitals, school boards, and police districts. Job evaluation plans are in common use already. Perhaps even more important, the unemployment-inducing effect of raising wages above market rates is not as direct as in the private sector. For many public services, government is a monopolist or near-monopolist; and in any case most public services are not priced to the consumer.

Induced unemployment, however, arises as an indirect consequence of government's attempts to pay for the increased labour costs. If it raises taxes, it draws the money out of the private sector, thereby reducing consumption and investment. If it borrows the money on the open market, it puts upward pressure on interest rates, again with a depressing effect on the private sector. If it creates the money, it produces inflation by increasing the money supply. This may have a temporary stimulating effect on the economy but in the long run tends to aggravate unemployment by distorting the information content of price signals in the market. However, since the unemployment is largely externalized onto the private sector, public sector enthusiasm for EV may be expected to continue undiminished.

One should also reflect about the equity of the income transfers involved in the implementation of EV in the public sector. Apart from part-time, temporary or casual workers, women in public-



sector employment do not rank among the poorest of the poor, or even among the poor. Female teachers, nurses, librarians, social workers, and technicians in the public sector may be seen as underpaid in relation to an abstract standard of social justice, but they are well-off in comparison to waitresses, cleaning ladies, hotel chambermaids, seamstresses and telephone solicitors in private employment. It is the former categories who stand to profit from EV rather than the latter.

It is even questionable how much net transfer there will be from men to women. As has been recently pointed out regarding affirmative action, the family, not the individual, is still the focal point of living standards and economic equality (Winn, 1985:40). Women in public sector employment, having secure and reasonably well-paid jobs, may be more likely than average to be part of stable families. It is worth empirical investigation to see what sorts of redistribution among families would be entailed by EV in the public sector.

Voluntaristic attempts at social reform are rarely simple and direct in implementation. The action decreed by the reformer's will is the beginning rather than the end because other actors respond according to their own wills. The moral satisfaction produced by enunciating goals and passing them into law often obscures the long-range outcome of the reform.

## Conclusion

Voluntarism interlocks with animism and reification to produce a mutually supporting triad. Animism tells the reformer that social processes can be understood on the model of personal decisions; reification implies that the conceptual abstractions of one's mind are superior to the concrete facts of social life; and voluntarism offers reassurance that determination can triumph.

Space does not allow a detailed study of existing and proposed Canadian legislation. Suffice it to say that, if the above analysis has any validity, the serious intellectual problems of EV make it suspect as public policy. An important contribution to the debate would be careful econometric studies of the effects of EV as implemented at the federal level and in Quebec,

Manitoba, and Ontario. Such studies would help us to decide whether the theoretical criticisms of EV presented here are significant at the practical level of policy-making and implementation.

## Note

- \* The research reported in this article was financially supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Applications are invited for the Carthy Foundation Chair in Business in the Department of Marketing and Economic Analysis. The chairholder will be appointed in the general area of marketing and will be an active researcher and teacher of wide repute. The chairholder is expected to provide intellectual leadership and will be entitled to a discretionary expense allowance to assist in discharge of this responsibility. He/she will be expected to interact with colleagues and contribute to leadership in the Department of Marketing and Economic Analysis and the Faculty of Business. Salary is negotiable depending on experience and qualifications. An attractive

and competitive salary is made possible by the generosity of the Carthy Foundation. Appointment can be effective July 1, 1988. Deadline for applications is December 31, 1987.

The University of Alberta, the second largest university in Canada, is located in Edmonton, a city of 700,000.

For further details, contact:  
**Stuart McFadyen**  
**Chairman of the Selection Committee**  
**Faculty of Business**  
**University of Alberta**  
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*The University of Alberta is committed to the principle of equity in employment.*