

Title: Income Splitting Policy: A Gendered Analysis

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Harper and the conservative propose to introduce a new “Income Splitting Policy” to their tax plan. The basic tenets of this policy are that a household with a single source of income can transfer up to 50,000 to the lower earning spouse in order to receive tax breaks. Harper would favour a flat tax over a plan based on the principle of progressive taxation, or different tax rates for different levels of income. Harper argued that the current system penalizes households with one higher income earner who make the same amount of money as households with equal income earners. Previously, a two income household where both spouses earn 40 000 a year would pay \$11,720 paid in taxes, and a family with both spouses making 20 000 and 60 000 would pay \$13,660 (done on a simple calculator). This was the provided justification for the Harper government. This approach has the same effect of the flat tax, but is presumably easier to swallow and not explicitly labeled a “flat tax”. This is a move that is no doubt meant to calm and assure the masses, along with his paltry rebate of two dollars a day. Because of criticism, the tax benefits from income splitting have been capped at 2,000 dollars.

The Harper government, and the Conservative party of Canada have long been criticized for representing the needs of the upper classes, and for engaging in social engineering, that favours single income households, with typically the breadwinners being men in these cases. The conservative values of the home, of the role of women and men, lie at the heart of the debate surrounding this policy. Critics suggest that this is a policy which favours more traditional, “patriarchal” families, and some have even gone so far as to suggest this plan is mean to keep women barefoot and in the home, as it encourages them not to work, to take on the role of homemaker, or to work a part time job.

Bibliography

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