

Beyond Vice and Decay: Canadian Women's Organizations and the Technologies of Sex, 1930-1955

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Abstract

This thesis utilizes an historical sociology approach to examine women's organizations in Canada between 1930 and 1955. I consider their responses to changes in women's lives among three key areas: birth control, sex education and motherhood in the context of macro level events in Canadian society. This research utilizes a moral regulation framework to consider the ways in which the discourses, images and programmes of women's organizations such as the National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes created a space for norm-based adaptations to women's intimate lives during the mid-twentieth century in Canada.

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Alfred J. Prufrock measured life in spoons of coffee. Graduate students often have a similar experience and measure day to day progress through the number of sentences, paragraphs and pages written. It seemed a particularly apt analogy over what became a lengthy process filled with finding documents, reading and of course, writing. All of which I took some measure of pleasure and excitement in even when the process became mired in drudgery and conflict. This research eventually took on a life of its own and I went down all kinds of unintended paths in the history and sociology of sex which turned out to be a very worthwhile trip. In spite of the delays that life, death and other mayhem threw in my path this has been an intriguing and rewarding process.

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Chapter One: Beyond Vice and Decay: Canadian Women's Organizations and the Technologies of Sex, 1930-1955

Introduction

In January of 1926 Mrs. Edith M. Jewell asked a bold question of officials at the

Department of Justice:

Gentlemen:

What are the laws concerning Birth Control in the Province of Sask? [sic]

What about contraceptive information?

In a case where a tubercular mother with nine children desires contraceptive information may it be given her?

Or, is motherhood compulsory?

Thanking you in advance for advice,

Yours truly,

Edith M. Jewell¹

The themes of birth control and motherhood addressed in this question posed in 1926 by Mrs. Jewell were not new. The late nineteenth-century saw similar themes with the rise of voluntary parenthood which was influenced by a number of significant shifts in the public sphere including women's participation in social, political and legal arenas.² Women's work in the public sphere through social service organizations and additional forms of civic participation, shifts in the modes of family formation and function, and new laws restricting access to birth control were all elements of this ongoing debate. The result was a growing advocacy for reproductive freedom while asking seemingly impertinent questions. By the 1920s, these questions were continuing to be asked as

¹ LAC RG 13 series A-2 vol. 302 file 1926-153. January 16, 1926.

² For further discussion see for example Hera Cook *The Long Sexual Revolution: English Women, Sex, and Contraception, 1800-1975* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004).

individuals and activists alike were taking to a variety of newspapers, magazine columns, and letters to the editor in local newspapers to debate the place of birth control and more specifically its access in Canadian society. There were a range of opinions being voiced however including the social anxiety that widespread changes in the access to birth control would mean especially in relation to women's social and intimate relationships. All of these issues and more were compounding this simple question of compulsory motherhood.

The response from officials at the Department of Justice to Mrs. Jewell's question was as follows: "I may say unofficially however that I do not know of any statute which makes it a criminal offence to seek and follow medical advice in the circumstances stated by you."³ By situating the request and response for contraceptive aid in the context of medical need, access to birth control was less likely to challenge the norms and expectations surrounding women, sexuality, and motherhood. In conjunction with the use of medical discourses, the female (and mothering body) is given a frame of reference outside the social and lived experience which would influence more general reactions to women's sexual experiences by the public. Women's organizations would continue to use the language and position of institutions such as medicine to work from within to advocate for women more broadly speaking.

It is these types of medical cases where maternal health was threatened that Mrs. Jewell and similar advocates considered access to contraceptives a reasonable if not a necessary request. There was a case was to be made that women should have autonomy

³ LAC RG 13 series A-2 vol. 302 file 1926 - 153. January 25, 1926.

over their health related decision-making as this would have a positive impact on their family's welfare. Through this strategy of using a combination of lived experience and institutional language and legitimacy, women were claiming some level of expertise concerning their own bodies and health to advocate for accessible contraceptive options. Women holding opinions like Mrs. Jewell would challenge the perception that women's lives held a singular purpose – to bear and raise children.

The primary research question guiding this project is: how was women's relationship to sex and sexuality in mid-twentieth-century Canada understood as a project of moral regulation through middle-class women's organizations such as the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC)? More specifically, I wish to examine this general issue using three interconnected components that become part of the social framing of women's sexual lives in the mid twentieth-century: birth control, sex education and sexual health, and motherhood. I will examine longstanding Canadian organizations specifically the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) and their active participation in discussions regarding women's intimate lives from 1930 to 1955. As will be demonstrated shortly, from their inception in the late nineteenth-century women's organizations relied on the existing social norms and women's predominant role as mothers to shape both policy and programme initiatives. Their activism relied on and used women's social identities to not only claim space for social change, they also used the biological fact of women's capacity to be mothers to generate a vision of women's lives that encompassed a specific moral ideal and identity.

Ongoing changes in social and sexual norms over the course of the twentieth-

century compelled women's organizations to engage with - or at least to acknowledge - the effects the new social and sexual norms would have on women's roles specifically and the family unit more generally. The areas outlined above (birth control, sex education and sexual health, and motherhood) will be framed as projects of moral regulation within society at large and for women's organizations as they considered the changing status, role, and lived experience of Canadian women. I intend to examine the discourses of women social reformers in order to demonstrate how sex, motherhood and social norms regarding intimate relationships were viewed and understood (and occasionally challenged) in mid-twentieth-century Canada.

The development and maintenance of an appropriate female sexual subject during the 1930 to 1955 period involved acknowledging the changing meaning of marital and sexual relationships, the place of women in Canadian society outside the realm of family and the discourses that had the potential to shape the intimate lives and choices of women. The *response* of these organizations to the changes in social and sexual norms of the mid twentieth century is of interest here. I aim to examine these organizational responses through the lens of moral regulation which poses questions about the "rightness" of specific forms of conduct both public and private in nature. The acknowledgement of issues related to women's intimate lives made by social organizations will offer an indication of both what was occurring in Canadian society and the middle-class response to public morals.

As a response to the shifting public discourses of sex and sexuality, the National Council of Women and related social organizations, employed several strategies to make

their concerns and views known to both the public and governments. They incorporated initiatives such as lobbying all levels of government to legally control or prohibit sexual materials, soliciting funding for the creation of related health and social programs role of women and creating healthy leisure opportunities in their communities.⁴ As shall be demonstrated throughout these research programmes advanced a regime of conduct for women's sexuality that these organizations either spearheaded or contributed to for the real or perceived benefit Canadian society. To effect these changes middle-class women's organizations made great use of their status and role as guardians of women, children, and communities to keep women's lives visible on the social, political, and cultural agenda.

Agreement on issues of sex, sexuality and motherhood were made through broad consensus within social and women's organizations. Locally and individually however, agreement was hard fought and resistance to the aims and wishes of the Executive Council of the National Council of Women was frequent. The idea that there was a middle-class norm for women and their intimate lives is part of the dilemma for women's organizations - what is the new ideal moving beyond war and social change?

⁴ As will be discussed in later chapters, there were attempts to regulate the sale and availability of Kinsey's research titled made through resolutions and petitions: *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Male* and *Sexual Behaviour of the Human female*. Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), Toronto Local Council of Women (hereafter TLCW) F 805 - 1- 0 - 5 November 21, 1953. The work of the Censorship Committee for the NCW was also very active over the course of the period under examination here. They were active across multiple forms of media and sites including films and novels, education, and recreation. They worked closely with library councils to improve the type of literature available to the communities they served. They also had several petitions to various levels of government to curb specific forms of literature including pulp and crime fiction and comic books. See Anne Marie Kinahan "Cultivating the Taste of the Nation: The National Council of Women of Canada and the Campaign against "Pernicious" literature at the Turn of the Twentieth Century" *Canadian Journal of Communication* 2007 32: 161-179.

How will any new ideal be reconciled with the politically, economically and socially desirable maternal role for women?

Subsequent chapters will show that women's organizations did not always extend their advocacy to reproductive freedom or for creating sources that would support choice for the same women. This is not to say that individuals and couples were not asking for assistance through their physicians, medical officers or other advice givers. It does however, indicate that this is a complicated subject for society at large and for women and the organizations they participated in. While seeking to adapt to new social and sexual norms women's organizations were trying to understand what birth control, sex and the extension of voluntary parenthood would mean for women in mid twentieth-century Canada. Prior to the "sexual revolution" of the 1960s, middle-class women's organizations were trying to find ways of dealing with the dilemma of sex and all the related and abundant contradictions of the age.

Talking about sex in the twentieth-century

During the twentieth-century, sex has occupied a contested place and status as one of the most discussed and yet publicly derided (or alternately revered) biological or social activities. Anxiety over the physical, emotional and social representations of sex provided much fodder for social commentators and representatives of both formal and informal institutions in many Western societies. Input from formal and informal institutions or organizations helped to create discourses that managed to either reflect back that anxiety to heighten a range of reactions. The types of social anxieties regarding sex, birth control and motherhood expressed within the court of public opinion also

operated on a continuum of debate or acceptance. These areas included outright fears of types of sexual interactions and their potential consequences, for example: “family decay”, miscegenation, and “lustful relationships” which were understood as occurring outside the dominant heterosexual marital model. Alternatively, attempts were made to soothe the fears that challenged the social norms of the day for example, delinquency and defiance of gender norms and roles using and/or developing social or medical programmes, education and laws. Most of these issues were never resolved throughout the 1930 to 1955 period. The general shift that had begun earlier in the century of embracing sexual relationships for the sake of pleasure and companionship rather than that of reproduction, forced women’s organizations and other institutions to deal with - or at least acknowledge - changes to sexual norms and their effect the family unit. As a result, there was continuous speculation and pronouncement as to how much emphasis individuals should place on sex in their lives and what that should look like as a part of the human social and biological lifecycle.⁵

Sexology and sexual relationships in the “modern” period

The ability to and the necessity of, making an accounting of sexual practices in the mid to late nineteenth-century eventually led to the disciplinary specialization of sexology. As a new discipline, sexology worked to not only define human relationships but the role of sex in a changing society. As a response to industrialization, family formation, and the content of human relationships sexology borrowed from medical,

⁵ See for example Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love & Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1992); Göran Therborn *Between Sex and Power Family in the world* (London: Routledge, 2004).

social sciences (including sociology and anthropology), and legal discourses to help define and document not only human progress but human “pleasures” and “deviances.”⁶ Medicine helped identify the normal and abnormal physical experience of sex alongside the psychological outcomes of ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ sexual relations. The social sciences documented the social relations and demographics of a given population and how they responded to changing social and sexual mores often in tandem with other macro scale social processes. Psychology focused on physiological responses and sexual development of the individual in direct relation to normatively defined sexual relationships. The law aided this process by codifying and criminalizing the “perverse” or the “pathological” reflecting the prevailing social and attendant medical norms of the day.⁷ Applied together, these disciplines were able to “link” biology to gender roles, relationships and subsequently to sexuality and sexual practice. However as with medicine, “in its construction of a new language of sex, sexology did not start from women’s experience but from men’s. Once again women were defined in terms of male desire.”⁸ Treatment for the physical dimensions of inappropriate sex and

⁶ See for example Chris Waters, “Sexology” in H. G. Cocks and Matt Houlbrook *Palgrave advances in the modern history of sexuality* (Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2006); Nicholas Matte, “International Sexual Reform and Sexology in Europe, 1897-1933” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 2005 22(2): 253-270; Howard Chiang, “Liberating sex, knowing desire: *Scientia Sexualis* and epistemic turning points in the history of sexuality” *History of the Human Sciences* 2010 23(5): 42-69.

⁷ Ivan Crozier and Gethin Rees, “Making a Space for Medical Expertise: Medical Knowledge of Sexual Assault and the Construction of Boundaries between Forensic Medicine and the Law in late nineteenth-century England” *Law, Culture & the Humanities* 2012 8(2): 285-304; Gert Hekma, “History of Sexology: Social and Historical Aspects of Sexuality” in Jan Bremmer *From Sappho to de Sade: Moments in the History of Sexuality* (Routledge: London, 1991) Ch. 10.

⁸ Lucy Bland, “Marriage Laid Bare: Middle-Class Women and Marital Sex 1880s-1914” in Jane Lewis (Ed) *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1986).

experiences of desire were also linked to gender roles. The gendered element of sexology helped to reinforce the “natural” links between biological “needs” and gender expectations. With regard to sexual practice for example, it was expected that men would have more physical and/or “deviant” sexual practices. Women on the other hand were more psychologically linked to sex as in the case of frigidity.⁹

The links to medical and social sciences also helped sexology play a role in elevating the status of sexual relationships within marriage and influencing its content. Sexual pleasure came to be viewed as a spiritual union through romantic and emotional means while still being considered a “base physical appetite that was unfit for civilized discourse or civilized women, and which was properly kept to back alleys and red light districts.”¹⁰ By claiming that good sexual experiences were integral to an individual’s health and marriage, a space was created for talking about pleasure *within* the marital relationship.¹¹ This was limited however by language, knowledge, gender roles and related experiential expectations. As Seidman has noted with regard to the Victorian era: “sex was not, however, a way to demonstrate and sustain love ... to link sex to love was to risk a marriage awash in lust.”¹² Sex then, was constrained and shaped in both

⁹ See Carolyn Groneman, *Nymphomania: A History* (W.W. Norton and Co.: New York, 2000).

¹⁰ Gerhard, *Politicizing Pleasure: ...* p. 32.

¹¹ See Michael Gordon, “From an Unfortunate Necessity to a Cult of Mutual Orgasm: Sex in American Marital Education Literature, 1830-1940” in *Studies in the Sociology of Sex* (Ed) James Henslin (New York: Schocken Books, 1971); Jessamyn Neuhaus, “The Importance of Being Orgasmic: Sexuality, Gender and Marital Sex Manuals in the United States, 1920-1963” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2000 9(4): 447-473; Vern Bullough, “American Physicians and Sex Research and Expertise, 1900-1990” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 1997 52(2): 236-253; Peter Laipson, “‘Kiss without Shame for she desires it’: Sexual Foreplay in American Marital Advice Literature, 1900-1925” *Journal of Social History* 1996 29(3): 507-525.

¹² Steven Seidman, *Romantic Longings: Love in America, 1830-1980* (Routledge: New York, 1991). p. 42.

meaning and practice while elevated in importance to the sustainability of social norms and kinship. This conceptualization of love and lust would change dramatically within the context of the twentieth-century.

The relative importance of sex to twentieth-century marriage would become viewed as almost opposite to its prescribed place in the Victorian era. Through sexology and related disciplines there appeared to be an obsession with describing the ways and means of pleasure and desire alongside the social structure of sexual relationships. The need to have knowledge about sexual nature and its performance allowed links to be established to specific types of positive social relations. This was carried out through multiple processes of institutionally organizing sex through regimes of education and medicine. In part, these regimes comprise what Foucault calls the technology of sex which also influenced the “rules” of sexual and social conduct.¹³

Love, Sex and Femininity in the twentieth-century

While sex has been highly contested throughout the twentieth-century, in most western nations there has been an increase in real and perceived sexual freedoms and sexual expression. There have been often tumultuous discussions regarding these newfound sexual freedoms across many social groups — for example, faith institutions, governments, social reformers, and sex educators. These discussions and debates have concerned among other areas: the nature of sex and the discourses and material objects surrounding it, acceptance of pleasure in relation to sex, separation of sex from reproduction (including pronatalism, eugenics and birth control), technologies, sex and

¹³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (vol one) Chapter 4.

education, experience(s), identity, sex, and “deviance”, etc. All these areas of sex and sexuality are bound together in their social spaces and places, economic, and political contexts.

From the beginnings of the twentieth-century sex reformers used changes in gender discourses to promote a new kind of sexual reality, one that was built on the romantic ideals of love and courtship and companionate marital relationships. Giddens frames the changes to sexual relationships over the twentieth-century as a project of modernity and social change. The second shift in intimacy related to the period under investigation here, is demonstrated through the characterization of the “pure relationship” from approximately 1920 to 1950. The pure relationship:

refers to a situation where social relations are entered into for their own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it.”¹⁴

For Giddens this marked the beginning of an individualisation of human relationships that were not just based on developing and maintaining kinship bonds thereby retaining and maintaining family and community social systems. Individualisation as a project of modernity encouraged attaining and expressing individual desires and needs with sexual pleasure as one of these desires. In this context it meant that not only were you to experience pleasure as a couple but know and be able to express your own bodily experiences and expectations with your partner. Overall, there are several notable changes in this period that mark a shift in the nature and content of intimacy. The first

¹⁴ Giddens, *Transformation of Intimacy* p. 58.

difference was the assumed temporary nature of relationships in contrast to that of the ideal romantic love relationship which presumed permanence and social stability. Secondly, that these relationships are often non-reproductive throughout much of their duration. Thirdly is the responsabilization of sexual pleasure as an individual endeavour within the sexual relationship and less about the ideals of the companionate marriage.¹⁵

The content of marriage changed during this period from the ideals of separate spheres which reflected the gendered needs or expectations of the couple and their outward extension to society to a companionate marriage form that encouraged couples to complement each other in both public and private spheres. The second difference was in the pursuit of individual sexual satisfaction embodied within the ideals of romantic love. This may not have been necessarily experienced between husbands and wives however there was an emphasis on pleasure within the pure relationship. Giddens also described the pure relationships of this period to include confluent love which:

for the first time introduces the *ars erotica* into the core of the conjugal relationship and makes the achievement of reciprocal sexual pleasure a key element in whether the relationship was sustained or dissolved. The cultivation of sexual skills, the capability of giving and experiencing sexual satisfaction, on the part of both sexes, become organised reflexively via a multitude of sources of sexual information, advice and training.¹⁶

While this period is less influenced by sexology, the earlier concerns from social

¹⁵ Giddens, Ch. 3. A contemporary examination of this can be seen in Melissa Tyler, "Managing Between the Sheets: Lifestyle Magazines and the Management of Sexuality in Everyday Life" *Sexualities* 2004 7(1): 81-106. Tyler offers an examination of how sex and sexuality are rationalized through lifestyle magazines.

¹⁶ *ibid* p. 62-63. Cas Wouters describes this period as the "lust-economy" making use of Elias' culture and symbolic interactionist frameworks. *Sex and Manners: Female emancipation in the West 1890-2000* (Sage: London, 2004) p. 47.

reformers and medical professionals remained active. Sexology and related disciplines would make a more public reappearance in the post World War II period with the arrival of the Kinsey Reports. This mid twentieth-century outlook of sex built on an understanding of marital relationships that was influenced by the experiences of the post World War I context. This meant not only were reformers and others recognizing that women were sexual beings, however sexual fulfilment was something that needed to be taught to women through various institutional mechanisms such as medical professionals, sex education and/or marital education classes, the popular presses, and of course husbands.¹⁷ Framing the intimate lives of the idealized middle-class couple as an erotic relationship and not just a reproductive relationship, was acceptable and necessary for the new discourses of an ideal and happy marriage. The mutual enjoyment of sex was an indicator of a successful marriage as all aspects of love, romance and compatibility were fully engaged and functioning in the everyday.¹⁸

For some social reformers the problem was that this reframing of female sexuality as both active and desirable divorced the preferred connection of sex with reproduction. With the increased acceptance of non-reproductive sexual practices women were considered to be in a state of moral danger. This marks a significant change

¹⁷ See for example Kate Fisher, "Modern Ignorance" in *Reproduction: From Antiquity to the Present Day* Nick Hopwood, Rebecca Flemming and Lauren Kassell (Eds) (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK: 2018). For an examination of marital manuals see for example: Mary Fissell, "Making a Masterpiece: The Aristotle Texts in Vernacular Medical Culture" in Charles E. Rosenberg (Ed) *Right Living: An Anglo American Tradition of Self-Help Medicine and Hygiene* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore 2003); Jesse F. Battan, "The "Rights" of Husbands and the "Duties" of Wives: Power and Desire in the American Bedroom, 1850-1910" *Journal of Family History* 1999 24(2): 165-186.

¹⁸ Gordon, "From an Unfortunate Necessity...."

from the portrayal of actively sexual marital relationships as lustful, sinful, immoral, and damaging to a marriage in both a public and private context. Shifting marriage from the obligations of economics, religion and social reproduction created a space for authors in the marital manual industry to re-create the content of marriage in a new way that needed to be “taught” to spouses and society. Gail Hawkes has labelled this figure the “erotic housewife” in that she was now meant to be a visible and satisfied sexual subject while maintaining the decorous position of wife and mother.¹⁹ While this offers the potential for a new vision of — and the acknowledgement of — women’s sexual desires, she is still ignorant about what those desires might be. “Sexual ignorance had once been the sign of a virtuous woman. Now it was a signal that ‘something was wrong’ — something for the experts to cure.”²⁰ Women’s sexual and social desires would continue to be placed within the context of the home and her role as mother as the complete expression of her desires. The inclusion of the modes of articulation of desire by women are missing. As a result, the silent wife is framed as both abnormal while being expected.

Cultural changes in the first half of the twentieth-century helped contribute to a shift in the way that sexual relationships, marriage, and childbearing were considered. According to Brown and Fane, “economic shifts towards a more corporate and more monied society and the corrosive effect of the World War helped alter the sexual landscape. The wider acceptance of premarital sex, rise in divorce rates, and greater

¹⁹ Gail Hawkes, *Sex and Pleasure in Western Culture* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2004) p. 155 and more generally Ch. 6 where she calls this “training heterosexuality”.

²⁰ Hawkes, *Sex and Pleasure in Western Culture* Ch. 6. Carolyn Herbst Lewis discusses the role of the physician in training women’s sexual responses in *Prescription for heterosexuality: sexual citizenship in the cold war era* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2010) see Ch. 2.

range of sexual expression challenged traditional morality and created a new sexual order.”²¹ Increased economic independence for some women and subsequently how young women and men spent their increased leisure time became highly charged social issues. What made some social observers anxious according to McLaren were young, single, working women:

The vast majority of these women would eventually leave their jobs, marry, and raise families, but the anxious expressed their concern that they would have already formed tastes and habits of independence that would render them unfit to raise the traditionally large family. Middle class women, on the other hand, were accused of restricting family size simply out of a desire for greater luxury and self indulgence.²²

These attitudes helped to ensure that the duration of women’s employment would be limited. Should the working girl fail to marry she could carry the social stigma connected to the exhibition of non-conformity by retaining her social and economic independence. It should also be acknowledged that most women’s economic dependence on men was assumed to be “right” and echoed the dominant social norms of the day. Social policy ensured this dependence and worked against women who never married, were widowed, or divorced especially with regards to holding property, money or other arenas connected to decision-making in the public realm.²³ The wish to restrict family size was not without its own problems, as the exercise of control over

²¹ Kathleen A. Brown and Elizabeth Fane, “Revolutionary Desire: Redefining the Politics of Sexuality of American Radicals, 1919-1945” in Kathleen Kennedy and Sharon Ullman (Eds) *Sexual Borderlands: Constructing an American Sexual Past* (Ohio State University Press: Columbus, 2003) p. 275.

²² Angus McLaren, “Birth Control and Abortion in Canada, 1870-1920” in Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff (Eds) *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1985) p. 85.

²³ Katherine Holden, “Imaginary Widows: Spinsters, Marriage, and the “Lost Generation” in Britain after the Great War” *Journal of Family History* 2005 30(4): 390.

family size challenged the function of family as part of not only social reproduction but the site of social regulation for sexual practice and social roles.²⁴ This carried over to a social consequence wherein the single woman was represented as an object of pity for her “failure” to marry and have children or alternatively the subject of scorn due to her perceived selfishness and disinclination to fulfill her ascribed gender role.

The addition of the stages of youth or teenager to the life cycle in the pre-World War I era drastically reconfigured the ways in which individuals met and mated.²⁵ The expectations for this new social category was not that of an adult but one that would eventually generate its own set of cultural practices and social expectations. The extension of educational options and the subsequent delay of entry into the workforce meant that the spaces for meeting desirable mates would shift in relation to where this new social group would spend their leisure time. One of the primary figures that embodied the concerns of the generation were the flappers and the dapper gents. The young women of the 1920s flapper decade had upset the gender balance and the specific relationship married women were seen to have had to the home. D’Emilio and Freedman comment on the sexual liberalism of the period as:

an overlapping set of beliefs that detached sexual activity from the instrumental goal of procreation, affirmed heterosexual pleasure as a value in itself, defined sexual satisfaction as a critical component of personal happiness and successful marriage, and weakened the connections between sexual expression and marriage by providing youth with some room for experimentation as preparation for

²⁴ Jenéa Tallentire, *Everyday Athenas: Strategies of Survival and Identity for Ever-Single Women in British Columbia, 1880-1930* (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 2006).

²⁵ Jeffrey Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2000).

adult status.²⁶

As mentioned above, societal changes connected to employment, education and economic prosperity changed the relationship landscape significantly. Connected to this are the spaces and places where potential mates could meet was expanded as the content of day to day life also changed. For some, disposable income generated possibilities of participating in a leisure economy that offered opportunities for the display of wealth and the time available to meet and be social.²⁷ The imperative to meet and marry also changed as the function and form of family was impacted by new occupational classifications, compulsory education, and the possibilities of new social identities outside the family. The accepted path of moving from the parental house to the spouse's house was becoming less the norm among the middle-class.

The trend towards dating by the 1930s as a more common and formal process came with the potential for sexual experimentation that was public in both actions and discourses more so than the opening years of the twentieth-century.²⁸ This is not to say that premarital sex wasn't occurring prior to this period, what it does mean is that the place of sex in the life cycle was changing. In addition, the newer association of sex with pleasure or connection to a partner rather than solely reproduction was part of the

²⁶ John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Harper & Row: New York, 1988) p. 241.

²⁷ Randy McBee, *Dance Hall Days: Intimacy, Power, and Leisure among Working Class Immigration in the United States* (New York University Press: New York, 2000); Mary McComb, "Rate Your Date: Young Women and the Commodification of Depression Era Courtship" in Sherrie A. Inness (Ed) *Delinquents and Debutantes: Twentieth-Century American Girls' Cultures* (New York University Press: New York, 1998); Mary Louise Adams, "Almost anything can happen: A search for sexual discourse in the urban spaces of 1940s Toronto" *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 1994 19(2): 217-232.

²⁸ Cas Wouters, *Informalization: Manners & Emotions since 1890* (Sage: Los Angeles, 2007).

public debate.

Another social feature that was impacting intimate relationships was the rise in divorce rates in Canada due to changes in both access to and the content of divorce law. This meant that the durability and duration of marriage was being questioned - would a marriage last for the rest of one's days? This would reinterpret the type of intimate expectations that individuals may encounter over their lifecycle. For example, did this mean a change in the acceptable pursuit (for both men and women) of sex outside marriage and what would this mean in the case of remarriage? Are the expectations the same? In addition, there was a larger population of single women in this period who were more visible in the public realm through both work and leisure. Some segments of these women also had a greater measure of financial independence in the post-war economy which meant they were increasingly delaying entering into marriage. With the rise of dating as an acceptable social practice couples were open to initiating various sexual practices such as 'petting' that may have been permissible previously in cases where an engagement was already in place. It is here that according to Gerhard, sexual experts faced a dilemma:

... ideas about modernity which were linked to sexual liberation required that women partake of the fruits of sexual freedom. At the same time, experts wanted to maintain a sexual order which preserved men's sexual authority at home. Sex experts searched for a way to explain female heterosexuality as both liberated and domesticated, to celebrate female sexual expression while situating that expression in monogamous marriage.²⁹

The emphasis here was still on the monogamous marriage but there was a wider

²⁹ Gerhard, *Politicizing Pleasure*:... p. 33-34.

differentiation between marital and non-marital sex that appeared to offer women sexual autonomy and the freedom to express their sexual desires. As a result, single women possessed a temporary and transitory relationship and sexual status and were in some contexts characterized as a danger to society. The delay before entering into marriage was often interpreted as a lack (or disdain for) of social conformity and even selfishness by not fulfilling the motherhood role. A second interpretation of this effect can be viewed in the context of the changing importance of homo- and heterosocial relationships.³⁰ Dean characterizes this as part of a larger transformation from an agrarian to industrial economy which in turn created more mobile social networks where:

the nuclear family replaced the extended family, and monogamous heterosexual relationships became the primary means of individual fulfilment and social sustenance. Accompanying this development was the gradual replacement of homosocial 'separate spheres' by 'companionate marriage' in which men and women ostensibly shared each other's lives as equals in all respects.³¹

The idea of companionate marriage formally proposed by Ben Lindsey in 1927 reflected the change in the marriage relationship by describing the new married couple as one that is psychologically connected and sexually intimate. Noted in the United States for his sometimes controversial courtroom decisions, Lindsey's ideas developed in response to the divorce cases he presided over and because of this he was active in promoting

³⁰ See for example, Kathy Peiss, " "Charity Girls" and City Pleasures: Historical Notes on Working-Class Sexuality, 1880-1920" in Peiss and Christina Simmons (Eds) *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1989).

³¹ Carolyn Dean, *Sexuality and Modern Western Culture* (Twayne Publications: New York, 1996) p. 33.

birth control and amendments to divorce laws.³² It is difficult to determine how much impact his ideas regarding companionate marriage had or how widely they were discussed in society however the phrase did have some currency in popular culture and was used widely among the authors of sexual and marital advice manuals of the period. As Kuby notes, companionate marriage was not without its detractors because the term was being equated with trial marriage which offered a much bigger threat to marriage rates by challenging not only the permanence of the marriage (as divorce did) but the need for marriage in the first place.³³ As Groneman further explains,

With the rise of the companionate marriage ideal greater emphasis on female sexual pleasure as a measure of a successful marriage and a growing acceptance of the separation between reproduction and sexuality would lead to heightened concern about the nature of female sexuality ... the ideology of companionate marriage with its assumption of mutual sexual satisfaction contained potential risks. Too much sexual desire by the wife - 'semi-nymphomania' according to one physician - obviously threatened the husband in ways in which the older notion of female passivity had not.³⁴

While the definition and content of desirable sex for women was contentious the experience of sexual intimacy was also varied and the label of "pleasurable sex" was filled with anxiety. Under the more formal label of "companionate marriage", men and women were actively creating more eroticized relationships that were publicly sanctioned and somewhat expected — within reason. As McLaren adds "the goal of

³² Judge Ben Lindsey and Wainwright Evans, *The Companionate Marriage* (Boni and Liveright: New York, 1927). See also, Theodore Van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage* (Covici - Fried: New York, 1930).

³³ William Kuby "Till Disinterest Do Us Part: Trial Marriage, Public Policy, and the Fear of Familial Decay in the United States, 1900-1930" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2014 23(3): 383-414.

³⁴ Carol Groneman, *Nymphomania:...* According to Groneman, "nymphomania is variously described as too much coitus (either wanting it or having it), too much desire, and too much masturbation." p. 340.

sexual intimacy was marriage and so promiscuity was condemned by the young while premarital sex was condoned.”³⁵ While this meant that still single men and women could make use of their social and leisure hours pleurably (if discreetly), it also meant that there were still the old bonds of marital expectations and family pressures to be fulfilled. The changing meaning and practice of sex within and outside the legal bonds of marriage had a significant impact especially on post World War I relationships. While the ideals of companionate marriage placed more emphasis on the emotional and physical intimacy of couples, this did not necessarily mean that gender roles weren't employed and reinforced during marriage “in spite of an appearance of greater togetherness in earlier marital styles.”³⁶

In many ways these institutional and social relationships helped redefine gender roles and some of the accompanying expectations that would be carried into the social sphere. With labour and educational prospects changing significantly, the social side of heterosexual and heterosocial relationships also changed. With economic success, couples had greater chances for social gatherings with obvious consumerism. Educational opportunities offered similar social situations where youth could meet and date or socially experiment in other ways until they decided to settle down with their marital partners. Access to higher education also offered the opportunity for women to

³⁵ McLaren, *Twentieth Century Sexuality: ...* p. 39. Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Dutton Books: New York, 1995); David R. Shumway, *Modern Love: Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crisis* (New York University Press: New York, 2003).

³⁶ Janet Finch and Penny Summerfield “Social reconstruction and the emergence of companionate marriage, 1945-59” in David Clarke (Ed) *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change: Writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne, 1944-88* (Routledge: London, 1991) p. 13.

work and gain some measure of financial freedom which contributed to the shifts in age at first marriage and the number of children they may have. Pronatalism however remained strong throughout this period with the aim that childrearing and homemaking was women's primary social value.

The rise of voluntary parenthood in social and health discourses in the late nineteenth-century as a viable choice for newly married couples meant that women could and would delay having children and have fewer children but children were still expected. There is an element of choice here that isn't immediately obvious in the pronatalist discourses. Proponents of voluntary motherhood "believed that women had a right to determine how many children they bore and raised, and in order to do so, could enforce abstinence upon their husbands."³⁷ To use the cliché of voluntary parenthood every child should be a wanted child.

Birth Control

Not only were there changing social conditions and lifecycle processes that brought birth control into the public realm as part of a medical and social concern, there were economic and political realities that influenced how contraception was conceptualized and promoted. Amongst demographers, sociologists and historians, there is agreement that the falling birth rate in the West during the twentieth-century indicates the possible use of contraceptives to regulate family size. As Cook notes,

demography, and statistical sources more generally, offer historians new possibilities for understanding the histories of sexualities in the

³⁷ Dianne Dodd, *The Canadian Birth Control Movement 1929-1939* (MA thesis University of Toronto, 1982) p. 17. For a more complete discussion of voluntary parenthood see Linda Gordon *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (University of Illinois Press, 2002).

nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. These measurable outcomes of people's lives both shape the context in which sexual activity takes place and are in turn shaped by the consequences of sexual activity.³⁸

Additional explanations are worth considering to explain these fluctuations such as changing structure of family, the compulsory education of children, or changing economic structures. However, one of the most prominent reasons and also in some ways the most difficult to prove or identify without archival documents of some form, is a noted shift in public and private decision making as options for birth control increased. As Cook continues, "birth is one of the events for which reliable measurements exist. However, births can only provide a measure of sexual activity if there is either very little use of effective, individual, direct methods of contraception and abortion or if the levels of use can be, and have been, measured."³⁹ Diaries or related documentary evidence would aid in illustrating not only how women understood their own sexual experience but their real or perceived reproductive choices.

Demographic data for Canada shows that over the period under investigation here, the average age of marriage for women remained remarkably stable at 25 and the average age for men fluctuated from 29 to 28 and the numbers of marriages increased steadily, while the number of divorces had almost doubled by the end of each period.⁴⁰

³⁸ Hera Cook, "Demography" in H.G. Cocks and Matt Houlbrook (Eds) *Palgrave Advances in the Modern History of Sexuality* (Palgrave MacMillan: Houndsmills, 2006) p. 19.

³⁹ *ibid.* p. 24. Catherine Annau, "Eager Eugenicists: A Reappraisal of the Birth Control Society of Hamilton" *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 1994 27(53): 111-133.

⁴⁰ K. G. Basavarajappa and Bali Ram, "Population and Migration" and R.D. Fraser, "Vital Statistics and Health" in *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Statistics Canada: Ottawa, 1999) Catalogue number 11-516-X; Marvin McNis, "Canada's Population in the Twentieth Century" in Michael Haines and Richard Steckel (Eds) *A Population History of North America* (Cambridge University Press: Massachusetts, 2000).

In addition, the number of births declines over time which could indicate that couples were taking control of their reproductive decisions through contraceptive tools or voluntary parenthood ideals.

Eugenics would also play a part in the promotion of the ideal middle-class family and the place of birth control in regulating reproduction. As a late nineteenth-century social ideology, eugenics sought to influence the rules of heredity and control the fertility of the poor, marginalized and feebleminded.⁴¹ Eugenics was meant to minimize the impacts of urbanization and industrialization that were attributed to the rising numbers of social ills and “degeneration”. For the middle-class “it was a comforting notion to think that poverty and criminality were best attributed to individual weaknesses rather than to structural flaws of the economy.”⁴² As it merged with additional social reform movements of the period such as social purity, eugenics offered a way to promote reproduction of the socially and racially fit. The political and eugenic fears regarding demographics and population control drove both sides of the birth control debate. Birth control in the 1930s was caught in both sides of the debate — was this a tool to aid in eugenic efforts at population control or was it possible to make birth control accessible for women who wished to control their fertility? Neither approach was mutually exclusive or simple. The use of sterilization as a method of birth

⁴¹ Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1990). Ch. 1; for the U.S. context see: Diane Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present* (Humanities Press: New Jersey, 1995).

⁴² *ibid.* p. 37. See also Linda Revie, “More than Just Boots! The Eugenic and Commercial Concerns behind A.R. Kaufman’s Birth Controlling Activities” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 2006 23(1): 119-143.

control and not just eugenics as social ideology circumvented the existing laws prohibiting access to birth control as will be discussed shortly.⁴³ The uneasy marriage of eugenics and feminism offered a way to enshrine the role of women and the duty to not only birth children but healthy children. As a strategy to encourage “positive eugenics”, pronatalism became the marriage between feminism and eugenics which offered a way to ensure the continuance of the nation in all ways necessary through reproduction – population, economy, social standing, etc.⁴⁴ By the 1930s feminists of varying stripes also used eugenic arguments for better access to health care resources, government programmes such as Mothers Allowance, and as a closer tie to civic engagement and questions of social citizenship.⁴⁵

For some reformers the use of eugenics in Nazi Germany was the extreme end of the eugenics spectrum and not what many individuals or women’s organizations would consistently advocate for.⁴⁶ Alternatively, the language and sentiments of eugenic feminism would also be used as a strategy for discussing birth control and maternal health. By the 1930s, as will be shown throughout this research, maternal health would be the dominant theme, however eugenic feminism would make an appearance in some

⁴³ For an examination of women who employed sterilization as a birth control method and not necessarily as a eugenic one see: Erika Dyck, “Sterilization and Birth Control in the Shadow of Eugenics: Married, Middle-Class Women in Alberta, 1930-1960s” *Canadian Bulletin for the History of Medicine* 2014 31(1): 165-187.

⁴⁴ Geoff Read, “ “Citizens Useful to Their Country and Humanity”: The Convergence of Eugenics and Pro-Natalism in Interwar French Politics, 1918-1940” *Canadian Bulletin for the History of Medicine* 2012 29(2): 376.

⁴⁵ Clare Makepeace, “To what extent was the relationship between feminists and the eugenics movement a ‘marriage of convenience’ in the interwar years?” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 2009 11(3): 67-68.

⁴⁶ Dyck, “Sterilization and Birth Control....” p. 167, 168.

Local Council resolutions. Maternal health and eugenics would also be part of the international birth control movement with a range of organizations participating in advocacy activities. In several nations, the influence of Margaret Sanger and Marie Stopes can be seen through their strategies and approaches.⁴⁷ While there has been debate as to the extent to which they espoused eugenic practices within their birth control efforts, Sanger and Stopes have been placed within the cannon of the period as significant contributors to the birth control movement internationally.⁴⁸

It remains difficult however to judge the general public's response to birth control and eugenics as these stories were part of the news cycle and divorced from a more general public response. Newspapers such as *The Toronto Star*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, *Western Producer*, and *The Globe and Mail* along with smaller, local papers covered social, religious and legal stories that involved contraception.⁴⁹ Letters to the editor may offer a way to access the mood of the general public however, these contributions would also likely be associated with specific events. Advocates and detractors portrayed in the media remained linked to the potential of birth control to limit social problems, decrease

⁴⁷ See for example: Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Sanjam Ahluwalia, *Reproductive Restraints: Birth Control in India, 1877-1947* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Genevieve Burnett, *Fertile Fields: A History of the Ideological Origins and Institutionalisation of the International Birth Control Movement, 1870-1940* (PhD Dissertation: University of New South Wales, 1998); Nicole Bourbonnais, *Out of the Boudoir and into the Banana Walk: Birth Control and Reproductive Politics in the West Indies, 1930-1970* (PhD Dissertation: University of Pittsburgh, 2013).

⁴⁸ Angela Franks, *Margaret Sanger's eugenic legacy: the control of female fertility* (McFarland & Co. Inc.: North Carolina, 2005); Michelle T. King, "Margaret Sanger in Translation: Gender, Class and Birth Control in 1920s China" in *Journal of Women's History* 2017 (29)3: 61-83; Lara Marks, *Sexual Chemistry: A History of the Contraceptive Pill* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2001) Ch. 1.

⁴⁹ Dyck, "Sterilization and Birth Control..."

crime and positive social renewal.⁵⁰ Birth control advocates also used images of the tired or sickly mother with too many children to promise maternal health that would be improved through the availability and consistent use of birth control methods. These two perspectives best describe the extent of analysis for segments of the general public alongside the links to acceptable gender roles, especially women's role as mother.

This was also not to say that the public, the State or other institutions were silent on issues of birth control however, it could be inferred to mean that it wasn't a priority. With an eye to governing the morals of the people, the Canadian government enacted obscenity laws. The State's definition of acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour from the late 1890s to the early 1900s was as Chapman notes:

Sexual intercourse was viewed as a necessary evil, whose sole purpose was the procreation of the human race. And sexual activity which did not have procreation as its end result was deemed to be socially reprehensible and punishable as a crime under the written law. By placing such matters as abortion, female chastity, seduction under the promise of marriage, homosexual encounters and even the use of birth control within marriage, under the auspices of the criminal law, the federal government was attempting to establish or reinforce perceived notions of acceptable conduct.⁵¹

Beginning in 1892 (and modified fairly regularly after 1900) obscenity laws were effective in communicating the government's understanding of public morals and contraception. The legal provisions surrounding obscenity remained relatively consistent in the prohibition of the dissemination of birth control both in print form (such as information or publications), and as material objects (contraceptive devices such

⁵⁰ McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*: ...

⁵¹ Terry L. Chapman, *Sex Crimes in Western Canada, 1890-1920* (PhD Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1984) p. 5.

as condoms and IUDs). Modifications to the law over time reflect the change in access, technology and the range of changing media that could offer information to the public.

Section 207c of the 1927 Canadian Criminal Code states that:

Everyone is guilty of an indictable offense and liable to two years' imprisonment who knowingly, without lawful excuse or justification, ... offers to sell, advertises, publishes an advertisement of, or has for sale or disposal any means or instructions or any medicine, drug or article intended or represented as a means of preventing conception or of causing abortion or miscarriage; or advertises or publishes an advertisement of any means, instructions, medicine, drug or article for restoring sexual virility or curing venereal diseases or diseases of the generative organs.⁵²

The legal ramifications of providing birth control or contraceptive information may have been one reason why there was not a large, overt network of birth control advocates in Canada during this time. Alternatively, by connecting birth control to maternal health new opportunities for access to reproductive health and specifically contraceptives were able to skirt the legal ramifications of the obscenity law. The exception to the obscenity designation could be made if there was proof that it was for the "public good":

No one shall be convicted of any offence in this section mentioned if he proves that the public good was served by the acts alleged to have been done, and that there was no excess in the acts alleged beyond what the public good required."⁵³

The "public good" would become a effective loophole for some organizations to perform their advocacy work. Despite these legal provisions there appears to be little evidence of extensive raids and other legal actions taken by the police or other agencies on

⁵² *Criminal Code of Canada* (King's Printer: Ottawa, 1927).

⁵³ *Criminal Code of Canada* Section 207, (King's Printer: Ottawa, 1927).

contraceptive purveyors and supporters.⁵⁴ The threat of police intervention, professional sanctions, or social ostracism however, may have been enough to discourage individuals from actively participating in the dissemination or advocacy of birth control.⁵⁵

There have been relatively few studies of the Canadian birth control movement and one of the first in this field was Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren's 1986 social history of contraception in Canada.⁵⁶ In *Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980*, McLaren and McLaren undertake a general survey of contraception and abortion in Canada. Their work considers the origins and continuities of the figures participating in reproductive health advocacy and their connections to the social conditions of the period.

As part of their initial discussion regarding the work of birth controllers in Canada, McLaren and McLaren point out that discourses of sex reform stemming from British and American advocates early on in the twentieth-century were influential in forming the reactions of middle-class women in Canada.⁵⁷ Prominent birth control

⁵⁴ There are two documents related to Alvin Kaufman's Parents Information Bureau that do indicate that investigations were undertaken concerning section 207 of the Criminal Code. LAC RG 13 Series A-2 vol 2023 file 138421 and an RCMP file regarding a package being held at the Post Office in Stony Mountain, Manitoba. LAC RG 3 vol 2188 file 11-23-4 RCMP report dated 11-10-35. In related files, there appears to be some debate within the government as to how to enforce this law and who should be leading the investigations.

⁵⁵ Andrea Tone describes the raids and enthusiastic surveillance carried out by Anthony Comstock in New York: *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (Hill and Wang: New York, 2001).

⁵⁶ McLaren and McLaren *The Bedroom and the State: ...* See also Dodd *The Canadian Birth Control Movement, 1929-1939*, and Catherine Annau *Canada's First Birth Control Clinic: the Birth Control Society of Hamilton, 1931-1940* (MA Thesis, McGill University: 1992). Some work has been undertaken regarding British Columbia, for example: Mary Bishop "The Early Birth Controllers of B.C." *British Columbia Studies* 1984 61: 64-84; Angus McLaren "The First Campaigns for Birth Control Clinics in B.C." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1984 19(3): 50-64.

⁵⁷ McLaren and McLaren *The Bedroom and the State: ...* Ch. 3.

advocates and authors such as Emma Goldman (Russian-American), Marie Stopes (British) and Margaret Sanger (American) received letters from Canadian women requesting both marital and contraceptive advice and both women (and one of Margaret Sanger's nurses) made information trips to Canada.⁵⁸

As the Canadian birth control movement gained momentum between the 1920s and 1950s it became both formalized and professionalized. The use of medical and social service professionals facilitated the creation of clinics and other physical spaces in which women could meet with nurses and social workers to receive birth control information and contraceptives. The use of sympathetic physicians, nurses and social workers in local clinics and the community at large increased their publicity and clout. Social reformers also used this process of professionalization as a fundraising tool and received the always needed financial backing to continue promotional and lobbying activities as well as maintain services. Professionals offered a more formal connection to expertise and in return the public had greater trust in the services and knowledge provided therein.

The influence of social elites and others with monetary resources, maintained the established program of regulating reproductive habits through a version of positive eugenics. Constructing birth control as a social issue rather than a medical or sexual one created a broader audience and allowed social reformers to appeal to professionals for help.⁵⁹ Positive eugenics encouraged healthy mothers and children which would

⁵⁸ See correspondence from Margaret Sanger in the Sophia Smith Collection.

⁵⁹ Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women*: ... p. 138.

successfully sustain both community and nation according to social and genetic ideals. As a result the idea of reproductive freedom for women was less prevalent among many clinic operators and birth control was more frequently associated with eugenics by professionals and advocates as well as much of the general public. McLaren and McLaren note that:

birth control only became respectable and won the support of ‘financial angels’ in the 1930s. The depression and the spectres of working-class unrest and racial degeneration that it conjured up goaded eugenically minded businessmen, club women, academics, and clergymen into supporting a campaign aimed at lowering the fertility of the working class.⁶⁰

Degeneration and unrest were also the general areas of concern shared by birth controllers in the Canada, the United States, Britain and much of Europe.⁶¹ For the period under investigation here, McLaren and McLaren remain circumspect in their analysis of the development of a birth control movement in Canada. They focus on the overarching contributions of leftist organizations and individuals who formed clinics or contributed to keeping birth control in the public eye in British Columbia. As McLaren notes for leftist organizations and individuals, “their interests were kindled for two reasons: contraception appeared to offer the individual a way of freeing himself from both poverty and the morality inculcated by Christianity; and it could, so some argued,

⁶⁰ McLaren and McLaren, *The Bedroom and the State...* p. 13. See also Angus McLaren, “Sex Radicalism in the Canadian Pacific Northwest, 1890-1920” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1992 2(4): 527-546; Angus McLaren, “What Has This to Do with Working Class Women?": Birth Control and the Canadian Left, 1900-1939” *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 1981 14(28): 435-454; Martha Beaudry, *Birth Control and the “Public Good”: From Criminalization to Education for Family Planning* (MA thesis University of Toronto, 1994) p. 20.

⁶¹ James Reed, *From Private Vice to Public Virtue: the Birth Control Movement and American Society Since 1830* (Basic Books: New York, 1978).

be employed by the masses as a means to restrict the labour supply and thus formed part of the "General Strike".⁶² This rationalization does not necessarily mean that it was a natural or good fit as the primary concern of leftist groups was economic rather than gender. There was a similar type thinking with other mainstream opinions that access to contraception would decrease venereal disease rates, unwanted pregnancies and other forms of sexual exploitation.⁶³ It is a natural fit both socially and politically to focus on leftist groups who frequently held different politics about love and sexual freedoms to mainstream organizations. In addition, they focus on the individuals who funded the birth control movement of the 1930s however; they do not thoroughly consider other groups and individuals who were active during this era. Their discussion of the National Council of Women of Canada is limited to a few references and newspaper reports not primary source documents as I will be examining.

Both Dianne Dodd and Catherine Annau examine the actors and activities of the Birth Control Society of Hamilton (BCHS) during the 1930s. Individually, they examine the Hamilton Birth Control Society however they have focused on differing elements in the national and international context. Dodd focused on the actors involved at the local level and the differing aims of eugenics and birth control in order for women to have control over their own fertility.⁶⁴ Additionally Dodd assesses the aims and purposes of various actors within these dimensions to place the technology and the issue of birth control within the context of Canadian society. Annau shifts her examination of the

⁶² McLaren, " "What Has This to do with Working Class Women?": ... p. 437.

⁶³ *ibid.* p. 440.

⁶⁴ Dodd, *The Hamilton Birth Control Clinic* 132-3.

BCHS to an international context including the influence of Margaret Sanger and Marie Stopes on the growth of the clinic and its operation in the community.⁶⁵ Annau continues with the theme of eugenic ideology in birth control discourses through the BCHS and the context of the City of Hamilton as rates of employment and poverty rose dramatically. For both of these authors the ties to social renewal and poverty remain tied to eugenics, birth control and feminism.

Ellen Trott's analysis of responses to the initiation of a Canadian birth control movement between 1885 and 1935 has shown that while there were actors on both sides of the issue there was a lack of forward momentum with the public. As discussed previously, the absence of a defined birth control movement does not mean that couples were not making use of various forms of birth control. Trott demonstrated that there were macro-scale events that could have affected the development of a birth control movement including the falling birth rate, Malthusianism, and other popular social reforms of the time.⁶⁶ In her work, Trott also offered a survey of the contradictions within groups such as religious institutions and their involvement with family and reproduction. For example, the Roman Catholic Church did not support "artificial" means of contraception while the Methodist Church actively supported birth control efforts and the ideals of voluntary parenthood.⁶⁷ The support for sex education classes within the Catholic Church meant that in Quebec especially they could retain their

⁶⁵ Annau, *Canada's First Birth Control Clinic...* p. 12.

⁶⁶ Ellen Trott, *Attitudes Towards Birth Control Canada 1885-1935* (MA thesis, Carleton University: 1984) p. 5.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

congregation and promote specific sexual ideals and knowledge.⁶⁸

Trott also claimed that there was a general lack of sustained leadership in Canada that did not contribute to a positive environment that would have supported birth control efforts. To illustrate this, she compiled what little information was available about the Albertan, Georgina Sackville who authored her own birth control tract in 1927 and advocated for wider contraceptive access and other related issues including homes for unwed mothers.⁶⁹ Trott demonstrated that there was interest in discussing and promoting birth control in pockets of Canadian society but it was not a sustained nationwide effort.

During this period, reformers who fell on all sides of the political and social spectrum articulated the desire or need for adequate access to birth control. Middle-class women (both inside and outside the NCW) were not unified in their approach or even whether they *would* advocate for access to birth control. For some this went too far outside the private realm as it connected to both sex as a topic of public discourse and entailed a possible deviation from women as mothers. For others while this was a direct challenge to their status as mothers, access to birth control was necessary to ensure better health for women which would make them better mothers if they were able to control their own fertility with medical means, not just folk remedies. Regardless of the

⁶⁸ Michael Gauvreau, "The Emergence of Personalist Feminism: Catholicism and the Marriage - Preparation Movement in Quebec, 1940-1966" in Nancy Christie (Ed) *Households of Faith: Family, Gender, and Community in Canada 1760-1969* (McGill - Queen's University Press: Kingston, 2002); Diane Gervais and Danielle Gauvreau "Women, Priests, and Physicians: Family Limitation in Quebec, 1940-1970" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2003 XXXIV(2): 293-314.

⁶⁹ Georgina Sackville *Birth Control or Prevention of Contraception* (Innisfail: Alberta, 1929).

inconsistency of the application of the law, advocates for birth control were making this part of the political agenda.

Challenges to the pronatalist stance which maintained that a women's fulfillment was to be found in the home surrounded by a husband and children were few. By the 1930s this view had modernized somewhat yet there were requisite conditions attached. Birth control advocates wanted women to be healthy and to have a choice in how many children they would have and how often, yet it was still desirable for women to have children. "While none of these women demanded birth control in the name of women's emancipation from their family, all believed that simple justice dictated that women should control their fertility."⁷⁰ By locating birth control within the discursive fields of maternal and child health this allowed for some who were unsure or even against discussions of birth control or its advocacy to agree that working towards better maternal and child health was a worthwhile cause. As a byproduct, this would also mean that women's organizations had to consider examining the increasingly tenuous connections between sex and reproduction and all the attendant shifts and around the content of marriage and adult relationships.

A continuum of acceptance concerning discussions and action concerning birth control emerged amongst social reformers. On one side was the promotion of birth spacing and the subsequent separation of sex from reproduction. On the other side, it was felt that discussions of reproduction should remain within the realm of limiting the

⁷⁰ Dianne Dodd, "The Canadian Birth Control Movement on Trial, 1936-1937" *Histoire Sociale/ Social History* 1983 XVI(32): 411-428.

fertility and reproductive capacities of “undesirables” through eugenics and the encouragement of fertility rates among the middle- and upper-classes.⁷¹ In general, women’s organizations framed reproductive freedom as a cause for social freedom from the continual burden of bearing children using the discourses of improving infant and maternal health and lowering mortality rates. There was considerable discomfort with publicly endorsing sex for pleasure and not solely as a tool to reinforce reproductive aims.

As Annau notes the access single women had to contraceptive information and technologies through the Birth Control Society of Hamilton was restricted:

To be eligible for contraceptive advice, a woman was required to present a card signed by her physician recommending contraceptive treatment. This presented a significant obstacle for poor women, many of whom did not have their own family doctor and could not afford to see one merely to be referred to the clinic. There were also other barriers to treatment. The clinic’s stated policy was to refuse women who were unmarried or who had borne fewer than two children though this policy may not have always been followed. Distributing birth control to single women or women with no children was considered to endorse licentious behaviour while distributing it to the poor would save taxpayers’ money.”⁷²

Single women continued to be excluded from conversations regarding access to birth control throughout the period under examination here. They were regarded as socially problematic and in some cases deviant for their choices regarding marriage and

⁷¹ Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race...*; Sheila Gibbons “ “Our Power to Remodel Civilization”: The Development of Eugenic Feminism in Alberta, 1909-1921” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 2014 31(1): 123-142; Jana Grekul, H. Krahn, D. Odynak “Sterilizing the “Feeble-Minded”: Eugenics in Alberta, Canada, 1929-1972” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 2004 17(4): 358-384; Dyck “Sterilization and birth control in the Shadow of eugenics: ...”

⁷² Catherine Annau “Promoting Prophylactics: The Birth Control Society of Hamilton’s Very Public Profile” *Ontario History* 1998 LXXXX(1): 51-52.

motherhood however, their access to legal contraceptive aids was highly regulated.⁷³

Women's Organizations: Working with Sex

Western women's organizations came to issues of sex in several ways: social purity campaigns, motherhood through the lens of maternal feminism and other issues such as advocating for women in the labour market. As Klein and Roberts note:

the major focus of their concern [the National Council of Women] was the woman as a future mother - the sacrifice of whose health would degrade the community - not as a worker. Their obsession with separate lavatories, considered one of the key goals of factory inspection, demonstrates their focus of issues pertaining to the maintenance of purity, modesty and other necessary qualities of wifely and motherly virtue.⁷⁴

Beginning in the late nineteenth-century, social purity provided an entry for women reformers into often publicly sensitive areas such as prostitution, sex education and morals, sexual hygiene and disease and other associated social problems found in cities and towns alike. It allowed women to work in concert with experts in the fields of medicine, education, and social science, as well as placing themselves in the dialogue as authorities to make claims about what was best for all levels and groups in society.

⁷³ Dyck "Sterilization and Birth Control..." offers an examination of how women used voluntary sterilization as a challenge to the existing rules of access for birth control. However, many women were also refused the surgical option if they too had not had children. In the case of Britain, Kate Fisher and Simon Szreter have conducted interviews with couples regarding their negotiation of using contraceptive methods: " "They Prefer Withdrawal": The Choice of Birth Control in Britain, 1918-1950" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2003 xxxiv(2): 263-291; Kate Fisher " 'Didn't Stop to Think, I Just Didn't Want Another One': The Culture of Abortion in Interwar South Wales" in Franz X Eder, Lesley Hall, and Gert Hekma (Eds) *Themes in Sexuality: Sexuality Cultures in Europe* (Manchester: 1999), p. 213-232; Kate Fisher " 'She was Quite Satisfied with the Arrangements I Made': Gender and Birth Control in Britain, 1925-1950" *Past & Present* 2000 169: 161-193.

⁷⁴ Alice Klein and Wayne Roberts, "Besieged Innocence: The "Problem" and Problems of Working Women - Toronto, 1896-1914" in Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith and Bonnie Shepard (Eds) *Women at Work Ontario, 1850-1930* (Canadian Women's Educational Press: Toronto, 1974) p. 215; Strange, Carolyn. *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1995).

According to Sharon Cook, there are two phases of social issues for organizations under the umbrella of social purity. The first covered the 1870s to 1890 and the issues of concern included “personal programs of dress reform, pure food campaigns, alcohol and tobacco abstinence, and most notably, the reclamation of prostitutes and the ideal of a ‘white life for two’, or a single standard for men’s and women’s sexual behaviour.”⁷⁵ The second phase encompasses the period 1890 to the 1920s and “was characterized by a multiple pronged remedial public programme including: ... the elimination of prostitution rather than the rehabilitation of prostitutes, preventive medical and public health issues focused on adolescents rather than adults and a repressive programme of censorship.”⁷⁶ The common thread for both of these phases is the development of regulatory forms of conduct that would conform the ideals of healthy citizenship.

Mariana Valverde continues with this theme and notes that: “social purity was a campaign to regulate morality, in particular sexual morality, in order to preserve and enhance a certain type of human life.”⁷⁷ This campaign would stretch into public and private domains from family and work, to health and recreation. Within this the primary concern by women’s organizations was the sexual double standard with the aim of making men more accountable for their sexual exploits. This had the desired effect of reinforcing family norms and retained the value placed on relegating heterosexual sex to either chastity or marriage. With the encouragement of male celibacy or sexual restraint

⁷⁵ Sharon Cook, “ ‘Do not ... do anything that you cannot unblushingly tell your mother’: Gender and Social Purity in Canada” *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 1997 XXX (60): 217.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1991) p. 24.

and fidelity during marriage, it was hoped that these efforts would protect women from abuse, venereal disease and retaining the desired social status of marital relationships. According to Holden for unmarried men, “by the 1920s this ideal was being more actively undermined by the view that long-term chastity for men was harmful and debilitating and sublimation difficult if not impossible.”⁷⁸ The intimate details of family became fodder for regulation discourses and programmes through social constraints and educational programmes. This meant that individuals of all ages and both sexes were potential targets for learning “right living”. Social purity campaigns were organized by many different groups and individuals including upper and middle-class women’s groups who used the ideal of social purity to assert their image of a good and moral society. The cultivation of the image of the benevolent matron role who worked “with” the poor or working women to elevate their economic or social status further entrenched their image and place within reformers campaigns.⁷⁹

As a discourse social (and sexual) purity reinforced women’s sexual identity as inherently maternal and simultaneously provided for public access to organizing around sex as an educational programme and an activist one too. The moral uplift that characterizes many of the descriptors of womanhood in this period is a consistent theme and metaphor used by social reformers. In the early twentieth-century the emphasis on

⁷⁸ Katherine Holden, “ ‘Nature takes no notice of Morality’: Singleness and *Married Love* in interwar Britain” *Women’s History Review* 2002 11(3): 483.

⁷⁹ Meryn Stuart, “*Let Not the People Perish for lack of Knowledge*”: *Public Health and the Ontario Rural Child Welfare Project, 1916-1930* (PhD Dissertation: University of Pennsylvania, 1987); Laura Abrams, “Guardians of Virtue: The Social Reformers and the “Girl Problem,” 1890-1920” *Social Service Review* 2000 74(3): 436-452; Cynthia Davies, “The Health Visitor as Mother’s Friend: A Woman’s Place in Public Health, 1900-1914” *Social History of Medicine* 1988 1(1): 39-59.

sex and desire was predominantly framed within the context of vice and self control (or lack thereof). Not only were investigations by social reformers into sex and sexual behaviours phrased through morality discourses but also as a public health issue. What facilitated this was the difficulty in quantifying proper sexual behaviours – except through the birth rate.⁸⁰ Defining sex through public health education and the language of health more specifically, offered social hygienists specific programmes and legitimacy in the context of a moralist science. In viewing sex as vice, reformers used long held assumptions about the sexual proclivities of the masses, their fecundity and “resulting” social problems to take a “moral” stand.

This difficulty in quantifying sexual behaviours and desires in the early twentieth century required that social purists rely on their own programmes in addition to the available public health education to shape individuals into proper citizens. By the 1930s social purity was on the decline however, social hygiene remained strong. Social hygiene education offered through schools by physicians and other health professionals was equally effective in promoting a consistently moral understanding of sexual relations. The effect of this was to relegate unacceptable sexual practices to the social realm of morals and vice education in addition to adding to the growing set of quantifiable knowledge concerning the outcomes of sexual behaviours.

The reactions of the NCW and other social organizations in matters pertaining to

⁸⁰ Studies conducted regarding the sex lives of women such as Katharine Bement Davis' *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* (Harper and Row: New York, 1929) and Clelia Duel Mosher's *The Mosher Survey: Sexual Attitudes of Forty-Five Victorian Women* (Arno Press: New York, 1980) were unique in their scope and demonstrated a worthiness of social science and biological science to study sex. Unfortunately Mosher's work would not be published during her lifetime.

sex were largely framed by women's ability to bear children. The reliance on women's biological ability (and social desirability) to be mothers provided a stable and acceptable platform for women to be socially active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Through their organizing efforts, they attempted to create and shape society in a specific image that reflected a new social consciousness to balance the efforts of more male and mainstream political and economic development such as building the nation's infrastructure. These early projects included for example, installing women on municipal, provincial, and national committees to promote women's needs (whether in the home or in the workplace), working with health practitioners to promote child and maternal health and even working with other organizations to create better social infrastructure such as libraries and recreation facilities. For example, during World War II, the NCW was concerned with the social threats posed by premarital sex, leisure pursuits that promoted interactions between men and women in "morally harmful" ways and the rising number of seemingly dysfunctional relationships. This included examining popular culture and leisure activities that women (and men) were participating in as the rise of a new social culture around dating became popular.⁸¹ To address this some NCW committees examined the social sites that women spent their time and considered the impact this would have on the creation and maintenance of

⁸¹ See for example, Anne-Marie Kinahan, *"A Splendid Army of Organized Womanhood" Gender, Communication and the National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1918* (PhD Dissertation, Carleton University: 2005); Kinahan, "Cultivating the Taste of the Nation:"; Craig Wilson, " "Our Common Enemy": Censorship Campaigns of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the National Council of Women of Canada, 1890-1914" *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 1998 10(2), 438-479. For a general discussion on leisure spaces and activities see: Alan Hunt, "Regulating Heterosocial Space: Sexual Politics in the early Twentieth-Century" *Journal of Historical Sociology* 2002 15(1): 1-34; Adams, "Almost anything can happen: .."

“healthy” adult relationships. One of their solutions was to work with other organizations to promote sex education courses at the local level with an emphasis on forms of conduct and the formation of proper intimate (marital) relationships.⁸²

Responding to sex: morals, social disorganization and social dilemmas

Women’s organizations answered questions regarding the dilemma of sex (the social role of women as mothers versus the political use of motherhood) in new or different ways. They did this through the promotion of specific elements of a morally governed conduct in sex education programmes and promoting gendered standards and ways of living. Their efforts to promote specific forms of conduct that would retain a more formal boundary between the sexes and adult relationships would take the form of sex education with an emphasis on the formation and content of proper intimate (marital) relationships. As discussed previously the shift from social purity’s understanding of sex as vice to the mid-twentieth century approach to considering sex as part of a familial relationship and identity was not without concern.

In the post war period, the NCW and the WI were concerned with the re-formation of families and neighbourhoods. Not only were these projects aimed at generating the infrastructure for neighbourhoods but the social organization that would be required to support families over time. This included the reaffirmation of women’s primary role as mothers and made the attempt to recognize the growing number of working mothers in society and contributing to their needs. Marriage education classes continued to be promoted as an additional form of community support to diminish the

⁸² LAC MG 10 I25 Reel H-2018 vol 61 file 3.

growing rates of social delinquency. The continued targeting of potentially harmful or dysfunctional relationships was paired with other resulting forms of social delinquency and deviance, creating a real or perceived causal relationship that legitimated the growing concerns of the NCW.

As a response to the shifting public discourses of sex and sexuality, the National Council of Women and other social service organizations, employed several different tactics to make their concerns and views known to both the public and governments. These initiatives included lobbying at all levels of government to contain sexual materials or providing funding for the creation of a variety of social or health programs within their communities. These programmes (such as health promotion, education, leisure programming, or community building) promoted a regime of conduct for women's sexuality that these organizations determined was needed for Canadian society to thrive. Even with a shift in the conceptualization of sex as vice to sex as a fruitful component of women's lives, sex continued to be a difficult topic to negotiate. For the NCW, shifts in any direction other than locating or promoting sexuality in relation to motherhood had the potential to disrupt or nullify their status as representatives for Canadian women. To incorporate wider discussions on alternate possibilities in which women had the potential (or option) not to be a mother challenged and pushed the membership in new directions. This shifting discourse was particularly difficult when these women's organizations engaged with the other contexts and conditions in which women participated such as employment (both public/commercial and private/domestic) and education. The dilemma then, was how to remain true to the

position that as mothers, middle-class women's organizations were in the best position to speak for women while the public discourse shifted around them.

Researching mid-twentieth century women's organizations

Analyses of Canadian women's organizations began in earnest in the mid 1970s in tandem with the rise of women's history as a distinct discipline. Women's history challenged the dominant macro level histories of nations and states and told the stories of women's lives at both the micro and macro levels.⁸³ The National Council of Women of Canada has been examined extensively since the 1970s however, these studies have been limited to three dominant areas. These analyses were predominantly rooted in the class distinctions of the organization's members whether they were upper-, middle-, or working-class women and how these class orientations were reflected through their agendas and mandates. More recent examinations of women's organizations have incorporated other frameworks such as postcolonial studies, postmodernism and discourse analysis to provide another picture of the workings and accomplishments of Canadian women's organizations.⁸⁴

⁸³ See for example: Veronica Strong - Boag, *The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929* (National Museums of Canada: Ottawa, 1976); Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Organizations in Canada: The English Protestant Tradition" in Paula Bourne (Ed), *Women's Paid and Unpaid Work: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (New Hogtown Press: Toronto, 1985); Wendy Mitchinson, *Aspects of Reform: Four Women's organizations in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (PhD Dissertation: York University, 1977); Carol Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1983); Diana Pedersen, *The Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, 1870-1920: "A Movement to Meet a Spiritual, Civic and National Need"* (PhD Dissertation, Carleton University, 1987); Sharon Cook, "Continued and Persevering Combat": *The Ontario WCTU Evangelicalism and Social Reform 1874-1916* (PhD Dissertation, Carleton University, 1990).

⁸⁴ See for example, Annau, *Canada's First Birth Control Clinic: ...*; Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: ...*; Mariana Valverde, "The Rhetoric of Reform: Tropes and the Moral Subject" *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 1990 18(1): 61-73; Kinahan, "A Splendid Army of Organized Womanhood" ...; Katja Thieme, *Language and Social Change: The Canadian Movement for Women's Suffrage, 1880-1918* (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia: 2007).

In general, scholars working in this field have produced analyses of organizations such as the National Council of Women, Women's Institutes, Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Women's Christian Association, that examined two main areas: first, an examination of the relative social, political and economic position of women who were part of the organizations and how this impacted the growth and development of organizations and their projects. Since these initial studies, some scholars have begun to examine the impact that women's organizations had locally upon the growth of their communities. This has facilitated inquiries into the issues that were being dealt with outside that broad national context.⁸⁵ The second area has included analyses of the organizational agendas in relation to the membership to determine if the agendas represented the membership and their relative successes.

Most of the research conducted on middle-class Canadian women's organizations has been limited in scope and utility in three ways in relation to this research project. First, many of these analyses have examined the large-scale contributions women's organizations made to Canada in social, legal, political, and economic contexts. The focus on general issues changing the national context in the pre-1930 period while necessary does not provide for an adequate entrée into the period under study here. The organization's focus on the large-scale issues such as suffrage and

⁸⁵ See for example Wendy Heads, *The Local Council of Women of Winnipeg 1894 - 1920: Tradition and Transformation* (MA Thesis University of Manitoba, 1997); Janet Harvey, *The Regina Council of Women, 1895-1929* (MA Thesis, University of Regina, 1991); Gillian Weiss, *'As Women and as Citizens': Clubwomen in Vancouver 1910-1928* (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1983); Kathleen Oliver, *Splendid circles: Women's clubs in Calgary, 1912-1939* (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 1992).

the Persons Case in the pre-1930 period addressed in this branch of research were largely resolved and the “newness” of women’s activism had evolved. Simply put, research from the 1970s onwards often examined the growth of women’s organizations in the late nineteenth-century and their contributions to suffrage. An analysis of the activities of local branches rather than their involvement in the national context has been largely incomplete. In this instance, the time scale and the examination of these general political issues (such as suffrage) are not relevant here. In the context of this research, I am interested in the examining how middle-class women’s organizations positioned themselves on sexually related issues through a lens of moral regulation in both local and national contexts as a new gender and sexual norms were established.

Second, prior studies have often featured the prominent women who led these organizations and shaped the policies and agendas of the times. While this too has provided useful insights into the workings of the organizations themselves and an examination of race and class related issues of leadership, membership, and agenda, it is not applicable in this context. These studies have examined the impact of these community leaders on the large-scale issues of the day, their personal biographies and influence on the direction of the organizations. While this is useful in constructing an over-arching history of the organization, in this instance biographies do not help reconstruct the types of programmes initiated and supported by the organizations as it pertains to sex and motherhood. Nor do these works highlight the more general debates within the NCW and related social organizations related to issues of birth control, sex, and motherhood.

Thirdly, most research in this area has focused on an organization's formative years (late nineteenth-century) and concluded with the end of the World War I era or into the 1920s. By the 1920s suffrage had been won in most of Canada, the Persons Case was settled by the end of the decade and the scale of involvement and the type of issues these organizations were likely to be involved in had changed dramatically. Issues that concerned the organizations beyond the 1920s have not been addressed thoroughly by scholars in this field. At a national level, the agenda of the National Council of Women continued to be concerned with women's legal, social and economic position in a more general sense rather than the issue specific campaigns for suffrage for example.

An examination of the 1930 to 1955 period that I am undertaking here has largely been absent within the wider scholarship of this field. The lack of research into this period is in part because the more politically and socially significant issues of suffrage and the Persons Case were already largely resolved by 1930. At the other end of this period, the decades prior to the 1960s are not seen to be as active for women's organizations. In addition, it is assumed that women's organizations of this period are not addressing wider social issues as they were prior to 1930, nor do they appear to be operating in conjunction with the social change agenda of the 1960s and onwards. A second possible rationale is the assumption that the 1930s to the mid 1950s saw the maintenance of a mainstream activist agenda that did not offer a radical program that has been recognized as a characteristic of second wave feminism. This could be taken to mean that forward momentum in terms of women's activism during this period wasn't occurring. Regardless, within the context of the economic depression of the 1930s and

then World War II, women's organizations continued to work on changing women's legal, social and political status in Canadian society. In addition major events such as the economic depression of the 1930s and World War II have been examined extensively in relation to the impacts on social institutions yet very little work has been done on families, gender roles and the evolving nature of sexual norms. This gap in the literature has generated new opportunities for research using historical sociology as a tool with the aim of adding to the existing knowledge of the period.

The exceptions to this are two works that were centennial publications for both the National Council of Women of Canada and the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. While Griffiths and Ambrose respectively, detail the first century that these organizations were in existence, they predominantly examine their major achievements and the prominent personalities that drove the organizations.⁸⁶ This generalized focus also makes their contribution for this research somewhat limited. Another possible exception is Christabelle Sethna's analysis of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and their efforts at social and sexual purity education between 1900 and 1920.⁸⁷ While outside the period under examination here, Sethna's examination of a middle-class

⁸⁶ Linda Ambrose, *For Home and Country: The Centennial History of the Women's Institutes in Ontario* (Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario: Guelph, 1996) and N.E.S. Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1993* (Carleton University Press: Ottawa, 1993). These are institutional histories written to commemorate centennial anniversaries. As a result, they chronicle the organization's efforts over time rather than conducting an in depth analysis of specific issues and initiatives.

⁸⁷ Christabelle Sethna, *The Facts of Life: the sex instruction of Ontario Public School children, 1900-1950* Ch. 2; Dianne Dodd, "Women's Involvement in the Canadian Birth Control Movement of the 1930s: The Hamilton Clinic" in Katherine Arnup, André Lévesque and Ruth Roach Pierson (Eds) *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Routledge: London, 1990).

women's organization direct involvement with sexually related issues is rare in this area of study. Another study that does ask different questions of the NCW's course of action is Anne Marie Kinahan's examination of how a political subjectivity was generated through the discourses of suffrage, women's education and "pernicious" literature.⁸⁸ While still focusing on the early years of the NCWC Kinahan approaches the subject of political identity formation through a different lens than previous scholars of Canadian women's organizations. Kinahan focuses on the creation and use of discourses by the NCWC to carve out space in the political realm and creating a mode for initiating change rather than focusing strictly on the elements that generated a social movement or the actors involved.⁸⁹

This research will be different from previous studies in several ways. First, this research focuses on the 1930 to 1955 period. This was a period of extensive social, political, and economic change for Canadian society along with a changing set of social relations between social groups. While issues such as women and the law, housing, employment, immigration, resource development, health and the arts continued to be part of the agenda into the 1930s, women's organizations increased their level of attention to sexually related issues during the period under discussion here. I will argue that the National Council of Women and related organizations were working to address both the needs of women and the social conditions in which they lived, and they considered women's sexuality in a meaningful and substantial way as part of the post

⁸⁸ Kinahan "A Splendid Army of Organized Womanhood" p. .

⁸⁹ *ibid.* See also Kinahan "Transcendent Citizenship: Suffrage, the National Council of Women of Canada, and the Politics of Organized Womanhood" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 2008 42(3): 5-27.

1920s agenda. In addition, I will demonstrate that the founding principles of these organizations challenged their ability to move beyond positioning women as mothers when it came to issues around sexuality. The status of motherhood remained integral to their vision for Canadian women.

Second, I wish to consider the specific ways in which middle-class women's organizations such as the National Council of Women of Canada engaged with issues pertaining to birth control, sex and sex education and motherhood. The available research has not attempted to examine how middle-class women's organizations responded to the changes in public attitudes towards sex, sexuality, and motherhood.⁹⁰ I will demonstrate that due to their involvement in social and sexual reform matters, they had to consider these issues in their sexual education/regulation work throughout the mid twentieth-century. This approach would allow them to continue to frame middle-class women's identity in relation to their maternal potential while preserving social order in their towns and cities.

Finally, I have chosen 1955 as the end date for this study because the Pill was introduced shortly after this time, which again shifted gender roles, politics, and other social standards and norms in a much more substantive way. In the period following 1955, medical/health and other sexually related technological innovations such as contraceptive and fertility technologies more forcefully impact questions around gender

⁹⁰ Both Griffiths and Ambrose mention birth control in a sentence surrounded by other subjects for the period and that is the extent of their engagement with this topic. This could indicate that they did not consider this an issue of substance for either organization or that it did not fit with the intent of their publications. Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision: ...* p. 122; Ambrose, *For Home and Country: ...* p. 131.

roles, the social expectations regarding dating and the motherhood ideal. If, as a result this project seems simple it is based on the premise of a contradiction that became apparent in the available archival material that I examined throughout this process. It also informs one of the main arguments of this research: at the executive level, the NCW was only willing to talk about sex related issues in specific contexts for example, education, family, or leisure. However, they often collaborated with other agencies on programs that would obliquely (or in some cases obviously such as the Health League of Canada which specifically worked on venereal disease issues) address these issues according to their maternally based framework. There was also evidence that some of the local council branches were interested in advocating for birth control or other sex education programs for example, against the wishes of the executive council. The opposition by individual women within these organizations demonstrated some resistance to the programs and ideas that were endorsed by their executives towards what they considered to be necessary for their community.

I have chosen to start from a national perspective and then to study the relationship of the executive council with some of their local branches in comparison as they attempted to gain consensus for a national women's agenda. Regarding the archival data of the local branches, I examined meeting minutes that I could access. I also chose provinces with birth control clinics already in operation to determine what kind of relationships (if any) the women's organizations may have had with those organizing

the clinics.⁹¹ As a result I did not for example, examine organizations operating in Quebec because a birth control clinic was not established there until 1958.⁹² Adding Quebec to this study would have provided some interesting contrasts to what was occurring in other mostly English speaking provinces, cities, and towns. This is certainly an area needing future investigation. Also, I was unable to access archives in the Atlantic provinces to determine whether there were any clinics or what the response of the local branches were to the overall debates on reproduction.⁹³ As a consequence, this dissertation will be unable to offer an examination of a national and local approach to sexual norms and values. However, with the groups I have been able to access I will be able to investigate several key ideas: the contradictions within the membership and the lack of consensus on some key debates; the ways in which middle-class women's organizations were actively promoting a specific vision of female sexuality through their (non) involvement with birth control; and their conceptions of proper motherhood through sex education.

It is important to note that this is not a project about a social movement. This research comprises an examination of the social and institutional discourses used to

⁹¹ Ontario is the exception to this. The Hamilton Birth Control Society has been examined by Dodd, *The Canadian Birth Control Movement, 1929-1939* and Annau, *Canada's First Birth Control Clinic: ...* Some work has been undertaken regarding British Columbia: See: Bishop, "The Early Birth Controllers of B.C."; McLaren, "The First Campaigns for Birth Control Clinics in B.C."

⁹² For a discussion regarding fertility trends in Quebec see: Gauvreau, "The Emergence of Personalist Feminism: ..."; Gervais and Gauvreau, "Women, Priests, and Physicians: ..."; Denyse Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family and Home in Montreal during the Great Depression* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press: Waterloo, 1999); Andrée Levesque, (trans. by Yvonne M. Klein) *Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1994).

⁹³ The exceptions were the local branches that contributed to the minutes (such as Annual General Meeting, notes to the executive council or other branches) or other publications.

frame middle-class womanhood during a period of significant change and transition in Canadian society. Social movement studies often approach the context, creation and outcomes of social movements through the formation and leadership of formal and informal organizations and the support and networks within their members. The emergence of a social movement organization is dependent on the creation and maintenance of informal and then formal connections and networks between interested groups and individuals.⁹⁴ Since its inception in 1893 the structure of the NCW allowed for a more hierarchical and bureaucratized approach to social change that would easily create and maintain relationships with other similarly formalized institutions such as government and business. This approach has enabled the NCW to have many either organizational or collaborative successes over their 125-year history.

It is necessary to recognize that the NCW and other organizations under study in this research are part of a wider social movement context and are social movement organizations in their own right. In keeping with this, their form and function will impact their understanding of women in Canadian society as they attempt to gain consensus for their various projects and programmes. In their records they will cover topics and use language to create a type of straw figure that is generalizable to the segment of the population they are referring to. Their programmes and related materials will reinforce three dominant discourses that respond to changing norms. The study of

⁹⁴ Jurgen Willems and Marc Jegers "Social Movement Structures in Relation to Goals and Forms of Action: An exploratory model" *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 2012 3(2): 67-81. Willems and Jegers have developed a taxonomy to describe how the types of SMOs and their goals are interrelated and necessary to create social change.

the discursive elements of a social movement is also required to understand the reactions to (and sometimes reinforcement of) the dominant discursive system and in this case the responses of the NCW.⁹⁵ This will allow for the exploration of a context that is not inseparable from the social or political alongside the norms and experiences of women's lives.⁹⁶ While I am considering the National Council of Women of Canada as a source of data, I am not framing their activities in the context of a social movement. They NCW and related organizations will function as an indicator of their contemporary social world and the construction of women's lives during this period. As a contribution to the existing literature, I will examine an under-developed field and time period in Canadian historical sociology. I will also use the archival material of an organization outside the field of social movement literature.

As I have begun to demonstrate here, the history of twentieth-century sexuality is not static nor is it straightforward in its construction. In addition, I have outlined the primary contextual items regarding sexual culture, law and general Canadian society as well as the actors that I will be considering for the remainder of this project: middle-class women's organizations and women as both initiators and subjects of moral regulation projects. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, neither vision of these organizations

⁹⁵ See for example: Sarah Gaby and Neal Caren, "The Rise of Inequality: How Social Movements Shape Discursive Fields" *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 2016 21(4): 413-429; John Flowerdew, "Understanding the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement: A critical discourse historiographical approach" *Discourse & Society* 2017 28(5): 453-472; Carol Harrington, "Governmentality and the Power of Transnational Women's Movements" *Studies in Social Justice* 2013 7(1): 47-63.

⁹⁶ Howard Ramos and Kathleen Rodgers, "Introduction: The Promise of Social Movement Societies" in Ramos and Rodgers *Protest and Politics: The Promise of Social Movement Societies* (University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver 2015) p. 11.

was unchallenged by their own members. With individual initiative and membership in multiple organizations, the public actions of women involved in these organizations were occasionally in direct conflict with the decisions made by their Executives and community. While it is still difficult to claim with certainty that women and men in Canada were using specific types of contraceptive products to control their fertility, demographic and other social evidence indicates that measures were being taken and that it was a concern at various levels.

Women's organizations made great use of their status and role as guardians of women, children, and communities to keep women's lives visible on the social, political and cultural agenda. Their reliance upon a maternal identity to come into public spaces and debates cannot be ignored. It could be inferred that with the birth control debates and the changing relationship to sex in the general social realm, their status and relevance was threatened thereby making resistance to birth control and voluntary motherhood almost a given. Their support for sex education however may have been one way of controlling the available knowledge and reinforcing a morally governed sexuality. Through the insertion of council members onto various boards and policy discussions, organizations such as the NCW were able to contribute ideas and resources to sex education for example. The influence of various academic and professional fields such as sexology, medicine, sociology, psychology and popular culture especially during World War II and the post-war period, helped shape both the message and its delivery system. As we shall see throughout chapter five however, agreement on issues of sex, sexuality and motherhood were made in broad strokes. Locally and individually

however, agreement was hard fought and resistance was frequent.

The development and maintenance of an appropriate female sexual subject during the 1930 to 1955 period involves considering the changing meaning of sexual relationships, the place of women in Canadian society and the discourses that had the potential to shape sexual choices. The idea that a national organization could mandate a standard or ideal for women through a specific program of action is of interest here. Resistance from sections of the membership to the means in which that ideal was promoted and less that there was an ideal woman also needs to be considered. The fact that they were re-enforcing their own image as well as that of a generation removed from them in context and experience provides a certain disconnect in much the same way that the two quotes that opened this chapter exemplify. The dilemma for Canadian women's organizations during this period remained linked to their reliance upon sex to claim a public position as advocate for women which does not always extend to their advocacy for reproductive freedom or choice for the same women.

Conclusion

The 1930 to 1955 period is a point of significant change in Canadian society. Not only were macro level events such as the economic depression of the 1930s and World War Two impacting women's lives, social norms and values were also in flux. The changes to women's roles and the available sexual scripts offered new possibilities for women in addition to wife and mother. Women's shifting relationship to sex and reproduction also changed conceptions of femininity and made public a new moral context for sex and sex practices that would continue to be valorized within heterosexual

marriage. This would have a significant impact on the way that men and women were supposed to relate to each other within the context of marriage. This meant not only viewing the couple as a reproducing unit but a intimately companionate one as well. Women's organizations viewed this new companionate form of marriage as a way to stabilize and maintain the family unit within the needs of Canadian society. This would also have further implications for the "fitness" of family but also shift the understandings of reproductive health as a way of introducing support for birth control measures.

While reframing sex beyond the limits of vice and decay women's organizations continued to view women's reproductive lives in relation to a specific moral frame. This would include for example, a concern for new forms of leisure activities that were on the rise as part of a socio-cultural phenomenon and the related choices that both women and men were making prior to settling down as a couple.⁹⁷ Not only were the sites away from the prying eyes of family generating new social and moral concerns, they were changing the structure of what it meant to be in an intimate relationship. Organizations such as the National Council of Women of Canada had to adapt to these changes in order to continue to speak for Canadian women. The emphasis on knowing one's mate prior to marriage would become one new strategy that women's organizations would be involved in to shape the content of relationships into one that would retain a specific

⁹⁷ See for example, Cynthia Comacchio, *Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920-1950* (Wilfred Laurier Press: Waterloo, 2006); Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1997).

vision of not only family but Canadian society. The straw figure of middle-class womanhood was both a discursive construction and one that could be produced through programme initiatives aimed at women's sexual conduct and education.

The notes, letters, and meeting minutes available through various archives will provide insight into the mid twentieth-century politics of reproduction. In addition, the use of moral regulation as a framework for analysis will provide the opportunity to view the discursive changes in middle-class women's intimate lives. I expect that the macro level issues discussed above will impact the content of the discourses and programmes that were reflected not only through nation-building but at the individual decision making of women. I also expect that there will be a shift away from the view that sex was solely an indicator of vice and decay to one that attempted to reshape not only "debauched" men and their untamed sexual partners but "unruly" middle-class women.

Women of this time influenced new standards for family and society that would not be easily brushed away. The social anxieties regarding women's intimate relationships, would be part of a project of the mid-twentieth century that Women's organizations provided medically sanctioned information that ostensibly laid out the new rules of the sexual game. Social norms regarding birth control were changing rapidly as women embraced not only a new possible identity as a sexual subject but motherhood. These identities emphasized the possibility for a new discussion of what it meant to be a modern woman.

Dissertation Plan

Moving forward this thesis will examine both theoretical (Chapter Two) and methodological (Chapter Three) questions and frameworks that will impact this research. Chapter Four will address the organizational structure and their membership thereby offering a starting point to connect to the rest of this work. As I will discuss in Chapter Three, the data processing process suggested key themes and a periodization that informs Chapter Five (1930 to 1939) which examines the debates and positions on birth control and voluntary parenthood. Chapter Six (1940 to 1945) will examine how the content of marriage and sex education programmes were influenced by the calamity of war. Chapter Seven (1946 to 1955) will examine the reconstitution of family and the public perception of sex in social and popular culture fields. Chapter Eight will offer some conclusions about this period and the social roles and norms around birth control, sexual intimacy and motherhood that were in flux.

Chapter Two: Moral Regulation: A Theory of Social Norms

Introduction

The theoretical framework that will support this research is moral regulation. As Hunt notes, moral regulation involves investigating the “instances in which the values and practices that, irrespective of any consequences that they give rise to, are deemed to be wrong to a degree that justifies condemnation... Moralization involves imposing judgments about the rightness or wrongness of the conduct or values of others.”⁹⁸ As a framework for this research Hunt’s definition aids in offering a discursive structure of “moral” for understanding the responses by the National Council of Women to issues of sex and women’s intimate lives. Not only is moral regulation concerned with the “judging” of behaviour it also aims to establish through a discourse of “good” and “bad” what is expected in relation to social norms and behaviours. Moral regulation will offer an opportunity to examine challenges undertaken to received understandings of sex, motherhood and related social processes occurring throughout the twenty-five years under examination here. In addition, moral regulation will allow an extension into governmentality to examine instances where moral regulation extended into programmes promoting a restructuring of behaviours deemed problematic through social service and health organizations. This chapter will also connect women’s organizations with moral regulation and lay the framework for examining discourses of “the moral”.

⁹⁸ Alan Hunt, “Risk and Moralization in Everyday Life” in R. Ericsson and A. Doyle (Eds) *Risk and Morality* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2003) p. 165-192.

The key features of moral regulation will enable me to examine the 1930 to 1955 period and the actors and issues involved. First, a behaviour, idea, etc., is defined as deviant or problematic to a community or group. The problem is real or perceived as such and can be seen as a threat to status or general social cohesion, for example. Second, who defines the problem? Who are the experts and who speaks for the group that defines the problem? This can come first or second depending on the context. Third, what are the discourses that arise out of this and what are recognized as the signs and symbols of “good” and “bad” behaviours? Fourth, how is the problem to be rectified? Over time some ideas or behaviours for example, become part of the social fabric (with modifications) while others are criminalized or otherwise socially condemned.

Over the course of the discipline, sociology has been concerned with the evolution and maintenance of social processes, norms and their translation into the everyday lives of social actors. As a framework moral regulation examines how behaviours are normalized within a given context usually under times of real or perceived social stress with a judgement attached. It also attempts to offer a mode of understanding what mechanisms are required to influence the self conduct of the actors to deter “deviant” behaviours and conform to the prevailing social norms. In the following sections, I intend to explore specific concepts within this framework such as authority, techniques, and technologies. I will also examine how they are used in theorising of power relations within the construction and reconfiguration of social problems and through that, the development of subjectivities and norms. This chapter will also provide an outline that consolidates these concepts and reaffirms moral

regulation as a viable theory of social processes.⁹⁹

Grounding the Subject: Conceptual Origins and Modifications

Moral regulation has its origins in the functionalist branch of sociological theory specifically in Emile Durkheim's idea that society was the source of morality through the forces of social solidarity and cohesion. In *The Division of Labour in Society*, Durkheim theorized that social solidarity was a natural function of labour and arose in the evolutionary shift from mechanical (community based) to organic solidarity (individuality based) societies.¹⁰⁰ The collective creates its own rules for cohesion and expects individuals to actively participate in maintaining them as they have a vested interest in the collective through the mechanisms of identity and social life.¹⁰¹ For Durkheim, mechanical solidarity occurred in more primitive communities that shared a belief system and way of life with little to no division of labour.¹⁰² When society grew into organic solidarity it was a reflection of communities that possessed a greater differentiation and division of labour.¹⁰³ For Durkheim, normative social relations were predominantly enforced through legal means. This is in part due to his insistence that legal institutions were a primary moral institution within society or community and therefore acted as its enforcer. However, if legal means were not available to provide the necessary sanctions, existing social customs and norms could be relied upon to fill the

⁹⁹ Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: an Introduction" in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmental Rationality* (Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (MacMillan Press: New York, 1933).

¹⁰¹ Ivan Varga, "Social Morals, the Sacred and State Regulation in Durkheim's Sociology" *Social Compass* 2006 53(4): 457-466.

¹⁰² Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* p. 174-181.

¹⁰³ *ibid.* p. 181-93.

void. Ultimately punitive sanctions due to deviant behaviour could be social or legal in nature.

In opposition to the positive nature of social cohesion within communities that was typified through mechanical solidarity, anomie is the result of the individualistic and externally focused tendencies of organic solidarity where the division of labour ceases to create solidarity.¹⁰⁴ For Durkheim, the lack of social cohesion was a result of the disintegration of recognized social rules due to the changes in social stratification and the attendant values which in turn affects community stability. As the division of labour becomes more diffuse, the likelihood of adhering to the social rules of the collective decreases due to an increased sense of individuality.¹⁰⁵ As a result, social solidarity promotes cohesive social relations based on accepted norms, while deviant behaviours function to recreate social unity as reinforced by new social norms and understandings of the social world.

By the 1970s, the emphasis on the social and moral cohesion of a given society within sociological theory turned to discussions of specific disruptions within a given context. This required a shift away from the transitional or evolutionary model of society and social cohesion that Durkheim proposed and moved towards an examination of the production of these disruptions by a social group. The more abrupt form of these kinds of social disruptions were conceptualized as moral panics.

In sum, the basic structure of a moral panic contains several elements: the roles of

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* p. 353.

¹⁰⁵ Varga "Social Morals, the Sacred and State Regulation in Durkheim's Sociology" p. 460

specific actors defining the “deviant” behaviours; the distortion of the issue itself; the forms the resolutions take and their legacies (for example, legal changes); and finally the apparent function of the panic and how it manages to reaffirm the “values” of a given society.¹⁰⁶ As a result, moral panics locate themselves within the realm of social deviance as a short lived event mediated or shaped by media.

Cohen, Hall, Goode and Ben-Yehuda: Moral Panic

Stanley Cohen's influential 1972 study described the moral panic associated with the 1960s battles between the Mods and Rockers in seaside communities in England.

Through this context, Cohen proposed a moral panic framework which describes:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible.¹⁰⁷

As with Durkheim, Cohen explored the notion that as there appeared to be a unified social collective, transgressions were not just a mark of a society in decay but an event in social life that gave rise to and challenged the social order.¹⁰⁸ From this individuals or groups are identified for their non-normative behaviour which threatens the established order of a community. Experts of some form are offered centre stage to

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth Thompson, *Moral Panics* (Routledge: London, 1998).

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (MacGibbon & Kee: London, 1972) p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Chris Jenks, “The context of an emergent and enduring concept” *Crime Media Culture* 2011 7(3): 229-236. See also Sean P. Hier, “Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm” *Critical Sociology* 2002 28(3): 311-334.

diagnose the characteristics of individuals who are disrupting the existing norms and the social structures that can be called upon to reinforce positive social relationships. On the chance that social structures need to be modified, experts will have the platform to offer suggestions that will bring both the individuals and the institutions back in line with the norms of the community.

There are additional considerations to moral panics that aid in distinguishing them from both social control and moral regulation. An important variable for moral panics that Cohen considers is time - both the duration of the panic and the period in which it occurs. Temporally, moral panics are marked disruptions to the social order and are purposely short in duration, they are often replaced with new panics. Moral panics also place no requirement on the part of the individual (as with Cohen's case of the Mods and Rockers) to change their own behaviours or conduct as part of a wider moral project. Cohen further distinguishes between the groups or participants involved through their types or levels of power and social influence in defining or creating the moral panic.¹⁰⁹ These levels include: the media who focus on individuals and events that disrupt the social order through orientations, use of language and images, and establishing the role of causation (between norms, groups and events); moral entrepreneurs (individuals and groups at the grassroots level); and "societal control culture" as the site of institutional influence (police, legislators, etc.). At the end of the panic cycle these groups will most likely be called upon to institute change, calm the fears of the public, or alternatively be seen to be doing something to ameliorate the

¹⁰⁹ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*:... p. 17-18.

situation and subsequently reinforce the moral order.¹¹⁰

While this framework may provide a path to the exploration of reactions to riots and mass hysteria, it does not effectively describe long standing (and possibly recurring) moral projects that require a shift in the subjective understanding of an individual or group. It does however, continue with earlier theoretical themes including distinguishing between desirable and undesirable behaviours and their promotion through various media and agents of “social control”. The outcome for this perspective is that the media serves as a mechanism to broadcast and record normative violations or instances of conformity thereby serving as a reminder to any and all who would continue the real or perceived deviance and their potential consequences.

Another feature of moral panics includes the role of the media as a mediating force over the definition, constitution, and duration of the panic. Hall et al. described four aspects of media involvement specifically in constructing the mugging panics.¹¹¹ Firstly, the media are the primary authors of the panic due to their resources and extensive reach into multiple sectors of society. Secondly, the media translate the actions and activities into a language familiar with specific readers. Thirdly, the media “feed back to the primary definers their own reactions as if they were public opinion. Fourth, the media overemphasize violence in order to justify the extent of reaction.”¹¹² There are an increasing number of studies examining the generation of a media driven moral

¹¹⁰ Chas Critcher, “Moral Panic Analysis: Past, Present and Future” *Sociology Compass* 2008 2(4) 1130.

¹¹¹ Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Bryan Roberts. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (MacMillan: London, UK, 1978) p. 75-76.

¹¹² Critcher, “Moral Panic Analysis: Past, Present and Future” p. 1131.

panic using specific discourses and language largely using content analysis.¹¹³ This is still methodologically problematic (for example, what language is used and how they are chosen to illustrate a moral panic) but it is a preliminary way of connecting the media to the generation of moral panics.

The emphasis on the role of the media as a mediating force over the definition, constitution and duration of the panic would become a constant in moral panic theorizing. In this model and continuing through later moral panic frameworks, the emphasis has been on the construction and identification of the negative or deviant conduct of the constructed folk devil. In many instances the image of the folk devil has taken the form of an ideological straw figure (ie. *the poor, the homosexual, the criminal, the single female/male, etc.*) rather than exploring the groups or individuals who identified and subsequently defined the panic.

Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) added to previous models by proposing three sites of origin for moral panics (elite, middle, public) and two sets of motives (morality/ideology, material/status interests).¹¹⁴ This addition moved the level of analysis outside the media and toward other social actors that may have had a vested interest in maintaining or altering social norms. The grassroots model of moral panics is similar to Cohen's model in that the panics originate with the general public and the concern is

¹¹³ See for example: Julia Laite, "Justifiable Sensationalism: Newspapers, public opinion and official policy about commercial sex in mid-twentieth-century Britain" *Media History* 2014 20(2): 126-145; Anita Howarth, "A 'superstorm': when moral panic and new risk discourses converge in the media" *Health, Risk & Society* 2013 15(8): 681-698; Marinus Ossewaarde, "Calling Citizens to a Moral Way of Life: A Dutch Example of Moralized Politics" *Human Affairs* 2010 20(4): 338-355.

¹¹⁴ Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, "Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction" *Annual Review of Sociology* 1994 20(1): 159.

widespread and genuine with the possibility that the expressed anxiety is mistaken or exaggerated.¹¹⁵ Grassroots actors call attention to specific social problems that occur in a somewhat spontaneous manner. The elite model "argues that a small and powerful group or set of groups deliberately and consciously undertakes a campaign to generate and sustain fear, concern, and panic on the part of the public over an issue they recognize not to be terribly harmful to the society as a whole."¹¹⁶ This group is more likely to generate a panic when their economic interests are threatened. For Goode and Ben-Yehuda, the most prevalent actor in moral panics are interest groups. This group is composed of the moral entrepreneurs who "launch moral crusades - which sometimes turn into panics - to make sure that certain rules take hold and are enforced."¹¹⁷ They are more likely to use a variety of outlets to promote issues and "causes" outside of the interests of the elite.

What was new about Goode and Ben-Yehuda's contributions to this branch of theory was their assurance that they could ascribe motive to the actors or moral entrepreneurs. In the case of the grassroots model, the motive is one of a basic threat to their values or lifestyle. For the elite model a moral panic may have its origins in protecting their social/political/or economic status or legitimize an agenda. The interest group model presents the guiding motivation as potentially being related to both material/status interests as well as morality/ideological interests. I think this is an interesting possibility however it remains highly problematic to attribute motive to a

¹¹⁵ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*:... p. 161.

¹¹⁶ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, "Moral Panics:..." p. 164.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 165.

group of individuals. While there might be a common focus among participants, it is possible that there are other factors involved in an individual's participation. Their motive for participation in an event may have nothing to do with status retention and as researchers we are not always able to access that information.

In addition to further elaborating on the actors within their moral panic framework, Goode and Ben-Yehuda also theorized that there were specific properties of moral panics that needed to be part of the analysis. First, a concern is expressed over the behaviour of a group or class of behaviours that were deemed (real or perceived) as problematic within a society. Goode and Ben-Yehuda offer the media response as a means of measuring the level of concern through opinion polls, media coverage and lobbying activity to not only identify the issue but to determine its prevalence in society.¹¹⁸ Second, is hostility towards the “deviant” actor. This is seen through the response by those who frame the issue in terms of the sanctions they demand or actively carry out. Third, consensus regarding the level and type of threat to society and the frequency of the problematic behaviour is required. Fourth, the idea of the panic itself which is disproportional to some social reality. This means that a higher than usual level of outrage is demonstrated towards the persons, groups, or events surrounding it. These triggering events are not necessarily every day events (for example, extraordinary forms of violence carried out by teens - Kenneth Thompson uses the example of the kidnap and murder of a toddler in England¹¹⁹) but the key here is that they represent a

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* p. 33.

¹¹⁹ Thompson, *Moral Panics* p. 11.

significant departure from the social norms of a society. Lastly, moral panics are volatile and diminish as quickly as they start with blame and/or punishment meted out to the “offending” groups or individuals. Goode and Ben-Yehuda also note that the issue causing the panic may recur later but ultimately these are not sustained moments or events.¹²⁰

Both Goode and Ben-Yehuda agree that moral panics are extreme reactions to social problems and that there are consequences (either real or symbolic) for legal and state institutions. This can take the form of discourses and the generation of new labels with the intent of identifying and defining the conduct of individuals or groups. This is not solely about identifying and categorizing or defining the content of behaviours. This process will connect to a series of potential legal changes or social reform based challenges in order to reestablish the norm. Alternatively there may be largely symbolic actions (for example, limited recognition of a group, identity or behaviour) taken by social institutions to stop or prevent the crisis from growing instead of going the route of legal or social penalties. The idea that these events might be cyclical is not accounted for - just that the frame is disproportionate to the event and the episodes are short in duration. Adding to these consequences, Critcher contends that there is also the sense that moral panics reaffirm the core moral values of a society. This further requires that both individuals and social institutions reaffirm their commitment to the ideals, lifestyles or values of a given society.¹²¹ In some cases these may even be orchestrated

¹²⁰ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, “Moral Panics:...” : 33-34.

¹²¹ Critcher “Moral Panic Analysis:...” p. 1134.

panics - the event hasn't even happened yet but operate to highlight the importance of the ideals, lifestyles, or institutions within a society.

There are however, several differences between these two frameworks. Within Cohen's processual model of moral panic the media has a dominant role either as the instigators or supporters of the moral panic with the role of offering information with a view to galvanizing public support and imagination. In contrast, Goode and Ben-Yehuda's attributional model view the media as a more passive figure serving more as a forum for the various actors involved in the panic.¹²² From this the question arises: where might the origin of the panic be located if not with the media and their prominence in a community?

Second, in Cohen's model state level actors are often part of the *framing* of the moral panic while within Goode and Ben-Yehuda's model the emphasis is on the *strategies* of the actors or moral entrepreneurs to influence, contain or directly dictate public opinion.¹²³ There are implications here as to the social location of the actors with all their attendant resources, access to power and how it is used or expressed. It also shifts the discussion of the origins of moral panics to possible macro level actors. This is problematic as it does not incorporate the normative aspirations of "the masses". Nor does it incorporate discussions of how actors may access the mechanisms for claiming recognition and generating normative change. Lastly, within the attributional model (Cohen) is an examination of the language used to create the claims used by the actors

¹²² *ibid.* p. 1134.

¹²³ *ibid.*

and the arguments being made. The processual model (Goode and Ben-Yehuda) examines the ideological discourses (for example the language of law and order) employed during the panic and how that impacts the direction, content, and resolution of the moral panic.¹²⁴

The levelling off and decline of a moral panic will occur when it is displaced by other and potentially newer problems again usually raised by media concerns; the apparent or symbolic ending of the problem through legal or other related means; a visible decline in the problematic actions through coercive strategies; and challenges to the claims made by the originators of the moral panic.¹²⁵ In reflecting on the ending of moral panics this has become a marker of distinction from moral regulation - that the sensationalism of moral panics and the replacement of one issue with another means that it will naturally have a limited shelf life in the public imagination. Moral regulation requires a much longer duration to achieve some sense of a similarly incomplete resolution before the same issue makes a reappearance in the future.

Since the research of the 1990s, Critcher has attempted to create a continuum of issues that could be termed moral panics using three criteria: a threat to the moral order, social control, and the identification of a solution for resolving the issue, and last (and most recently), the addition of governmentality.¹²⁶ While moral regulation examines the judgement of norms and behaviours, governmentality offers the *mode* for change to

¹²⁴ Critcher, "Moral Panic Analysis:..." p. 1135.

¹²⁵ Thompson *Moral Panics* p. 8-10.

¹²⁶ Chas Critcher, "Widening the Focus: Moral Panics as Moral Regulation" *British Journal of Criminology* 2009 49: 26.

occur. As Macleod and Durrheim note,

disciplinary technology has as its aim the regulation and normalization of subjects. ... Disciplinary technology operates through hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. Measurement and observation produce a knowledge in which it is possible to classify each subject in a system of gradated, hierarchical levels.¹²⁷

The desired result of governmentality is for the subject to reach the point whereby they govern themselves without the “oversight” or influence of community norms and practices - it becomes absorbed into their everyday life. This asks the question of whether there is a need to consider the ethical formation of the self as either a strategy of a moral panic or part of the outcome.¹²⁸ For Critcher, the emphasis on the first two criteria would lend the analysis more towards moral panic. If there was a sustained emphasis on this last component (governmentality) it would mean that the issue would be more suited to an analysis through the lens of moral regulation. One thing that theorists of moral panics agree on is that these panics are short while moral regulation projects have the time or duration and expressed need required for self - (re)formation.

Using these criteria Critcher further outlines the criteria of moral panic to moral regulation continuum: issues that are more likely to be constructed as a threat to the moral order are more likely to become moral panics (for example, types of crime). For him the level of agreement and a public voice is key here. With Critcher's example of crime there is a high level of societal consensus that this is a threat to the moral order

¹²⁷ Catriona Macleod and Kevin Durrheim, “Foucauldian Feminism: the Implications of Governmentality” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 2002 32(1): 48.

¹²⁸ Critcher, “Widening the Focus: ...” p. 26.

and can therefore be effectively constructed as such.¹²⁹ In the middle are the issues that are a little more ambiguous in that they are not immediately seen to be part of a threat to a moral order (for example, internet pornography). Here there is a lower degree of consensus and discursive construction that this is in fact a threat. These types of issues could easily be moved into the first category if there is a trigger event that could galvanize the change. Lastly are issues “that can be highly moralized but that cannot in normal circumstances be perceived or constructed as threats to moral order.”¹³⁰ In this category Critcher includes issues pertaining to sexually transmitted diseases.¹³¹ Critcher’s typology could be useful as a starting point for a framework with which to classify areas of interest or issues that could generate a moral panic. The inclusion of a basic method for calculating the perception of an issue and public consensus on its “moral character” could be something that could be measured through public forums such as letters to the editor in a newspaper. Critcher’s incorporation of governmentality in the continuum makes a stronger link to the idea that moral panics are an offshoot of

¹²⁹ *ibid.* p. 27.

¹³⁰ *ibid.* p. 27.

¹³¹ *ibid.* p. 27. I would disagree with his examples for the middle and last feature of the continuum because in a given context an issue such as sexually transmitted diseases or internet pornography could be seen as a threat to wider sexual norms which would also make them suitable for an analysis using a moral panic framework. However, when viewed through a lens of governmentality and self regulation (as will be explored later), these issues could be more effectively examined within a framework of moral regulation and governmentality. For example as John Parascandola *Sex, Sin, and Science: a history of syphilis in America* (Praeger: Westport, Conn., 2008) demonstrates the diagnosis of sexually transmitted diseases amongst women during World War II in some parts of the United States meant being housed in camps until not only the disease was contained or cured but they had “relearned” the rules of social conduct with regards to intimate social interactions. Joan Sangster *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 2001) demonstrates a similar type of programming for delinquent girls.

moral regulation. This would offer a way of analyzing how moral panics could lead to changes in actions or behaviours or possibly evolve into moral regulation projects.

Moral panic models may be useful as a means of examining the rise and fall of social problems within a given time frame, however they remain media oriented without a critique of the reasons why media would be the driving force in this process. The analytical emphasis also remains on the perpetrators and their challenge to existing social norms. There is less concern with how these challenges may change social norms or impact the real or perceived perpetrators through a redefinition of identity or behaviour. Ultimately, moral panic analyses offer limited insight into the public perception of social deviance, the nature of social cohesion and how the public imagination is engaged in this process.

Moral Regulation

The theoretical entrée into moral regulation frameworks often begins with Corrigan and Sayer and their work on the evolution and acceptance of the English state.¹³² Their aim was to examine the relationship between citizens and the state's role as more than an arm for social control over its citizens. Their challenge was to consider how the State aims to create "new social identities - a new moral order, a new kind of civilization, a different socialization."¹³³ The primary modes of influencing this kind of citizenship by the State are demonstrated through variables such as gender, class, religion, and the nation. These variables contain not just moral connotations but ways of

¹³² Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1985).

¹³³ Corrigan and Sayer, *The Great Arch*:... p.

influencing identity and subjectivity as they connect to social citizenship and the State.

For Corrigan and Sayer, moral regulation is:

a project of normalizing, rendering natural, taken for granted, in a word 'obvious', what are in fact ontological and epistemological premises of a particular and historical form of social order. Moral regulation is coextensive with state formation, and state forms are always animated and legitimated by a particular moral ethos.¹³⁴

The state contributes to creating "proper" citizens and clearly delineating an "Us" and "Other" dynamic with the state being the mediating actor. By remaking and redefining "the citizen" the state creates a new subjectivity of what it means to be and subsequently live as that ideal citizen. Examples of this could include: the roles of voter, taxpayer, the formal rules of legal (and social) citizenship, duties and obligations of participating in civil society, etc., through their transformation and definition citizen. It "is not just about changing deeds of ownership or capturing 'power', but *making* new ways of relating, new social identities - a new moral order, a new kind of civilization, a different socialization."¹³⁵ This is an explicitly Marxist project with the maintenance of a top down vision of social citizenship created and enforced by the state. Their use of a Marxist approach remains a common point for initial critique in their vision of moral regulation.¹³⁶ A second critique surrounds their placement of the state as the central site

¹³⁴ *ibid.* p. 4.

¹³⁵ *ibid.* p. 207. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁶ It should be noted that between 1960 and 1990 many - if not most - studies of both moral regulation and moral panic examined instances of politically conservative or punitive examples as demonstrated above. While this is in part to do with the context in which many of these authors were writing and the state of sociology at that time, it is possible to apply both moral panic and moral regulation to examples that are both politically centrist and leftist in origins. For example, donations to non profit organizations as a form of social cohesion and marker of civil society and the development of these kinds of campaigns.

of moral regulation. Other theorists following Corrigan and Sayer have ably demonstrated that there are several other possible actors that are not state institutions (including social organizations, self help regimes, etc.) which enlarge the social sphere that moral regulation may operate within.

Adding to Corrigan and Sayer's initial framework, Alan Hunt shifts the political dimension favoured by Corrigan and Sayer with an examination of the multidirectional origins of moral regulation projects. He has conceptualised the process as: "a moralised subject; a moralised object or target; knowledge; a discourse within which the knowledge is given a normative content; a set of practices; and a harm."¹³⁷ In sum, his framework considers the following elements: agents; targets; tactics or techniques; discourses; and the political context.¹³⁸ In the cases he examines in *Governing Morals*, the agents are often social organizations, and the targets are citizens both within the organization and external to the organization. Determining the full range of potential impact is key in demonstrating that moral regulation is a multidirectional process, not solely top down in form and function. Hunt also considers the potential initiating actors for moral regulation projects to be individuals or groups at all levels of society. In contrast to Goode and Ben-Yehuda, the actors are not solely involved for reasons of status conservation.

For Hunt, moral regulation and eventual governance is not just about governing the "other" but about maintaining social norms within the group. In terms of tactics,

¹³⁷ Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1999) p. 7.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* p. 28.

Hunt describes a number of ways in which this could be accomplished including legal structures and other forms of social “pressure” that can be brought to bear on an individual or community. In some cases this may take the form of offering the subject a reward as a motivation to change.¹³⁹ In turn these tactics and techniques are internalized through self discipline and self restraint as habit or character forming and thereby shaping the identity of the “good citizen”. Hunt notes that moral discourses “... link moralized subjects and objects with some moralized practices in such a way as to impute some wider social harm that will be occasioned unless subjects, objects and practices are appropriately regulated.”¹⁴⁰ Hunt recognizes that these projects are frequently framed as political acts concerning the formation of alliances and potential acts of resistance by targeted groups. He also suggests that these projects could connect to social movements, however I’m not convinced that this is necessary (or even desirable) and may limit the theoretical usefulness or applicability.¹⁴¹ While it is entirely possible to think of actors within social movements as moral entrepreneurs it is less likely that the outcomes are linked to self-governance and forms of conduct rather than creating platforms for legal or social change.¹⁴²

In a further contribution to moral regulation theorizing Hunt makes use of

¹³⁹ *ibid.* p. 29.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. 8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² See for example: for example, Nicola Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1997) regarding the temperance movement and moral entrepreneurs in the midst of a social movement. See also Henry Yeomans, “What did the British Temperance Movement accomplish? Attitudes to alcohol, the law and moral regulation” *Sociology* 2011 45(1): 38-53.

Foucault's ideas concerning the governance of the self which moves beyond an analysis of constructed problematic behaviours and into the shaping of a social self through self-formation and conduct. This is done through mechanisms of self-restraint and self-discipline, in other words self-governance which will be discussed shortly. The use of governmentality as an accompaniment to moral regulation offers a path to examining the tools and technologies used to encourage and facilitate individual and group change towards new or adapting norms.

This shift in moral regulation theorizing further identifies what is deemed to be a moral act and how they are framed as discourses. "Morals" are not defined as morality and ethics (although it can be phrased as such) however, as Rimke and Hunt note "moral" "designates a field that problematizes the link between personal character and conduct and potential social harm, disturbance and disorder."¹⁴³ As noted above Critcher further differentiates moral panic from moral regulation by claiming that there is an ethical self-regulation that is occurring. The typology he uses includes: "ethical regulation that involves governance of the self based on exhortation that does not involve control of others; regulation that does involve a balance of actions directed at others with actions directed at the regulation of the self; regulation that is directed at the actions of others and only rarely and then implicitly at the self."¹⁴⁴ Thus a normative

¹⁴³ Heidi Rimke and Alan Hunt, "From sinners to degenerates: the medicalization of morality in the 19th century" *History of the Human Sciences* 2002 15(1): 61 and see also for example, Caroline Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto: 1997); Deborah Brock (Ed) *Making Normal: social regulation in Canada* (Nelson Thomson Learning: Toronto, 2003).

¹⁴⁴ Critcher, "Widening the Focus:..." p. 29.

judgment is used to justify “corrective” actions that are undertaken to modify the real or perceived problem and promote other actions deemed in some way “better” as a mechanism of self regulation and then subsequent ethical self-formation.

Moral regulation as a process for developing and establishing norms

I view moral regulation as a somewhat circular process as many moral regulation projects at their core remain similar over time in that the anxiety may be the same however the context may change. In other words, they may go through some sense of resolution for a short time but then resurface to become part of the public debate again due to social characteristics or norm based change. Issues of moral regulation are rarely fully resolved as society reinvents itself through norms which reflect the needs of the population, their economic and social position and the ever-changing moral landscape. For example, alcoholism, delinquency and forms of sexuality and/or sexual expression have been rallying points for social, legal or medical regulation consistently at various points in a society’s lifecycle.¹⁴⁵ All of these issues were considered to have been resolved either through legislation or other socially derived options (education programs, rehabilitation, acceptance, inclusion, ostracism of individuals, etc.) and new forms of normative adaptation appear to be complete. While this may be the case for a period of time, all of these issues have returned to the foreground of public debate. They re-emerge as the pressures of social change, communication, and access to information and new technology, etc., bring to light the ways in which the existing social norms are

¹⁴⁵ See for example, Biesel *Imperiled Innocents*, Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal’s Modern Girls and the Law, 1869-1945* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2006); Heidi Coombs-Thorne, “ “Mrs. Tilley had a *very* hasty wedding!”: The Class-Based Response to Marriages in the Grenfell Mission of Newfoundland and Labrador” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 2010 27(1): 123-138.

out of sync with current practices and standards and therefore require reexamination and/or redefinition. From this new or recurring programmes and initiatives are revived to promote new and “appropriate” ways of living.

As with Miller and Rose, the emphasis is placed on several possible forms of interaction between social groups. As discussed previously, the relationship between the "governed" and the "governor" is often a tenuous one and is also multidirectional in nature and the cyclical nature of moral regulation ensures this. For example, the initiatives undertaken by the members of the temperance movement from the early twentieth century were as much about decreasing lower-class drinking and debauchery and improving their leisure habits, as it was about saving and keeping middle-class families from real or perceived destructive fates. Members demonstrated and lived out their own commitment to temperance as they expected others to as well. In the end, because of their multidirectional content and execution moral regulation projects rarely impact just the one intended group but are spread throughout society.

Projects of moral regulation using techniques of governance are not always projects of social reform led by community leaders and voluntary organizations. Government, understood in this sense, draws our attention to the ways in which the conduct of personal life has become a crucial mechanism in the exercise of political power, including the active promotion of social well-being and the public good through initiatives and programmes ranging from the remodelling of urban architecture and sewage systems, through the control of vagrancy and pauperism, to the ordering of family life and personal habits.¹⁴⁶

Moral regulation projects are silently (or sometimes loudly, proudly, and

¹⁴⁶ Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, “The Tavistock Programme: The Government of Subjectivity and Social Life” *Sociology* 1988 22(2): 174.

financially) endorsed by government agencies and authorities as well as, for example, economic, educational, religious, or medical organizations. These types of agencies and organizations may position themselves as the authority who can identify and define what is “moral”. These actors can rely on previously acquired knowledge and their already claimed authority to formalize the regimes that would act to change, modify, codify, etc., the contentious practices that moral regulation and governmentality projects are being organized around. These groups and agencies are also privy to a multitude of discourses, signs, symbols, and places of power that will either enhance or diminish the problem at hand. Still, the dynamics of moral regulation seem to extend in a circular fashion: from the community, the “experts” and “authorities”, through individuals and back to their communities of affiliation and often back to the authorities. The reasons for each of these links are sometimes about power and sometimes about conformity under the guise of community stability. For the purposes of this discussion a community (as defined through multiple meanings) is recognized as being a potential origin or site of moral regulation projects.

Community Cohesion: adaptation and incorporation

At the most basic level, communities are composed of individuals with common lifestyles, beliefs, values, anxieties, etc. For Rose:

community proposes a relation that appears less ‘remote’, more ‘direct’, one which occurs not in the ‘artificial’ political space of society, but in matrices of affinity that appear more natural. One’s communities are nothing more – or less – than those networks of allegiance with which one identifies existentially, traditionally, emotionally or spontaneously,

seemingly beyond and above any calculated assessment of self-interest.¹⁴⁷

In addition, an individual's participation could be reflected through the physical geography of the community in terms of residence, the prevailing social and economic status within the community, or its politics. This is not to say however, that individuals cannot be a part of multiple communities, each with their own characteristics and expectations. As will be shown throughout this research, participation in multiple organizations with divergent aims was common. The next level would place the community within some version of a municipal context and then go through the process of eventually linking it with the state which would codify among other things, a community's social, cultural, and economic expectations. Alternatively for Rose,

the community of the third sector, the third space, the third way of governing is not primarily a geographical space, a social space, a sociological space or a space of services, although it may attach itself to any or all such spatializations. It is a moral field binding persons into durable relations. It is a space of *emotional relationships* through which *individual identities* are constructed through their bonds to *micro-cultures* of values and meanings.¹⁴⁸

It is useful to consider both the geographical as well as the "moral field" because geographical boundaries (eg. ethnic ghettos, red light districts, etc) and social, political, economic identities can also be used to identify or contain social problems as well as the other relationships that bind the community. The power to create these geographic and moral separations "places its objects beyond a boundary that delimits for a social group

¹⁴⁷ Nikolas Rose, "The Death of the Social? Re-figuring the territory of government" *Economy and Society* 1996 25(3): 334

¹⁴⁸ Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1999) p. 172. Emphasis in original.

what its members are to value as real and true.”¹⁴⁹

What holds the community together is expressed through the product of their social expectations and norms or standards. This idea of community cohesion, is best theorized by Durkheim among others who implied that community cohesion or “moral constraint is indeed the essence of collective life.”¹⁵⁰ As discussed previously, Durkheim theorized that morals were just one part of the organic solidarity that bound the community and that the sanctions applied to seemingly non-normative or deviant acts were necessary for the preservation of the community equilibrium. Within that solidarity the individual is conceived as being:

... a moral individual with bonds of obligation and responsibilities for conduct that are assembled in a new way - the individual in his or her community is both self responsible and subject to certain emotional bonds of affinity to a circumscribed ‘network’ of other individuals - unified by family ties, by locality, by moral commitment to environmental protection or animal welfare.¹⁵¹

This implies that the individual has an obligation to both themselves and the group or community to support and maintain the values of the larger group. This does not mean however that the actions of the individual are merely subsumed by the group. It does however, link the ways that governmentality works towards governing others as well as the self. The “social citizen” is perceived as a constant reflection of community norms and ideals. Community is not just a territorial entity but a social one that adheres to a set

¹⁴⁹ William Ray Arney and Bernard J. Bergen, “Power and Visibility: The Invention of Teenage Pregnancy” *Social Science Medicine* 1984 18(1): 11.

¹⁵⁰ Richard Hilbert, “Anomie and the Moral Regulation of Reality: The Durkheimian Tradition in modern Relief” *Sociological Theory* 1986 4: 2

¹⁵¹ Rose, “The Death of the Social?:...” p. 334.

of practices that:

is itself a means of government: its detailed knowledge about itself and the activities of its inhabitants are to be utilized, its ties, bonds, forces and affiliations are to be celebrated, its centres of authority and methods of dispute resolution are to be nurtured, shaped and instrumentalized to enhance the security of each and of all.¹⁵²

These forms of government ensure that the needs of a community are being met and that members are part of that cohesive whole. However, because societies are not static, the role and function of relationships and norms change which means that the guiding norms of a community will also change. When the community ideals are being challenged, one way to reconnect the discordant sections of the community into something resembling cohesion and solidarity again, is by an “expert authority” which will provide direction and “relief” for all those concerned.¹⁵³ As Miller and Rose astutely note: “for something to be manageable it must first be knowable.”¹⁵⁴

Who Knows? Authorities, Experts and Re-shaping the Social

Within moral regulation literature, the issue of authority is one that is also well addressed.¹⁵⁵ The bulk of Nikolas Rose’s work in the areas of governmentality and moral regulation centres around the role of “the authority” who is, for him, usually presented as a member of a professional group (psychiatrist, physician, sociologist, criminologist, etc). The professional is one who can shape the way that moral regulation projects are undertaken usually in a top - down fashion. While this is an obvious and necessary view

¹⁵² Nikolas Rose, “Government and Control” *British Journal of Criminology* 2000 40(2): 329.

¹⁵³ Nikolas Rose, “Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism” *Economy and Society* 1993 22(3): 285.

¹⁵⁴ Miller and Rose, “The Tavistock Programme: ...” p. 174.

¹⁵⁵ See for example: Rose, 1989, 1993, 1994, 1996.

of the origins of a moral regulation project, what is also required is the need to look at authority as originating from the any social position. Moral regulation projects are also initiated by social classes at the bottom or the middle of society and by those who are not necessarily accredited professionals in the realm of the social, medical or professional realms for example. Questions need to be asked about the nature of authority and what that label includes or allows actors to do in a practical and contextual fashion. By extending the potential range of analysis, the role of authority opens to others without the assumed formal characteristics of an expert (education, capital, statuses, etc) and can (and should) include positions and causes taken by the middle- and lower- "classes" and other attendant forms and content of knowledge. This would effectively illustrate some of the ways that those without dominant social power or capital either resisted moral regulation projects or in some fashion led or influenced them.

A demonstration of power is not the primary rationale for initiating moral regulation or governance projects however there is an element of power that cannot be dismissed. With reference to Foucault's work Gordon notes that, "power is defined as 'actions on others' actions': that is, it presupposes rather than annuls their capacity as agents; it acts upon, and through, an open set of practical and ethical possibilities."¹⁵⁶ This formulation of power provides some means of being able to examine the forms of capital or power available to those who are marginalized or sanctioned and therefore have the unique ability to be everywhere or nowhere. Speaking of power in this fluid

¹⁵⁶ Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: ..." p. 5.

fashion goes back to the links made between the “governed” and the “governor”. As has been previously mentioned, projects of moral regulation are also about changing the conduct of both groups. What should be further investigated here is the development of interchangeable relationships and positions between these two groups and how these roles change the subjective experience of norms and identity.

Following this, those who could initiate moral regulation projects constitute several groups ranging from (but not exclusive to), governments/states, accredited professionals, voluntary organizations and the self-proclaimed actors.¹⁵⁷ All of the groups in these examples possess their own constituent knowledges, strategies, technologies, and power to govern the conduct of the social citizen. By theoretically isolating the source(s) of authority alongside their attendant levels and characteristics of social power in a given context and through them their interrelationships to individuals and communities, the process and the techniques of moral regulation carried out by each of them becomes clearer.

¹⁵⁷ I have drawn these distinctions or categories based on various substantive readings in this field. While they are not formal and may overlap, they are useful in looking at the role of authority within these realms. In the case of state/government regulation see for example Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power, Rule and Authority* (Sage: London, 1999) and Margaret Little, *‘No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit’: The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 1998); for the role of the accredited professionals see for example Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Postwar Canada* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1999) and Deborah Lupton, *The Imperative of Health: Public Health and the Regulated Body* (Sage: London, 1995); for voluntary organizations see for example Arnup (1994) and Cynthia Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies: Saving Ontario’s Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* (McGill-Queen’s University Press: Montreal & Kingston, 1993); in the case of the self-proclaimed expert there are many (historical and contemporary) examples including pseudo - physicians, educators outside their fields, religious figures, social reformers or activists, etc. See for example, Christabelle Sethna, “Men, Sex, and Education: The Ontario Women’s Temperance Union and Children’s Sex Education, 1900-20” *Ontario History* 1996 Sept LXXXVII(30): 185-206.

In the case of governments or states, the use of census figures for example, have been used to determine where funding will be allocated and what laws and social policies are implemented often in a top-down fashion. This has the effect of refocusing the political agenda around key issues and policies particular to those in power and has the side benefit of refocusing public opinion and action into possible realms of self-governance. According to Corrigan, “what the state regulates are thus moral features of the social environment, above all the encouraged/discouraged forms of expression, depressing, repressing, and suppressing *alternative* forms which portray contrasting moralities.”¹⁵⁸ Governments have the capacity to make social problems visible through the use of surveys, reports, funding, etc., which not only exposes a problem but provides a new forum for discussing it and influencing the range of possible actions to ameliorate the issue. Concurrently this process of classifying social problems enables the state to have less involvement in the solution while unobtrusively monitoring the progress of those who have taken up with the cause. This redistribution of political power has meant for Rose, that “the state now appears simply as one element - whose functionality is historically specific and contextually variable - in multiple circuits of power, connecting a diversity of authorities and forces within a whole variety of complex assemblages.”¹⁵⁹

Accredited professionals are often entrusted as the expert simply through their attained education and experience or the trust given to them by communities or other

¹⁵⁸ Phillip Corrigan, “On Moral Regulation: Some Preliminary Remarks” *The Sociological Review* 1981 29(2): 327 (emphasis in original).

¹⁵⁹ Rose, *Powers of Freedom*:... p. 5.

actors, which enables them to help shape communities and “societies” through their presence in the community. They have been given:

... special authority in practices that not only try to order human affairs to minimize miseries, risks and dangers, resolve conflicts, but also claim to help us achieve individual and collective security, health, welfare, wealth and even happiness.¹⁶⁰

The circle then turns back when such professionals are in turn regulated by the state in the form of consumer protections for example, through techniques of performance. These “are utilized from above, as an indirect means of regulating agencies, of transforming professionals into ‘calculating individuals’ within ‘calculable spaces’, subject to particular ‘calculative regimes’...”¹⁶¹ While the experts themselves have an evolving relationship with both the public and other centralized bodies, they are still relied upon to provide direction. Experts such as physicians have the tools and opportunities to generate data about social groups to aid in claims-making activities that may in turn be used as evidence of social disorder or equilibrium. Social scientists are another group that are often relied upon for their ability to gather data and offer skills to communities or other actors to provide direction and information regarding social problems.

In the main, accredited experts such as physicians, academics or other policy makers have been able to persuasively pathologize or normalize ideas and behaviours, etc which will effectively (re)construct or eliminate “problematic” communities and

¹⁶⁰ Nikolas Rose, “Expertise and the Government of Conduct” *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society* 1994 14: 359.

¹⁶¹ Dean, *Governmentality*: ... p. 169.

individuals.¹⁶² The accumulation of knowledge through education, experience, or other forms of formalized training have created these capacities and access to a myriad of tools (including language and forms of analysis) with which to explain social practices that may be framed as problematic. Their visibility and accessibility to various communities gives them opportunities for interactions at the local level that the state or other institutions may not have. In addition, credentials have the added bonus of being considered “official” regardless of the information being disseminated. This immediately puts the expert in a place of credibility and in control of some version of “truth”. It does not mean that there is complete agreement among the experts but it does produce a diversity of opinions and each collects its own following which may help various causes. Knowledge becomes “an apparatus for the production, circulation, accumulation, authorization and realization of truth. And truth is a technical matter - it is the ‘know how’ that promises to make government possible.”¹⁶³

Consequently, the rationale of the expert for their participation in a moral regulation project is something that also needs to be considered. The altruism of the expert is sometimes doubtful and among other things, the expert demands,

that economic, familial and social arrangements are governed according to their particular schemes, attempt to mobilize political resources such

¹⁶² Lutz Raphael calls this involvement by social scientists in the early part of the twentieth-century “scientization of the social” “Embedding the Human and Social Sciences in Western Societies, 1880-1980” in *Engineering Society: the Role of the Human and Social Sciences in modern Societies, 1880-1980* Kerstin Brückweh, Dirk Schumann, Richard F. Wetzell and Benjamin Ziemann (Eds) (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); Stefan Königeter, “Surveilling and Surveying Slums: The Transnational Translation of the City as a Social Problem” in *Transnational Social Policy: Social Welfare in a World on the Move* in Luann Good Gingrich and Stefan Königeter (Eds) (New York: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁶³ Rose, “Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism” p. 291.

as legislation, funding, or organizational capacity for their own ends.¹⁶⁴

While experts may have their own agendas, they still need the affected community to be receptive to proposed programs of change. Resistance in this case may form the basis for other forms of identity and may push the community towards devising their own form of moral regulation to retain the existing norms and identities.

Traditionally, voluntary organizations are most closely associated with moral and social reform projects. Voluntary organizations are effective because they are locally based and thereby know their surrounding community and its members. They may also have links to broader networks that will work on their behalf to further benefit the project. Their networks, knowledge and access are frequently useful to other organizations (either formal or informally based) because they have access to both public and private spaces that certain official groups initially (the medical community or government agencies for example) may not have. In spite of this, the use of voluntary organizations to further social, economic or political goals does not always include a close association with the state however, the often political nature of both voluntary organizations and their projects cannot be overlooked. As Valverde and Weir state:

there is, in other words, not only a pragmatic but also a structural reason why voluntary organizations are essential to moral reform campaigns of whatever political stripe. These organizations cannot be seen as mere pawns of the state engaged in doing its dirty ideological work in puppet-like fashion; voluntary organizations have their own agendas and are in

¹⁶⁴ Rose, "Expertise and the Government of Conduct" p. 365-366.

some ways in opposition to the state even when they receive most of their funding from it.¹⁶⁵

As such, these types of organizations are placed in a symbiotic relationship with the state because the state could not implement policies, etc without the endorsement of the membership of the voluntary group, and some groups could not exist without the funding of the state. As Rose notes, “it is dependent upon the *political authorization* of the authority of these authorities, upon the *forging of alignments* between political aims and the strategies of experts, and upon *establishing relays* between the calculations of authorities and the aspirations of free citizens.”¹⁶⁶ Voluntary organizations have also taken their prompting from both these sources (government and the accredited professional) with the aim of shaping their communities to some ideal vision. Again, there are overlaps among these authorities that have the potential to make their aims coterminal.

Lastly, the self-proclaimed expert is sometimes viewed as being on the fringes but still speaks to the ideals of their preferred populations.¹⁶⁷ Using discourses and symbols that are common and familiar to a specific group, the self-proclaimed expert often plays on the fears of the community and can set in motion a different set of

¹⁶⁵ Mariana Valverde and Lorna Weir “The Struggles of the Immoral: Preliminary Remarks on Moral Regulation” *RFR/DRF* 1988 17(3): 32; Alan Hunt, “The Purity Wars: Making Sense of Moral Militancy” *Theoretical Criminology* 1999 3(4): 409-436.

¹⁶⁶ Rose “Expertise and the Government of Conduct” p. 364. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁷ For example, in the early twentieth-century self-styled sociologists/social workers/scientists rose to prominence with their involvement in the relatively new field of social surveys and social welfare. These individuals often had only minimal backgrounds in these fields but knew what they wanted to prove through their studies which in turn made them a success and provided some measure of credibility. For example, while the methods of Francis Galton were not overly reliable, he spoke to a growing fear of racial and physical degeneracy which made him popular and credible as the “founder” of eugenics. McLaren *Our Own Master Race*:...

sometimes unintended responses. While the self proclaimed expert may not have the backing of other types of authority, they are able to gain the ear of investors to promote norms and ideals that resonate with a community. The resulting character reformation here is not consistent throughout a physical community but at the level of the individual.

All of these “authorities” use various techniques and technologies to inform and educate both those being targeted and the general public. The authorities use their public or professional position and knowledge to define the problem and propose solutions. With the attendant knowledge of the subject or community, they will develop the techniques and technologies available to them to implement moral regulation projects.

Social Service Organizations and Moral Regulation

In the case of this research, I am considering the National Council of Women of Canada and related social organizations to be one point of authority. The origins of middle-class women’s organizations have made them an obvious and natural choice for moral regulation projects. As organizations that worked to protect women and enhance their communities, they were involved in shaping the physical and social environment that women lived and worked in. In their attempts to retain and promote a specific idea of womanhood they relied on their previously attained status of “moral guardians” to promote and enhance women’s social and reproductive roles as mothers. Their use of additional professionals (such as physicians, local and national businessmen, clergy, educators, and politicians) helped to bolster their claims for authority by confirming

their specific ideals and visions for women's lives. This helped both sets of experts to create effective discourses promoting motherhood as the desired female state.

By positioning themselves as agents of moral regulation, women's organizations were already well connected to both their subject and their sphere of influence. In the main, voluntary organizations have been most closely associated with moral and social reform projects due to the range of social concerns and techniques they have available to them. Voluntary organizations have been effective in their work because they were locally based and therefore had specific knowledge of their community and its members. As discussed previously voluntary organizations may also have links to broader networks that will work on their behalf to further their aims. This is the case for the women's organizations featured in this research as they needed to work with other organizations that had the capacity to develop and run programmes to promote specific outcomes towards the social citizen. In addition, voluntary organizations are useful to other institutions because they have access to both public and private spaces that certain official groups initially (for example the medical community or government agencies) may not have. Thus, their early origins depended on their status as mothers thereby claiming on moral grounds that they should be involved in the public development of Canadian society.

Intersectionality offers another mode of understanding how women's organizations shaped and used women's roles and facets of their identity to inform their involvement in moral regulation projects. The use of variables such as culture, faith, motherhood and women more generally, cannot be disentangled and treated separately

and still apply to the issues under examination in this work. Intersectionality has been used as a tool to analyse how identity and social location function in systems of oppression for women of colour. The inclusion of intersectionality here could help situate how the various strands of identity and social characteristics shaped the responses of women's organizations to the norms of the period.¹⁶⁸ As Levine-Rasky notes, identity and forms of inclusion/exclusion are "contingent upon social, political, and ideological contexts that produce and sustain them. ... it is wholly relational to others, to culture, and to organizations in which one moves."¹⁶⁹ In this case, moral regulation produces and sustains forms of identity that work in tandem with new or existing social structures and norms. In the context of social movements the reliance on collective identity as a mode of communicating the needs and aims of the movement complicates the incorporation of the range of social positions that members come from.¹⁷⁰ How do organizations acknowledge differences in identity and social position among the membership? In this case affiliated organizations represent the diversity in Canadian society of women's experiences and the range of social positions they occupy which may also be influenced through systems of oppression or privilege.

Applying intersectionality to this context would require examining identity on a

¹⁶⁸ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist theory, and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 14: 139-167.

¹⁶⁹ Cynthia Levine-Rasky, "Intersectionality theory applied to whiteness and middle-classness" *Social Identities* 2011 17(2): 239-253.

¹⁷⁰ See for example: Veronica Terriquez, Tizoc Brenes, Abdiel Lopez, "Intersectionality as a multipurpose collective action frame: The case of the undocumented youth movement" *Ethnicities* 2018 18(2): 260-276; Éléonore Lépinard, "Doing Intersectionality: Repertoires of Feminist Practices in France and Canada" *Gender & Society* 2014 28(6): 877-903.

number of levels: first, through the diversity of membership; second, through the population that they claim to represent; and third in the creation of straw figures that would become the dominant form organizations such as the NCW would use to operationalize motherhood and women's intimate lives. As will be shown throughout this work, women's organizations would incorporate multiple identities as sources of institutional understanding and identity as a moral proposition. Positioning themselves as sources of authority regarding women's lives implies that they had an understanding of how systems and institutions regulated women and this would become their basis for activism.

Part of framing the process of moral regulation involves identifying an authority that will speak for and initiate discourses with the aim of ameliorating a particular "condition". Authority may be assumed by those making the claim through their own definition and the pathways they have available to them to influence the social problem. As will be demonstrated in throughout this research, authority is not solely understood to mean the state, professional or accredited individuals and organizations. Women's organizations situated themselves as an authority through their claims-making and knowledge of women's lives and then related it to their advocacy. While the knowledge, support and credibility of a well-placed professional are often sought after, professionals are not always the instigators of moral regulation projects.¹⁷¹ As Rose remarks, "in the name of social and personal well-being, a complex apparatus of health and therapeutics

¹⁷¹ Sethna examines the WCTU's hiring of social reformer W.E.A. Beall to deliver temperance and sexual purity lectures in the public school system. "Men, Sex, and Education: ...".

has been assembled, concerned with the management of the individual and social body as a vital national resource, and the management of 'problems of living,' made up of techniques of advice and guidance, medics, clinics, guides and counsellors."¹⁷² As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the origins of middle-class women's organizations have made them an obvious and natural choice for leading moral regulation projects. In their attempts to retain and promote a specific ideal of womanhood, they relied on the previously attained status of "moral guardians" to promote and enhance women's social and reproductive roles as mothers. The National Council made use of professionals to bolster their claims or alternatively to provide case studies which would form the basis of their own moral regulation and governmentality based projects. This would provide a language and basis for understanding new claims as to the morality of birth control, the female sexual instinct and motherhood. As will be shown in future chapters, the reliance on different types of authority enabled multiple sets of experts to create effective discourses promoting motherhood as the desired female state.

Women's Organizations: Moral Regulation or Social Control?

Social historians have challenged the idea that women's organizations were involved in either moral regulation or social control projects.¹⁷³ Ambrose and Kechnie for example, offer two perspectives on the work of the Women's Institutes in Ontario ostensibly through the lenses of "Social Control or Social Feminism" as their title suggests. In this article Ambrose and Kechnie start with an analysis of the effects the

¹⁷² Rose, "Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism" p. 286.

¹⁷³ Linda M. Ambrose and Margaret Kechnie, "Social Control or Social Feminism?: Two Views of the Ontario Women's Institutes" *Agricultural History* 1999 73(2): 222-237.

Women's Institutes (WI) in rural areas and their relationship with the Department of Agriculture. It is necessary to acknowledge the role of the state in the context of the Women's Institutes because that is where their funding and much of their more formal program initiatives and organizational structures came from. The WI was established through the Department of Agriculture as a companion class to Farmer's Institutes and membership grew through not only farming communities but urban expansion as well.¹⁷⁴ While the WI was under the aegis of the provincial government, this would become problematic when uncomfortable issues of suffrage for example, arose for discussion by local branches.

As they move into their analysis Kechnie and Ambrose do not actually explain what they mean by social control:

In the first part Kechnie takes a "top-down" approach, focusing on organizational aspects of the WI to argue that the Ontario Department of Agriculture used urban-based domestic science experts, wives of well-to-do farmers, and small-town elite women to impose middle-class ideals and values on others while ignoring the needs of women farmers. In the second part, Ambrose looks at the WI through the rank-and-file members. This "bottom-up" approach suggests that rural women actively sought to improve their own quality of life, but they did not passively comply with directives from either government or elite WI organizers.¹⁷⁵

Instead of defining and utilizing the concept of social control as a theoretical construct in the strictest sense, they use the concept as a means of framing historical debate. It appears that Ambrose and Kechnie use the term "social control" to describe the power

¹⁷⁴ Louise Carbert, *Agrarian Feminism: The Politics of Ontario Farm Women* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1995) Ch.1. *Ambrose For Home and Country...*

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* p. 222-223. They use the definition of social feminism as proposed by Naomi Black in 1989, "the refusal to allow the exclusion from social influence not just of women as individuals but of the values and competencies associated with women." p. 233.

dynamic between the Women's Institute leaders and the membership. While this is partially accurate it is only one element of social control. Using this approach could be useful if they were to move beyond examining the organization from either a "top-down" or "bottom-up" approach and interrogate how these approaches influenced the actions of the WI.¹⁷⁶ Simply claiming that social control implies a "top-down" leadership approach does not provide enough of a basis for making use of social control as a theoretical framework.

Kechnie begins her analysis by examining the class dimensions of those who comprised the membership of the Executive. She deduced that it was primarily urban women with time and money who set the agenda of the WI often in conjunction with the provincial government.¹⁷⁷ Kechnie's interpretation of this is to view the composition of leadership as an indication that these "city women" viewed farmwomen as impeding modernization rather than viewing farmwomen as working women.¹⁷⁸ Further to this, Kechnie's description of domestic science as an urban initiative ignores the actions of other WI members and their education initiatives, as was the original purpose of the WI.¹⁷⁹ Kechnie's analysis remains linked to class interests and that cannot be dismissed however, it limits the possibilities of a more complete examination of the varied efforts

¹⁷⁶ For a more complete discussion of the imposed "top down" and informally, decentralized generated "bottom up" approach see for example: Cristiano Castelfranchi, "Formalising the informal? Dynamic social order, bottom-up social control and spontaneous normative relations" *Journal of Applied Logic* 2003 1: 47-92.

¹⁷⁷ Kechnie and Ambrose, "Social Control or Social Feminism?:...." p. 228.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 227.

¹⁷⁹ Carbert, *Agrarian Feminism...* Ch. 1; Amy Parker, "Making the Most of What We Have": *The Women's Institutes of Huron County, Ontario During the Inter-war Period*" (MA thesis, University of Guelph, 2007) Ch. 1.

of *all* members of the WI. In this instance, she focuses solely on the leadership rather than the activities and responses of either the members or the community and their acceptance or rebuttal of the agenda of the WI leadership.

Ambrose uses social feminism to demonstrate how farmwomen were involved in feminist politics as a means of gaining autonomy from the state. This examination of the WI works insofar as it approaches the members of the WI as having their own particular agency and opportunity to create their own programs and agendas. From this perspective, she begins to show how the WI “provided them with some influence in the community as they helped to determine community infrastructure projects, provide social welfare, and create public spaces accessible to women.”¹⁸⁰ Ambrose’s interpretation makes room for an analysis of the WI that is not limiting them to passive efforts but still leaves them rather benign figures in their communities. What is produced through both of their analyses is a narrow view of the leaders and members of the Women’s Institutes without a coherent demonstration of how social control could contribute to their examination of the Women’s Institutes. As shall be demonstrated throughout this dissertation, the National Council of Women of Canada, the Women’s Institute and other organizations are much more flexible in many respects than what Ambrose and Kechnie have portrayed them. For example, most organizations did not operate in a top down fashion, nor did the Executive Council for the NCW. Kechnie and Ambrose characterize the WI leadership and related actors as dismissing the concerns, questions, and actions of their members as a matter of course. As will be demonstrated

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 235.

throughout Chapter Five, the Local Councils (LC) of the NCW challenged the Executive Council on their approach to birth control by not only questioning their stance on the issue but defying the prohibitions placed on them. In the case of the Toronto LC they visited the local birth control clinic, in Winnipeg and Calgary there were members who were on the Executive or worked with the local Birth Control Societies and shared information in their LC meetings. The Women's Institutes have similar examples of instances where they challenged the "top-down" approach that Ambrose and Kechnie describe. These actions demonstrate the multidirectional nature of the organizations which disputes the ways in which Ambrose and Kechnie have used social control.

An examination of social control by Hannu Ruonavaara offers this definition:

[social control] attempts to prevent people from doing certain things without requiring any moral commitment from the controlled. In moral regulatory control such commitment is achieved through the change of identity and acquisition of a particular ethos by the controlled.¹⁸¹

Social control also includes acknowledging the role of discourses, laws, social and cultural norms in reshaping the actions of individuals, communities, etc. The concept also ignores not only the role of individual agency but motivating self interest in the subject's acceptance or rejection of new or existing norms. According to McNay social control could be accomplished through "*regulatory or massification* techniques that focus on the large scale management of populations ... and *individualizing, disciplinary mechanisms* that shape the behaviours and identity of the individual through the

¹⁸¹ Hannu Ruonavaara, "Moral Regulation: A Reformulation" *Sociological Theory* 1997 15(3): 287.

imposition of certain normalizing technologies or practices of the self.”¹⁸² Moral regulation goes beyond social control by not just considering class or state interests:

... but also examining the ways in which they aid, hinder, compete or ally with one another, producing consequences which are not the realization of *any* programme ... [whereas] the language of social control fails to capture the ways in which regulatory practices and techniques have come to operate, not through a crushing of wills or a subjugation of desires but through the promotion of subjectivity, through investments in individual lives, and the forging of alignments between the personal projects of citizens and images of the social order.¹⁸³

Social control also demands that individuals comply with the regulatory factions regardless of individual capacity or interest. Social control mechanisms imply that individuals have no choice but to comply with norm based social projects. This is not usually the case as individuals adopt or adapt such projects as they have the resources to do so or it fits with their general ethos or lifestyle. I do not think that social control offers a viable form of analysis because human subjects will not always comply especially when it is not in their best interests, if they haven't the resources available to them/wish to use them in that fashion, or the programme is not demonstrably beneficial to their communities. Social control will not offer a positive framework for generating either cohesion or processes of adaptation in solving social problems.

Positioning the NCW as an initiator of moral regulation projects is one part of this project, the second is an examination of their use of a variety of tools, strategies and technologies in order to respond to women's changing social identities. I recognize that

¹⁸² Lois McNay, "Self as Enterprise: Dilemmas of Control and Resistance in Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics*" *Theory, Culture & Society* 2009 26(6): 57. Emphasis in original. It should also be noted that McNay positions moral regulation as a form of social control.

¹⁸³ Miller and Rose, "The Tavistock Programme:..." p. 172. Emphasis in original.

this organization did not act alone and will also be incorporating the archival data from other organizations to demonstrate that they were making use of additional networks and resources while continuing to respond to changes in women's lives as a social issue.

Implementing norm-based change through techniques and technologies

As with its theoretical predecessors, contemporary frameworks of moral regulation describe ways in which groups identify and isolate various behaviours, ideas, individuals, etc., that are deemed to be outside the norm. These constructed social problems are then placed on either a small or large-scale public agenda (e.g., community or state) and further linked with the social and economic problems of the day. Another "new" element is the incorporation of an analysis of the techniques and technologies of moral regulation projects and their duration. According to Dean, governing:

... involves some sort of attempt to deliberate on and to direct human conduct. From the perspective of those who seek to govern, human conduct is conceived as something that can be regulated, controlled, shaped and turned to specific ends."¹⁸⁴

By combining moral regulation with governmentality the normative judgements can be demonstrated alongside the modes of governmentality that are meant to modify or ameliorate public anxieties. Technologies and techniques of regulation are the mechanisms for dispersing knowledges, ideas and choices which link discourses, symbols and experiences to the regulating institutions or individuals. Through varying medias, "proper" choices are articulated and the tools are made accessible. Simply put, those who have access to or control of the technologies and discourses are able to create and disseminate knowledge and "truth" claims. In this case, the "truth" claim is

¹⁸⁴ Dean, *Governmentality*: ... p. 11.

represented through the straw figures of motherhood, sexuality and reproductive health.

According to Foucault, there are four major types of technologies:

(1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce transform or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.¹⁸⁵

Building on this framework Dean further differentiates between techniques and technologies of regulation. Technologies offer a rationalization of human behaviours and experiences through “systems of accounting, methods of the organization of work, forms of surveillance, methods of timing and spacing of activities in particular locales, etc.”¹⁸⁶ Dean contends that technologies are “types of schooling and medical practice, systems of income support, forms of administration and ‘corporate management’, systems of intervention into various organizations, and bodies of expertise.”¹⁸⁷ It would also be worthwhile to add other media to these definitions of “official” sources of regulation as they also contribute to the identification of acceptable choices made available to a “knowing” public.

¹⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self” in Luther Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick Hutton (Eds) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst, 1988) p. 18.

¹⁸⁶ Mitchell Dean, “Governmentality...” in *Critical and Effective Histories* (Routledge: London, 1994) p. 187-188.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 187-188.

Dean's conceptualizations stay close to Foucault's project of situating technologies as formal, official and skill oriented with the intended goal of modifying the individual and their behaviours.¹⁸⁸ I would broaden this to include the type, sources of, and access to information dissemination. By separating the modes of regulation from the source, it is possible to talk about the practices that make up regimes of power and who wields them and why. While it is useful to identify "official" modes of regulation and discourses, it is still necessary to examine "unofficial" discourses such as support from independent groups, to gain some insight as to resistance of regulation projects. However, within both Foucault's and Dean's applications there is still room for the subject to create and re-create themselves and their environment through technologies of agency that are:

...the multiple techniques of self-esteem, of empowerment and of consultation and negotiation that are used in activities as diverse as community development, social and environmental impact studies, health promotion campaigns, teaching at all levels, community policing, the combating of various kinds of dependency and so on.¹⁸⁹

Those who are directly targeted by techniques and technologies in moral regulation projects are demystified through the attributing of new meanings, signs, and symbols to their actions by the experts. Appropriate messages are sent out to others specifically outside the target group so they too can be safeguarded. This also helps to complete the groundwork necessary to maintain or reject self-regulation.

As noted above, moral regulation provides for the opportunity or necessity of

¹⁸⁸ Foucault, "Technologies of the Self" p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ Dean, *Governmentality*: ... p. 168.

self-formation through a number of means and identities. The use of governmentality as an organizing principle for constructs of self-formation offers this possibility. According to Foucault government of the self is exercised through an historically contingent assemblage of both actors and techniques including (but not limited to): institutions, procedures, analyses, calculations and tactics.¹⁹⁰ All of which give immeasurable amounts of knowledge to both official and lay actors regarding a population in order to govern and maintain social relations. As Macleod and Durrheim note, “disciplinary technology has as its aim the regulation and normalization of subjects. ... Disciplinary technology operates through hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. Measurement and observation produce a knowledge in which it is possible to classify each subject in a system of gradated, hierarchical levels.”¹⁹¹ The desired result of governmentality is for the subject to reach the point whereby they govern themselves without the “oversight” or influence of community norms and practices - it becomes absorbed into their everyday life. This project of self regulation is accomplished through strategies including regimes of practices. “Regimes of practices” have been described as:

more or less explicit, programmatic attempts to organize institutional spaces, their administrative routines and rituals and the conduct of human actors in specific ways ... It is not therefore a question of tacit practice but of the more or less explicit and calculated attempts to make a difference to particular spaces and the actors that inhabit them.¹⁹²

Through this programmatic process changes to both individual and community norms

¹⁹⁰ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self”

¹⁹¹ Macleod and Durrheim, “Foucauldian Feminism:...” p. 48.

¹⁹² Mitchell Dean, “Questions of method” in Irving Velody and Robin Williams (Eds) *The Politics of Constructionism* (Sage: London, 1998) p. 185.

can occur. The “enforcement” of moral regulation is carried out through the governing of conduct. According to Dean, governing “...involves some sort of attempt to deliberate on and to direct *human* conduct. From the perspective of those who seek to govern, human conduct is conceived as something that can be regulated, controlled, shaped and turned to specific ends.”¹⁹³ Many contemporary theorists of moral regulation start with the Foucauldian idea that characterizes this form of governing as the ‘conduct of conduct’. Dean formulates this as “the study of the practices, techniques and rationalities involved in the calculated shaping of human capabilities and structuring the field of possible actions.”¹⁹⁴ In the case of this project, the possible modes of shaping women’s conduct were varied and include: regulating dance halls, implementing sex education and marital education courses, regulating social spaces and sites of potential delinquency.

While many moral regulation projects are initiated primarily due to middle-class concerns and anxieties, they are not only aimed at the “other” they are also aimed at the members of the group that has identified the real or perceived problem. As Gordon notes with reference to Foucault’s project, “government as an activity could concern the relation between self and self, private interpersonal relations involving some form of control or guidance, relations within social institutions and communities, and finally, relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty.”¹⁹⁵ As with Miller and

¹⁹³ Dean, *Governmentality*: ... p. 11.

¹⁹⁴ Mitchell Dean, “Putting the Technological into government” *History of the Human Social Sciences* 1996 9(6): 47.

¹⁹⁵ Gordon, “Governmental Rationality:...” p. 2-3.

Rose, the emphasis is placed on several possible forms of interaction. Consequently, the relationship between the "governed" and the "governor" is often a tenuous one and is also multidirectional in nature. For example, the initiatives undertaken by the members of the temperance movement from the early twentieth century were as much about decreasing lower-class drinking and debauchery and improving their leisure habits, as it was about saving and keeping middle-class families from real or perceived destructive fates. In the end, because of their multi-directionality moral regulation projects rarely impact just the one intended group but are spread throughout society.

Using moral regulation to examine social anxieties and the creation and adaptation of norms, allows for enough flexibility to consider the impact of subjects that embrace or reject such projects. Evidence of this can be seen through "rebellious" acts that are both situated internally to the project and by the actors that are meant to be "targeted". The rejection of projects based on moral regulation by those who are "targeted" implies a resistance that can be both public and private in nature. For example, individuals publicly speaking or behaving in one fashion while in private spaces doing the opposite or vice versa. Similar concerns such as agency and the origin of these projects are raised with theories of moral panics. Moral panics are seen to have specific beginnings and endings and are predominantly media driven and focused on a single current issue. The lack of historicity combined with an outcome that is based on short-term broad changes rather than long-term, individually shaped changes makes moral panic a less useful tool for framing these types of projects.

In the case of this research, the separation of sex from reproduction in sexual

relationships was a source of anxiety for both women's organizations and parts of general society. A related anxiety was the possibility of non-monogamous, premarital sexual relationships in a more permissive social environment. As a response to these anxieties, the NCW for example sponsored or created programs for women of all ages and stations in life through many initiatives. They were able to draw on direct education in formal settings, literature and brochures or influencing popular culture, and could have some say over the message being delivered. This would allow them to generate an ideal of women's lives during the mid-twentieth-century that reflected not only their moral concerns but the use of techniques and technologies to adapt to social norms.

Discourses of Sexuality, Moral Regulation and Discourse Analysis

According to Lesley Hall, much of the recent work investigating the history of twentieth-century sexuality has concentrated on the medicalization of sex and the influence of medicine on the understanding or interpretation of social phenomena.¹⁹⁶ In many ways it is relatively easy to delineate medicine's influence on the history of sexuality as the profession itself evolved over time. By the twentieth-century, medical education and practice included more than biological aspects of the human body and in the case of sex and sexuality, broadened to include education and treatment of

¹⁹⁶ Lesley A. Hall, "The Sexual Body" in Roger Cooter and John Pickstone (Eds) *Medicine in the Twentieth Century* (Harwood Academic Publishers: Amsterdam, 2000) p. 261-276. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 2000); Carolyn Dean, *Sexuality and Modern Western Culture* (Twayne Publications: New York, 1996); Jeffrey Weeks, *Making Sexual History* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2000).

psychological and sexological elements as part of the human life cycle.¹⁹⁷ As discussed previously, the use of sexology to define not only “healthy” sex and gender roles encouraged a more social view of sex throughout the lifecycle. Influenced by this changing conceptualization of sex and sexuality Gilfoyle notes: “no longer does the word [sexuality] imply just physical sexual behavior or biological reproduction; rather, it now includes the broader terms and conditions under which physical intimacy occurs and the outward expressions and manifestations of such behavior.”¹⁹⁸ More recent social history studies of sex and sexuality have moved beyond a focus on the role of health and medicine in defining and understanding the place of sex in society and investigated how race, international geographies, and colonialism for example, have impact the evolution of twentieth-century sexuality.¹⁹⁹ The role of medicine is still being investigated with regards to the experience of sex as both a restrictive entity and a liberating one, however widening the investigation has demonstrated that not only is the experience of sex much

¹⁹⁷ Groneman, *Nymphomania: ...*; Darlaine Gardetto, *Engendered Sensations: Social Construction of the Clitoris and Female Orgasm, 1650-1975* (PhD Diss. University of California, Davis, 1992); Janice Irvine, *Disorders of Desire: Sex and Gender in Modern American Sexology* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1990); Chiara Beccalossi, *Female Sexual Inversion: Same-Sex Desires in Italian and British Sexology, c. 1870-1920* (Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, 2012).

¹⁹⁸ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, “Prostitutes in the Archives: Problems and Possibilities in Documenting the History of Sexuality” *American Archivist* 1994 (sum) 57: 514-527; Robert Padgug, “Sexual Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in History” in Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton (Eds) *Culture, Society and Sexuality A Reader* (University College London Press: London, 1999) p. 21.

¹⁹⁹ See for example: Philippa Levine, “States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination” *Victorian Studies* 2008 50(2): 189-219; Cheryl D. Hicks, ““Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl”: Black Women’s Sexuality and “Harmful Intimacy” in Early-Twentieth-Century New York” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 2009 18(3): 418-456; Marcus Anthony Hunter, “The Nightly Round: Space, Social Capital, and Urban Black Nightlife” *City & Community* 2010 9(2): 165-186; Simon Gunn and RJ Morris (Eds) *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (Ashgate: London, 2001); Laura Harrison, ““The streets have been watched regularly’: the York Penitentiary Society, young working-class women, and the regulation of behaviour in the public spaces of York, c. 1845-1919” *Women’s History Review* 2019 28(3): 457-478.

more diverse but the social and cultural practice is influenced by more than traditional fields have indicated. Further, these projects have also made use of a wide spectrum of documentation to analyse how sexuality has become defined by states and social institutions or a variety of social and cultural groups, and then the subsequent experience of sex and sexuality under these conditions.²⁰⁰

Michel Foucault, one of the most widely cited theorists of sex and sexuality brought a new view of sex and sexuality and the influential role of discourses into the academic and public eye in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In his series *The History of Sexuality*, he began an outline of social and sexual change influenced by official and unofficial discourses as part of an examination of internalised (self) and external regulation (ie. government, medicine, etc). Accordingly, sexuality as part of a theoretical construct:

is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power.²⁰¹

Sexuality then, is more than the physical enactment of pleasure but is part of a wider discussion of social relationships that are articulated through knowledge, strategies of

²⁰⁰ Angus McLaren, *Twentieth Century Sexuality: A History* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1999); Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives 1950-1970* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1998); Julian Go and George Lawson (Eds) *Global Historical Sociology* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2017) Part II - Empire, Race, and Sexuality; Eva-Maria Silies, "Taking the Pill after the 'sexual revolution': female contraceptive decisions in England and West Germany in the 1970s" *European Review of History* 2015 22(1): 41-59.

²⁰¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (vol one) (Pantheon Press: New York, 1978) p. 105-106. This statement was reaffirmed on page 3 of volume two *The Use of Pleasure* (Pantheon Press: New York, 1985).

governance and new forms of identity and speech. In other words, as with his earlier projects Foucault attempted to demonstrate how the social realm constructed and maintained 'the self' in daily life within specific contexts such as prisons and asylums for example. This process was then refined through the practices and techniques that individuals governed themselves. In the *History of Sexuality* series, he explores a number of sites, techniques and technologies that have influenced the production of sex including diet, psychology, changing conceptualization of the lifecycle, gender, social status, professions and religion. These sites and techniques would be shaped by two forces that both govern the social understandings of prohibitive practices ("apparatus of alliance" which governs kinship bonds) and non-prohibitive practices ("apparatus of sexuality" which governs sexuality in a disciplinary form such as sexual practices).²⁰² Through the concept of sexuality Foucault contextualized the discourses and practices that bound the social relationship to the physical act working from the ancient Greeks and the early Christians through to the Victorian era.

Jeffrey Weeks on the other hand recognizes sexuality as a very tangible set of practices and asks "how is it that in our society sex is seen not just as a means of biological reproduction nor a source of harmless pleasure, but, on the contrary, has come to be seen as the central part of our being, the privileged site in which the truth of ourselves is to be found."²⁰³ Weeks further defines sexuality as:

²⁰² John Forrester, "Sex, Gender and Babies" in Nick Hopwood, Rebecca Flemming, Lauren Kassell (Eds) *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) p. 613.

²⁰³ Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society...* p. 6.

... a result of diverse social practices that give meaning to human activities, of social definitions and self-definitions, of struggles between those who have the power to define, and those who resist. Sexuality is not a given. It is a product of negotiation, struggle and human agency.²⁰⁴

Instead of an either/or statement, I feel it is necessary to consider both the discursive constructions of sex and sexuality alongside the ways in which groups and individuals live them and further utilize or create discourses based on their social context and experiences. In *The History of Sexuality* series, Foucault links the strategies of knowledge and power through medical, legal, psychoanalytic, and educational discourses to the construction of a normatively based sexual subjectivity. He then took this further through an examination of the ethics that governed the social and sexual self. The combination of theory and praxis to examine the power/knowledge aspect demonstrated how discourses have the potential to influence how people “practice” their sexuality and identity.

According to Foucault discourses arise out of their specific sets of relationships inherent to their context, which are “established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization; and these relations are not present in the object; ... [they are] to be placed in a field of exteriority.”²⁰⁵ This set of relations is dissembled into primary and secondary relations. Primary relations are independent “of all discourse or all object of discourse, may be described between institutions, techniques,

²⁰⁴ Weeks, *Making Sexual History* p. 129.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.* p. 45.

social forms, etc.”²⁰⁶ Secondary relations are reflexive and fall between their context and the institutions, groups, individuals, etc. that employ them.²⁰⁷ He discourages the idea that these are causal relations. They are linked however, through their use and in this case the production of a sexual subject. The construction of a sexual subject that is understood within the context of a moral regulation framework is one that is not only defined through a moral lens but one that may then be used as a project for governmentality. An examination of context, actors, norms and relationships provides a partial framework for examining systems of thought, regulation and in this instance, sexuality. According to Cocks, Foucault’s interest in discourses is visible in his attempts to examine how “... a particular way of thinking, acting and being, an apparatus of thought and action with its own set of powerful assumptions, its own internal unity, rules and patterns” come together to become a discourse.²⁰⁸ Discourses and systems do not work alone, each governs the other’s practice and focus.

Discursive practice ... must not be confused with the expressive operation by which an individual formulates an idea, a desire, an image; nor with the rational activity that may operate in a system of inference; nor with the ‘competence’ of a speaking subject when he constructs grammatical sentences; it is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function.²⁰⁹

Discourses are expressions of world views, norms, social processes, and social relations

²⁰⁶ *ibid.* p. 45.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.* p. 45.

²⁰⁸ H.G. Cocks, “Approaches to the History of Sexuality since 1750” in Sarah Toulalan and Kate Fisher (Eds) *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present* (Routledge: London, 2013) p. 43.

²⁰⁹ *ibid.* p. 117.

as made concrete through language and systems of representations. As representations they may become statements of meaning and therefore can operate as tools of social governance.

In the case of sex and sexuality this includes an examination of the said as much as the unsaid. According to Morrow, "discourses contain rules of inclusion, exclusion and classification which govern the content of knowledge, including the potential to create true and false statements, as well as rules about who can make knowledge claims in relation to which domain and under what circumstances."²¹⁰ This is equally applicable to discourses pertaining to sex and sexuality. Using what has become normalized through institutions and social norms offers a way to examine not only the practices and procedures that have given form to what is pursued as "normal" but those that are then deemed to be "abnormal" or hidden due to the biases and restraints of the "normal" field. As Harris notes:

Using the very same categories created by the state to control and define citizens in order to reclaim their histories was impossible, he [Foucault] argued. Not only were historical actors powerless, so too were historians. The best escape from this paradox was not to speak about sexuality, particularly no about alternative sexualities. Doing so only reinforced their taboo-value, and strengthened the state's power to define and oppress those considered deviants.²¹¹

In agreement with Foucault, Weeks notes: sex discourses are discourses of "control not through denial or prohibition, but through 'production', through imposing

²¹⁰ Ross Morrow, "Sexuality as Discourse - Beyond Foucault's Constructionism" *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* 1995 31(1): 16.

²¹¹ Victoria Harris, "Sex on the Margins: New directions in the historiography of sexuality and gender" *The Historical Journal* 2010 53(4): 1095.

a grid of definition on the possibilities of the body.”²¹² These productive possibilities as they pertain to sexuality are vast and inevitably interconnected. They combine among other areas: social, political, cultural, economic realms that structure the everyday life and govern the conduct of the subject. Normative institutions such as medicine, law, education etc, have served to structure and influence the ways in which members of a given society have adapted or resisted statements about their sexuality and sexual practices.

Foucault places the preoccupation with sex and sexuality as beginning in earnest in the eighteenth century where “there emerged a political, economic, and technical incitement to talk about sex. And not so much in the form of a general theory of sexuality as in the form of analysis, stocktaking, classification and specification, of quantitative or causal studies.”²¹³ Sex was something to be counted in terms of population and economics: “it was necessary to analyze the birth-rate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them fertile or sterile, the effects of unmarried life or of the prohibitions, the impact of contraceptive practices...”²¹⁴ Through this need for the measurement of the population by the state, sex moved from being a private issue to a public one framed in a multitude of competing discourses and authorities to be discerned as an object of knowledge and concern. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, social service organizations continued with knowledge gathering activities and

²¹² Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*: ... p. 7.

²¹³ Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (vol one) p. 23-24.

²¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 25-26.

used the tools of measurement in order to know not only their subject but also to know the ways in which they could contribute to a response.

As part of the shift from quantifying and generating a specific “known” form of sex, the same type of process should be understood when the focus shifts towards sexuality and sexual practices. According to Padgug:

The general distinguishing mark of human sexuality, as of all social relations is the unique role played in its construction by language, consciousness, symbolism, and labour, which taken together - as they must be - are praxis, the production and reproduction of material life. ... The content of sexuality is ultimately provided by human social relations, human productive activities, and human consciousness. The history of sexuality is therefore the history of a subject whose meaning and contents are in a continual process of change. It is the history of social relations.²¹⁵

Thus, the availability and use of discourses to describe both the role of the individual in the social realm and their relationship to pleasure and pain both creates and mediates their subjective experience along with their capacity to name these practices and measure themselves against the established ideals or norms. The primary concern remains however, with who creates the language that gives meaning to and describes the experience. The secondary concern lies with the implementation of these discourses as rules of conduct.

A potential tool for examining the discourses of sexuality include mediated discourse analysis which examines how “through mediated actions, discourse is submerged into the ‘historical body’ of the individual social actor as a social practice, and how this discourse emerges from the ‘historical body’ through subsequent mediated

²¹⁵ Padgug “Sexual Matters: ...” p. 21.

actions.”²¹⁶ Scollon and Scollon argue that social actions take place within three dominant arenas: interaction (including the social roles and relationships in a situation), place (this may connect with existing media and communications), and the historical body (the existing bodily practices).²¹⁷ As Jones notes this will contribute to an understanding of “how discourse is transformed into social practice within the historical body, but also how the historical body itself becomes a discursive tool in social interaction.”²¹⁸ Using this as the starting point for analysis I will be able to demonstrate how mothers, women, birth control and other related intimate practices and relationships become part of an overarching discourse of moral female sexual subjects. These forms not only examine the pre-existing discourses of the above subjects but also their future forms and the ideals that will comprise the actions of women in their everyday and social reformers. In much the same way that Jones uses this model to frame safe sex as unable to exist without the threat of ‘unsafe’ sex, the discourses of motherhood and “proper” sexuality put forth by the National Council of Women cannot exist without the threat of women choosing different life cycle patterns.²¹⁹ For organizations such as the National Council of Women, they make use of existing networks or media and formation of ideal women as pre-existing moral subjects to generate a historical body that responds to changes in women’s everyday lives.

²¹⁶ Rodney H. Jones, “Good sex and bad karma: Discourse and the historical body” in Vijay K. Bhatia, John Flowerdew and Rodney H. Jones *Advances in Discourse Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) p. 245.

²¹⁷ Ron Scollon and Suzie Wong Scollon, *Nexus Analysis: discourse and the emerging internet* (Routledge: London, 2004).

²¹⁸ Jones, “Good sex and bad karma:...” p. 246.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 250

While there are numerous approaches to discourse analysis I will be situating the available archival data within the context of subjects, their formation and the strategies used to not only communicate a specific discourse but the images used as a strategy in itself. Discourse analysis has been concerned with speech, speech patterns, rhetoric (especially words and phrases) and the general content and context of everyday conversation. Depending on the period of interest this type of immediate speech is not possible for historical sociologists to access and as a result the data is the archival record and the written word. The roles of speakers that would be considered in verbal speech is part of the historical record and contextually based through for example, authorship, correspondence and presence in meeting minutes. The function of the records themselves and the differences in the type of archival records that have been included in this thesis (which will be further discussed in Chapter Three) range from meeting minutes, speeches, correspondence, government records and reports, etc., all of these record types have a specific form and function that will represent social actions and governance.²²⁰ This may include authorship of the document, the context of its production (occupation related or meeting minutes) the language used throughout the recording process (including formal jargon or informal shorthand); the process for recording the items and the associated rules offer an albeit partial accounting of the

²²⁰ In historical discourse analysis the emphasis on speech markers, grammar and syntax, and language in the linguistic sense remains. In the case of this research, the emphasis is on the construction of women and their intimate lives, the use of moral regulation as a descriptive discourse. See for example Laurel J. Brinton, *Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996); Marcel Bax and Daniel Z. Kádár, "The historical understanding of historical (im)politeness: introductory notes" *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 2011 12(1-2): 1-24.

meetings themselves and the items the organizations felt to be of importance. This will allow me to examine the available discourses in relation to the moral regulation framework as outlined earlier in this chapter. In this case subject and subject formation is connected to the creation of “woman” (especially as a sexual being outside of motherhood) as a straw figure used to highlight women’s changing roles in mid-twentieth century Canada. From these initial contexts the analysis of discursive practices may be undertaken.

As Bacchi and Bonham note: “the term ‘discursive practice/s’ describes those practices of knowledge formation by focusing on how specific knowledges (‘discourses’) operate and the work they do.”²²¹ In this case the discourses generated and used by women’s and other social organizations operate to highlight women’s roles and their changing position in society and the impact this has on family, society and nation. Framing the discourses that shape conduct as a matter of “choice” returns some sense of agency to the subject which would recognize the types or kinds of discourses that we absorb or utilize in the everyday. In addition, the use of moral regulation allows for an examination of resistance to the tools of governance that women’s organizations made use of.

As discussed previously, I will be considering women’s organizations and other social organizations as sources of authority. “The status of speakers is particularly important, as it authorizes speakers to have their say in a specific way and determines

²²¹ Carol Bacchi and Jennifer Bonham, “Reclaiming discursive practices as an analytic focus: Political implications” *Foucault Studies* 2014 17: 174.

the issues that can be raised.”²²² Women’s organizations and related social service organizations carved out a particular niche for speaking to various social conditions and operate at the macro and micro level of the everyday. Thus, the availability and use of discourses to describe both the role of the individual in the social realm and their relationship to an issue both creates and mediates their subjective experience. As a result, there are two primary areas of focus. Firstly: who creates the language that gives meaning to and describes the experience? The second lies with the formulation of these discourses and subsequent use or employment through forms rules of conduct. In this case, discourses effectively mediated and helped women and men to negotiate changing sexual relationships that brought forth new means of governing conduct.

As Hall states, discourses surrounding sex and sexuality more specifically are:

not monolithic, not impermeable sets of ideas with distinct boundaries. People (and indeed societies) are capable of simultaneously holding ideas inconsistent with one another: a prime example of this was the belief that women were by nature maternal and destined for monogamous marriage, alongside a fear that given the slightest encouragement - education, employment opportunities, the granting of political rights, the accessibility of birth control - women would immediately renege on their duty to marry and keep the world populated.²²³

This passage articulates two key points: first that discourses are not static and nor are they without sometimes abundant contradiction. This requires the researcher to consider not only the context and the author/speaker but the ways in which this discourse is utilized to communicate a specific ideal. Second, in the context of birth control and

²²² Britta Baumgarten and Peter Ullrich, “Discourse, Power, and Governmentality. Social Movement Research with and beyond Foucault” in J. Roose and H. Dietz (Eds) *Social Theory and Social Movements* (Springer: Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2016) p. 18.

²²³ Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* p. 4-5

sexuality discourses throughout this period there was a pre-existing social anxiety. Issues of sex have been consistently presented as a social anxiety often in relation to questions of who, what, where and when. In this case, the anxiety and sense of essential forms of femininity and motherhood are the driver of social anxieties resulting in “rules” and modes of conduct that were seen to be socially beneficial for a variety of contexts: women themselves, society and nation. Women’s organizations generated discourses that reflected their image of Canadian society through sponsoring or creating learning programs for women of all ages and stations in life through direct education in formal settings, literature and brochures or influencing popular culture. Third, the separation of reproduction from the preferred monogamous sexual relationship was a source of anxiety for both women’s organizations and parts of general society. The changing prominence of sex for pleasure within and without marital relationships questioned women’s reproductive roles and her relationship to sex. Regardless, the inconsistencies that Hall notes place women in a position that is often hindered by the expectations of childbearing.

The connection to moral discourses can be seen in their framing of women as both social caregivers and mothers as has been discussed earlier. As Valverde notes with reference to the social purity movement:

the structure of the discourse, the complex relationships within each allegory and among different allegories/symbols helped to lay out a framework for the work processes being promoted (becoming pure oneself, giving money so others can be saved and recruiting others). What mattered was not the *what* but the *how*, the methods to be followed for purity work, which were learned not through abstract

theoretical lessons but through parables, allegory and poetic imagery.²²⁴

Many of these elements for communicating the moral message were still in use during the period I intend to examine. Parables operate as morality tales and offer a ready image of women who do and do not conform to the social and sexual norms of the period. Social reformers were able to take real or perceived worst case scenarios and use them to great effect. With a wide network they were able to employ not only the language of social reform but medicine, politics, and science. What is key here is the connection of a moral message that offers a moral judgement which differentiates between desirable and undesirable behaviours and connects to either/or a programmatic action or a discursive frame of some form.

In terms of illustrating how moral regulation projects are discursively framed, this dissertation will focus on the use of discourses as a source of understanding how birth control and motherhood are constructed in response to women's lives during the mid twentieth-century. As Ruiz notes, there are three forms of discursive interpretation that will be useful in this analysis, starting with the "informative dimension of discourse."²²⁵ This begins with the actors involved and their place in the generation of specific types of discourse. In this case, women's organizations place themselves as not only actors but as authorities of women's lives. While it is likely that they did not influence or impact portions of Canadian society, their reach went well beyond the

²²⁴ Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water* p. 41. See also Valverde, "The Rhetoric of Reform: . . ."

²²⁵ Jorge Ruiz Ruiz, "Sociological Discourse Analysis: Methods and Logic" *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 2009 10(2):Art. 26.

immediate membership. Additionally, their internal and external responses can be contextualized as being representative of a wide swath of Canadian society as their members were not only part of the white, middle-class but women from other segments of society. This aspect of the discourse will combine their own viewpoints and their modes of adapting to new norms regarding women's intimate lives.

A second form of interpretation will be conducted through the lens of information.²²⁶ This will not only offer a possible mode of examining the social reality of the data but their social context that gave rise to this type of discourse. The final form of interpretation will consider the "discourse as a social product".²²⁷ This will allow for questions to be asked about the possible reasons why this discourse was produced during this period. All three of these forms will allow for the analysis of the textual, contextual, and interpretive elements of the available archival data from women's organizations and other interested parties.

As a framework for the accompanying discourses, moral regulation in this context not only forms the basis for discussions of right or proper but also defines discourses of womanhood. Women's organizations had made defining proper womanhood part of not only a social but national cause. The birth control debate not only challenged the expectations for women but also influenced discourses regarding "national preservation". Using the components of moral regulation as part of the analysis will allow me to frame the birth control debate within a wider discourse of

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

gender expectations. Though the use of descriptors within moral frames as forms of judgement (for example: “character”, “harm”, “intelligent parenthood”, “public menace”) and preferred behaviour (for example, “training”, “happy motherhood”, “fitness”, “responsibility”, “right living”) will allow for an examination of the construction of an idealized middle-class woman. Through these moral frames “She” will operate as a straw figure to identify and “successfully” adapt to changing norms. This will include not only the programmatic development of proper conduct but the language of nation and motherhood, the real or perceived understanding of changing intimate lives and changing reproductive options and social norms. This shift would require women’s organizations more specifically to form new discursive frames for women’s reproductive life and their relationship to the content of motherhood.

Chapter Three: Archival Data and Research Methods

Introduction

A single relic or record - a painting, a funerary inscription, an article of bodily adornment, a tool or weapon, a filmed advertisement - precisely because it once functioned as an integral element in a larger social matrix, implicates and embodies various conditional aspects that were involved with or necessary for its creation and utility.²²⁸

As human beings we leave our mark on the places and times in which we live through a multitude of artifacts. As the quote above indicates, objects are created within a specific context and imbued with uses and meanings to be revisited and reinterpreted in the future as societies and cultures change. These items become part of a record of our society, lives, ideas, etc., that can be used to paint a portrait of our social world and context. The aim of this chapter therefore is twofold: first to examine the changes in approach and use of historical sociology over time and second, to offer a process for qualitative archival work as it pertains to this research.

Historical sociology as a tool for understanding social processes

The combination of history and sociology has the potential for a unique perspective on our social worlds that is not able to be entirely explained only through dedicated sociological methods such as interviews or observations for example. As Calhoun notes there are (at least) four different types of social phenomenon that cannot solely be understood through contemporary data sources: first, revolutions or settler societies (due to the number of occurrences and their context or time); second, national development connected with cultural features (do societies “evolve” along the same

²²⁸ Joseph M. Bryant, “On sources and narratives in historical social science: a realist critique of positivist and postmodernist epistemologies” *British Journal of Sociology* 2000 51(3): 498.

trajectories if they possess different cultural values and origins); third, long view social formations (the establishing of states, nations and identities); fourth, the influence of context on social change and growth (for example technologies).²²⁹ Contemporary sociology could examine each of these features in terms of their constituent groups and outcomes while thinking historically would offer an analysis that charts the change over time using multiple perspectives and documentary sources and which would enable a better understanding of historical and/or contemporary outcomes. As a starting point Theda Skocpol offers a useful definition of historical sociology: it is “research devoted to understanding the nature and effects of large-scale structures and fundamental processes of change.”²³⁰ I would disagree that historical sociology is solely devoted to macro level forms of research however as shall be demonstrated shortly, this is part and parcel of the dominant aims and programs within sociology.

As a field within sociology, historical sociology has been regarded as seemingly on the margins however, sociology has relied on historical data (often quantitative) and methods since the formal beginnings of the discipline and continues to do so today to chart trends and change over time. Between the 1950s and 1980s historical sociologists remained interested in the associations between politics and state formation with Marxism being the dominant theoretical lens. This reflected the times in which they were working – challenges to states and social institutions were growing, a challenge to

²²⁹ Craig Calhoun, “The Rise and Domestication of Historical Sociology” in Terrence J. McDonald *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1996) p. 313-314.

²³⁰ Theda Skocpol, *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1984) p. 4.

political conservatism and a general rethinking of the ways in which social inequalities were being/had been perpetuated. The types of tools and variables used for this type of research remained connected to macro-level variables and documents.

Michael Mann has noted that macro-sociology as a whole was best characterized by the work produced during the post-war period.²³¹ For Mann, there are three ways in which historical sociology reinforced sociological analyses: historical causal (conditions that give rise to modern institutions), variation (do these social structures vary between social groups and related contexts), and an abstract-comparative macro-sociology (testing general positions about social communities).²³² This taxonomy maintains yet elaborates on the forms and functions of earlier research programmes. In various works coming out of this period (notably Eisenstadt's *The Political Systems of Empires*, Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions*, Tilly et al. *The Rebellious Century*, and Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*²³³) the shift towards examining systems outside western societies was part of the expanding research agenda. However, the politics of state, economics, class and revolution remained the core theme of research undertaken in this era.

As a way of organizing the dominant methodological approaches of this period

²³¹ Michael Mann, "In Praise of Macro-Sociology: A Reply to Goldthorpe" *British Journal of Sociology* 1994 45(1): 37-59.

²³² Ibid. p. 39.

²³³ S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires: The Rise and Fall of Historical Bureaucratic Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1963); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly, Richard Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966). Skocpol's text *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* offers a thorough analysis of their contributions.

Skocpol and Somers distinguish between three strategies of comparative historical sociology: “parallel comparisons, contrast oriented and macroanalytic approaches” which will be outlined here.²³⁴ There are a number of others that could be added to this discussion including rational choice methods, world systems, and path dependency, that have expanded the range of themes, actors, social processes, contexts, etc. that historical sociology typically aims to analyze.

Skocpol and Somers describe parallel comparisons as offering the opportunity to demonstrate the recurrence of hypotheses or variables when compared to similar historical events.²³⁵ Using similar variables, researchers can offer generalizable theory to demonstrate that the model can apply from case to case. “Differences among the cases are primarily contextual particularities against which to highlight the generality of the processes with which their theories are basically concerned.”²³⁶ I think there is a missed opportunity here to offer an examination as to why the discontinuities occur, exist, and their formation and function in a society. Yet, as a project concerned with generalizable features, this is a useful approach.

Skocpol and Somers next describe the contrast oriented comparative sociology as incorporating ideal type concepts with which to ground the research.

Themes, questions, or ideal types may be posed explicitly at the start; or they may be allowed to “emerge” as the historical discussions proceed.
 ... This variant of comparative history is to suggest that particular nations, empires, civilizations, or religions constitute relatively irreducible wholes,

²³⁴ Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, “The uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1980 22(2): 174-197.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid. p. 178.

each a complex and unique sociohistorical configuration in its own right.²³⁷

In comparative sociology, the differences between cases are more important rather than new generalizable principles. This model takes the opportunity to acknowledge that social evolution will not occur in identical fashions given additional variables that may contribute to the process. The third framework is one that Skocpol has used to great effect - the macro-causal analysis. Within this framework historical comparisons are used "to test the validity of existing theoretical hypotheses and to develop new causal generalizations to replace invalidated ones."²³⁸ The principle behind this lies in the number of common variables amongst the cases and examining how they operate within the cases themselves. The paths towards revolution or other macro-level social policy changes as examined in many of the works of this time, chart the developmental patterns leading to revolution and the paths taken according to variables such as class, economics, political structures, and the potential for social movement mobilization.

What is important to note here amongst all these possible tools is that the archive is not the common data source - more often quantitative data was used to prove their theories. Another difference among these forms is the degree to which theory building and generalizations are important or even relevant. In order to not be seen as purely historical in scope and function, there is some implementation of sociological aims and principles and not presenting analyses that have built an explicitly linear narrative.

As with all methodologies these too have their limitations. Working backwards

²³⁷ Ibid. p. 178.

²³⁸ Ibid. p. 182.

from the outcome to explain the how and why according to common variables can lead to a simplistic account of events. An additional feature that may be problematic is the deterministic nature of these kinds of methods. While not all of these approaches dismiss variables or features that cannot be explained they are deemed less important in their capacity for overall analysis and generalizability when in reality they may be the features that could offer a more thorough analysis. Skocpol and Somers explain this potential limitation by acknowledging that, “because they are largely inductively established, comparative-historical causal arguments cannot be readily generalized beyond the cases actually discussed.”²³⁹ I’m not convinced that inductive research processes are as limiting as this, however when generalizability is the aim it does appear to be a problematic feature of historical sociology.

Research produced throughout the 1950s to the 1980s continued with earlier themes but added dimensions aided in refining a methodology for a growing specialization. No longer was the primary aim to determine the features of modernity, poverty or governmental political systems but identifying the varying structures associated with macro scale social change. As Mills noted in 1959, “not only are our chances of becoming aware of structure increased by historical work; we cannot hope to understand any single society, even as a static affair, without the use of historical materials.”²⁴⁰ The utilization of interdisciplinary tools to analyze changes in a society

²³⁹ Ibid. p. 195.

²⁴⁰ Most famously perhaps, C. Wright Mills commented on the necessity of history within sociology and that the two were nearly symbiotic in their needs. *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1959) (specifically Ch. 8).

over time has not only increased the diversity of stories we can tell but offers a chance to incorporate tools that highlight aspects of societies or communities that would be diminished otherwise for example: art, culture, storytelling, laws, norms and values, social stratification, and types of community formations, etc.²⁴¹

Thinking about methods

At its most basic level the point of developing and employing a research method is to determine systematically, the best way to obtain relevant data to answer a research question. Over time, sociology has relied on a fairly consistent set of variables (such as gender, race, class, economics, education, political or government types or structures, etc.) to present an almost linear and social structure/institution-oriented causality to research. The use of the “x (may) cause(s) y” model makes most analyses conditional - that the outcomes are dependent upon a dominant set of variables - and that the phenomenon is replicable. This is problematic when thinking historically because the contexts and/or outcomes are rarely able to be compared using the same variables, let alone whether the events under investigation are replicable given the contexts of nation, settlement, and economics. Historians have a more inductive approach to causality and take a more conditional approach to processes of explanation. This includes considering a less absolute statement of events - that they don't *have* to occur in the same shape and form over time or that the outcome would not have occurred in other contexts without

²⁴¹ Allen Feldman's text *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1991) incorporates storytelling, geography, anthropology and documents to analyze the politics of violence, imprisonment and the myths or stories communities tell around events such as The Troubles and the impact of physical structures such as prisons, sites of conflict, neighbourhoods on individuals and communities, in tandem with different types of social interactions.

the same set of variables in the same order. There is a misconception that a narrative is a description of events from beginning to end. This dismisses the analysis of events as a series of statements without connection or explanation of what contributed to the events under examination. As with the social sciences, causal relationships in historical research have taken a wider view to the probabilities and possible conditions that may have contributed to an outcome.

Historiography considers three dominant question types: what? how? why?²⁴² “What” questions are concerned with “what we make of past events - whether a certain predicate is applicable to a certain historical event, person, or situation.”²⁴³ The “how” and “why” questions are more related to questions of causation. This type of narrative is examined and written according to a “causal chain” of events which generates a readily understood and demonstrable common coherence of the subject. In addition, the subject or theme is already part of the narrative and remains consistent throughout the investigation.²⁴⁴ It is embedded in an existing place and time and the causal element is related to a network of relationships, ideas, objects, and meanings.²⁴⁵ This creates the conditions for examining the origins and maintenance of the subject (person, place, thing, idea, etc.) as a set of causal statements that move through the time period and grounds the subject in a particular context. As a causal element time will operate less as a mode of explaining the absolute sequence of events but a trajectory contributing to the

²⁴² Michael Stanford, *An Introduction to the philosophy of history* (Blackwell: Malden, MA, 1998) p. 128-129.

²⁴³ Anton Froeyman “Concepts of Causation in Historiography” *Historical Methods* 2009 42(3): 119.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.* p. 121.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.* p. 122.

conditions that may generate the event or outcome.²⁴⁶

Historical sociologists have used similar phenomenon or events as the context for their comparative analyses in terms of equivalences of social development. They have compared social processes such as state formation, acts of rebellion, and conditions of policy development and enactment, etc. Using historical contexts it has been shown that these social processes remain dynamic rather than static in their impact with a greater number of possible variables to test or consider. Historical research on the other hand “aims to accumulate significant data through an examination of sources and a documented reconstruction of processes, sequences of events, or customary micro-behaviors in order to understand a specific occurrence. An occurrence which is unique and irreducible to another, therefore non-repeatable.”²⁴⁷ This research will rely on a combination of approaches including the historian’s approach to causality.

Attempting to meet the needs of both disciplines can be difficult and raises questions about the validity of the data and the methods of data collection and modes of analysis used in historical sociology. Goldthorpe has been critical of historical sociology in part because of the data source (historical documents as discovered and sociological evidence as invented) and how it is used.²⁴⁸ For example, he does not view the archival

²⁴⁶ *ibid.* p. 122.

²⁴⁷ Franco Ferrarotti, “The Relation between History and Sociology: Synthesis or Conflict?” *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 1997 34(1): 2.

²⁴⁸ J. H. Goldthorpe, “The uses of history in sociology: reflections on some recent tendencies” *British Journal of Sociology* 1991 42(2): 211-230. This article prompted the *BJS* to devote an entire issue to responses and critiques of Goldthorpe’s stance (1994 45(1)). Ian Lustick also offers a strong critique of sample/selection bias in: “History, Historiography and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias” *American Political Science Review* 1996 90(3): 605-618.

document as primary source data. Goldthorpe contends that grand historical sociology used “already written” histories which called into question their methodological rigour and conclusions.²⁴⁹ The addition of newspaper reports, crime, or court or other government documents for example, have since demonstrated that historical data could arrive at unique conclusions that were also sociological in nature. Today, the range of possible materials to be found through an archive is much broader than the “already written” histories. Records such as testimonies, correspondence, policy documents, census records, meeting minutes, diaries, material objects, etc., all offer a place to start the examination of the individual or a community and their location in the social world. A wider variety of records are being used in contemporary historical sociology which has influenced the methodology and practice of both sociology and history.

Moving forward, a combination of both sets of disciplinary methodologies and principles may look something like this:

Methods are about achieving access to information, about finding aids, about reference materials, about the existence of evidence or the lack of evidence, and about the triangulation of information - all the factors that impact our “systematic method of gathering evidence” and our interpretation of that evidence, our presentation of our revisionist histories.²⁵⁰

This definition combines the systematic qualities of both disciplines yet acknowledges the question of documentary completeness offered through archival data sources. While this is not a revisionist project in form and function, it does require a more detailed

²⁴⁹ Goldthorpe, “The uses of history in sociology:...” p. 211-230.

²⁵⁰ Barbara E. L’Eplattenier, “Opinion: An Argument for Archival Research Methods: Thinking Beyond Methodology” *College English* 2009 72(1): 69.

accounting of the methods of both disciplines. The content of the archive and the retention of specific histories has had a significant impact on the *kinds* of histories that are capable of being told. Historical sociologists are no longer relying on one type of document (for example State records that have operated as a form of corporate memory in order to generate and communicate nation-building histories) from one source to tell a story. This has opened new possibilities for the stories we are able to tell which moves beyond a single communal narrative and into one that demonstrates differences in how communities operate and their members lived experience from that context. Whether the data is qualitative or quantitative in form, data from the archive is the primary source and theory becomes the mode of explanation for processes and events.

In the last twenty or so years, historical sociology has continued with similar projects of the 1950s to the 1980s (macro level, state, and social revolution projects, etc.) and then incorporated additional priorities. According to Adams, Clemens and Orloff there are five primary areas of interest for historical sociologists of this period covering: institutionalism; rational choice; cultural turn; feminist challenges and colonialism, race, and empire.²⁵¹

For Adams, Clemens and Orloff, the “new” institutionalism of the 1990s and onwards, examines the roles of social networks and organizations that create possibilities for challenging and sustaining social institutions.²⁵² Making use of variables

²⁵¹ Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff, “Social Theory, Modernity, and the Three Waves of Historical Sociology” in Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff *Remaking Modernity: Politics, history, and sociology* (Duke University Press: Durham, North Carolina, 2005) p. 30.

²⁵² *ibid.* p. 31.

such as gender, race and sexuality for example, a different view of the origins, meanings and maintenance of institutions are made visible. This can also be constructed through the responses of those who are impacted by and through those institutions.²⁵³ With a focus on the institution as a site of its own historical processes generated through social change, the analysis turns towards actors and social outcomes contributing to the establishment and maintenance of the institution. This is of particular interest when examining expansionist or imperialist projects where the institutions have been overlaid existing structures.

Rational choice theories continue to remain the dominant mode of analysis when examining individuals, interactions, and outcomes especially with subjects pertaining to state formation or social movements. According to Kiser and Hechter this is in the form of the principal and agent relationship, resource use or accessibility and incorporates the recognition that this is a multidirectional relationship not solely a demonstration of top down modes of resource distribution.²⁵⁴ The primary analysis concerns the influence of actors on each other through decision making or relations of rule.²⁵⁵ This approach offers a possible mode for the accounting of individuals and the relations of power when it comes to maintaining or toppling government structures and rulers for example.

²⁵³ See for example Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Duke University Press: Durham, NC 2009).

²⁵⁴ Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter, "The Role of General Theory in Comparative-Historical Sociology" *American Journal of Sociology* 1991 97(1): 1-30. Arondekar makes a similar argument when discussing British Imperialism in India and the growth and development of policies and cultural imperialism. Arondekar, *For the Record*:... .

²⁵⁵ Ibid. Kiser and Hechter gives the example of state autonomy being relative to the citizenry and their acceptance of rule. This includes examining the resources that the citizens endowed with by the state.

The cultural and linguistic turn in social sciences research produced during and beyond the 1990s challenged the existing macro level Marxist structural analyses to employ a more Weberian and cultural studies approach. The incorporation of cultural studies to historical sociology tested the idea that there was a monolithic history that could or should be told from a single perspective, document source, etc. This period is marked by the attention paid to language, identity, signs and symbols of social groups. The top down approach was no longer enough, nor deemed accurate. As with earlier scholars who were interested in the conditions contributing to the rise of States, class groups, and forms of war or revolution for example, more contemporary examinations of state or social transformations involved other social actors either impacted through or leading this process.²⁵⁶

These questions encouraged an examination of how variables such as class, race or gender for example were shaped through multiple social practices including the institutionalization and content of norms enacted in a given context. In part this became an epistemological project of knowledge, knowledge formation, and subsequently how these categories were shaped by understandings of power relations. The content of the archive, including what is and is not “there” influence the formation of social categories. Also of concern was how those within oppressed groups used social categories to create meaning through political systems as a feature of everyday interactions rather than a

²⁵⁶ For example, Roderic Broadhurst, Thierry Bouhours and Brigitte Bouhours “Violence and Elias’s Historical Sociology: The Case of Cambodia” *British Journal of Criminology* 2018 58: 1420-1439. It should be noted that Norbert Elias provided a foundation for this work in *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenic and Psychogenic Investigations* (Blackwell Publishing, Oxford: 2000 [1939]).

single macro level process emphasizing political aims.²⁵⁷ The research conducted using a wider range of variables in this period also made room for answering questions that originated from the meso- and micro levels of society.

Cultural categories in their own right have been examined as part of an evolutionary process in tandem with other societal features including relations of power, law, culture, etc. This type of research has demonstrated that social categories are more fluid than previously understood and the types of archival materials needed for their analysis are therefore more complex. The fluctuations in cultural and social categories have been expressed in multiple forms from the systems of government classification to formal and informal social norms and the people embodying them.²⁵⁸ This includes a fundamental questioning of what constitutes an archive - material objects for example, can open lines of inquiry that are not capable of being examined solely through documents. The use of social and material objects to examine the formation of social categories and by extension lived experience, required that material objects be considered outside of solely using documents to create a narrative. Through research of this type it has been demonstrated how the categories themselves contain variations and that they are also bound by the shifting organization of social or cultural features as well as the general passage of time.

Feminist projects have also made significant contributions to historical sociology

²⁵⁷ Francis X. Blouin, Jr and William G. Rosenberg, "The Turn Away from Archival Authority in History" in *Processing the Past: Contesting Authorities in History and the Archives* (Oxford University Press: 2011).

²⁵⁸ See for example Arondekar *For the Record...* Ch. 1; Brenda Cossman, *Sexual Citizens: the legal and cultural regulation of sex and belonging* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

in recent years. Feminists have challenged the assumptions made around the traditional topics of historical sociology: state formation and aspects of rule. Because these roles have predominantly been the province of men, the impact on/of/by women and their contributions to this process have largely been ignored.²⁵⁹ There are exceptions to this of course, but it is in the most recent phase of historical sociology that gender has become a significant feature for analysis.²⁶⁰ Putting women's lives in the frame of analysis has changed the perspective on the creation, functioning and access to social institutions in addition to political institutions - to the places where most women live and act. This has generated new avenues for study that are not only focusing on the ways in which gender is expressed in state formation and revolution for example, but in the everyday. This includes women who have power by virtue of birth or marriage and women who have challenged these systems without automatic or assumed points of entrée to institutions.

While opening the range of dimensions or variables used in analysis there can be limitations to using gender as the primary variable. This can be seen in the choices for data sources and the exclusion of women and the objects or documents that represent their lives from the archive. If this is the case, how can women and their lives be

²⁵⁹ See for example: Chandra Mukerji, "Cultural Genealogy: Method for a Historical Sociology of Culture or Cultural Sociology of History" *Cultural Sociology* 2007 1(1): 49-71. In this article, Mukerji not only explores the potential of genealogy as a methodology but applies it to women labourers who worked on Canal du Midi in France during the seventeenth-century. See also: Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the archive: women writing house, home, and history in late Colonial India* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2003).

²⁶⁰ See for example Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" *The American Historical Review* 1986 91(5): 1053-1075; Ava Baron, "Romancing the Field: The Marriage of Feminism and Historical Sociology" *Social Politics* 1998 5: 17-37; Ewa Morawska, "A Historical Turn in Feminism and Historical Sociology" *Social Politics* 1998 5: 38-47.

accounted for?²⁶¹ The “remnants” of women’s lives are found in the places that are likely to be more contentious which for some, influences the validity of the source or its capacity for analysis. The products or articles of women’s lives such as art or tapestries, cookbooks, or diaries for example are not seen to be easily understood or objective. In addition, the scope of the available documents through state or other social institutions means that generalizable statements are less likely when paying attention to the variabilities and visibility of gender as a category of analysis.

Lastly, Adams, Clemens and Orloff place colonialism, race and culture as a contemporary project for historical sociologists more so than those undertaken during the height of the 1960s and 1970s.²⁶² Questions are being asked about the nature of colonial rule and whether this can be examined solely as a project of the aristocracy and rulers and what value might be gained by asking different questions of the available archival material. In contrast, recent projects have examined the responses or actions taken by citizens or communities of individuals during the same period, by working from the bottom up. Prioritizing race in questions of state formation and colonial rule provides an opportunity to see how these actors created “new” social classifications or how systems of rule changed existing social, political, and economic structures. While some of this is addressed in historical sociology research conducted in the 1980s, changing the emphasis to the position of the colonized and the connections between

²⁶¹ See for example Anke Voss-Hubbard, “ ‘No Documents - No History’: Mary Ritter Beard and the Early History of Women’s Archives *American Archivist* 1995 58(1):16-30 .

²⁶² Eiko Ikegami makes note of the shift in emphasis and inclusion of culture in historical sociology: “Bringing culture into macrostructural analysis in historical sociology: some epistemological considerations” *Poetics* 2005 33: 15-31.

politics and culture creates a new view to social history. Similarly, issues of data sources occur when considering the records of colonization. Ann Laura Stoler remarks on the destruction of colonial records at the time of their production:

Colonial statecraft was built on the foundations of statistics and surveys, but also out of the administrative apparatus that produced that information. Multiple circuits of communication - shipping lines, courier services, and telegraphs - were funded by state coffers and systems of taxation that kept them flush. Colonial publishing houses made sure that documents were selectively duplicated, disseminated, or destroyed.²⁶³

This deliberate erasure of documents pertaining to decision-making and the individuals who contributed or produced the records is both problematic for researchers in the obvious lack of data but also a potential site for new or different materials that may have been physically hidden from view. Stoler continues:

If a notion of colonial ethnography starts from the premise that archival production is itself both a process and a powerful technology of rule, then we need not only to brush *against* the archive's received categories. We need to read for its regularities, for its logic of recall, for its densities and distributions, for its consistencies of misinformation, omission, and mistake - *along* the archival grain.²⁶⁴

While colonial documents help understand the shaping of states and nations, they are often generated in response to existing conditions and localized narratives. They also rely on dominant modes of recording and record keeping and a prior knowledge of their readers and actors. One of the aims of colonial documents is to record and monitor state oriented outcomes such as the accounting of resources, diplomacy, treaties, and policy

²⁶³ Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance" *Archival Science* 2002 2: 98.

²⁶⁴ *ibid.* p. 100. Stoler also raises the interesting question of what counts as data in the colonial archive and how this challenges not only epistemology but the understanding of data sources. A similar question could be asked of any archive - with or without a specialized collection.

making. Unfortunately, as noted above these records can have a very short shelf life as geopolitical concerns change and evolve. What research into colonial rule has done is to expand the ways of reading documents to further examine relations of ruling, the formation of social classifications and norms. This has the intention of moving beyond the content of state formation and nation-building through laws and policy towards signs and symbols and interaction with citizens. It has also asked researchers to consider what happened on either side of the governmental process - by those who did not contribute to the dominant archive in the capacities of administrators for example. Reconsidering the role and place of the archive in the retention and subsequent availability of materials encourages researchers to formulate new possibilities concerning documentary silences, meanings, and the relations of rule.

The use of interdisciplinary methodologies has made the potential of historical sociology much more interesting and fruitful. The use of network analysis for example “shifts the focus of research away from particular individuals or events onto the connectivities among people, groups, and organizations.”²⁶⁵ This would offer the capacity to evaluate and understand the links between people and emphasize the discontinuities of social life. By tracing names and related information from one individual or decision to the next creates a less linear and conditional (through specific variables) picture of social and institutional interactions. This leads to a more inductive research orientation which may not conform to the expectations of a more “mainstream”

²⁶⁵ Roberto Franzosi and John W. Mohr, “New directions in formalization and historical analysis” *Theory and Society* 1997 26: 145.

sociological approach. The benefit of using a more inductive approach is that it allows for the inclusion of an analysis through the variation of meanings over time and a more dynamic view of social interactions and relationships. The changing definitions and understanding of a variable such as poverty, the poor, etc., can be traced through their social, legal, economic, and faith-based definitions.

Thinking about the Archive

In the practices of history and of modern autobiographical narration, there is the assumption that *nothing goes away*; that the past has deposited all of its traces, somewhere, somehow (though they may be, in particular cases, difficult to retrieve).²⁶⁶

As part of the public imagination, the archive has been conceived of as a physical space that holds the corporate memory of a particular space, place and time and is not for everyday public participation or consumption. The archive is assumed to be an old and badly lit space crowded with boxes, paper, and dust. The patrons are often portrayed as older and scholarly (maybe a little disheveled) and in hiding from the world with books and documents for company – the modern-day monk, paying homage to the past.²⁶⁷ With the growth and capacity of the internet new modes of access and purpose have been attributed to “archives”. Institutions that have been able to make use of digital technologies have enhanced the options for accessing documents significantly and changing what is stored and how. The archive is no longer seen solely as a

²⁶⁶ Carolyn Steedman, “The space of memory: in an archive” *History of the Human Sciences* 1998 11(4): 73; Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression” *Diacritics* 1995 25(2): 9-63.

²⁶⁷ Caitlin Patterson, “Perceptions and Understandings of Archives in the Digital Age” *The American Archivist* 2016 79(2): 339-370. See also Michelle T. King, “Working With/In the Archives” in Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Eds) *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2012).

warehouse for storing the ephemera of a population or for generating a single linear narrative, but as a site for creating knowledge.²⁶⁸ The digital archive has challenged the composition of files and how they are read which reframes the order of events in a unique fashion. According to Schwartz and Cook, the archive has not only multiple possibilities with regards to knowledge creation but as a source of materials for examining policy debates and culture and/or identity creation and maintenance.²⁶⁹ As a site of institutional and cultural memory, the archive becomes a key resource in examining social, political, economic, etc., experiences and depending on the type of archive this can be a multilevel and multidirectional narrative based on available materials.

Sadly, an archive is never complete for a number of reasons including the changing priorities of the archive, available space, the government of the day (including the politics and shaping of memory and resulting funding allocations), donating parties, record creators, and archivists, the survivability of documents (and the technology needed as part of the process of preservation and conservation) and related elements among many others.²⁷⁰ Does this mean that an analysis of a specific place and time

²⁶⁸ Lynée Lewis Gaillet, "(Per)Forming Archival Research methodologies" *College Composition and Communication* 2012 64(1): 39. Lewis Gaillet also raises a preliminary list of newer questions for the meaning and function of the archive that have been influenced by interdisciplinary studies. p. 38.

²⁶⁹ Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory" *Archival Science* 2002 2: 17.

²⁷⁰ See for example, Tim Cook, "Documenting War and Forging Reputations: Sir Max Aitken and the Canadian War Records Office in the First World War" *War in History* 2003 10(3): 265-295. In my own work, archivists have denied me access to materials deemed "prurient" and not for public consumption or removed the materials from the file entirely to preserve the reputation of the individual. There have also been occasions where I've been granted access to a file only to have everything but the date redacted.

cannot be undertaken in a thorough fashion? No. There will always be gaps and silences that cannot be filled however they can be addressed and possibly accounted for in other ways through different accounts and types of archival materials. No methodology or data source is ever complete.

As Nicholas Cox has noted, “archives are the incidental by-products, official actions and therefore have no obvious ‘author’, and very often not even a declared title.”²⁷¹ This can be true, however it is only one part of the potential range of available materials. The documents and artifacts of social institutions are catalogued in accordance with longstanding archival protocols rather than as markers of an individual’s work product.²⁷² As a result authorship could be scattered over numerous work files and not always grouped in a logical fashion but maybe in order of work product, or through other classification systems for example, a generic file title - “Subject A to B”.²⁷³ However, Cox is not necessarily accurate with regards to his depictions - archives don’t just contain the “official actions” but the day to day shopping or to do lists of individuals, letters to and from sweethearts along with other organizations or individuals not directly connected with affairs of state.

Recent historical sociology projects are not just writing grand macro social

²⁷¹ Nicholas Cox, “National British Archives: Public Records” in Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and Anthony Seldon (Eds) *The Contemporary History Handbook* (Manchester University Press: Manchester 1996) p. 255

²⁷² For a discussion of the protocols and the changes to access related to the digital archive in the UK see: Valerie Johnson and David Thomas, “Digital Information: ‘Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom...’ is Digital a Cultural Revolution?” in Nancy Partner and Sarah Foot (Eds) *The Sage Handbook of Historical Theory* (Sage Publications Ltd: London, 2013).

²⁷³ Correspondence records are notorious for being organized this way. For example, the Marie Stopes archive held at the Wellcome Library is organized alphabetically rather than by country, year or other possibilities which raises questions of accessibility - both physical and financial.

narratives but also focusing on the everyday and how that experience is shaped by resources, policies, social institutions, norms, etc., and purposely using multiple types of materials in addition to documents to tell the story. As discussed previously there is a growing recognition that social, political, economic, (etc.) identities and entities, borders, and the notion of citizen for example, are not fixed but influenced by the time and conditions in which they are located. The use of a range of documents (from personal to “official”) could offer insight into both micro and macro social processes (either together or separately) the stories of groups and individuals can be told as a more complete project. This also challenges the writing of the grand narrative which is linear in form and function to complete a chronology with specific beginnings and endings. In conjunction with this, Levine suggests a different kind of comparison be used through this type of comparative analysis: “comparisons *of* rather than comparisons *to*. The latter (comparison *to*) sets up a hierarchy with the lead comparison as the normative entity against which something else will be compared.”²⁷⁴ This sets up the relationship between contexts and variables that doesn’t privilege one context over another, nor diminish aspects of social change that cannot be easily and cohesively compared or connected.

As demonstrated earlier, comparative methodologies all work to provide causal explanations for social change. Amongst researchers today the focus has broadened to include an examination of the lives of individuals within communities in relation to variables - be it culture, class, gender, faith, etc. This has encouraged a much more

²⁷⁴ Philippa Levine “Is Comparative History Possible?” *History and Theory* 2014 53: 337.

fruitful analysis of, for example: how social norms are produced and maintained, how social categories are generated and used as a means to exercise power and influence individuals to perform in specific ways, and how people live according to their context and shape their societies accordingly.²⁷⁵ As Abrams noted historical sociology is “an attempt to understand the relationship of personal activity and experience on the one hand and social organization on the other as something that is continuously constructed in time.”²⁷⁶ This adds to Skocpol’s definition from the beginning of this chapter by changing the theoretical level of work that historical sociology could address effectively and create new theories regarding the social world.

Archival records and histories of sex

Using archival research to generate a social history of sex can be a greater challenge than some research fields. As will be discussed shortly the types of materials that can be used are numerous however, the story of sex can be more complex. Sex can be understood both qualitatively and quantitatively. Understandably the quantitative aspects are easier to identify and make sense of as data is accessible through several official means including census, judicial or other survey data. This is not without its own sets of concerns including what is being counted and how. Definitions are not always consistent or reflective of a group or time, nor are they always applied consistently. The potential is there to use demographic data and vital statistics to allow researchers to

²⁷⁵ For example, Emily Arrowsmith, “Fair Enough? How Notions of Race, Gender, and Soldiers’ Rights Affected Dependents’ Allowances Policies Towards Canadian Aboriginal Families During World War II” (PhD Dissertation, Carleton University: 2006); Katharine McGowan, “ “We are wards of the Crown and cannot be regarded as full citizens of Canada”: Native Peoples, the Indian Act and Canada’s War Effort (PhD Dissertation, University of Waterloo: 2011).

²⁷⁶ Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY, 1982) p. 16.

analyse social patterns of a given time and place. These sources will enable researchers to draw some inferences with regards to fertility and birth rate patterns, while court records can illuminate sexual violence, sex work and sexual behaviours.²⁷⁷

Qualitatively the process requires a closer read. Depending on the document type discussions of sex may be more nuanced than boldly or clearly stated. In diaries for example, the words and phrases used to identify sexual practices, understandings of experience and contraceptive use will be individually framed and communicated usually without the use of scientific terminologies. More formal records such as policy and medical materials conversely will make use of the scientific nomenclature of the time. This will assist in demonstrating not only professional standards but the ways in which physicians were administering to their patients' health. These archival sources will enable researchers to compare the creation and experience of more formal social identities such as mother as they are understood in a medical context rather than the more individual understandings of social or sexual identity.

When considering what types of archival data can offer an examination of sex and sexuality, the available records are significantly varied. It is possible to move beyond vital statistics and diaries and into documents or objects that would allow for the researcher to understand how the discourses of sex permeate the everyday. As

²⁷⁷ See also Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in the Archives: ..." Julie Peakman, also made use of archival materials to frame sex work between 1700 and 1825 see *Whore Biographies: 1700-1825* (London Pickering & Chatto, 2007). The National Archives of the United Kingdom has created a research guide for researchers interested in accessing records for Sexuality and Gender Identity history: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/gay-lesbian-history/#12-further-reading-websites-and-podcasts> this highlights the ways in which records may be classified or the language used in order to access materials that may be relevant to this field of research.

Wrathall notes, “rather than focusing on discrete sexual acts, they [social historians] have examined sexual mores and beliefs about the body, religious rites of passage, social institutions like marriage, kinship, and friendship, and the ways discourse about sexuality has been shaped or silenced.”²⁷⁸ Legal records for example, can inform researchers about both laws pertaining to sex and sexuality and the ways in which this is reflected in social norms through convictions, court reports and court appointed punishments. The inclusion of other types of documents and objects go further than state or official documents and enable an understanding of not only experience but identity.²⁷⁹ Institutions may retain not only diaries and reports or policy development records but physical objects pertaining to: examples of erotic objects (for example, art, pornography and related objects including ritual objects), signs and symbols of social groups, clothing and dress related to sexuality or sexual practices, along with other material objects including technological inventions (for example condoms, sex toys or

²⁷⁸ John D. Wrathall, “Provenance as Text: Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections” *Journal of American History* 1992 p. 166. For a discussion of accessing queer archival material see also Amy L. Stone and Jaime Cantrell *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives: Researching Sexual Histories* (State University of New York Press: Albany, 2016). This collection asks questions regarding the archival institution itself, the content of a queer archive and how both of these structure not only the experience of doing research but the kinds of questions that may be asked and answered. Michele Leiby, “Digging in the Archives: The Promise and Perils of Primary Documents” *Politics & Society* 2009 37(1): 75-100. Leiby explores how multiple methods can produce a more thorough examination and understanding of state sponsored sexual violence in Peru.

²⁷⁹ Frans. W.A. Van Poppel et al. use marriage licenses to examine the emergence of the housewife in the Netherlands. “Diffusion of a social norm: tracing the emergence of the housewife in the Netherlands, 1812-1922” *Economic History Review* 2009 62(1): 99-127. Timothy Willem Jones examines the wedding vow to examine subjectivity in: “Love, Honour and Obey? Romance, Subordination and marital Subjectivity in Interwar Britain” in Alana Harris and Timothy Willem Jones (Eds) *Love and Romance in Britain, 1918-1970* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015) Ch. 6. Katrin Horn examines the potential use of gossip in highlighting intimacy “Of Gaps and Gossip: Intimacy in the Archive” *Anglia* 2020 138(3): 428-448.

medical devices), films, postcards, phone box calling cards (“tart cards”), etc.²⁸⁰ This range of possible objects offers the researcher insight into not only acts that have been seen as criminal or deviant but the changing norms of a society over time. Material objects are also reflective of a social group and culture of the time and signify not only membership in a community but the day to day life experience and this type of object needs to be contextualized as such.

As a research method and data source, the critical reading and analysis of archival data can fill several roles. It can aid in the examination of persons and events in both micro and macro contexts through personal records, census records, newspapers, etc. In the case of this research, archival sources such as meeting minutes, annual reports, correspondence, and other items such as pamphlets and monographs will assist in demonstrating how women’s and related social organizations understood and worked through issues of changing female sexuality at an organizational level. Their attempts for consensus on significant issues to the organizations will be examined through the archival data. Letters and correspondence from both organizations and individuals make it possible to see some of the inconsistencies that individual group members might have lived with in their personal lives.

Using the Archive

History is my data, sociology is my toolbox... - me

Qualitatively, archival documents can be a starting point for compiling an

²⁸⁰ See for example the Kinsey Institute Collection: <https://www.kinseyinstitute.org/collections/index.php>. There are many other institutions worldwide that have substantial collections of material including both documents and objects pertaining to sex and sexuality.

account of an individual's or group's experience(s) which can become part of a record of a period, event, etc. As with all research methods the researcher is allowed to access only what the subject tells them. Whether the data source is a diary, a court transcript or in this case meeting minutes and reports, researchers can only work with what is present and examine what insight the author(s) has provided into their lives and events. It should also be noted that this does not diminish the usefulness of archival records but serves as a reminder that gaps and silences tell a story of their own. Making use of other types of materials (such as newspapers) or tools usually used in genealogy, events or other links to the subject can be further corroborated or elaborated upon.

Once the basic research question has been formulated it can then be broken down into component parts in order to determine what kind of documents, photos, maps, diaries, meeting minutes or other materials may be required to answer the question and where they can be found.²⁸¹ Archives can be found at the local level in public libraries, municipal governments, private collections through to (in the case of Canada) provincial and national institutions. The collection will often connect to the type of document that is kept or the document's relevance to a particular location,

²⁸¹ There are a number of resources that are helpful for the first time archive user. Michael Hill's *Archival Strategies* (Sage Publications: Newbury Park, California, 1993) is a short primer. Hill distinguishes between document types and steps in preparing for a visit to an archive. Susan Grigg, "Archival Practice and the Foundations of Historical Method" *The Journal of American History* 1991 78(1): 228-239; Elena Torou et al "Historical research in archives: user methodology and supporting tools" *International Journal on Digital Libraries* 2010 11(1): 25-36; and Marc J. Ventresca and John W. Mohr, "Archival Research Methods" in Joel A. C. Baum *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations* (Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, 2002) offers methodological insights into doing organizational research using archival materials. Nina Baur offers a good introduction to research method design "Problems of Linking Theory and Data in Historical Sociology and Longitudinal Research" *Historical Social Research* 2009 34(1): 7-21.

individual or group. Hill classifies the document types into public and private documents with public documents covering government records and vital statistics materials and private records covering the personal papers of individuals.²⁸² Depending on the type of documents and institutional level required (for example regions or level of government (provincial vs. federal vs. local), level of an organization (for example executive vs. local)) as specified through the research question, materials could be found at more than one institution. Archives have their own peculiarities in the form of access which should be noted.

For this research, documents have been assembled from Library and Archives of Canada, the Archives of Ontario, City of Toronto Archives, the Archives of Manitoba, the Sexual Education Resource Centre (Winnipeg), the Glenbow Museum, the Provincial Archives of Alberta, and the City of Ottawa. From these repositories, I was able to access documents from various Local Councils and Branches and the executive councils. Relevant records for social service groups affiliated with the National Council of Women such as the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and health promotion groups such as the Health League of Canada (HLC) and the Dominion Council of Health were also examined for possible connections to NCW programme initiatives. Record groups from the federal government such as the Department of National Health and Welfare (RG 29), Department of Justice (RG 13), Postmaster General (RG3), Dominion Council of Health, Customs and Revenue (RG 16), Department of National Defense (RG 24) among others were also surveyed.

²⁸² Hill *Archival Strategies*.

Unfortunately, over time documents are lost, destroyed, or not retained due to limitations of space or general apathy making the available collection incomplete for some of these organizations. Another challenge that occurred throughout the completion of this research was the resistance by some organizations to allow access to their records.

At both the Federal and Provincial Government level, the records are a combination of materials including letters and meeting minutes. Government records required a slightly different approach to creating a viable file list. I started with the 1930 to 1955 period and then used key words to identify relevant files through specific departments. The letters can be considered as both internal and external documents - internal communications between departments and external letters from the public requesting information, clarification or other forms of complaint on issues.

In the case of the Maternal Health Committee as part of the Department of National Health and Welfare, I was able to conduct a more systematic search of available records. In the case of this Committee there are meeting minutes regarding preparation for various books and information pamphlets along with letters from the general public.²⁸³ For other departments I was able to use names linked to other departments based on correspondence from women's organizations and key words based on specific projects or contextually linked words and phrases. In other cases, the key words were derived from literature reviews and paying close attention to changes in language over time.

When combined with the records of the organizations, I was able to examine the

²⁸³ See LAC RG 29 vol 991

relationship between the executive council and the government including areas of collaboration or disagreement. The local city council meeting minutes also offer similar information. Using these sorts of documents can aid in creating a path to an examination of how norms around women's changing social roles and the relationship to motherhood via sex was changing in the mid twentieth-century.

In the case of this project the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is the primary focus. As a National organization they determined the most appropriate repository for their records to be Library and Archives Canada (LAC). The NCWC has been depositing records at LAC since 1923 with the last major donation in 1994.²⁸⁴ The LAC collection is predominantly centered on the Executive Council's work and contains a variety of materials including: meeting minutes, reports, letters (to politicians, international bodies, internal correspondence, external groups, etc.), speeches, plans and other types of materials. It is a remarkably complete collection with few gaps in the available records. As a National body their organizational structure includes both Provincial and Local bodies (for further discussion see Chapter Four). Both the Provincial and Local Council records are less complete and consistent in their availability. The records for these levels of the organization may be found at local museums, LAC, provincial or municipal archives, and public libraries to name but a few locations. Many of the Local Council collections only contain meeting minutes, while others may include correspondence and reports to other branches or levels of the

²⁸⁴ Library and Archives Canada. National Council of Women of Canada (MG 28, I 25) Finding Aid 694. <http://data2.archives.ca/pdf/pdf001/p000000103.pdf>

organization.

Defining an appropriate sample type and size can be influenced by the availability of documents (what has survived, has been made available, questions of accessibility, etc.) or through other facets including time - defining the period under investigation. Time is one of the more difficult areas to assess. Creating a narrative involves recognizing and examining social phenomena in its contexts.²⁸⁵ Does one stop or start their archival work based on the duration of a specific event, a year, an occasion? Additional areas that influence the variable of time includes the actor(s) themselves, changes in policy or government and the duration of organizations. The use of eventalisation made popular by Michel Foucault has created a new mode for both data collection and analysis. Foucault proposed that examining the disjunctures of a “thing” (an idea) offers the capacity for greater understanding of change.²⁸⁶ In determining the “origins” of an idea or policy for example, the archival component could demonstrate change over time, its content, what events or individuals impacted the change and how it was enacted or received. Time could also be determined in relation to major events or disruptions within those events and can affect the types of documents generated.

²⁸⁵ Larry J. Griffin offers a more thorough discussion of the possibilities of the dimension or variable of time and how it can be used. “Temporality, Events, and Explanation in Historical Sociology: An Introduction” *Sociological Methods & Research* 1992 20(4): 403-427. Andrew Abbott is a key figure in this debate see *Time Matters: on theory and method* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2001). Abbott also questions the use of “x causes y” models in relation to time variables: “From Causes to Events: Notes on Narrative Positivism” *Sociological Methods & Research* 1992 20(4): 428-455.

²⁸⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An archaeology of the human sciences* (Tavistock Publications: London, 1970); Foucault *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1972).

Generally, the derived sample is organized around the research question, the period under investigation and the individual(s) involved. Once the choices were made regarding which organizations I wanted to explore, and the accessibility of their files was determined, finding aids and other resources were used to create a file list that would keep the process ordered and focused. Most often I relied on the file titles to guide my research program; however, on some occasions, sifting through the entire fonds was more fruitful as the file titles were misleading or not complete. While not all documents may be relevant to the question (for example, confirmation of receipt correspondence) including it on the file list for review is necessary. This was the case when there was only a single word or date on a file and it met the sampling criteria.

Determining the sampling parameters and the appropriate level of record (local, provincial, national or international), the relevant archival repository and assuring accessibility of the records is the first part of the process. Once this has been organized creating a file list of relevant documents for the project can begin. By conducting both primary and secondary source research a list of synonyms or alternative spellings could be generated to create the most complete file list possible or filter out the non-relevant materials. Not only does this process also aid in creating a list of key words but it also aids in establishing range of actors involved in the issue at hand. In his examination of nineteenth century same-sex desire Upchurch notes that through an examination of secondary source readings terms such as “sodomy”, “abominable crime”, “gross indecency” and “indecent assault” operate as code words in primary source documents

and news accounts.²⁸⁷ Unfortunately search terms such as “abominable crime”, “gross indecency” and “indecent assault” could also be used to describe other kinds of sex crimes which would need to be accounted for in the document reading process itself. Accessing materials pertaining to the social history of sex and sexuality often requires creative thinking as file titles are not always indicators of the file’s contents. As will be discussed shortly, knowing the language of the period, the potential differences between “official” and “everyday” language is necessary to determine the capacities of archival data on any given subject. For example, documents pertaining to birth control could also be found using these types of key words: contraception/contraceptive(s), prophylactic(s), condom(s), (the) pill, IUD, diaphragm, French letters, etc. This kind of pre-planning opens up the possibility of creating a more complete relevant file or document list. From there, I examined the files and recorded the items that would comprise the archival data for this dissertation.

Throughout the process of determining the range of appropriate documents for this dissertation, I needed to consider where I could find materials based on availability and access. Consulting a finding aid helped in determining the scope and availability of a series of documents pertaining to specific groups or government departments. While these are not always current, they do offer a starting point for researchers. For example, the finding aid for a government department will document the files generated, often

²⁸⁷ Charles Upchurch, “Full-Text Databases and Historical Research: Cautionary Results from a Ten-Year Study” *Journal of Social History* 2012 46(1): 89-105. While Upchurch focuses on newspapers as the data source, his discussion of the use of technology in this process is instructive with regard to coding. p. 92.

chronologically. Recognizing that federal departments especially are responsible for the entire country, documents are not usually organized regionally which can complicate the document search process and where computer search technology can be useful. At LAC for example, they have stopped updating the paper copy of the finding aid and the database has become the primary mode of searching for potential documents.

Finding aids for social service organizations may be organized both chronologically and by material type. Differentiating between photographs and meeting minutes for example aids in determining the range and type of materials selected for inclusion or exclusion in the research process. Starting with Library and Archives Canada I examined many finding aids for social service organizations and then created a database that listed all the relevant textual materials that covered the period under examination here: 1930 to 1955 beginning with the National Council of Women of Canada.²⁸⁸ These records included meeting minutes, notes, correspondence, subject files, resolutions, reference materials and their annual publication *The Yearbook*.

An examination of their committee structure also helped narrow down the search for relevant materials. For example, documents that were related to the Natural Resources Committee were excluded while files generated by the Moral Standards Committee were included. Documents from other relevant Committees included: Censorship, Printed Matter, Education, Health, Law, etc. A similar process was followed when examining documents from the Local Council's (LC or LCW). However, in some

²⁸⁸ *ibid.* I also went outside the period to examine their presentation to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1964.

cases document types were not differentiated which necessitated a careful examination of all files within the relevant time period.

Once the file list was complete the document review could begin and the further inclusion or exclusion of individual documents based on the information contained within provided a further filter based on the needs of the project. File review is often the longest part of the research process and the examination of files can be both tedious and surprising because as mentioned previously file titles can be misleading or vague. File contents often contained further leads or additional information not included in the file description. File review also offers a point in the process where new files or connections between disparate records or record groups can be made by following authors, file numbers, key words or document contents.

As I began collecting and assessing the documents, it became evident that the internal debates were not only diverse but frequent which challenged one of my hypotheses that at least internally, the membership agreed with all policy decisions, actions and programmes. More importantly the type and frequency of resistance to policy stances challenged my understanding of how a consistent vision for that organization was formed and how members worked towards some level of consensus. By noting the individuals who did disagree with the directions being pursued by the executive council, this offered the opportunity to examine some of the local actors more carefully. For example, Dr. Mary Speechly of the Winnipeg Local Council of Women was the president for several years but also a founding member of the Winnipeg Birth

Control Society (WBCS).²⁸⁹ She raised the issue of birth control not just with her Local Council but actively resisted the dictates of the Executive by participating in community actions including the dissemination of birth control technologies. This discovery led me to examine a fragmented record collection pertaining to the WBCS and her own records as well. Another example can be seen in the records of the Calgary LCW where mention is made by another member on the executive council of their attendance and report of the local Birth Control Society meeting. This led me to another incomplete document collection for the Calgary Birth Control Society.²⁹⁰ Once I had completed the data mining process, I began coding the documents according to the general theme and date.

Processing the document collection

Coding processes are usually related to the specific variables that the researcher will use or test to measure an outcome to answer the original research question. Reviewing the document for content will not only organize the document collection but determine what has been emphasized over time. Coding methods can be as simple as using a recipe card per topic/author/actor or the creation of a database that enables the researcher to not only note the dominant theme but other key phrases or content that may be important in developing the narrative. After completing the coding process, I found that there were certain patterns emerging that were both expected and unexpected. As a result, key themes emerged along with the time periods to form the

²⁸⁹ The remaining papers of the WBSC and Mary Speechly's papers are housed in multiple locations around Winnipeg including the Archives of Manitoba, University of Manitoba Archives and the Sexuality Education Resource Centre.

²⁹⁰ The remaining papers of the Calgary Birth Control Society were accessed at the Glenbow Museum Archives prior to their move to the University of Calgary in 2018/19.

basis of this work: 1930 to 1939 (birth control and a preliminary examination of sex education), 1940 to 1945 (modes of governing female sexuality and marriage), 1946 to 1955 (family reconstruction). A secondary coding process was then undertaken to identify key phrases and examples of programming that were consistent with the themes of moral regulation and governmentality.

Bryant describes a preliminary method for assessing and analysing documents whether individually or as a collection.²⁹¹ First is “the identification/classification of the evidence”.²⁹² This entails specifying the nature and provenance of the document (the type - correspondence, meeting minutes, government documents, diaries, etc.) which will aid in understanding the role of both the author and the intended readers - specifically their knowledge or participation in the process. This includes an assessment of the purpose of the document and what it is meant to do (explain, identify, demonstrate, or communicate ideas, policies, etc.) and the depth of the knowledge contained therein (surface or in-depth discussion). Another aspect within the identification and classification process includes a consideration of where the document originates to determine for example, the embedded understandings of the document type, the intended reader, etc. As Schwartz and Cook note: “...the individual document is not just a bearer of historical content, but also a reflection of the needs and desires of its creator, the purpose(s) for its creation, the audience(s) viewing the record, the broader legal, technical, organizational, social, and cultural-intellectual contexts in

²⁹¹ Bryant, “On sources and narratives in historical social science: ...” p. 498.

²⁹² *ibid.*

which the creator and audience operated..."²⁹³ The first stage of classification also requires dating the documents to assess the thoroughness and completeness of the series. This will point out the gaps and possible silences in the data that may require additional archival research or other modes of explanation.

The second phase of analysis that Bryant outlines is "the determination of its [the document's] meaning and purpose".²⁹⁴ This requires the researcher to decipher and understand the "symbolic codes - linguistic, iconographic, behavioural, institutional - that informed its creation".²⁹⁵ Whether it is through jargon used by colleagues, institutions, or other etiquette based expectations and related social processes (for example understanding the language and institutional quirks) will aid in grasping the time in which the document was produced, the actors who contributed to it and their role. Adjectives used to describe constituent groups (for example the "deserving poor") offer much in the way of symbolism that would need to be decoded and contextualized to be able to discuss the status of groups and individuals within communities, the features of the population, the creation and implementation of policy, etc. The role of an author may also have an impact on these symbolic codes - are they fulfilling specific roles or statuses which have an impact on what is recorded and how? How is the document to be used? Are there official language protocols that should be observed and meaning is therefore malleable? Is the author accurate in their record or projecting a single point of view?

²⁹³ Schwartz and Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power:..." p. 3-4.

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*

²⁹⁵ *ibid.*

Third, Bryant recommends “determining its spatio-temporal localization” or embeddedness in the context of both time and place (either institutional or archival).²⁹⁶ The chronology of the documents themselves lend to the capacity to follow a conversation or series of ideas. When documents are either intentionally or mistakenly put out of order the reader can miss relevant actors or decisions and actions. Alternatively, if the documents have been intentionally placed out of order by the document creator this could open new avenues for thought as correspondence on a single thread for example can be accumulated and organized for the cohesion of responses. Secondly, the location of the document within the collection can also be relevant. Because files are not always single topic entities the location of the document within both the file and the series can be useful or lead to new relevant information for the researcher.

In developing the narrative from the accumulated data, as discussed earlier the dimension of chronology will be a starting point. Based on the preferred coding process an inventory of key documents can be organized and eventually used. This will aid in determining the strength and type of evidence required to illustrate how the event or outcome within the research question occurred. Creating links between causes and effects is seen through what happens in between - decisions, debates, correspondence, etc., all of these forms offer opportunities for discovering relationships, meanings, and actions. According to Bryant

historical-sociological narratives must accordingly identify, situate, and

²⁹⁶ *ibid.*

integrate the disparate 'first-order' narratives operative among the actors, and retrospectively explicate those experiences with reference to the social structural and historical forces responsible for their genesis and development.²⁹⁷

This creates a framework for a theoretically sound explanation of social worlds and the interpretations of individuals experience. The use of archival materials allows for stronger evidence and a greater depth of explanation throughout the narrative. They also offer the opportunity for a multilevel analysis rather than solely macro scale analyses as early historical sociologists were inclined to do. The archive creates the capacity to examine the roles and contributions of actors in their understanding of and integration within their context.

Considering the nature of the data sources it is impossible to get a complete picture of the discussions and debates that may have occurred during the period under investigation here which is a distinct limitation of this research. The use of meeting minutes allows for a summary sense of what the groups felt was important and what actions they wanted to support and where possible pursue. Resolutions indicate support and action items within the minutes indicate precisely that, action taken to back up the resolutions. Unfortunately, meeting minutes are not usually verbatim transcripts of discussions and are therefore missing whatever additional discussions may have occurred at the meeting. The minutes however do offer clear insight into what their social anxieties were and how they were prepared to address them when it came to female sexuality. A second limitation arose from the available documents themselves.

²⁹⁷ Bryant "On Sources and Narratives..." p. 514.

Poor to non-existent records have made a viable and in-depth analysis of the treatment of these issues from a rural and urban as a mode of comparison impossible.

Ethics

In the social sciences, ethics is a significant element of research design. In general, ethics requires researchers to consider the role of the researcher, the participants, and their context in relation to the data that they share with us. These policies and practices are located at the level of the institutional and the personal. The requirements for working with research subjects are formalized through documents such as the Tri-Council Policy Statement or through educational and medical institutions, however these regulations largely cover living subjects.²⁹⁸ As a result the ethics protocols when using documents are usually imposed on the researcher through the granting archival repository or institution. There are two dominant record types that will have varying regulations regarding access and other ethical practices attached to them. The first are record groups (RG) which are usually government documents and second are manuscript groups (MG) which are often donated materials by private individuals.

In the case of official government documents the law may play a role regarding the implementation of ethics. The ethical principles that may be impacted by law include disclosing names (anonymity and confidentiality) and access (including consent). Specific records and record groups have extensive periods set for restrictions (thirty

²⁹⁸ Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical conduct for Research Involving Humans* (Ottawa, 2014) p. 14-15. See also the policy statement set by the Canadian Historical Association: <http://www.cha-shc.ca/english/about-the-cha/statement-on-research-ethics.html#sthash.deyO9Wfc.vwOULb9l.dpbs>

years for cabinet conclusions for example, thirty to seventy years for criminal court records, permanent restrictions for pardons, and the possible requirement of court rulings when seeking to access juvenile records) to permanently sealed records. Access to Information (ATIP) requests for documents that have not been released are part of the initial assessment process regarding access and confidentiality or for example, assessment of national security concerns. Sometimes this action may be undertaken if the records don't have a file title but have several other features that indicate it may be useful (as Cox noted above). Filing an ATIP request will aid in providing a determination of inclusion or exclusion of the file for review as the research project gets underway. Unfortunately, Access to Information requests have become a very political process and the rules of access are being blurred in significant ways as can be seen in the delays of releasing specific types of information and in the type of information that is released. While document assessors are not allowed to ask the reason why researchers wish to view specific documents, there are certain assumptions made regarding their eventual use based on the type of material being requested which may influence the evaluation process. There are also a diminishing number of individuals doing this administrative work which can create a longer than average delay.

Another type of record that may have ethical issues attached to their examination and use are personal records (manuscript groups) that have been donated to an institution yet contain information about individuals still living. The group or individual donating records to the institution may place restrictions on when files may be accessed (often it is with the death of the individual plus "x" years connected to the individuals

mentioned in the record). Another possibility concerns records that were donated by medical groups for example or other groups/individuals who wish to monitor access and require that the researcher request for access directly from the sponsoring organization. In other cases, the donating party may close financial documents or other records pertaining to personnel or human resource information. Donating parties may also grant limited access to specific sections of their records with the proviso that material cannot be used in publication without their prior examination or approval. In addition, the donator of the records or the institution can also stipulate specific requirements regarding anonymity and confidentiality otherwise names and other identifying information can be freely used. With other types of documents, legal restrictions will dictate how individuals are to be referred to (in some cases if at all) and what of their information or data can be used. Information pertaining to employment and other human resources materials will not be made accessible for publication however they may still be viewed in some cases where they haven't been removed from the document collection. Filing requests to view such records with the donating organization, executor or family is common and often granted with or without conditions attached.

In recent years, there has been a profusion of documents available online that can circumvent the need to physically be at an archive. This has been limited to documents that have been declared open and without the need to go through an ATIP/FOI process. This continues to be an ongoing project and depending on the institution this could be

quite low on the priority list due to funding allocations.²⁹⁹

Due to the lack of formal ethical guidelines regarding the use and treatment of documents, scholars have taken an approach to ethics that is in keeping with their own personal ideals. While conducting research in the mid-1990s Steven Maynard made an interesting decision regarding the ethical use of unaccessioned court records of prosecuted gay men dating from the 1890s to the 1930s in Ontario.³⁰⁰ Due to the stigma faced by gay men over time and in Maynard's particular case the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century, he chose to obfuscate the identifiers (such as name, age, occupation, marital status, place, etc.) even though he had exceeded the minimum of number of years between the date of the records being made available and when he was doing this research. Due to the unorganized nature of the records themselves, he created case numbers that would not be in use in the future by Archives Ontario. This served to protect and honour the individuals named in the documents.

Another example is patient health records which can be made available after a set period according to provincial and federal laws. In her examination of psychiatric records Wendy Mitchinson used first names of the patients or pseudonyms to retain the

²⁹⁹ For an interesting assessment of online document retrieval see: Alexandra Chassanoff, "Historians and the Use of Primary Source Materials in the Digital Age" *The American Archivist* 2013 76(2): 458-480; Lucie Ryzova, "Mourning the Archive: Middle Eastern Photographic Heritage between Neo-liberalism and Digital Reproduction" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2014 56(4): 1027-1061; Upchurch, "Full-Text Databases and Historical Research:..."

³⁰⁰ Steven Maynard, "'Horrible Temptations': Sex, Men, and Working-Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890-1935" *Canadian Historical Review* 1997 78(2): 191-235. See footnote seven. For a first person account of the dilemmas of developing privacy policies around archival documents pertaining to sex and sexuality see: Judith Schwarz, "The Archivist's Balancing Act: Helping Researchers While Protecting Individual Privacy" *The Journal of American History* 1992 79(1): 179-189.

confidentiality of the patients regardless of the period or place (Canada and Australia) she examined.³⁰¹ For her study of two asylums based in Canada and Australia, Mitchinson chose to only use the first name of the patient and a file number. Cheryl Krasnick Warsh and Geoffrey Reaume have also used similar practices that are in keeping with not only legal requirements but with reinstating an individual's presence in the record:

[T]his approach to naming those who were categorized as being of unsound mind, is significant for not only giving them an identity as human beings separate from a diagnosis, but for considering them as people who could be active agents in their own lives.³⁰²

With regard to this research, I have complied with the legal requirements as stipulated by the archival institutions I visited during the research period. Most of the documents used in this research were already declared open at the time of data collection. The same has been the case with most of the records reviewed and included from manuscript groups with notable exceptions. The donator for one manuscript group required that I have a conversation with them regarding my interest in the organization, the content of the files, and the scope of materials I would require. A second organization stipulated that I could look at all the files however, records pertaining to charities, donations and financial transactions could not be published to assure the confidentiality of not only the organization but the individuals who were already

³⁰¹ Wendy Mitchinson, "The Toronto and Gladesville Asylums: Humane Alternatives for the Insane in Canada and Australia?" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1989 63(1): 52-72.

³⁰² Geoffrey Reaume, "Portraits of People with Mental Disorders in English Canadian History" *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 2000 17: 99. See Archives of Ontario for more information regarding the use of medical and/or patient records: http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/health_records/psychiatric.aspx

marginalized through the stigma of poverty. I have respected and complied with these requirements.

Conclusion

Historical sociology is about the analysis of, amongst many things, past social processes, in order to consider paths to, or consequences for, the future. The tools of both sociology and history continue to be successfully combined to tell the stories of various social groups. Through the earlier brief summary of the new(ish) areas under current consideration by historical sociologists, it can be shown that the possibilities contained within the archive for answering these questions are many and diverse. The accumulated archival data is where the malleability of variables and the context in which they are deployed are part of a project to generate more than linear narratives. This sounds as though historical sociology is devolving into case study analyses rather than grand narratives of social change but this is not necessarily the case. The examination of institutions is still under way but the level and forms for analysis have changed.

Analyses of the production, use and transformation of social concepts and institutions is necessary for a more complete understanding of the conditions under which change at all levels occurs. While there are numerous critics of the potential evidence an archive can provide and its later interpretation, a systematic process for data collection as demonstrated earlier can satisfy with many of these criticisms. It still remains that as with any research method researchers can only use the information they may receive and that it will always be incomplete. The methods for conducting this type

of research will change as new methodologies and theories from other disciplines are tried and tested.

In the case of this research, historical sociology will allow for an examination of the discourses of sex using the available records of social organizations such as the National Council of Women of Canada. Using archival records offers a number of possibilities within this research. First a consistent and largely complete record of the period under investigation is available which will allow for an examination of change over time. Second, an aging population of women and the number of women who were involved with the organizations during this period is beginning to dwindle. Third the testimony from women of this period may not offer the range of details that are available through the documents types made use of in this research. Meeting the aims of both explanatory and interpretive needs within historical sociology will continue to be where the possibilities for analysis are. Ultimately there can be no question of sociology's continued reliance upon history to describe where we have been and where we are going.

Chapter Four: Establishing the Organization: Structure and Form

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the organizational structures of the National Council of Women of Canada. This will be important in order to understand the ways in which information flows, ideas and actions are carried out, and resistance occurs. A discussion of their structure is also relevant as ideas and agenda items that will be discussed in the following chapters were not just distributed in a “top-down” fashion, rather they operated in a more fluid fashion - suggestions for action and concerns that warranted investigating were offered from all levels. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the available documents, an analysis of the differences in their approaches to adaptation between rural and urban groups is not possible.

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCW) was established in 1893 as an outwardly urban and secular organization even though they based their ideals on Judeo-Christian ethics as a basis for action.³⁰³ The preamble to the first constitution of the National Council stated:

We, Women of Canada, sincerely believing that the best good of our homes and nation will be advanced by our own greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, and that an organized movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the Family and State, do hereby band ourselves together to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law.³⁰⁴

The National Council of Women positioned itself as an umbrella group for their local councils and dozens of other affiliated women’s and social service organizations.

³⁰³ Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision ...* p. 5-6.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.* p. 441, Appendix H.

Over time, organizations such as the Young Women's Christian Association, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Health League of Canada, and the Canadian Council on Social Development, the University Women's Association, and various Business Women's Associations became longtime affiliates of the NCW. As is demonstrated in Appendix B the affiliated membership was varied across elements of the social and political spectrum. Broadly speaking organizations could be characterized as being part of one of the following groups: religious, social (family, children, general social environments, social service organizations), education (elementary to university associations), military, political, business and/or union, and health or related to medical institutions. This encouraged women who participated in multiple organizations to use their influence and collaborate on projects with other institutions. With this range of organizational participation at both the local and the national level, middle-class women's interests could be seen to be represented quite effectively.

At their annual meetings, the NCW received reports and resolutions from their affiliated groups and put them forward to be endorsed by the rest of the membership. Most often these resolutions were adopted so long as they supported the mandates of the majority of the member affiliates. As a result, affiliated members could be influential in setting the agenda of the National Council. This strengthened their overall capacity to lobby at all levels from municipal government through to the international scene concerning social, political, and economic issues.

The organizational structure of local councils consisted of an executive branch and committees ranging from and not limited to: work and professions, health

(including a separate committee for mental hygiene³⁰⁵), laws, economy and natural resources, immigration, recreation, and moral standards. These remained some of the standard committees for at least the first half of the twentieth-century. Naturally, the mandates differed per committee to include both research and action plans while others were more focused on evaluating existing policy or legislation. The 1936 terms of reference for the Moral Standards Committee for example was based on the Terms of Reference that governed the International Council of Women for this same committee. It was indicated that they were to focus on three areas:

- a) to insist upon the necessity for a high and equal moral standard, and to organize public opinion for this purpose.
- b) to emphasize the advantage of voluntary treatment of venereal disease as against compulsory registration.
- c) to keep in touch with the work of the Advisory Committee on Social Questions of the League of Nations, and to urge the Governments not only to sign and ratify but to implement [the] International Conventions on Traffic in Women and Children."³⁰⁶

This combination of local, national, and international contacts and contexts provided for an internal and external consistency of both concerns pertaining to women's lives and actions that could be taken at a local level to - in this instance - ensure better health.

In many instances topics for discussion or investigation were provided by the national executive to determine the prevalence of both good and bad social trends at the community level. The results of these investigations would also provide the basis for

³⁰⁵ In a 1946 report it is noted that "Mental hygiene is primarily concerned with helping people grow to satisfying maturity, which is marked by consideration, tolerance, self-discipline, ability to face facts and accept realities, participation in self-expressive work of community value, finding a high purpose in living, around which they have integrated their lives. This demands definite instruction, guidance, knowledge and desire by the individual to practice what he knows." NCWC *Yearbook* 1946 p. 95.

³⁰⁶ LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 72 file 8 November 2, 1937 Reel H-2024.

new lobbying or educational efforts. Another form of direction from the executive council came in the form of reading lists. Readings in related areas were often provided to inform members of present debates, science, and general opinion. Frequently agenda items would reflect regional issues such as resource-based economy management in western regions of Canada while social problems dominated the agenda in many eastern towns and cities. Generally, meetings consisted of committee reports and updates or new issues were brought forth for consideration. These research reports would influence how decisions were made at both the local and national levels. Often a speaker from the community, for example, religious officials, social workers, physicians or nurses, bankers, educators, etc., would speak briefly thereby reaffirming and reinforcing their connections to their community. Using information learned from their community leaders and their own investigations, local members attempted to create change through education and programming. Another outcome was to work with social service committees and agencies or to place women onto various boards and committees of city councils or the provinces.

The Provincial Councils of Women (PCW) would form another coalition and organizational level both vertically and laterally in terms of the NCW's hierarchy.³⁰⁷ The PCW would report on the actions of the local councils to the national executive. For example the Manitoba Provincial Council of Women forwarded a list of activities that local council committees had worked on throughout the 1950-1951 season including: Alcohol Education and Advertising; Women on juries; Enforcement of laws on salacious

³⁰⁷ For an example of the activities and role of the PCW see Griffiths, *The Splendid Vision ...* p. 262.

pocket books; Sex Education; Larger school area; Ceremonies for citizenship; Housing; Penal Reform; and the School of Nursing.³⁰⁸ Provincial councils would collate and coordinate reports and actions from the local councils and this information would then be sent to the national executive. From there the executive council would be able to set the annual priorities based on reports from all levels (local, provincial, and national) and for most committees (through a national convener) established key goals for the local councils to monitor in their community. For example, in the fall of 1937 the national convener for the Moral Standards Committee, Mrs. Dorothy Gregg requested information from local branches regarding delinquency. Mrs. Gregg wrote that:

nothing is more important for the future of our country than that young people should be guarded from conditions that lead to moral delinquency in their early years. Labour conditions for minors, protection of the illegitimate child, correction of, or removal from, unsuitable home conditions, are all problems which this committee should study.³⁰⁹

The specific nature of the forms of delinquency and the spaces in which they were presumed to be occurring displays a distinct mode of understanding for the NCW. The public and private spheres of social interaction were increasingly seen to be sites that were unregulated or ungoverned in relation to changing sexual norms and conduct. The public and private sphere were being influenced by the social conditions of the period and the use of moral language would establish where and with whom the problems lay.

While the executive branch may have set the official agenda, there were issues such as birth control where it will be shown, not all the local councils followed suit.

³⁰⁸ There is a further notation that some of these areas have been endorsed and submitted to the Provincial Cabinet and others sent to the NCW. LAC MG 28 I 25 vol 92 file 3 p. 4.

³⁰⁹ LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 72 file 8 November 2, 1937 Reel H-2024.

Discussions and debates were common within the organization and mostly welcomed as the agenda needed to reflect the regional needs of the whole country.

The national executive participated in the International Women's Council and supported initiatives in other countries. According to Griffiths there were three primary benefits to maintaining an international affiliation: it provided "information about the general status of women and children across the world; information about the strategies various countries were using to fight sex discrimination; and participation in the general international effort to achieve better understanding among peoples."³¹⁰ Resolutions and actions taken by the International Council would be reported on by the National Executive and then distilled through to the Local Councils for information, discussion or further action.

On the front lines of the NCW, the Local Councils of Women (LCW) united like-minded women and provided a forum at the level of the small town or city.³¹¹ According to Strong-Boag "meetings and programmes would instruct members in the operations of their community. Women would learn to identify and manipulate the institutions and individuals who directed the community's affairs."³¹² Local Councils were established in many small towns and cities across Canada and alternately opened and closed as their popularity and sustainability waxed and waned.³¹³ Participation in women's

³¹⁰ Griffiths *The Splendid Vision* p. 196.

³¹¹ For example, during the 1938 - 1939 season the Ottawa Local Council of Women had 35 local affiliates and by 1943 there were 86 local affiliates.

³¹² Veronica Strong - Boag, *The Parliament of Women: ...* p. 3; Griffiths *The Splendid Vision:...*

³¹³ As of 2006 there were 18 Local Councils in operation with 27 nationally organized groups as affiliates. By 2019 there were 12 Local Councils, 6 Provincial Councils and 11 nationally organized societies.

organizations had attractions for their members that were beyond the stated organizational goals of civic improvement. The appeal of participation was in almost equal parts of friendship, shared interests, and companionship, increased individual status within their community and the desire and ability to influence the direction of their local government.³¹⁴ While not usually offered respect by some members of both society and the media the use of the term “club women” was used as a descriptor of:

a wealthy woman freed of economic and family responsibility. She was seen as having a ‘problem of leisure,’ and any activity she undertook was therefore seen as a matter of self-indulgence, no matter how laudable the enterprise might be.”³¹⁵

Women’s lives and contributions to society were understood in relation to their families and not public service which is where some of this derision towards the clubwoman was directed. Some of this characterization was true. Much of the original membership was composed of upper- and middle-class women who had enough leisure time to devote to community and committee work however, this is not their sole characteristic. By the 1930s the social structure of Canadian society had changed significantly and no longer were “titled ladies” leading organizations such as the NCW. With the widening of class dimensions by the 1930s, there was an increased diversity of participants. This is not to say that there weren’t upper-class women or women of privilege in the ranks of the NCW, it does offer the opportunity to examine the social positions of club women and the ways in which they connected to their communities.

³¹⁴ Leila J. Rupp “Sexuality and Politics in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of the International Women’s Movement” *Feminist Studies* 1997 23(3): 577-605.

³¹⁵ Griffiths *The Splendid Vision...* p. 4

As Wendy Heads' examination of the Local Council of Women of Winnipeg (LCWW) during the period of 1894 to 1920 found, 83% of the Council's members were married, and that married women were overwhelmingly part of the executive and the council in general.³¹⁶ It is important to note two features of this data: first, given the predominantly rural nature of Winnipeg during this period it is quite plausible that among the membership single women would be in the minority and that Heads' findings in this aspect were accurate. Second, this ratio would not necessarily be representative of the rest of the National Council of Women membership where only 9% of members were employed outside the home and were either married or widowed.³¹⁷ Of the 74% of members who were married but were not employed outside the home most husbands were professionals (34%) (including physicians, clergy, journalists, lawyers, architects, etc.).³¹⁸ Similarly, other husbands were either business proprietors and senior or middle managers in business (22% and 21% respectively), or financial service workers, brokers, and agents (predominantly real estate).³¹⁹ Other occupational categories included civil servants (at all levels of government), members of the armed services and clerks and bookkeepers (18%) with the fewest proportion of husbands.³²⁰ Janet Harvey found similar occupation and marital status patterns during the period of her study 1895-1929 for the Regina Local Council of Women: 86% of women who

³¹⁶ Wendy Heads *The Local Council of Women of Winnipeg 1894 – 1920...* Chapter 4 and for more detail see her Appendix C.

³¹⁷ *ibid.*

³¹⁸ *ibid.*

³¹⁹ *ibid.*

³²⁰ *ibid.*

attended one of the first meetings were either married or widowed. Only 80% of spousal occupations could be determined with 97% of that group found husbands who were civil servants, North-West Mounted Police officers, a business owner, lawyer, clergy, or a bank manager.³²¹ Other professional occupations, including a Judge, and a farmer were added over time.³²² According to Heads, many women described volunteering as their employment. This is interesting considering the value that women placed on their work inside the home as “natural” and taken for granted while work outside the home (such as volunteering) was deemed to be employment.³²³

Women who were involved in paid employment were mostly in professional occupational categories such as physicians, clergy, professors, journalists, nurses, and teachers. The timing of NCW meetings to times outside the school session suited both women who had school-age children and working women. “It was easier for married women to combine household duties with journalism than with the duties of some other careers, though by no means all of the LCWW (Local Council of Women of Winnipeg) journalists worked from their homes.”³²⁴ The rest of the employed members were in occupational fields such as real estate, or worked as middle managers and clerks, or were employed by the city. It was not a uniform policy across all organizations that women who participated in voluntary organizations be married and unemployed. The incorporation of an official policy requiring that members be married varied from

³²¹ Harvey *The Regina Council of Women,* Gillian Weiss also confirms this pattern: ‘*As Women and as Citizens’*

³²² *ibid.*

³²³ Heads *The Local Council of Women of Winnipeg 1894 – 1920...* p. 177.

³²⁴ *ibid.* p. 177.

organization to organization.³²⁵ Working women were able to offer new and different skills to their clubs so their influence could be expanded and the knowledge they collected be relied upon. It was also an opportunity to gain skills and resources. While racial and class discrimination may have been a part of organizational development, some groups viewed the increasing membership of women of colour or immigrant women as a mode of inclusion and as a mechanism for promoting assimilation and establishing “Canadian ideals”.

Heads also concluded that women living in the working-class end of Winnipeg were not well represented on Council and that most of their members were living in the central core and the South and West ends of Winnipeg (predominantly middle-class neighbourhoods). In addition, “the surnames of the women were overwhelmingly of United Kingdom origin, though many of the women had been born in Ontario; there was a small sprinkling of French-Canadian names, but negligible representation of other nationalities.”³²⁶ In other locations the inclusion of women of colour or immigrant women served as a way to alleviate the loneliness of lives in their towns communities whether or not they were based in urban or rural settings. Social service organizations encouraged women of other races and classes to participate as members which would also provide cultural links and access to new groups and services as part of network building.

³²⁵ For example, between 1875 and 1936 the Girls’ Friendly Society would only accept girls of “virtuous character” (virgins) as members. See Vivienne Richmond ““It is Not a Society for Human Beings but for Virgins”: The Girls’ Friendly Society Membership Eligibility Dispute 1875-1936” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 2007 20(3): 304-327.

³²⁶ Heads *The Local Council of Women of Winnipeg 1894 – 1920...* p. 178.

The Women's Institutes: Organization and Structure

Another example to contrast with the National Council of Women are The Women's Institutes (WI). They have their origins in companion classes to the Farmer's Institutes established through provincial Departments of Agriculture. As a result, they were originally more rural in orientation and membership. The Departments of Agriculture used their time with the farmers to conduct extension classes promoting new crops and farming techniques. Frequently wives would accompany their husbands to these meetings due to the distance and time spent away from the farm and home. It was suggested that this could also be a time for women to exchange domestic or farming tips of their own and from there women's branches were formed. According to Kechnie, "the local branches ranged from being dynamic fund-raising groups which provided health and social services in many small towns to being little more than tea circles in other areas."³²⁷ I would argue that even if they were only "tea circles" the WIs were still a valid and important social network for women facing potential isolation on the farm and in their communities.³²⁸ Branches were not as structured as the NCW's local councils but many kept themselves involved in local concerns for example, medical or other health issues and funding for related local works, supporting women and business projects, local politics and education issues. The provincial Departments of Agriculture

³²⁷ Margaret Kechnie, *Keeping Things Clean "For Home and Country": The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1897 - 1919* (PhD Dissertation, OISE, 1996) p. 14; Ambrose, *For Home and Country: ...*

³²⁸ Georgina Taylor " 'Shall I Drown Myself Now or Later?' The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and Their Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967" in *Women, Isolation and Bonding: the ecology of gender* Kathleen Storrie (Ed) (Methuen: Toronto, 1987) p. 79-100.

coordinators did not consistently facilitate or support the organization and communication among provincial WIs. As a result, “the Women's Institute’s federal body (FWIC), for instance, barely exists as a national umbrella; the Women’s Institute’s active life is conducted almost entirely at the local level, where it is directed to servicing members and their local community.”³²⁹ The available archival documents certainly reflect this sentiment.

Locally, speakers were invited to their meetings and networks were created with other groups and officials such as educators, physicians and nurses, clerical members, and politicians.³³⁰ These speakers also offered similar opportunities for WI members to not only learn from the speaker but use that information to shape their local activities. Rural women “shared with urban dwellers the need for greater community services in the fields of health, education and welfare. Relative isolation rather than crowding set the parameters of these issues in their rural form.”³³¹ The WI’s focus on women’s issues and the way they experienced farm life or connected to other rural communities and organizations was in some circles a point of contention especially when they connected with politically driven groups. For example, there was dissension among the more politically left leaning farming organizations in Western Canada such as the United

³²⁹ Carbert, *Agrarian Feminism*: ... p. 25. This creates a difficulty in comparing these two organizations. In addition, the lack of available archival documentation at all levels means that only a piecemeal discussion of WI positions and actions on the present topics can be undertaken. For example the finding aid for the Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada: <http://data2.archives.ca/pdf/pdf001/p000000196.pdf>

³³⁰ For example the Manitoba Women’s Institute worked with local branches to develop and hire public health nurses that would deliver health and sex education curriculum to the local schools. AoM MG 10 C8.

³³¹ Strong Boag *The Parliament of Women...* p. 29-30.

Farmers of Canada and their branches including the Women's Sections (especially noted in Alberta and Saskatchewan). The resistance was mostly amongst male members, who objected when gender issues were raised to the fore rather than class or farming issues.³³² In the case of the WI, the Minister of Agriculture and the Farmer's Institutes encouraged the emphasis on gender issues so long as it was in the context of women as homemakers and not in relation to the political issues of the day.³³³ For example, from 1915 to 1918 when suffrage was being debated, the Provincial government "forbade" them to discuss the issue and generally discouraged them from being politically active. This also stemmed the type of advocacy work that some branches participated in. George Putnam the Superintendent of the Institutes Branch of the Department of Agriculture stated:

You may discuss whatever subjects you think well, but we strongly advise, and we are very serious in our advice, that you avoid all controversial or political questions. There is such a large field of work without taking up these questions. The Institute is yours.³³⁴

It should also be noted that some of the some of the branches were not interested in the suffrage debate outside of the government edict. "... it was felt that women had no place in these political controversies nor in exercising the franchise."³³⁵ When the resolution came from the NCW the members of the WI passed it regardless.

³³² Cheryle Jahn, "'Class, Gender and Agrarian Socialism': The United Farm Women of Saskatchewan, 1926-1931" *Prairie Forum* 1994 19 (2): 189-206; Rudolph G. Marchildon *The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association: A Study in Agrarian Activism* (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1981).

³³³ Monda Halpern, *And on that farm he had a wife: Ontario Farm Women and Feminism, 1900-1970* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal & Kingston, 2001) p. 5.

³³⁴ Ambrose, *For Home and Country*:... p. 88.

³³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 87.

A prominent segment of the WI agenda was the development of domestic science education and homemaking skills offered through the education system at all levels.³³⁶ Classes at local agricultural colleges were also sponsored and supported by the local branches. This provided an organized means of connecting with young women - especially women who came from farming families. This would provide an additional layer of organizational support and membership pool especially for women who may have wished to enter the urban workforce before marriage or were interested in the domestic side of running a farm. Through this support WI members were nominated to take further classes at colleges and universities. The classes would help women learn how to organize their homes, work with and incorporate new household and farming technologies, ways of supporting the household income, food management, nutrition, child rearing, etc. They were also involved at the level of primary education in the establishment of Junior Mother's Classes. These classes meant that girls could be enrolled as WI members from an early age and specifically learn domestic science skills, child rearing basics and other allied subject areas.³³⁷ The skills taught to the girls through the early age school program would also be used in their homes.

'Little Mothers' classes joined homemaking badges in guides and lectures in CGIT [Canadian Girls in Training] to prompt members to accept special responsibility for and find particular reward in the care of those younger than themselves. Dolls, homemade or store-bought, confirmed the same

³³⁶ Halpern *And on that farm he had a wife:...* Ch. 4.

³³⁷ Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth Century Canada* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1994); Arnup et al. *Delivering Motherhood:...*; Dianne Dodd "Advice to Parents: The Blue Books, Helen MacMurchy, MD, and the Federal Department of Health, 1920-34" *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 1991 8: 203-30; Rima D. Apple, *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Childrearing in America* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, 2006).

message. ... Not all girls enjoyed baby-minding; some regretted the time lost to play or school. For others, however, the social approval they earned as 'Little Mothers' and the affection they might win from those in their care were powerful inducements to nurture. The lesson of such early experiences was difficult to ignore. Even should they be able to reject a maternal role for themselves, girls would be hard put to escape the realization what normalcy for their sex was inextricably linked with mothering, whether biological or social.³³⁸

The added benefit to incorporating 'Little Mothers' or 'Junior Mother's Classes' into the general curriculum was twofold. First, domestic skills were thought to be declining with the advancement of new technologies and labour and educational opportunities which may have looked better than being a wife and mother. Homemaking skills taught in the schools gave a new generation the skills required to run their own homes and families and these classes would hopefully ameliorate the real or perceived problem. Second, if the students were from immigrant families, information could be shared with their mothers thus completing the cycle for knowledge dissemination.

In general, the WI program goals and mandates were monitored through the Department of Agriculture and as they became more established they too did not always take direction as they were supposed to. Government officials did not often interfere in the work of the WI and frequently left it to deteriorate with little support and funding, except when politically expedient or potentially damaging issues arose. Through the Provincial Department of Agriculture there was a contact available to send information and field inquiries however, the WI was not a priority for governments. Examination of Department of Agriculture Annual Reports over this period show that turnover in this

³³⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Penguin Books: Markham, 1988) p. 12-13.

contact position was high.³³⁹ Women held the post predominantly and as was the case for at least the first half of the twentieth-century once the WI contact married they had to leave the civil service, which left this position periodically vacant. The combination of a lack of sustained and consistent leadership and increased urbanization left the WI to become nearly as urban issue oriented as the NCW. Thus, issues that pertained to the needs of farm women were largely relegated to the background.

As both the NCW and WI grew and expanded, membership overlapped between the organizations which could have created pressures in achieving consensus on agenda items for focus and action.³⁴⁰ By the early 1920s the Federated Women's Institutes and the Provincial Women's Institutes especially on the Prairies and eventually Ontario dropped their affiliation with the NCW. According to Griffiths there were a number of reasons for this: the urban/rural split regarding the direction of the NCW and the relative input the WI members had; the seemingly intentional disregard for farming and farm life especially when it came to production of goods; and lastly some felt that the farming associations on the prairies offered more to the members.³⁴¹ As is demonstrated in Appendix A, there were some local branches that continued their affiliations because there were no other local associations available to them.

Toward the mid-twentieth-century more women worked outside the home and participated in these or similar organizations. Many members though, were financially

³³⁹ Department of Agriculture *Annual Reports* (Kings Printer: Canada) 1930 to 1955.

³⁴⁰ Griffiths *The Splendid Vision...* p. 132.

³⁴¹ *ibid.* p. 162-163. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union took a similar approach and did not join as an affiliate at the national level but the individual branches had the option to affiliate themselves with the NCW. *ibid.* p. 80.

well off by virtue of their husbands' positions and were thus able to devote their time to charitable works. However, this phenomenon was in decline by the 1930s due to changing social and economic structures, educational opportunities and other demographics. In addition, many of the members were involved in more than one organization. This could have allowed them to leverage their multiple memberships to greater advantage by transplanting their ideas and actions across groups to gain more widespread support for various causes and concerns. Simply being involved in multiple organizations also meant that all their personal interests could be met.

By 1930 however, the popularity and perceived usefulness of the NCW and WI was waning and they were often viewed as being out of touch with contemporary women's lives. In addition, it could be speculated that by this time, women were part of the public sphere in more ways than solely as part of a voluntary civic organization. Women's employment and social potential had expanded beyond what the NCW and the WI were capable of accommodating given their mandates. As mentioned previously, the membership of both organizations did decrease marginally but throughout the period overall membership numbers remained stable.³⁴² There were significant losses during the 1920s as many western farm women's associations left the National Council's affiliation over the treatment of rural and urban issues. The challenge became one of trying to figure out a way to remain relevant in a changing world and still hold onto the ideas and ideals that originally made them into a prominent public organization.

³⁴² See Appendix A for WI membership levels. See footnote 310 and 341 regarding the NCW's membership levels.

Organizational Origins and Continuities

Generations of women's organizations of numerous political, ethnic and class compositions have played active roles in shaping towns and cities across Canada especially in the late nineteenth-century. Middle-class women's organizations such as the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Women's Institutes (WI) were no exception. These organizations worked to place the concerns and needs of women and children on the social, political, and economic scene. Not only were large scale specific needs such as legal protection of women and children placed on the agenda, but smaller scale, local matters such as libraries (including "proper" books on the shelves), physicians and inspectors (including inspectors for health and food safety issues), and hiring committees for example, were also points of interests and concern for women's organizations. The agendas of the NCW and the WI were not always as specifically single issue oriented as labour or education organizations or as nationalist as organizations such as the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire.³⁴³ Nonetheless they remained important to the lives of the women and children in their communities. The broad nature of their concerns and eventual lobbying, allowed them to cover most aspects of women's lives. As Griffiths notes,

... women vowed to temperance and women whose money came from the sale of alcohol, women who thought that their vote would be the solution to all social distress and women who did not believe that females should vote, talked and talked until they could agree that a first step towards change should be a better water filtration plant for the town, or women

³⁴³ See for example, Joan Sangster *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1989); Shauna Wilton, "Manitoba Women Nurturing the Nation: The Manitoba IODE and Maternal Nationalism, 1913-1920" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 2000 35(2): 149-165.

inspectors in factories to insist on laws being enforced, or women in the justice system to ensure that women prisoners were not subject to a particularly hostile environment. The vision of Council has been above all a vision of consensus, a belief that the provision of a neutral arena in which women of good will could meet to find commonly acknowledged problems would result in a new and positive influence on world affairs.³⁴⁴

This diversity of women and their wide-ranging concerns in part, allowed for the growth and popularity of the organization. Their evolution into national umbrella organizations that spoke with the consent of dozens of affiliated organizations as demonstrated in Appendix A, allowed for the possibility of many speaking with one voice about their concerns at almost every level of government. The organizations affiliated with the NCW were extensive and ranged from political to religious, arts and military, business, educational and medical organizations. This does not mean that there was complete consensus on most issues. It did mean organizations such as the NCW could unilaterally put forth an agenda based on what the members and their affiliates found to be of importance for women specifically and their communities generally. They had to consider (if not include) the input of their affiliates or risk losing the affiliate.

As men were building the economic and physical infrastructure of the country, their wives and daughters were also creating local, provincial, and national networks. These networks augmented men's efforts and would provide a forum for seemingly neglected social concerns that directly impacted not only women's lives but those of

³⁴⁴ Griffiths *The Splendid Vision...* p. 10-11. Griffiths also claims that Council membership varied from 150,000 in 1919, 400,000 in 1923 to 500,000 in 1940 and at the time of publication (1993) 700,000 women. Unfortunately there was no accompanying citation to indicate where this information came from. In conversations with the NCW Secretary in 2007, there were no strict membership records kept so membership is speculative. p. 11, 176.

their families.

Most women began their path to organizing with faith based or related groups.³⁴⁵ Church affiliation supplied a socially compliant appearance for organizations that afforded members some measure of protection against prevailing social mores regarding the type of work women could (or should) be involved in outside the home. This affiliation provided them with the ability to learn skills that may have expanded gender expectations of the time. The range of activities they could claim to be involved with included learning business and financial skills, networking and lobbying, developing policy and programmes, and public speaking. They learned these skills while participating in organizations such as home and school associations and other inherently political organizations such as suffrage or labour associations. The difference was that social groups retained a sense of acceptability as it fell into the range of what were considered to be women's concerns rather than the politics of men.

Accompanying their faith based origins, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century middle-class women's organizations had their roots in social gospel and social purity doctrines. Social purity placed an emphasis on the creation and maintenance of proper character and conduct of the individual and their families. In turn these efforts were linked to preserving the nation and the character of its citizens.³⁴⁶ Subsequently, upper, and middle-class women's organizations frequently initiated social purity

³⁴⁵ Sharon Anne Cook *"Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal & Kingston, 1995) Ch. 1; Valverde *The Age of Light, Soap and Water* Ch. 1.

³⁴⁶ See for example, Richard Allen *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1971). Valverde *The Age of Light, Soap and Water*.

campaigns to assert their ideal of a good and moral society. Women reformers were often involved in publicly sensitive areas such as prostitution, sex education, gender roles and morals, sexual hygiene and disease and other associated social problems. The image of a benevolent matron who worked “with” poor or working women to elevate their economic or social status further entrenched their place within reform campaigns.³⁴⁷ Their leadership within the social purity campaigns also allowed women to work in concert with experts in many fields including medicine, education, and social science. These professional associations placed them firmly in the dialogue as authorities able to make claims about what was best for all levels and groups in society based on their role as mothers.

Social purity and forward ambitions

As discussed previously, social purity would allow women to enter into the public forum to discuss matters of sex. This campaign would stretch into public and private domains from family and work, to health and recreation. For Comacchio, social purity advocates helped to make it a priority for the state to better define what a moral society should be.³⁴⁸ She used the Society for the Protection of Women and Children as an example of an organization that:

... used such arguments to influence the 1892 amendments to the Criminal Code, which elaborated a comprehensive system of offences to protect the sexual innocence of women and enforce a stringent code of sexual behavior. Abortion, contraception, and ‘seduction’ were criminalized. All sexual acts between men were classified as ‘gross indecency.’³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Abrams, “Guardians of Virtue: ...”; Davies, “The Health Visitor as Mother’s Friend: ...”

³⁴⁸ Cynthia Comacchio *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1999)

³⁴⁹ Comacchio *The Infinite Bonds of Family*:... p. 59.

Within the purity framework, women's organizations attacked the implementation of the sexual double standard and utilized campaigns such as reforming sex workers, upholding temperance ideals and related legal reforms. These actions were aimed at solidifying the family and all holding men more accountable for their sexual exploits and general conduct towards their spouses and children.³⁵⁰ Social purity campaigns also reinforced family norms and increased the value placed on limiting heterosexual sex to either chastity or sexual intercourse within marriage. With the promotion of male celibacy or sexual restraint and fidelity during marriage, it was hoped that women would be protected from abuse or venereal disease and could retain the desired status of marital relationships.

As discussed in Chapter One, the reliance of organizations such as the NCW and the WI on their roles as mothers was central to their existence and this carried on well into the twentieth-century. It served a purpose through strengthening the ties to social purity and women's acceptable gender roles as mother and guardian. The social standing women's organizations afforded mothers and relied on as their mode of claiming public space prior to the twentieth century to would change significantly. The choices that women were making regarding family, sex and relationships would mean that women's organizations had to adapt to new norms. Finding solutions for social anxieties around sexual morality, disease and gender were key features that needed to be added to their agenda. Organizations would transition the use of the motherhood

³⁵⁰ See for example: Lesley Hall "Hauling Down the Double Standard: Feminism, Social Purity and Sexual Science in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain" *Gender & History* 2004 16(1): 36-56.

ideal through a link between sex and vice to shore up the middle-class family unit and promote a stable vision of the new family.

Sex and education within social purity

By the 1930s social purity was on the decline while social hygiene campaigns remained strong.³⁵¹ The difference between the two agendas was that social purity relied on religious doctrines to validate their message of moral purity. Social hygiene relied more on science to impart clinical (usually related to health) messages regarding the role of sex in society. That did not mean that the moralizing message was absent from social hygiene programs. As Hall notes,

On sex education, there was something of an overlap between this 'sex reform' movement and the traditional concerns of 'social purity'. The organizations represented in the latter camp continued to deplore the lack of 'adequate sex knowledge' to young people so that 'inaccurate and perverted ideas are very widespread'.³⁵²

Social hygiene education included not just lessons about the proper functioning of the human body but the social (and gendered) expectations for men and women. This message was filtered through the lens of moral regulation and self-government through the language of duties, obligations and "proper" behaviour and the resulting programming was developed to take the form of demonstration and establishing norms. Messages were frequently phrased as an individual's duty and obligation to oneself, family, community, and nation. Through the school system, physicians and other health professionals promoted a consistently moral stand on sexual relations firmly attaching

³⁵¹ Julia Ann Laite "The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene: abolitionism and prostitution law in Britain (1915-1959)" *Women's History Review* 2008 17(2): 207-223.

³⁵² Hall *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain Since 1880* p. 125.

sex to reproduction within marriage. This version of sexual education “had less to do with teaching children about sexual anatomy, biology, physiology and psychology and much more to do with channeling Canadians toward compulsory heterosexuality, reproducing the patriarchal nuclear family, maintaining the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon race, building a healthy patriotic citizenry, and protecting the nation state from harm.”³⁵³ The effect was to relegate unacceptable sexual practices to the social realm of morals and vice education. The side benefit added of this approach was that the information or data would be added to the growing set of quantifiable knowledges concerning the outcomes of sexual behaviours.

For women’s organizations the links between sexuality and public health was natural and had the potential to be directly related to governing morality. The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union was one of the first groups to make the transition to public education through sexual purity/education programs. According to Sethna,

Purity education, which invoked notions of Christian sexual chastity, cleanliness, and sinlessness, was conceived of as much more than a personal project. It was a positive, divine, multi-level undertaking, simultaneously familial, national and international in scope. Purity education was a comprehensive attempt to inculcate in children the importance of sexual self-control and to introduce them to the wonders of sexual chastity, marriage and parenthood before the sexual storm and stress of adolescence.³⁵⁴

The involvement of the WCTU in temperance and purity education made sense as they were heavily concerned with: the elimination of the double standard, regulation of sexual practices, eradication of prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases and general

³⁵³ Sethna *The Facts of Life: ...* p. 3.

³⁵⁴ *ibid.* p. 13.

ignorance regarding matters involving sex. “Beholden to the motto, “For God and Home and Native Land,” the Ontario WCTU considered children’s school-based sex instruction integral to the Canadian first-wave maternal feminist drive to morally regenerate not only the individual and the family but the race, the nation and the Empire as well.”³⁵⁵ Their focus on children was intentional as they had yet to be corrupted by outside social forces. Children could also transmit their new knowledge to their parents who were surely in need of character and lifestyle reform. The educational platform for the WCTU was focused predominantly on boys and their growth, development, and character. This was due to their conviction that women as mothers already possessed a significantly higher moral character. Much of their programme was built around the idea that boys (as they grew up to be men) would do well to mimic the positive characteristics or habits of their mothers.³⁵⁶ As a result, their sexual purity lectures included a minimum discussion regarding biology and anatomy, with a greater focus on the dangers of life and vice including alcohol, sex, and other aspects of bodily and social regulation.

Not only was the character of the country a primary concern for women’s organizations but the changing importance and relevance of the family became an additional source of anxiety. As cities grew and towns declined in population and sustainable employment opportunities, the family home or farm was no longer the primary site of work. Shifts in labour and economic patterns took men out of the home

³⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 73.

³⁵⁶ Sethna, “Men, Sex, and Education: ...”; Sethna *The Continent Man: the ideal of pure manhood in the Self and Sex Series, 1897-1915* (MA Thesis, University of Toronto: 1989).

daily thereby losing a constant and visible family connection during the prescribed work day. A lack of daily visible paternal authority grew to be a distinct social anxiety during the early twentieth-century.³⁵⁷ Leading from changes to the working day through to hours spent away from the family and choices made with disposable income and leisure, it was feared that the family structure was disintegrating. Reinforcing the standing and worth of the family thus became a primary concern for women's and other social service organizations. By the mid twentieth-century other anxieties regarding gender roles and expectations in (and for) the family would bring strong influences to bear on the agenda of women's organizations.

As mentioned previously, women's organizations in the early twentieth-century dealt with sex on several levels. The first approach was through biology. There was a strong and consistent reliance on the biological ability of women to physically reproduce as part of women's function. A second avenue was the use of motherhood as a social identity and the further institutionalization of motherhood as a necessary and desirable part of womanhood. This was translated into a more generalized concern for family and community with women as their protectors. Socially and politically, the image of motherhood imbued these groups with political and social capital that could be paid through their activities and goals when applied in specific contexts. Well into the 1930s there was an inability to separate women's biological and social identities from the social and political activism of women's organizations. Thirdly, they worked to reform the sexual double standard that held women to higher propriety or conduct and attachment

³⁵⁷ Comacchio *The Infinite Bonds of Family: ...* Ch 1 and 2.

to familial bonds. The bonds to the family unit that women experienced were not only social but legal. Men were seen to have opportunities for greater sexual and social liberties than women. They were viewed as being able to “disregard” their families through divorce laws and economic standing. The presumptions of family and fidelity operated more so for women than men with greater repercussions for women. The aim then, was to eliminate the sexual double standard and make both men and women accountable for their morals and sexual probity to create stronger families and better citizens. This would be continued through the 1930s.³⁵⁸

The double standard was in effect in daily social interactions too. In a 1936 bulletin from the International Council of Women for example, comment was made in response to a British article regarding the working girl’s habit of taking rides or hitchhiking:

... referring to the high incidence of venereal disease among road transport drivers. The implication is, as usual, that it is all the women’s fault, though it is impossible to believe that in these days of open discussion and widespread warnings, any man is ignorant of the risks he takes if he chooses to practice promiscuity. As Miss Neilans says truly, “There is temptation and opportunity for both the girl and the man and what comes of it depends on their personal character in each case.”

These drivers are mostly young, they have a life of strain and monotony which to a large extent cuts them off both from regular home life and from normal recreation and social intercourse. The system of road houses and refreshment bars frequently open all night can very easily be used, by the

³⁵⁸ Catherine Carstairs et al. *Be wise! Be healthy!: morality and citizenship in Canadian public health campaigns* (University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver, 2018) Ch 1; Kristin Luker examines this within the U.S. context: “Sex, Social Hygiene, and the State: The Double-Edged Sword of Social Reform” *Theory and Society* 1998 27(5): 601-634; Timothy Verhoeven also examines this within the U.S. context: “‘Apostles of Continence’: Doctors and the Doctrine of Sexual Necessity in Progressive-Era America” *Medical History* 2017 61(1): 89-106.

professional prostitute to ply her trade.

But there is the other side. A girl seeking work or trying to get home when out of work, often obtains a lift from a lorry driver. This is often given or offered in good faith, but sometimes there is a pretty clear intimation that she is expected to pay for it with her person. Or without any ill intention on either side, these two young people find themselves together in conditions which lead quickly to a free and easy intimacy which may lead them on with certainly no more blame on one than the other. But the consequences may be serious for the girl. She may be infected, she may find herself pregnant, and so slip into the ranks of the prostitute.³⁵⁹

This commentary illustrates several points: first the dichotomy between the “good” girl (the girl who in this instance was seeking work and was still redeemable for a respectable middle-class life) and the “bad” girl (the assumed promiscuous girl or the sex worker who actively contributes to social ills) and how easy it was to fall into the bad girl category. As McLaren notes, “a ‘bad’ boy was a criminal; a ‘bad’ girl was sexually adventurous. In short, society ‘sexualized’ the young woman’s morality.”³⁶⁰ Second, the sexual double standard was highlighted in the description of the occupational hazards of being a transport driver - the potential lack of character, high disease rates and lack of acceptable social networks. In the second paragraph the girl was blamed for acquiescing to the sexual encounter and ignoring the potential outcomes of pregnancy, disease, and her downfall into sex work even if the encounter was consensual. Another possible reading would be to have both characters take the blame

³⁵⁹ *The International Women’s News* December 1936 31(3): 18. In a contemporary context of “non-safe sex” behaviours Jones concludes that the media discourses generate a social actor whereby “‘quality’ people do not get AIDS/HIV [which] creates ‘imaginary protections’, encouraging people to disconnect their sexual behaviour from possible infection.” R.H. Jones “Imagined comrades and imaginary protections: identity, community and sexual risks among men who have sex with men in China” *Journal of Homosexuality* 2007 53(3): 83-115.

³⁶⁰ Angus McLaren, *Twentieth Century Sexuality: A History* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1990) p. 44.

for her downfall, however the transport driver was already considered guilty through his employment and related class standing. Third, the analysis only touches on why the working girl may need to solicit a ride in the first place, but again fails to consider the type of employment and employment options she might have had due to class or educational opportunities. The possible commute from rural to urban occupations and how this situation may have been ameliorated was also neglected.

The social, moral, and economic status of women, particularly working-class girls and women remained a continuing source of anxiety for the women of the NCW. Their concern wasn't just that a woman was employed but the type of work she did. The more linked to home her employment was (such as service and domestic work) the better, as it meant that there was some training in hand before she started her own family. They would however, continue to advocate for women across occupational types and succeed in establishing workplace protections over time.

Conclusion

By the 1930s, organizations such as the NCW and the WI had to change their direction to retain their relevance and membership in the public sphere. Modernizing their approach to reflect the changing society in which they lived was a difficult task. The place of women's organizations as part of civil society was recognized but not always accepted. Resistance came from both the public (social commentators) and private (spouses/familial) sources. In relation to both these ideas, a 1931 address to an Annual Meeting of the Manitoba Women's Institutes noted that:

They compared the conveniences of early days and now. How the mode of dress had changed but (of course it wasn't polite to mention corsets).

How the men have nothing on the women (why they even use the safety razor). They discussed smoking and drinking and Tillie the Tailor, but the opposition was thankful they were in the minority. They discussed divorce, juvenile court, neglected children, independence of women, and we all came to the conclusion that the homes weren't all wrecked, the men starved and the children neglected just because the lady of the house has acquired greater freedom.³⁶¹

With eventual acceptance of women's public involvement earlier fears of women's desertion of their homes through too much public involvement were lessened. Women's lives may have been seen to be more diverse or problematic by the 1930s once women gained more social and political freedoms, however the clichéd apocalyptic vision of society due to women's public participation and contributions to political decision making didn't happen. As the quote above shows, they were aware of the ongoing and increasing modernization in their lives as well as changes to the social, political, and economic arenas which also demanded that *they* change. For the National Council of Women for example, the fact that women (particularly married women) were working became less of a problem than the low wages they were taking home, the hours they were spending in paid employment and the type of employment women were undertaking. The gendered dimensions of work in both the public and private contexts continued to be a thread in their work, but women's changing reality was also part of the discussion. The seemingly high pace of changing relationships to home and family including sex and sexual practices however, were seen to be threats not only to women but to society as well.

³⁶¹ Archives of Manitoba (hereafter AM) WI, May 28, 1931 - Annual Meeting - Crystal City, MG 10 C8 - 6 - Pilot Mound District - File 19, p. 2.

Chapter Five: Birth Control: Saving membership and closing debate, 1930 to 1939

Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine the internal debates pertaining to birth control from 1930 to 1939 predominantly within the National Council of Women and secondarily the Women's Institutes and related organizations. I will further illustrate through this issue the transmission of ideas from the executive council to the local branches and the responses by both segments of the organizations and the resistance of some of the local branches. Moral regulation will inform the birth control debate through the NCW's conception of who should be eligible for birth control and under what kinds of conditions. The issue of contraception offered the first challenge in this period to the assumptions of motherhood and women as sexual beings.

As an issue, birth control presented the most immediate threat to the continued path and agenda of the National Council of Women in the 1930s because they based their presence on the public stage in relation to women's status as mothers. They crafted an image of mothers working for the betterment of the nation through their families which had made them quite successful in the past, changing for the future would be the next challenge. Birth control would challenge the organization's view of women and motherhood. The maintenance of the notion of motherhood as a necessary part of women's lives and the definition of who should be a mother for the nation were all included here as part of a project for moral regulation. Their claims regarding the fitness of mothers and the motherhood role would form some of their responses to their members and the rise of birth control clinics in some regions of the country. Birth control

would become a moral regulation project on two fronts: maintaining the status of women as mothers, and the “good health” that women “owed” their children - the future generations.³⁶²

A second theme addressed during this period incorporated women’s conduct into sex education. As will be shown throughout the content of the education programmes they supported during this time considered the changes to social interactions and norms. Their approach to sex education would be one example of how they would use educational programming to aid in developing a preliminary frame for sexual and social conduct.

Degrees of Harm: Canadian Women’s Organizations, Birth Control, Sex and Motherhood

Prior to 1930 health services, education, and maternal mortality were consistently part of the NCW agenda. As Veronica Strong-Boag notes the birth control debates that occurred in the 1920s were similarly presented - brief discussions with little engagement:

Although the question of birth control, like sterilization, surfaced intermittently during the 1920s, the Council avoided public statements on the subject. Individual members like Carrie Derick, however, acknowledged its value, at least for the poor and mentally unfit. Other Council women, together with large numbers of Canadians, worried about its effect on family morality: would its adoption let loose a reign of license?³⁶³

Committees ranging from Housing, Education, Laws, Immigration, Mental Hygiene,

³⁶² For a discussion regarding the real or perceived moral status of mothers see Anna Davin “Imperialism and Motherhood” *History Workshop Journal* 1978 5: 9-57; Barbara Welter “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860” *American Quarterly* 1966 18(1): 151-174. Carol Bacchi “Feminism and the “Eroticization” of the Middle Class Woman: The Intersection of Class and Gender” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 1998 11(1): 43-53.

³⁶³ Strong-Boag, *Parliament of Women* p. 373.

and Moral Standards had made room in their mandates to advocate for issues pertaining to the “fitness” of mothers and services for individuals deemed “unhealthy”. Resolutions and later programmes or initiatives included the potential sterilization of “mental defectives” and for women deemed physically, mentally, and socially unfit. The Ottawa Local Council for example, put forth a resolution from the Frances Willard W.C.T.U. early in 1931 claiming that:

the problem of the mentally defective constitutes a rapidly growing menace to public well being; and Whereas no serious effort is being made to cope with the evil either by prevention or segregation; and

Whereas the absence of any detention or remedial home forces the mentally defective not deleterious contact with normal women and children on the street and in school, to the great detriment and danger of such women and children:

Therefore be it resolved that this Francis Willard W.C.T.U. petition the Ottawa Local Council of Women to take such steps as will bring this urgent matter to the attention of the National Council of Women, and through them to the Government of Ontario.³⁶⁴

Additional resolutions over the entire period under investigation here related to sex and intimate relationships included proposed changes to medical testing as a prelude to marriage. Adding a requirement of blood tests to determine and treat the occurrence of venereal diseases before marriage would ensure that sexually transmitted infections would not be passed between couples and their future children.³⁶⁵ At the very least there were calls for increased numbers of beds in hospitals or other facilities such as sanatoria

³⁶⁴ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 39 file 1. Reel H-2013 February 5, 1931 p. 223.

³⁶⁵ One of the first endorsements of a sterilization resolution during this period occurred at the Annual Meeting of 1931 in Moncton, New Brunswick. LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 reel H-2014 vol. 41 file 1 November 15, 1933 p. 108. The Manitoba Women’s Institute also held sessions regarding venereal diseases, sex education and sterilization throughout the 1930s and 1940s. AM MG 10 C8.

or similar facilities to segregate those designated as “feeble-minded”. Members of both the Public Health Committee and the Moral Standards Committee actively pursued these and other questions related to women’s physical and social health and sought support from health and social work professionals as required. The professionals that the NCW frequently worked with would report on the work of health facilities and programmes such as school inspections, well-baby clinics, pregnancy clinics, techniques, and advice for raising children, sexual health, and disease, etc. This generated a largely symbiotic relationship between social service, women’s organizations, and professionals such as physicians. Social service and women’s organizations were able to provide physicians and nurses with much needed entrées into communities during a time when medical care was scarce or basic and general access was poor. On the other hand, physicians and nurses provided further legitimate authority for women’s organizations when addressing city hall or other educators on the state of child and maternal health.

At the executive level of the National Council of Women, records have demonstrated that birth control was primarily treated as an issue to be discussed *in camera*. This meant that while there was evidence in their meeting minutes that the issue was discussed, specific reports and letters have not been included in the archive.³⁶⁶ As a result there were very few existing public Executive Council records debating the link between the use of birth control and non-reproductive sex. This is an important

³⁶⁶ *In camera* sessions would be used to continue discussion of a topic when the discussion was not to be recorded (personnel issues or sensitive debates for example). The content of the discussion would not be made part of the permanent meeting record. This opens the speculation regarding the opinions expressed during this meeting. Either the accompanying documents were not in the file or the discussion was halted and the session was left unrecorded.

distinction. The extant records of the NCW's executive committee and many of the local councils surveyed here demonstrated a stronger relationship between eugenic concerns and the potential use of sterilization rather than reproductive choice or freedom as a platform for action. In other words, the NCW records showed that they were more likely to associate sterilization with birth control and as a method to be "offered" to those seen to be less than ideally fit parents. An example of this occurs in November 1933 during an emergency meeting:

The matter of Emergency came out of circular letters issued by the National Convenors of Health and Mental Hygiene Committees recommending the study of Family Limitation and agreed to consider the matter not from a Sterilization (adequate Legislation) personal point of view but from our relations to the Roman Catholic affiliated organizations.³⁶⁷

After further discussions regarding the position of the council and their affiliates, it was decided that, "

Mrs Roberts with her experience, expressed the opinion that though she believed the measure would eventually be forced, she thought it would be better to withdraw the present stand of the Convenor of Mental Hygiene."³⁶⁸

The available records show that at this meeting, statements supporting sterilization measures were expunged from the record with a piece of paper over the statement to be recalled. There are other records in the archive that are treated in similar ways which indicate the sometimes contentious relationships between the executive, the local councils and their affiliated organizations.

³⁶⁷ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 41 file 1. Reel H-2014. November 15, 1933.

³⁶⁸ *ibid.*

Resolutions and discussions concerning sterilization and birth control labelled “others” as being not necessarily of child bearing age rather than their own peer group. This aspect of the debate is firmly not on the side of reproductive freedom. As has already been mentioned, sterilization, “mental defectives”, marriage, and venereal disease remained part of the agenda until the late 1950s.³⁶⁹ In addition the records document the concern for the potential loss of membership should they take a stand in favour of access to birth control. Because members and their affiliates were from all religious and political backgrounds, the issue of birth control use and access could be a divisive issue for the National Council of Women. This was especially true among the practicing Catholic women of the NCW.³⁷⁰ A further declaration made in February 1934 regarding future statements supporting sterilization illustrates this:

President made official announcement re Sterilization and Birth Control. Numbers of Local Councils have lost a large number of Affiliated Societies over this question. President felt the time had come when a statement was necessary. The Sub. Ex. approved and individually expressed approval, one dissenting.³⁷¹

In September of the same year it was noted that, “3 Resolutions re Sterilization - were withdrawn - and no discussion or publicity.”³⁷² The National Convenor of Mental Hygiene was also facing censure and from this point she, “will be asked to submit her

³⁶⁹ For a more general discussion of the marital blood test debate in Canada see: James G. Snell and Cynthia Comacchio “Regulating Nuptuality: Restricting Access to Marriage in Early Twentieth-Century English-Speaking Canada” *Canadian Historical Review* 1988 69: 466-489.

³⁷⁰ As an active issue birth control is not mentioned in the records of the annual reports of the Catholic Women’s League (CWL) at the Executive level. LAC, CWL MG 28 I345. As noted previously, their opposition to birth control and sterilization does appear in brief reports of their annual meetings published in newspapers such as the *Mail and Empire* (*Globe and Mail*).

³⁷¹ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 41 file 1. Reel H-2014. February 26, 1934, p. 121.

³⁷² LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 41 file 1. Reel H-2014. September 12, 1934, p. 157.

Report to a meeting of the Executive and statements of controversial nature will be eliminated."³⁷³ Further debate about this issue would not be entertained at Annual meetings either. The potential loss of members due to their religious beliefs made the resolution of this debate simple however, their handling of the issue internally was not.³⁷⁴ Other members may or may not have had a strict theological argument or political stand for not discussing or endorsing birth control however, this was not apparent in the records. As the minutes on this topic are not available it is unknown how many other women were reconsidering their membership to the NCW based on their faith and the position of the council on the issue of sterilization. It remains a possible conclusion that religion and the potential loss of membership were the two primary considerations leading to the suppression of the birth control debate for the members the NCW. The sterilization debates were not immune to membership losses either. These actions (both endorsement and rejection of views and programmes) were prefaced by the need to protect the status and functioning of the organization, status of women as mothers and engaging in the possibilities of birth control and its influence on the changing sexual experiences of Canadian women. All of this began in earnest in 1931.

In February of 1931 a letter was received by the National Council of Women executive committee from the St. Thomas (Ontario) Local Council of Women (LCW) that

³⁷³ *ibid.*

³⁷⁴ For a discussion of Catholic response to birth control and sexual relationships see: Anne Marie Sohn "Catholics between Abstinence and 'Appeasement of Lust' (1930-1950)" in *Sexual Cultures* Eds. Lesley Hall, Gert Hekma and Franz Eder (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1999); Catriona Beaumont "Moral Dilemmas and Women's Rights: the attitude of the Mothers' Union and Catholic Women's League to divorce, birth control and abortion in England, 1928-1939" *Women's History Review* 2007 16(4): 463-485.

started a debate within the National Council of Women for this decade.³⁷⁵ The letter claimed that the attitude of the NCW regarding birth control “may do a great deal of positive harm in the hope of doing a very little good, in dealing with these matters.”³⁷⁶ This opening salvo evaluating the stance of non-involvement regarding birth control taken by the executive committee forced the membership to begin to address their lack of policy on this issue. The degree of involvement in the birth control issue and its place in NCW policy would dominate the discussion of birth control for the executive committee for the duration of this first period. At its root, the potential political and divisive nature of birth control was partly what disturbed the executive committee. As shall be shown here however, it was not only the politics of birth control but also how it had the potential to be used that demanded the attention of the National Council of Women.

When the executive committee received the above described letter from the St. Thomas LCW, it responded by continuing to make motions to stall the debate on birth control. The delaying tactics worked at the executive level until March of 1933 when two events forced the issue to be reconsidered. First, a report on “Family Limitation and Birth Control” was scheduled to be discussed but the decision was taken by the members of the Executive to have it read “at a private meeting of Council instead of a

³⁷⁵ Prior to 1930, birth control made a brief appearance in the NCW 1922 meeting notes as an item that the British Columbia councils were going to investigate. The notation indicated that they investigated a mail order item and found that they could not support birth control then. LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 59 file 5 reel H-2107. McLaren and McLaren make note of this action when it appeared in the *Western Women's Weekly. The Bedroom and the State...* p. 161 note 56.

³⁷⁶ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 39 file 1. Reel H-2013 p. 237. A synopsis of the letter was recorded in the minute book. Unfortunately, the original letter was not in the file.

public meeting."³⁷⁷ The second and more public item included articles published in the *Toronto Star* and *Mail and Empire* (precursor to today's *Globe and Mail*) on the same day during their annual meeting. Both articles claimed that birth control would be *the* issue that would cause a split within the NCW and in some ways this was true. In another way, the decision making process was much simpler and would become embedded with other issues. In Halifax for example, there is a reference to the annual meeting of Catholic Women's League where the questionable stance of the NCW on birth control was raised:

re: Birth Control and Sterilization in Nova Scotia quoting ruling at Annual Meeting of Catholic Women's League President referred Mrs. MacManus to Provincial Council who have complete autonomy but we explained that the N.C.W. had not dealt with the question of Birth Control - nor can the President take part in such a controversial question.³⁷⁸

As reported in the *Toronto Star*, many of the local councils were in favour of some form of birth control and were waiting for the executive to put forth a resolution to finally commit to a position on the birth control issue.³⁷⁹ A favourable policy advocating access to birth control would allow the local branches to move forward with establishing resources for birth control or support for services already located within their communities. It was speculated by reporters that potential resistance to the resolution would come from the Roman Catholic members. Miss Winnifred Kydd then President of the NCW reminded the reporters that the National Council of Women was a non-

³⁷⁷ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 41 file 1 March 29, 1933 p. 31. Reel H-2014.

³⁷⁸ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 41 file 1 September 22, 1933 p. 98. Reel H-2014.

³⁷⁹ "Birth Control Issue May Split Council" *Toronto Star* March 31, 1933. p. 30. It is also included in the NCWC files LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 60 file 2.

sectarian and non-political group.³⁸⁰ She further expressed her disappointment that this was the issue to make the newspapers when it hadn't been fully discussed yet by the Council. In the same article, Toronto LCW President Mrs. J.P. Hynes felt certain the NCW would endorse sterilization as an acceptable method of birth control. She was also sure that the Catholic members and organizations would have to resign from the council due to the religious strictures and pressures that supporting the measure would bring.³⁸¹ There was no publicized conclusion to this debate either in the newspaper or the meeting records. The debate in some local councils however, did not cease. One of these councils was in Alberta.

In October of 1932 the Calgary LCW met to address the agenda item of the Provincial executive council titled "Family Limitation as Family Welfare."³⁸² The presentation made by one of the members Mrs. Osborne, was based on a paper presented by Professor Jackson of the Biology department from the Manitoba Agricultural College who had been asked to speak to a group of Winnipeg women. The Calgary women who had attended this presentation in Winnipeg believed birth control information should be made available to the wives and mothers in that province. The rationale for this position was that, "too many children from economically and otherwise impoverished homes had inadequate opportunity for happiness and full

³⁸⁰ *ibid.*

³⁸¹ "Birth Control Issue May Split Council" *Toronto Star* March 31, 1933 p. 30. "Birth Control Issue Menaces Ranks of National Council" *The Globe* March 31, 1933. Meeting Minutes express their displeasure with the media and how the discussion was framed. LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 Reel H-2013 vol. 41 file 1 March 31, 1933 p. 2-3.

³⁸² Glenbow, CLCW M5841/ 26 October 21, 1932 p. 137 - 138.

development, and that well-to-do mothers could procure the information while poor mothers could not.”³⁸³ Class in this instance was noticeably defined through both the financial and social potential consumers of birth control information and access to the available sites and sources of potential expert information. The construction of the happy family as one that has financial stability and a better home was part of the population typically targeted for family limitation. A second criteria of qualification for access to birth control was that women had already had children. As a determinant of “social fitness”, economics was a key component and descriptor of a healthy family by both social commentators and “experts” alike. As Adams has noted

while the middle-class often consulted experts voluntarily, or sought out their ideas in print, working-class and immigrant families were likely to encounter these professionals in any number of institutional settings – such as schools, the courts, or social service offices.³⁸⁴

Stemming from Professor Jackson’s paper and further discussion a resolution was put forward at a meeting in October of 1932:

urging the establishment of clinics and other methods for the dissemination of scientific and reliable information on Family Limitation, believing that, while it would not perhaps be a panacea for future human ills, yet it would make for happier families and for happier homes.³⁸⁵

The resolution was initially passed unanimously. However, after the vote was taken there was “considerable discussion” and the motion was posed again and this time there were significant numbers who opposed (or abstained) the resolution so that it was not

³⁸³ Glenbow, CLCW M5841/ 26 October 21, 1932 p. 137 - 138. It is also noted that clinics were already in operation in Hamilton, Kitchener, Halifax and Vancouver.

³⁸⁴ Adams *The Trouble With Normal*: ... p. 31.

³⁸⁵ Glenbow, CLCW M5841/ 26 October 21, 1932 p. 137 - 138.

carried. Unfortunately the minutes do not indicate what aspects the members disagreed with and why the vote was re-taken.³⁸⁶ This exchange is worth noting because in the years following this meeting, the Calgary LCW would support and actively pursue a birth control clinic for their city.³⁸⁷ The Calgary Birth Control Society's mandate had strands of eugenics running through it however, their other concern was maternal mortality. "Maternal mortality" would become a common code for endorsing birth control but under the auspices of medicine and health concerns rather than reproductive choice. By making it a medical issue, additional support and legitimacy would be easier to cultivate by birth control supporters rather than framing birth control as a matter of social choice that challenging family forms and structures, or reproductive freedom.

Some physicians were reluctant to enter the birth control debate publicly while others were actively providing contraceptive devices to their patients and lobbying for legal change. As one author from the University of Toronto claimed:

One must realize that voluntary parenthood is no panacea for all human evils; it will not solve the problems of mental deficiency, of poverty, or of war. But it will have a wide scope of influence and some of the more important changes brought, may be enumerated as follows:

The widespread practice of scientific contraception is one of the means at the disposal of the Medical Profession for dealing with ABORTION AND SEPSIS presumably due to interference, the dangers of which are incomparably more serious and frequent than any arising from contraception.

EARLY MARRIAGES – It permits early marriages and often brings about

³⁸⁶ *ibid.*

³⁸⁷ Support also came from the Calgary Federation of University Women who donated funds, had a member representing them and wrote letters of support. Glenbow M2055. Kathleen Oliver also makes a brief mention of the group's involvement with the Birth Control Society of Calgary in her MA thesis *Splendid circles:*

happier sex relations.

PRESERVES WOMAN'S HEALTH and means a six to eight hour day instead of twelve to sixteen hour, which the mother of many children is forced to endure.

IMPROVEMENT IN EXISTING CONDITIONS – If only to lighten the burden on the tax-paying community, for at present only the socially and financially-favored are able to obtain contraceptive information, resulting in an overwhelming increase in population among the less-favored.³⁸⁸

These four points were part of the rhetoric common for the time and reflected the opinions and positions of some groups in Canadian society. It touched upon the main themes that were used to justify the acceptance of birth control as a valid means of regulating reproduction often through eugenic means. First that the use of birth control would limit the growth of social ills and the rates of “mental and physical defects” and increase the financial prosperity of the home, nation and community with the decrease of financial support for the disadvantaged or ill. Second, improved maternal health would occur if mothers were given the opportunity and the technology to have fewer children. Lastly, the idea that better marriages would be had with the use of birth control. The relationship between happier marriages and sex had a basis in most marital advice manuals of the day (including Marie Stopes and Margaret Sanger’s works). Better sexual relationships between the couple would be an indicator of a more stable and companionate union. The sexual relationship would not be solely based on reproduction. Physicians, authors and other professionals claimed that with voluntary parenthood, couples would devote more time to each other and raise the socially responsible number of children when the time came. The article subsequently proposed

³⁸⁸ LAC, Health League of Canada (HLC) vol 74 file 8 April 1937. Emphasis in original.

that contraceptive materials be regulated and provided through physicians to prevent unsuspecting couples from being duped and physically harmed by untrustworthy suppliers.³⁸⁹ The theory was that legalizing contraceptives would also allow physicians to continue to be an active part of the reproductive cycle and in effect women's sexual conduct. In reality, this would only have reinforced a pre-existing relationship between physicians and their patients that already influenced proper conduct and in this case, sexual relationships.

Reflecting indecision and the wider public debate on the use and availability of contraceptives, physicians themselves were not unified on this subject. Some physicians had been asking that the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) begin lobbying the government for changes to the Criminal Code so that physicians could legally provide birth control information and products for specific patients. In 1931 for example, a letter from a physician in British Columbia was forwarded to the executive of the CMA inquiring as to their position concerning the establishment of birth control clinics and second whether physicians could participate in the operation of these facilities and that the "Vancouver Medical Association had been asked to receive a delegation of those interested in the movement."³⁹⁰ The General Secretary responded that "Medical Societies

³⁸⁹ See for example, Andrea Tone *Devices and Desires: ...*; Tone "Black Market Birth Control: Contraceptive Entrepreneurship and Criminality in the Gilded Age" *Journal of American History* 2000: 435-459; Tone "Contraceptive Consumers: Gender and the Political Economy of Birth Control in the 1930s" *Journal of Social History* 1996 29(3):485-505.

³⁹⁰ LAC, Canadian Medical Association (CMA), Reel M-7486, March 3, 1931. There were other letters in this period asking similar questions and looking for professional guidance. Through the Association they were unable to work with other social organizations but individually, there were physicians that were working with individuals and organizations involved in contraceptive distribution and family planning. Letters and other commentary can also be found in the editorial pages of the *CMA Journal*, *The Canadian Doctor* or other provincial medical publications.

would not be well advised to take any part in the promotion of Birth Control Clinics.”³⁹¹ Available records from other organizations show that there were individual physicians who were supporting their patients and the efforts of locally run Birth Control Societies.³⁹² They were participating through providing referrals, as advisors or through direct participation and interactions with clients at birth control society clinics. For example the Manitoba Medical Association passed this resolution in October of 1932:

Resolved that the subject of disseminating the knowledge of contraceptive methods to those who are in dire economic straits is worthy of consideration of the medical profession: but as the passing of such knowledge to such patients, by a physician is expressly forbidden by law and against certain religious orders, we are unable, as a society, to do anything with the subject until such time as those who have initiated and sponsored the proposal have obtained legal sanction of their cause.³⁹³

As a policy decision however, the CMA had decided not to support efforts to disseminate contraceptive information in conjunction with other social organizations. The response to the query by a Dr. Smith as to the position of the CMA states that “... any initiatives which should be taken on this matter should come through social agencies, women’s organizations and the public generally, and not through the channel of organized medicine.”³⁹⁴ By placing the onus for official activism and lobbying back in the hands of social organizations, women’s groups were left without the unified professional authority of the CMA to support or reinforce their actions. Women’s

³⁹¹ LAC, Canadian Medical Association (CMA), Reel M-7486, March 3, 1931.

³⁹² The Annual Reports from the Winnipeg Birth Control Society list the physicians who were not only on their Board of Directors but also worked within the clinic.

³⁹³ AM, Social Planning Council - Family Planning Association P730 file 22 October 11, 1932.

³⁹⁴ LAC, CMA MG 28 I343 Minute books: Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology April 27, 1932. p. 179-180.

organizations and Birth Control Societies however, continued to consult with physicians friendly to their cause.

At the 1932 Annual meeting of the local councils in Alberta there were twenty-six local affiliates as well as Miss Kydd, the President of the National Council in attendance. A resolution was passed endorsing the establishment of a birth control clinic in Edmonton. According to the report in the *Calgary Herald*, this vote took place “after a debate which has lasted over a period of months, during which medical specialists have been called in to speak, and members of the 26 affiliated societies have considered the question in their own organizations.”³⁹⁵ NCW President Miss Kydd, did not make a comment to the newspaper at this time nor is there a recorded reaction from her during this meeting.

These convention events for the United Farm Women of Alberta were also publicized with great detail in *The Albertan*.³⁹⁶ The author of the article noticed a marked difference from other public discussions that endorsed making birth control legal and readily available. Instead of solely endorsing sterilization amongst the feeble-minded, voluntary parenthood was considered as a viable and reasonable option.

“The medical profession sees an urgent need for the practice of contra-ception,” said Dr. Fallinsbee Newell, Edmonton, speaking before the resolution was presented. [sic]

Supporting the motion, the speaker said that many diseases are transmitted to the children; that births must be spaced to assure the health of both mother and child; that medical superintendence

³⁹⁵ “Birth Control Controversy Ends as Women Favor Clinic” *Calgary Herald* January 27, 1932. Unfortunately, it is not clear in the meeting minutes what actions were taken and by whom.

³⁹⁶ “U.F.W.A. Unanimously Asks for Birth Control Clinics” *The Albertan* January 20, 1933.

of the practice would eliminate abortion which is now a world-wide practice; that the community would be spared the curse of the pro-creation of the mentally or physically unfit. [sic]

Answering objections she said those with religious objections need not practice it; expense would be quickly offset by reduction of institutional costs; that the supposed harmful effects have been denied by the highest authorities.³⁹⁷

The discourses regarding “intelligent parenthood” were maintained and continued to be linked to the morality of physically and mentally able couples considered “eligible” or best suited for parenthood duties. The use of the phrase “intelligent parenthood” was interchangeable with “voluntary parenthood” yet spoke to a specific segment of eugenic supporters who considered the biological consequences of birth first and the social consequences second.³⁹⁸ Voluntary parenthood discourses of the period maintained that children would continue to be part of the marital relationship and was necessary for social and physical fulfillment.

“Mrs. R. Price, of Stettler, speaking to the resolution introduced by her said only that it came 25 years late. “Parenthood should be voluntary to be moral”, declared the report on the subject of birth control, prepared according to the direction of the 1932 convention by the executive and the convener of health, Mrs. Mary Banner.”

It continued further:

“What misery and suffering would be spared to women and children if all laws against birth control were annulled, and its practice under medical supervision considered a public utility instead of a public

³⁹⁷ *ibid.* The resolution from this session states: “For those married women who desire information on family limitation, and for those whose health and welfare it is deemed advisable, the department of health be petitioned to establish clinics, these clinics to be under medical supervision.”

³⁹⁸ Harley Dickinson, “Scientific Parenthood: The Mental Hygiene Movement and the Reform of Canadian Families, 1925-1950” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 24(3): 387-402.

menace. ... Intelligent voluntary parenthood is a highly moral procedure."³⁹⁹

The United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA) used the media in a different way to discuss birth control. In March 1930 the UFWA passed a resolution endorsing the promotion and use of birth control and put a general announcement of these events in *The Western Producer*. They endorsed birth control as a means of birth spacing for better maternal health and subsequent care and raising of the family. The debate that followed occurred in a different format - in the opinion pages and letters to the Editor. Both men and women argued for and against the resolution from various social, political, and religious positions. Several contributors called for the motion to be recalled, others mocked the resolution and equated birth control for women with the maintenance of cattle herd populations on the farm.⁴⁰⁰ The UFWA resolution and the ensuing debate illustrated the two popular strands for the time, birth control for eugenic purposes or for maternal health and birth spacing. In the end, the resolution wasn't rescinded despite the negative opinions voiced by the membership and readers of the newspaper. By the end of the decade, letters and opinions in *The Western Producer* debating birth control had declined in favour of other pressing farm and economic issues. However, the status and nature of marital and dating relationships between the sexes continued to be debated in the editorial and social pages of *The Western Producer*.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ "U.F.W.A. Unanimously Asks for Birth Control Clinics" *The Albertan* January 20, 1933.

⁴⁰⁰ *The Western Producer* June 10th, 1930.

⁴⁰¹ Dan Azoulay has compiled some of these letters from personal ads in *Only the Lonely: Finding Romance in the Personal Columns of the Western Home Monthly, 1905-1924* (Fifth House Press: Calgary, 2000). Angus McLaren also makes use of personal columns to provide some insight into reader's opinions on issues: "'Keep your seats and Face Facts': Western Canadian Women's Discussion of Birth Control in the 1920's" *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 1991 8: 189-201.

A similar resolution was passed by the Saskatchewan Women's Section of the United Farmers of Canada (UFC) in 1928, 1929 and again in 1930. The resolution began with the declaration that "... the bringing of mentally defective children into the world is a detriment to the State" and that sterilization was the best way to limit the potential damage that "mentally deficient" children and adults would have on the state (costs of upkeep) and the family (time, energy and money).⁴⁰² The resolution's authors also noted that "in countries where birth control is legalized are found the healthiest, happiest and most normal people on the earth" which should be supplied by trained physicians with the necessary and applicable legal protections.⁴⁰³ Issues of class were also brought to the fore in their support of birth. They supported its use by working-class women and farmers specifically to prevent women from being overburdened with childbirth (and children) and from suffering poor maternal health and maternal and infant mortality.

Similar to other women's organizations of the period, emphasis was also placed on the control of transmittable diseases and the issuance of health certificates prior to marriage which would ensure healthy, eugenic marriages and fit children. Other segments of the resolution also make note that the "training" of future children is of utmost importance and peace rather than war should be emphasized in the child's upbringing "to foster international good will and brotherhood."⁴⁰⁴ The resolution's authors put forth a view to use birth control as a means of creating better families and ensuring a healthy future which resonated with eugenic supporters. That the authors

⁴⁰² *Birth Control Review* February 1930, p. 56-57.

⁴⁰³ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*

would specifically include working class and farming families could be a case of including their own interests or a continuation of contemporary assumptions that the working classes were “over populating” the land. The resolution attracted international notice and was included as an information item in the *Birth Control Review*.⁴⁰⁵ It could be suggested that the male members of the UFC eventually defeated it in part because it was seen to be a gender issue rather than a class issue which moved away from the socialist ideals of the organization.

By September of 1933, there was a response to the efforts by the Calgary LCW in their pursuit of legalizing birth control and creating an accessible clinic from the Catholic Women’s League.⁴⁰⁶ The response confirmed the earlier fears of the Toronto LCW President Mrs. Hynes. The Calgary Catholic Women’s League was forced by their religious leaders to drop their membership in the LCW with the adoption of the birth control and sterilization resolutions.⁴⁰⁷ The executive of the Calgary LCW met with the Bishop of Calgary to reach a compromise of some sort and the delegation was denied. They were informed that the Catholic women could come back if this issue was dropped and if the LCW went back to an acceptable agenda.⁴⁰⁸ A similar action was taken by the Catholic Women’s League in Halifax:

re: Birth Control and Sterilization in Nova Scotia quoting ruling at Annual Meeting of Catholic Women’s League President referred Mrs. MacManus to Provincial Council who have complete autonomy but we explained that the N.C.W. had not dealt with the question of Birth Control

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.* The entire resolution was included in the notice in the *Birth Control Review*.

⁴⁰⁶ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 41 file 1 Reel H- 2014 September 22, 1933 p. 98.

⁴⁰⁷ Glenbow Calgary LCW M5841 File 1 February 7, 1933; March 10, 1933.

⁴⁰⁸ Glenbow Calgary LCW M5841 File 1 October 20, 1933.

- nor can the President take part in such a controversial question.⁴⁰⁹

In May 1935 the fallout from the articles in the *Toronto Star* and the *Mail and Empire* was still plaguing the executive committee. Again the executive committee declared birth control not an emergency issue and therefore not up for debate. Regardless, some of the local councils pushed the issue. Under the auspices of examining "Family Limitation and Birth Control from a Catholic perspective", the executive and the conveners gave local councils for Health and Hygiene permission to start (and monitor) the discussion. While local councils were strictly speaking prohibited from discussing birth control, the executive council claimed that so long as affiliates had paid their dues they could bring up any subject however it was cautioned "that the discussion should not get out of hand."⁴¹⁰

While "getting out of hand" remained undefined, the November 1933 meeting in Calgary notes that: "The minutes of the subexecutive meeting were read for information. The president stated that there was an incorrect statement in the resolution referring to Family Limitation. The matter re Family Limitation had been deleted from the Provincial report to the N.C. of W. but remained on our own books."⁴¹¹ The reluctance of both the national and provincial executive council to facilitate the discussion of an issue such as birth control while for other equally contentious issues conveners provided reading lists, survey questions and general talking points for addressing city council, is telling.

In answer to this another resolution was submitted to the Provincial Council of

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ LAC, NCWC MG28 I 25 vol. 42 file 1 May 11, 1935 p. 86.

⁴¹¹ Glenbow, CLCW M5841/ 26 November 17, 1933 p. 265

Women (Ontario) in 1934 by the St. Thomas LCW to an annual meeting that in part reads:

Whereas we look with alarm on the rapidly increasing numbers of the mentally ill persons who are filling our hospitals and mental institutions at the rate payers' expense, and at the men and women not confined in institutions, who are a constant menace to our community, and desire to give our full support to the demand for sterilization of the latter class, with proper follow-up work by district workers and police matrons,

And whereas we realize that our Government and our physicians must have the protection of an informed public opinion,

Therefore, be it resolved that this resolution be presented to the Provincial Government asking that the necessary legislation be enacted.⁴¹²

This was not the only resolution on this topic to be considered at this meeting. Similar resolutions were presented from both the Niagara region and a Hamilton Local Council affiliate, the Samaritan Club.⁴¹³ These resolutions not only touched upon the real or perceived potential criminality and financial burden of the mentally ill on both families and communities, but illegitimate children who may perpetuate their status through future generations or their reputed mental illnesses that were seen to be linked to illegitimacy. In a more general sense the condemnation of premarital sexual practices was already in force. "Illegitimate children" were inextricably linked to the actions of their "delinquent" parents and therefore suspect in their potential capacities as the following resolution passed by the Toronto LCW showed:

Whereas the problem of illegitimate children is frequently allied with that of mentality,

⁴¹² Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), Toronto Local Council of Women F 805 - 1- 0 - 5, May 15, 1934 p. 3.

⁴¹³ *ibid.*

Be it Resolved that the Provincial Legislature be asked to enact legislation making sterilization of the mentally unfit possible with the consent of the patient, or compulsory on the application of two duly qualified physicians.

While it did not combine all aspects of the three resolutions (the real or perceived physical and mental deficiencies, suspect social characteristics and the economics associated with their care) submitted at this time, it was consistent with previously articulated sentiments. It also embodies their moral understanding of reproduction as not just one of family and women's role but as a national project. The resolution was passed but set aside until the National Executive had determined a course of action for this subject.⁴¹⁴

By 1934 the National Executive Committee had had enough and finally decided to take a stand on the issue, however it was not an unanimous position. A letter was sent to the local councils outlining their official position of non-involvement in the birth control debate. The letter reiterated earlier comments that the National Council of Women was a non-sectarian and non-political organization representing Canadian women. The Ottawa LCW found this letter to be of importance and it was pasted into the minute book which was not a common practice amongst other records I examined.

In part the letter from the President Miss Winnifred Kydd stated:

The proud boast of the National Council of Women has been that, we are representative of the womanhood of this nation and that organizations or individuals federating with us have full political and sectarian immunity in discussion I would urge you with all the earnestness and sincerity within me to declare that we who have so many problems facing us as Citizens of this great Dominion will not discuss these two questions [birth control and

⁴¹⁴ AO, TLCW F 805 - 1- 0 - 5, May 22, 1934 p. 2.

sterilization] in the National Council of Women of Canada.⁴¹⁵

For the Ottawa LCW this appears to have reinforced their silence on the birth control issue. Even when a nurse working for Alvin Kaufman's Parent's Information Bureau (Kitchener, Ontario) was arrested for the distribution of contraceptive information and devices in an Ottawa neighbourhood the minutes demonstrated that they did not discuss the case or its implications.⁴¹⁶ Discussions may have continued informally amongst the members and not have been recorded.

In contrast to the Ottawa LCW, the Alberta Federation of Women took up the cause of family limitation in 1938 after following the Eastview trial closely. The following were their intended results of disseminating such information:

...reduce infant mortality and maternal mortality, promote infant health and maternal health, prevent the spread of venereal disease, promote physical and mental health, promote marital happiness, improve the quality of the race, improve the standard of living, reduce unemployment, crime and juvenile delinquency.⁴¹⁷

The immediate connotation of all these aims was that there was something already problematic about specific individuals and the ways in which they lived. It was felt that the legalization and distribution of birth control would solve these problems and return these individuals to an acceptable status within society. The Alberta Federation of Women was pleased with the verdict of the Eastview trial and they interpreted the

⁴¹⁵ City of Ottawa Archives (COA), Ottawa Local Council of Women (OLCW), B23/6C, Local Council of Ottawa, Speeches 1915 - 1934 Box 3. This letter was not in any of the other LCW records that I examined during the course of this research.

⁴¹⁶ Gerald Stroz and Murray Eaton. "Pro Bono Publico: The Eastview Birth Control Trial" *Atlantis* 1983 8: 51-60.

⁴¹⁷ "Alberta Federation of Women Advocate Establishment of Family Limitation Clinics" *Calgary Herald* October 22, 1938.

verdict to mean that they could address family limitation openly and constructively.⁴¹⁸

NCW President Miss Kydd, continued her remarks with the following rationale for the NCW's position of non-involvement:

A careful consideration of what the unity of the womanhood of the Dominion may mean in the life of our country. Let me repeat what I said in my last Annual Report: - 'Let us not take up questions which if discussed and passed upon would prevent us being called representatives of the womanhood of this country'.⁴¹⁹

Their insistence that they represent the "womanhood of the country" would offer a way to not only define their actions on the subject of birth control but retain their position on the public stage. Ultimately the executive council chose not to support the birth control issue overtly because other organizations were declining to support birth control and sterilization, along with the reported "difficulties" arising for the local councils where consensus was not to be found. A similar statement was made by the Women's Institute in their journal *Home and Country* in a special notice:

As most W.I. members are now aware, the subjects of Sterilization and Birth Control, by reason of their sectarian ramifications, have been ruled out of W.I. discussion. However, those who desire to inform themselves on both sides of this question will be interested to know that an impartial summary of the most up-to-date medical and lay findings on these subjects have been gathered and presented in book form by Dr. Helen MacMurchy. Publishers: Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 70 Bond St., Toronto. Regular price, 1.50; special to W.I. Members, \$1.25, postpaid.⁴²⁰

A lack of records for the WI regarding this issue makes placing this notice in any kind of context difficult. What the resolution demonstrated however, was the determination of

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ COA, OLCW, B23/6C, Local Council of Ottawa, Speeches 1915 - 1934 Box 3.

⁴²⁰ *Federated Women's Institutes Home and Country* March and April 1934 p. 8.

the WI's executive to limit or stop similar situations that occurred within the NCW from taking place among their own membership. The WI did offer a publication for their members to inform themselves instead of trying to deter members from examining the issue as the NCW initially did. Helen MacMurphy's publication *Sterilization? Birth Control? A Book for Family Welfare and Safety* was not impartial on the issue.⁴²¹ MacMurphy strongly rejected birth control as a form of family planning and held scorn for those families who may have employed birth control:

Our young people have a right to know the truth. And the truth about this matter of birth control is that it is against one's better judgment. It is unnatural. It is contrary to one's higher instincts. ... But shall we consider birth control as a matter of course for the bridegroom and the bride? No. The love and grace and tenderness, the beauty and sanctity of life centre in the home. Grace and beauty and tenderness, sanctity and affection can hardly remain if what should be revered like a sacrament is treated as a thing to be lightly esteemed.⁴²²

As previously mentioned, for the Ottawa Local Council the notice from the NCW executive committee was the only recorded mention of birth control. In contrast to the Ottawa LC's documentary silence, the stand made by Miss Kydd did not prohibit a delegation from the Alberta Provincial Council of Women from making a presentation to the Premier of the province in early 1934. Among other concerns they were bringing to the attention of the Premier was that of establishing birth control clinics throughout the province. As was later reported in the *Edmonton Journal*, the Minister of Health was quoted as saying that "the government is considering the establishment of educational

⁴²¹ Helen MacMurphy *Sterilization? Birth Control? A Book for Family Welfare and Safety* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1934).

⁴²² *Ibid.* p. 148-149.

courses and clinics to supply information, scientific and reliable, in regard to family limitation."⁴²³ Other than thanking the Premier for his time, there was no response reported from the delegation by the paper.⁴²⁴ Other Council branches such as the Alberta group referenced above, paid no heed to this edict and continued discussions both within their meetings and with community and provincial leaders. The Calgary LCW, for example continued to apply pressure on the provincial authorities to increase the number of spaces in hospitals and sanatoria for the feebleminded and that sterilization should be made more widely available. In their 1938 Annual report on laws pertaining to women and children the Calgary Local Council remarked on the provision that birth control only be disseminated if it benefits the public good,

The Court or Judge decides whether it is for the public good, and the jury decides whether there is or is not such excess. Thus Birth Control is legal in Canada in a roundabout way.

However, having regard to economic conditions which are preventing many young men and women from marrying, having regard to the many struggling men and women who are having great difficulty in supporting too many children, and having regard to the many neglected children who are being brought into this world, it is proposed that a law be passed to absolutely legalize Birth Control, and to establish and regulate government controlled clinics in the various cities, so that married persons will have no difficulty in obtaining proper scientific

⁴²³ "Women Urge Birth Control" *Edmonton Journal* February 1, 1934.

⁴²⁴ In the 1933 edition of the Calgary LCW's Yearbook the Laws Committee also approached the Provincial Department of Health and asked that they establish birth control clinics. It was noted that "the Premier stated that at the last conference between the Provinces and the Federal Government, the question had been discussed. There was the question of the Criminal Code to be considered, but it was felt that these clinics would be in the interests of the common good and therefore would not contravene the Criminal Code. In conclusion the Premier stated the Alberta Government was sympathetic, and some action would be taken within the year to grant this request." p. 23.

information.⁴²⁵

This interpretation of the birth control issue relied on the arguments of the day (poor economic conditions, fewer young people marrying, and making children wanted rather than neglected) to justify the provision of medically controlled scientific information. In the talking points for a meeting at the Winnipeg Birth Control Society the public good is rationalized as:

Public Good is served by the good health of individuals.

Birth Control where the health of the mother is endangered by further childbearing, and if under medical supervision, will ensure the health of herself, & indirectly that of her husband & children.

Thus the public good is served.

Birth Control information, if not provided under medical supervision, will be secured from unscientific sources and will not be for the public good.

If birth control information is not provided somehow for needy women, they will (& are doing so) resort to abortion, which is also against the public good.⁴²⁶

In Calgary, the Birth Control Society confirmed this position as one that should be endorsed by physicians:

Our fundamental policy is that actual information on birth control be definitely the responsibility of the medical profession and only available through them. We must recognize, however, that in order to secure the most wide-spread application of the methods of birth control where necessary, a lay society can fill a genuine need by devoting itself to the establishment of a better understanding between the medical profession and those people requiring

⁴²⁵ CLCW *Yearbook*, 1938 p. 36. See also, Stroz and Eaton "Pro Bono Publico: ..."; Dodd "The Canadian Birth Control Movement on Trial, 1936-1937"....

⁴²⁶ AM, Social Planning Council vol. P730 file 1, page 2.

information.⁴²⁷

This position would again place women's organizations as the mediator between physicians and the public as both initiators of collecting data on women seeking birth control and the providers of information to the rest of the public. This reinforced a moral judgement regarding the status of the family and women's sexual conduct. The "legitimate" target population for access to birth control continued to be married couples who had already started a family. Women who were not married were considered not to have reached their reproductive potential and as a result "owed" the family - and by extension the nation - healthy children.

As a continued theme of social purity, the emphasis on birth control within family contexts reinforced the conditions under which sexual matters would be contained: the heterosexual family. As McLaren has stated "such contraceptives were not meant for the unmarried; they were to be used rather to shore up a stable, heterosexual relationship."⁴²⁸ The 1933 Calgary *Yearbook* concluded with similar sentiments that with the Calgary LCW's support "they were asking that the Clinics and information be for married people only and that to every one their watchword was "Let your conscience be your guide."⁴²⁹ With other reports and resolutions this could suggest that for the Calgary LCW, birth control and sterilization were at times two separate ideas used for two separate purposes with two possible population groups in mind. Other records have shown that the Calgary LCW had given tacit policy approval

⁴²⁷ Glenbow CLCW M5841/81 Letter dated November 12, 1938.

⁴²⁸ McLaren *Twentieth-Century Sexuality* p. 68-69.

⁴²⁹ *Yearbook* 1933 p. 23.

for sterilization of the “feeble-minded” and supported the government’s sterilization legislation enacted in 1927.⁴³⁰

Within the Toronto LCW the birth control issue was treated with great care. In the context of finding workable solutions for the care and treatment of those under discussion by the Mental Hygiene committee, it was suggested that a visit by the director of the Toronto Birth Control Clinic be arranged.⁴³¹ To this end, the *West Toronto News* reported that in April of 1936 the members of the Toronto LCW attended a lecture on the subject of birth control given by the director of the local birth control clinic.⁴³² The article did not report any commentary by the members of the local council to the visit. The author provided details regarding who the Clinic served (“135 to 150 mothers and fathers are interviewed each week”), the place of birth control education within physician’s education and insisted that birth control is “every woman’s right.”⁴³³ The article concludes:

The real object of this movement is the creation and establishment of happy homes, peopled with happy children. The majority of people attend the clinic to learn how to space their children, to have them when they are physically fit for the responsibility from a health and economic point of view. The information is given by qualified and experienced women physicians and nurses. Surely these doctors are taking steps to give the next generation a chance of becoming physically and mentally fit to reproduce

⁴³⁰ Angus McLaren *Our Own Master Race: ...* See also LAC RG 13 Series A-2 vol 317 file 1927-1913 for the original legislation. By this time other provinces had mechanisms in place to facilitate sterilization making the legislation almost unnecessary.

⁴³¹ This was in contrast to the organizing of a visit to meet with the Reverend Alfred Tyrer in 1930. Tyrer, a Toronto Protestant Minister supported birth control and published several pamphlets and books on this and related topics. It was suggested that the women should attend individually rather than under the aegis of the TLCW. AO, TLCW F 805 - 1- 0 - 5, November 4, 1930.

⁴³² “Birth Control Lecture at Local Council of Women” *West Toronto News* April 9, 1936.

⁴³³ *ibid.*

their kind. Birth control is legal and materially reduces mortality in both mothers and children. We must not be hostile to social progress, said Miss Brandt, birth control is one of the sure foundations of social progress and happy motherhood and it is absolute pre-requisite to national eugenic advance.⁴³⁴

Similar to the Calgary LCW, in the Toronto Birth Control Clinic stipulated that medical experts regulate and provide contraceptives. The medical expert was trusted with the assessment of the mental, physical and social “fitness” of the parents, specifically the mother. The successful use of birth control defined as “social progress” was made in the context of raising children in physically healthy and economic conditions that privileged middle-class families. In addition birth control is framed in the sphere of motherhood and medicine rather than sexual freedom which reinforces the discourses of the day. The language of parental “responsibility” to produce healthy and happy offspring was part of the existing eugenic discourse.

There were secondary claims made during the presentation to the Toronto LCW concerning the reduction maternal and infant mortality that also implied the saving of middle-class women and their children. Birth control would allow women to have some measure of control over the number of births women had through their reproductive cycle and their spacing. If employed properly birth control would help the recovery time and decrease the exhaustion women felt from having many children in a relatively short span of time. Both claims were used to promote the accessibility of birth control to individuals who were wary of the debate on both sides. The most effective demonstration birth control advocates could make was that women and children were

⁴³⁴ *ibid.*

healthier while using birth control measures. If this positive result could be shown arguments that birth control would encourage women to be more selfish for not wanting children could be given the less weight.

In 1937, the NCW's Mental Hygiene Convener Mrs. Barbara Cody composed a circular to send to the local councils for information and investigation regarding their communities. Before it could be sent, the executive committee deleted the sections pertaining to birth control and sterilization. To decrease the tension amongst the members the executive council felt this was an appropriate measure. A letter of complaint from the author was filed with the executive protesting this action.⁴³⁵ While the convener for Mental Hygiene faced censorship and appealed the executive committee's decision, her work was not restored and the original report was not sent out to the local councils. The debate regarding sterilization as a form of birth control however, continued at the local council level. By the end of 1939, the birth control debate had all but ended.

During this era, the NCW's involvement in the birth control issue appeared to be driven by two concerns. First, the executive committee was unsure of how to continue or to interpret the discussion of birth control by its members and second, how it would reflect on them. The NCW's aims of preserving motherhood for the nation outweighed their concerns for voluntary parenthood. The capacity of the National Council of Women to speak for the women of the nation based on their role as mothers created a

⁴³⁵ LAC, NCW MG28 I 25 vol. 43 p. 62 "Notice of Motion", vol. 75 file 10 May 17, 1939 frame 1231 - 1232. Frame 1233 was the reply.

dilemma in framing the birth control debate. Their conception of birth control was in part limited to sterilization as a method and as a remedy for “feebleminded” individuals. This aligned much of the organization more clearly within the framework of the existing eugenics’ movements. This also placed them in opposition to the growing public movement towards reproductive choice. Even when the local councils framed the discussion as “family limitation” the message was still connected to “positive” eugenics and the creation of healthy, stable families.

The adaptation to norms surrounding birth control as debated and carried out by women’s organizations were in keeping with the general public. The lack of consensus within the general membership was also important when contrasted with the mood of the public. They could not account for or regulate the private activities of members of many organizations who may have been promoting or practicing some form of birth control. Not wanting to wholeheartedly endorse birth control yet weakly stipulate its use to benefit mothers was the middle ground. Offering resources to local councils who wanted to pursue the question of birth control both appeased members and created room to investigate its potential in Canadian society. Members who were active in birth control societies or related groups do not appear to have discontinued their memberships within either the NCW or the WI is significant. As discussed previously membership in social organizations filled many needs for individual members, this offered a way to engage with multiple issues that seemingly conflicted across organizations. Those members who were involved in the promotion of birth control did so with the aim of improving maternal health and the “fitness” of Canadian families.

The attempts that were made to shift the discussion towards family limitation or childlessness as a lifestyle choice did not appear to have been well received by the executive committees, at least publicly. This may have been a purely strategic decision meant to retain a broad membership and create some level of consensus amongst the varied affiliates. The discourses and actions that highlighted the importance of family and motherhood remained firmly in place for the NCW. In the case of the WI, the endorsement of Helen MacMurchy's publication which was firmly against the use of birth control also promoted pronatalism and healthy families. Second, the executive of the NCW was apprehensive of entering the public debate because they were afraid of losing membership and public influence. Regardless, by the end of the 1930s the birth control issue had faded into the background. It was possible that with the arrival of World War II other issues gained more prominence and relevance and therefore reproductive freedom and the attendant social issues surrounding motherhood were not consistently included in the record anymore.

While the meeting minutes indicate that the internal debates were highly contentious between all levels of the organizations, they are somewhat limited in their usefulness to outline a distinct programme of moral regulation. In tandem with the other documents from the period what does appear is a description of a target population that is financially and socially suspect. It was assumed that families with lower incomes could not have kept their families healthy and fit and therefore were good candidates for contraceptive measures or sterilization. The "feeble-minded" were another group that warranted surveillance due to their real or perceived threat to the

health of the nation and the family. Connections were made between low socioeconomic status, “feeble-mindedness” and “unfit” families through discourses of medicine and social contexts. The use of experts such as physicians to monitor and then “treat” this class of patient provided another link or entrée to communities, between women’s organizations and the community. The rising economic costs and social impact of problematic families struck a chord with the segments of the general public and strengthened the case to be made for regulating families.

Mothers were of interest to the NCW and the WI as the organizations relied on their position as mothers to be active in the public realm and influence change. As their constituent group, women’s organizations had to find a balance between advancing women’s rights and keeping the everyday lives and concerns of women in line with their policy and lobbying statements. The treatment of the birth control issue by the NCW held a bit of a dilemma as it would have followed existing forms of advocacy for the organization to lobby for positive changes to the legal accessibility of contraception. It also would have made sense to endorse contraception wholeheartedly as a health measure to improve the care of women and their children. As was shown throughout this period some members were willing to endorse birth control as a means to pursue better maternal and infant health care. Others felt this was the way to implement eugenic ideals in order to bolster “Canadian stock”. This continuum would allow them to maintain their pronatalist stance and their place as a prominent voluntary organization where women and their communities were the primary focus.

Motherhood on its own retained a “moral” quality for the NCW and the WI, one

that approved women's "natural" role as mothers and with the attendant gender roles applied to it. The Local Councils of Women that were involved with birth control societies and clinics endorsed birth control for women who had already had children rather than single women who had yet to fulfill their supposed duties. Speaking for the "womanhood of the nation" primarily meant women with children. Further, the documents demonstrate a connection between the mental and physical "fitness" of women and their offspring and a continuum of "appropriate" mothers. What was missing throughout these discussions was an index or scale that outlines what "fitness" was and as such this concept operates primarily as a social category.

The Local Councils of Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto were unique to this study because they had active Birth Control Societies in their cities during the 1930 to 1939 period and members were involved in both local council and Birth Control Society activities. For example, the President of the Winnipeg Birth Control Society (WBCS) Mary Speechly, was also the President of the Local Council of Women of Winnipeg (LCWW).⁴³⁶ Before she left the town of Pilot Mound for Winnipeg, Speechly had also been the President of the local Women's Institute branch. In the case of the LCWW and the actions of the Winnipeg Birth Control Society, Mary Speechly only let the two organizations overlap in a very few instances. It could be suggested that the pronouncements made by the executive council appear significant in her decision not to

⁴³⁶ Hamilton also had a Birth Control Society functioning during this time that was operating against the wishes of the local council even though the President was a member of the BCSH. According to Annau, the relationship between the organizations was less than harmonious. See, "Promoting Prophylactics: ...".

encourage the discussion and participation of her colleagues in the local council in the WBCS.⁴³⁷ Alternatively, further discussions that may have been held do not appear in the meeting records. In the case of Calgary, there were at least two members of the local council who was also part of the Birth Control Society of Calgary (BCSC) or on the Executive for both the LCW and the BCSC. One woman's participation in both organizations was evident through the minimal available correspondence that highlighted both roles.⁴³⁸

In Ontario, the President of the Hamilton LCW was also on the executive of the Birth Control Society of Hamilton (BCSH). McLaren and McLaren stated that Mrs. Mary Hawkins, the founder of the BCSH was active in her drive to recruit support.

[Her] attempts to lure Hamilton's clubwomen into support of birth control quickly proved themselves; within a year the Birth Control Society of Hamilton grew from fifteen to 200 members. Its clinic not only serviced hundreds of patients; it was visited or contacted by clubwomen from across Canada interested in establishing similar centres in their own cities.⁴³⁹

With the exception of the Hamilton LCW, it could be inferred that both the responses of

⁴³⁷ AM, Council of Women of Winnipeg P3587, file 2 February 23, 1934 p. 31-32. For a biography of Mary Speechly see Angela Davis "Mary Speechly: A Life of Service" *Beaver* 1994 74(5): 35-39.

⁴³⁸ There is very little remaining correspondence from the early years of the BCSC and it was spread through several different fonds. Glenbow M5841/81 Letter dated November 12, 1938. The author, Mrs. Withell asks the LC President Mrs. Grevett to announce a future meeting for the Calgary BSC at the Public Library and mentions her role as Convener of the Natural Resources and Industry Committee. There was an enclosure that outlined the role of Kitchener businessman, Alvin Kaufman in funding the Calgary BCS and other organizations and the current fundraising efforts (as Kaufman was decreasing funding to clinics) along with the benefits of having a local Birth Control Society. See also McLaren and McLaren *The Bedroom and the State: ...* Ch. 5; Fiona Miller *Population Control and the Perseverance of Eugenics: A Case Study of the Politics of Fertility Control, Alvin Ratz Kaufman, 1930-1979* (MA thesis, University of Victoria: 1993);

⁴³⁹ Unfortunately, the accompanying citation does not indicate which cities (and women) were considering opening clinics. *The Bedroom and the State:...* p. 101.

the Calgary LCW and the LCWW indicate that they viewed birth control as a given in their communities. According to Annau, the BCSH became an affiliate of their local council early in their operation. In the NCW's annual report however, it was not until 1954 that an organizational report for the Birth Control Society of Hamilton was included

The clinic is financed by a membership and special donations, mostly collected at the time of the Annual meeting each autumn. The clinic is situated at 80 1/2 James N. and operates there every Friday afternoon with a staff of a woman doctor and 2 graduate nurses. There is a minimum charge made for supplies only if the patient is able to pay. There is a steady increase in the number of new patients, and we are especially gratified by the increasing number of New Canadians; many of them from Great Britain who have been advised to attend this clinic by their Planned Parenthood societies in their own lands. Many patients live too far from our clinic to call for supplies; therefore we have built up a rapidly increasing mail order department.⁴⁴⁰

The commentary concerning the use of the clinic by new Canadians could be interpreted in at least two ways. First, the active birth control clinics in other countries could have made accessing birth control services in Canada much more acceptable and normal to immigrant women and men which could account for a positive response by this group. The second reading of this comment could be framed within a eugenic context. The limitation of births by immigrant families who may have been working-class or followed different traditions would also fit the aims of positive eugenics. By influencing their fertility, the perceived social decay that would accompany higher birth rates amongst working-class or immigrant families would theoretically decline.

⁴⁴⁰ LAC, NCW MG28 I 25 vol 98 file 8 p 4-5. Highlights from the Annual Reports of the Organizations affiliated with the Local Council of Women Hamilton, 1954. Annau, "Promoting Prophylactics: ..."

Ultimately, LCWs such as Calgary and Winnipeg worked with agencies and supportive branches of government to increase access to birth control in both more popular forms: sterilization or diaphragms and jellies. The local councils that did take up the birth control issue firmly linked their causes to solving social problems (immigrants, the “feeble-minded”, unemployed individuals, maternal mortality, etc.) rather than linking it to a healthy or positive view of female sexuality. As was shown through the Calgary LCW, their efforts were directed at family limitation and reducing maternal mortality. Overall, there appears to have been a resistance to the idea of linking birth control to reproductive choice or a rethinking of motherhood. This could also have been strategic however, based on the mood of the public and popular sentiment. Framing birth control in the context of maternal health allowed them to advocate for birth control within the stated concerns of the organizations.

As shown here, much of the 1930s was spent trying not to navigate birth control as a new norm which was part of an over arching social change regarding social roles and expectations including parenthood. As the overall birth rate declined and it appeared that there were changes to social interactions in the case of dating and mating, education, employment , social roles and a general extension of the lifecycle. The impact of the Depression Era of the 1930s also cannot be ignored. Issues such as earning living wages, working women, home financing and other related topics could have also carried more weight for the Council members. As shall be examined further in the context of World War II, regulating social and sexual relationships amongst the married and unmarried composed much of the recorded debate rather than birth control.

Discourses and processes of moral regulation outside the organization was aimed mainly at “feeble-minded” women who occupied different moral parameters by needing explicit reproductive controls set in place to regulate the “different” or “deviant” body. The mother who was overwhelmed or in ill health due to the number of pregnancies she had carried, or by the living conditions and circumstances she found herself in was also part of the target group. By framing acceptable motherhood in biological (both mental and physical) terms the support for sterilization of feeble-minded individuals as a form of regulation makes sense for these organizations. In the case of the Calgary LCW, debate could have been continued due the enactment of the 1927 Sterilization Act in Alberta.⁴⁴¹ The general decline or lack of discussion in other local councils such as the example of the Ottawa LCW could indicate that other issues were a priority at the time, that they weren’t recording their discussions, or that the members took the spirit and intention of the NCW President’s letter discussions regarding birth control to heart .

Internally, moral regulation of the membership can be seen through the reading materials and the investigative reports that conveners made. The reading suggestions provided through the national convener offer a distinct point of view that the council wanted to promote within their communities. In this case, the use of pronatalist ideologies to reinforce standards of care for mothers and children (including sterilization when “necessary”) as a policy item was built into their discussions. Not only was

⁴⁴¹ For a discussion regarding organizations in Alberta see Dyck “Sterilization and Birth Control in the Shadow of Eugenics:...” and Erika Dyck *Facing eugenics: reproduction, sterilization, and the politics of choice* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2013).

sterilization used to protect the future generation it was used to protect their own standing as healthy mothers. The conflation of health from a medical or biological phenomenon to something almost entirely socially defined is worth considering. The language of health was prominent in this period and used as a way to legitimize specific ideas regarding fitness and birth control. This would continue through the NCW's involvement in sex education.

*Sex, Femininity and Motherhood: "I have three girls and one boy and I would rather bury them while they are still innocent than see them like some girls I know."*⁴⁴²

As has been previously mentioned one of the organizing principles for the National Council of Women was the belief that as mothers, women were better suited to deal with the social elements and needs of Canadian society. While their stance on motherhood was consistently pronatalist, they supported the need for sex education. In keeping with a position of a maritally oriented and contained sexuality during the 1930s, the NCW primarily envisioned women without children as a temporary state rather than a long-term lifestyle choice. While they may have recognized the desire and necessity of not having as many children as in the previous generation, childlessness was perceived to be detrimental to both the status of womanhood and women's social roles. Sex education would aid in reinforcing this and the materials that social and medical organizations promoted would encourage both men and women to be as healthy as possible for future generations. The content of the programmes were as much about the social relationship as it was about using the networks the organizations had

⁴⁴² "Many Parents to Blame" signed "Prairie Wife and Mother" *Western Producer* April 30, 1931, p. 19.

developed to disseminate medical information. More specifically, it covered other areas such as maternal health, the female reproductive system and care of the home and family.

In response to these concerns, the NCW collected ideas for sex education from both the members and the affiliates. Submissions to the NCW annual publication *The Yearbook*, offered the opportunity for local councils and registered affiliates to detail their concerns, accomplishments and continued works.⁴⁴³ Many Local Councils were concerned with the content of sex education and who should teach it. In the questionnaire for 1930, the education convener Ruby Mason responded to this issue:

In all courses in Universities in Science, as in Arts, Medical Schools, Teachers' Training Schools, and Public Health Departments, instruction is given to men and women alike in biology and sex hygiene.

In reference to the teaching of biology in application to social life and character, it is deemed advisable by many that the subject should be presented to students in such a manner as to form the foundation principles of right living in regard to sex relationships. Since personality, background, and environment play such a big part in the attitude of a child of adolescent age, boy or girl, educators differ much as to the manner, time, and by whom this should be done.⁴⁴⁴

She continued to note that in public school (elementary school age) children began to learn about the care of the body as it related to health and hygiene as they went into high school: "We still deem it best, perhaps, to aim to direct the activities of boys and girls into right channels by instilling into their minds the foundation principles of right

⁴⁴³ *Yearbook*, 1930 p. 76-77. This publication was distributed to all members and many LC's publish their own version locally.

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.* p. 76.

living.”⁴⁴⁵ Unfortunately, there was no detail given as to what “right living” by way of “right channels” meant within the context of an educational program. Given the education programs that were promoted by other groups such as the WCTU it could be inferred that this would include temperance or social hygiene education.⁴⁴⁶ By adding sex education to the general curriculum in elementary and high school in their view, these programs were helping to create better and healthier citizens and families and formally establish gender roles.

The above 1930 *Yearbook* contribution further commended the efforts of the YMCA/YWCA in their public “lectures by experts to adults: Find a Mate, Values and Difficulties of Engagement, Marriage and the Adjustments, Children, the Women’s Side of Marriage, the Lesson of Unsuccessful Marriages, the Family Purse.”⁴⁴⁷ A consistent message in the public promotion of sex education courses was that people of all ages could use instruction on “right living” to ameliorate any bad habits that prevented the individual from being a contributing member of society. The course content would aid “students” in making these positive life choices that would also reinforce social ideals and sexual norms.

In a time when men and women were choosing their own marital partners in a love match it is interesting to note that the YWCA (and others) felt this was an activity to be learned. The course content highlighted elements that supporters considered necessary for making a wise and informed choice about a marital partner. The classes

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid.* p. 77.

⁴⁴⁶ Sethna, “Men, Sex, and Education:...”

⁴⁴⁷ NCWC *Yearbook*, 1930 p. 77.

were developed for all possible age groups including adult education and used a public lecture format to connect with the widest possible target audience. By holding classes in a multi-session format, participants could be evaluated on their assimilation of the lessons and their successes would also be noted by their peers. This method would have provided for a more direct form of surveillance with the aim of leading to self-governance. Course leaders could freely comment on the “students” in an immediate timeframe which would support new habits and norms. In addition, it would allow the lecturers to provide comment on the absorption of course materials and allow the other participants to acknowledge the changes in their fellow group members.

A 1934 NCW resolution continued with this theme and supported the promotion of sexual hygiene in the contest of social and public health safety. The NCW asserted that instruction should come from an expert in the field which would eliminate the speculation, folktales, and misconceptions around social and sexual habits. Instructors for these courses should be individuals who had a “real understanding of its [sex and sex hygiene] importance for the life of the individual and of the race, and whereas many parents and older people do not know how to meet the natural questions of children on these subjects with simplicity and frankness.”⁴⁴⁸ Sexual hygiene knowledge was a type of preventive measure for social and physical problems and defects and as such, cemented the position of sexual hygiene courses in the schools and the community. The instructors should not only be well versed on the topic but have the expert knowledge of how to instruct individuals on the prevention of misconduct.

⁴⁴⁸ NCWC *Yearbook*, 1934 p. 136.

The Women's Institute on the other hand, preferred knowledge readily available to both their members and their communities and continuously worked towards sexual and social hygiene classes available for all.⁴⁴⁹ This is not to say that the WI's approach was dissimilar to the NCW. Their construction of the relationship between sexual knowledge and motherhood took a similar form. However, within the available minutes there appeared to be more of a general acceptance of the need for distributing knowledge of sexual and marital life. In some ways the NCW took this on grudgingly during the 1930s. Subsequently, elements of this type of education were built into school based domestic science programs that they were already supporting.

In the case of the Manitoba WI qualifications such as formal education or professional experience were not consistently mentioned:

[It was] felt that there was a need for getting on with health services throughout Manitoba and at the present time it was difficult to obtain adequate staff since Public Health Nurses were not recompensed as they should be and until the general public was willing to accept the responsibility of improving conditions for staff in rural areas it would be difficult to recruit either teachers or public health nurses into these fields of work.⁴⁵⁰

In answer to this, it was determined that instruction should be accessible to all language groups with portable materials that could be taken home for the parents. This would not only answer the children's questions and correct any "faulty" prior knowledge that might have been passed from parent to child and finally to instruct the parent. In publications for parents available from the Department of National Health and Welfare

⁴⁴⁹ LAC, FWIC, MG 28 I316 vol 3 file 1 July 5 1945.

⁴⁵⁰ AM, MB WI MG 10 C8 July 30 - August 1, 1947 p. 8.

and supplied through the WI for example, they were admonished: that by reading this material -

... you may recognize some gaps where your training has been at fault and where this has hindered your child from achieving the mental, social and emotional maturity which he should normally achieve at a given age. If such gaps do occur, they likely will occur, they may be bridged by training and careful understanding between you and your child. Don't forget that it is never too late to mend.⁴⁵¹

In this case, the failure of proper parenting is framed through the dissemination of misinformation, and is another potential source of moral failing for the parent. Information sharing between children and parents continued to have the potential to effectively disseminate knowledge to parents who may not be "current" with the information and science of the time or be seen to be perpetuating folktales and gossip. There appeared to have been an assumption that if they were good parents and involved in their child's education, they would be interested in this material as a matter of the everyday. Alternatively, mothers and fathers with basic education would also be taught the new lessons regarding biology and social hygiene through the information brought home. This strategy was effective in distributing information to parents through "official" channels and opening the discussion for parents and children.

Conclusion

Throughout this initial period (1930-1939), both the NCW and the WI worked with the theme of education for proper living and bodily or sexual conduct. Taken together the birth control debates and the beginning resolutions and programmes for social and sexual hygiene there is demonstrated concern for the future of mothers and

⁴⁵¹ LAC RG 29 vol 991 file 499-3-2 pt. 5.

the future of the family. Their favoured approach was to hold classes to educate both themselves and the public to ensure a better future. Mothers deemed unfit were “discouraged” from bearing children and women who had already had children were offered contraceptives as a means of ensuring the health of the mother, family, and nation. Their use of medical and social resources and discourses to identify the characteristics of not only who should access birth control and under what conditions were repeated throughout the period to reinforce the ideals of citizenship and womanhood. Initially to create better unions, courses were offered to aid men and women in making better choices and to govern their behaviours. This would continue to be a focus during the next period with an emphasis placed on creating stable unions and decreasing or eliminating social and sexual problems. During the 1940 to 1945 period however, the war introduced new concerns and behaviours that conflicted with the gender relations and roles that were generally seen to be accepted within women’s organizations.

*Chapter Six: Women and War, 1940-1945: "... we must safeguard, as best we can, the rights and privileges and uphold the high ideals of the finer sex."*⁴⁵²

Introduction

Reflecting on the awful realities of World War I, there was hope that World War II would be shorter in duration and result in fewer casualties and lives lost. During the war years, women's organizations reverted to the activities they had undertaken during World War I. Among other initiatives they set about finding ways to legally, socially, and economically protect families and address the changing family form that was both impacted by war and a result of changing norms. These activities took many forms including the provision of care packages for soldiers, the upkeep of farming or other "small" business activities, collecting and recycling materials with the hopes of ensuring available resources, rallying women for the workforce, or conversely dealing with unemployment and its effects, and establishing daycare facilities for children.

Women's public roles also changed during the war as women again became more visible in employment sectors for example. With more women available than men as a potential labour pool, women were able to expand their positions and related economic, political and social roles. Women's expressions of patriotism were made visible through the usual signs and symbols of nationhood and through participating in war work to keep the nation running and promoting family networks that would preserve and demonstrate a sense of national unity.

Women's organizations emphasised not only these public features of women's

⁴⁵² NCWC Yearbook 1942 p. 79.

lives but issues pertaining to intimate relationships. In various programmes they covered issues such as disease and illness specifically in relation to non-normative sexual habits (for example, venereal disease, premarital or adulterous sexual encounters or relationships), and adapting to new images of femininity that were moving away from home and hearth.⁴⁵³ In an international context, Reekie has noted that “women’s campaigns during the war designed to protect women from sexual exploitation were, in most cases, isolated responses to specific situations unrelated to any cohesive theory of women’s position in society.”⁴⁵⁴ As will be shown throughout this chapter, using specific cases as parables to respond to changes in norms is the case as a single unifying issue (outside of war) was not necessarily employed during this period. Through a public and patriotic femininity women had the potential to occupy a more free feminine experience during the war. They were still morally governed by norm based “rules” no matter how much these expectations appeared to be further separated from women’s new reality.

Educating for Sex: schools for sex versus popular culture

In the 1940s the National Council of Women and organizations such as the Women’s Institutes continued their interest in reshaping the roles of women, men, and their families through the improvement of social and sexual conduct. The emphasis on

⁴⁵³ Gail Reekie makes a similar claim for the Australian context: “Women’s organizations were concerned with four major aspects of sexuality: public sexual behaviour, prostitution, contraception and venereal disease.” She goes further to state: “While these four issues are clearly selective and distinct manifestations of sexuality, they are treated together here as a conceptual whole through their common link with the culturally-determined, physical expression of the relations between individual men and women. So while patterns of sexual interaction, the commodification of sex, and the reproductive and pathological consequences of sex each has its own specific context, together they grant the historian insights into the character of sexual ideology which otherwise might remain obscure.” “War, Sexuality and Feminism: Perth Women’s Organizations, 1938-1945” *Australian Historical Studies* 1985 21(85): 579.

⁴⁵⁴ Reekie “War, Sexuality and Feminism: ...” p. 576.

practical sex education was designed for both children and adults as it pertained to the social and demographic changes prompted by the war years. As with the previous period there was a question of who should teach it, and where the scientific and social information should come from. Some LCWs and WIs were interested in taking a more hands on approach including participating through hiring committees or in curriculum development. However, when it came to educating themselves for further discussion or investigation, and maintaining their leadership position within their communities, the focus was on determining what kind of content was appropriate as a model for both the war years and beyond. This would offer them a plan for creating a programme that would be easily delivered and inform the desired regimes of conduct. As a preparatory action they recommended several publications to their members for further debate and consideration of what “right living” meant. The Convenor’s recommendations ranged from Mary Ware Dennett’s *The Sex Side of Life* to *The Question of Petting* by M.J. Exner and Thurman B. Rice’s *The Story of Life* among others. These texts provided a variety of information regarding intimate relationships and the means of cultivating proper conduct either within dating or marriage.⁴⁵⁵

In contrast to the NCW, Women’s Institutes endorsed literature sponsored by the government and publicly published materials. The WI and other government departments collaborated to publish: *Relations of Men and Women, Happy Healthy*

⁴⁵⁵ Mary Ware Dennett, *The Sex Side of Life* (Astoria: Long Island, 1919), M.J. Exner *The Question of Petting* (American Social Hygiene Association: New York, 1933), Thurman B. Rice, *The Story of Life* (American Medical Association: Chicago, 1933). Beth Bailey “Scientific Truth... and Love: the Marriage Education Movement in the United States” *Journal of Social History* 1987 20: 711-32.

*Womanhood, The Wonderful Story of Life, and Men, Women and God.*⁴⁵⁶ The content of these types of publications varied however, yet there were similarities such as covering basic biology (with an emphasis on reproductive physiology) of men and women, dating, courtship and marital relationships, and expectations for women's role in household management. The differences in these publications were centered on the amount of space these topics took per volume, the language (scientific versus romantic) and the inclusion of more detailed sexual or social concerns, including birth control. It is worth noting that the range of content in the books and pamphlets they sponsored included material that the organizations could not openly endorse or talk about. This could include topics such as birth control which was covered in most publications during this period even in a most basic format. This would allow them to go around the legally and socially prohibitive birth control issue and address it indirectly. In tandem with their promotion of various publications, the Women's Institutes also collaborated with the Division on Maternal and Child Hygiene and the Canadian Welfare Council on a handbook that would cover all the information necessary for motherhood and caring for the family.⁴⁵⁷

To avert controversy and dissent among the public and specifically schools and teachers, the term "sex education" was not attached to school courses and other informal talks. Programmes such as this were to be called "health and human relations" or "family life education". According to Sethna, "family life education was perceived as a

⁴⁵⁶ AM, MBWI Department of Health and Public Welfare: Manitoba.

⁴⁵⁷ LAC, RG 29 vol 991 file 499-3-2 pt.1 Minutes December 3, 1935 p. 3.

broadly-based sex instruction which did away with social hygiene's central focus on venereal disease. Family life education was intended to steer children safely toward compulsory heterosexuality, marriage and child-rearing."⁴⁵⁸ The Health League of Canada also acknowledged the fear of using the label and noted that to call it sex education "might tend to over-emphasize a topic which is intermingled with the whole of life and where over-emphasis might encourage abnormality."⁴⁵⁹ In addition,

... any study of the venereal diseases in the schools, should follow, not precede or accompany, the studies of normal sex life; and that these two types of studies be handled separately, venereal diseases to be dealt with among other communicable diseases.⁴⁶⁰

These notations offer a very distinct dichotomy between "normal" and "abnormal" sexual relationships, and implies that "normal" sexual relationships do not include contexts where there may have been a potential for contracting sexually transmitted infections or related problems. This purposely limits the sites where disease may be contracted to outside the home, thereby reinforcing the image of marital relationships and home as normatively desired spaces.

Following the idea that a good or healthy lifestyle was something to be learned from experts, the Montreal LCW reported on the results of a 1938-39 survey on Education for Human Relationships. This entailed the creation and future evaluation of the content and effectiveness of programmes in schools, universities, religious and other community agencies as well as the role of the home as individuals prepared for marriage

⁴⁵⁸ Sethna, *The Facts of Life*:... p. 19.

⁴⁵⁹ LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 58 file 58-3, 1944-46 n.d.

⁴⁶⁰ LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 58 file 58-3, 1944-46 n.d.

and parenthood. The report

indicates an increasing awareness, on the part of Canadian educational institutions, for the NEED of such education. It indicates excellent progress in providing such education in many provincial systems of public education, a few Universities, through the rapidly growing program of parent educational study-groups, and the efforts made by some of our educational, recreational and religious institutions and agencies.⁴⁶¹

A selection of courses at the University of Ottawa for example, met this need. The courses covered all the elementary aspects of marriage from household management to gender relations to birth spacing and childrearing.⁴⁶² The course developer was adamant that sections pertaining to sex and biology be provided only two weeks before the wedding and that the couple was not to share it with anyone else in good conscience.⁴⁶³ This might not have been as realistic as the instructors might have hoped as people tend to share forbidden knowledge in the form of gossip or in this case, as they shared their worries and concerns about sexual knowledge and experience.

In 1945 a panel sponsored by the Health League of Canada in Toronto furthered this discussion. It was decided "that any program of sex instruction in the schools be presented as a part of courses already existing, such as biology, physiology and hygiene, health education, general science, home economics, literature, citizenship, social studies, etc."⁴⁶⁴ The effect of this was to subsume sex and sexuality under the more important aspects of learning about day to day living and the attendant issues of gendered

⁴⁶¹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1940 p. 96. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁶² LAC, CCSD MG 28 I10 vol 61 file 492 Marriage Counseling (1945-50).

⁴⁶³ *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*

conduct.

In continued consideration of the potential role of family life education to help curb venereal disease, Health League of Canada members claimed that:

The mechanism of sex should be presented to enable students to understand intelligently the problem of V.D., but in addition the need for a high standard of moral conduct, the normal girl-and-boy relationships, the significance of marriage and the conditions upon which happy family life may be built, should all be emphasized in a normal and objective way. Family-life education should go a long way towards clothing with dignity the sanctity of marriage and the place of the home as the bed-rock of society. Properly presented, it should provide an antidote for the current cynicism towards marriage. Obviously, no mere smattering of the "facts of life" is sufficient for such large aims.⁴⁶⁵

As of 1949, there were "Family Life Education" courses being offered at the Universities of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, Western Ontario, Toronto, Montreal, McGill, Laval, and Acadia. Some of these universities also offered this material through correspondence courses.⁴⁶⁶ All of these courses offered similar areas of instruction including physiology, psychology (especially IQ testing), sex education, and the content of marital relationships including communication between spouses. The level of secrecy regarding the instruction of sexual relationships appears to differ by institution, community, and religious affiliation. By 1945 resolutions from the NCW (and their affiliates) and related programming had been undertaken to create, support and monitor sex education programs and classes in the high school setting and public sites from Vancouver (British Columbia) to Smith's Falls (Ontario) and beyond.

⁴⁶⁵ LAC, HLC MG 28 I332 vol 132 file 12 (1917-1949) n.d.

⁴⁶⁶ LAC, CCSD MG28 I10 vol 62 file 496 (1947-49) "Family Life Education in Canada: An Interim Report" June 2, 1949.

Turning towards character development as a moral proposition even during wartime, Dr. Edna Guest noted in a 1940 Public Health report that:

the welfare, both moral and physical, of the men in the fighting forces is naturally of the greatest interest to every Canadian, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the women of to-day have a responsibility for making conditions as favourable as possible for every child to grow up into a useful and honourable citizen.⁴⁶⁷

This call to participate in the war effort and to be part of the reinvention of Canadian society could be viewed as a reaffirmation of the place of women's organizations in the volunteering, leadership and representation of Canadian women. In 1941 Guest again noted that the role of women who committed their time and effort to the NCW was

[T]ogether, in this present hour, we must defend Canada. Together we must see to it that our generation of women leads Canada through these very serious years, in a way, that no matter how dark the weeks and days, we shall emerge finally into a sunshine, assured that Canada's women when challenged pulled well, their end of the yoke."⁴⁶⁸

The recognition that they would not necessarily be part of the same war effort that others in their social circles were participating in; elevated both their individual status and their contributions as leaders in their communities. These addresses also reconfirmed women's place as the moral arbiters for the growth and development of good Canadian citizens. This would continue to be undertaken in a variety of ways.

In a 1942 address, National Council of Women President Mrs. Edgar Drury Hardy noted that,

Generally speaking, clubwomen under classification of age groups will not be called to take war jobs in industry, but we are expected to re-arrange our

⁴⁶⁷ NCWC *Yearbook* 1940

⁴⁶⁸ NCWC *Yearbook* 1941 p. 108.

lives, our activities and competently undertake whatever task is available. Whether we realize it or not, we are facing a new era, a complete revolution of former thinking and we must adjust ourselves to a new system of values for living.⁴⁶⁹

As stated in this address, the NCW recognized that again war would have a lasting impact on the way that they too would resume their lives in a time of war. Through whatever changes were to create a “new system of values for living”, they expected to maintain their roles and statuses as leaders of their communities. The adjustment to a new value system during a time of great upheaval such as war necessarily included a renewal of patriotism and character-building. Patriotism would be communicated through nationalist discourses to shape the coming changes prompted by war towards positive outcomes and to prohibit or prevent the less desirable ones - namely delinquency or other social behaviours. To this end, members were encouraged to be active and provide “a determined and strengthened effort to influence women to stand by our sex; and a never relaxing endeavour to bring Canadian women to a fuller realization of their responsibilities as citizens of a great and glorious country.”⁴⁷⁰ Through the language of responsibility and national duty, women’s organizations were offered a place of authority and a more general recognition that they should contribute to postwar Canada. With their relationship to and knowledge of homes and schools and social contexts, it was recognized that social service organizations had much to offer. They were also in a position to demonstrate that classes to shape the conduct of women, men, and children in a more formal setting such as schools were not enough, events

⁴⁶⁹ LAC NCWC MG 28 I25 vol 82 file 15 - President speeches 1942-43.

⁴⁷⁰ NCWC *Yearbook* 1945 p. 25.

needed to happen in a more local and public arena.

Sex and health: "The VD rat will rise the moment you slacken..."⁴⁷¹

With the birth control issue laid to rest for all practical purposes by the NCW Executive in the late 1930s, social and sexual relationships remained a concern for many similar women's organizations. The heightened concern for the decline in morals through the disruption of home-life, the rise in illegitimate births, and divorce and desertion cases during wartime renewed the space for leadership through the NCW and the WI.

As noted above one of the most obvious sites of concern for sexual regulation was in the real or perceived rise in the rates of venereal disease. VD specifically made "abnormal" relationships more public which also included the image of the "disrupted" family. Subsequently, the links between "sex delinquency" and venereal disease were made at the levels of home and community.

Venereal disease is both a symptom and a cause. It is a symptom of sick social conditions, of neglect, ignorance, and indifference. It is a cause of much suffering and unhappiness, broken homes, doomed children, ruined careers, sickness, invalidism and early death.⁴⁷²

This assessment of the effects of VD served as a visual image in public health circles to demonstrate the consequences of "sex delinquency" which would inevitably contribute to the further erosion of Canadian communities. The images of disease and the straw figure of social decay was a discourse that resonated for social organizations. It was an effective trope for demonstrating the spaces that were contributing to social decay and

⁴⁷¹ LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 132 file 3 August 29, 1944 "Social Hygiene Division: Program for Next Six Months" p. 2.

⁴⁷² LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 113 file "Hygiene Day, 1947".

the assumed participants. The social investigations that members conducted in their home communities reinforced a sense of causality between VD and social decay. The WI on the other hand, accepted the incorporation of VD, sex education and birth control as a means of promoting better maternal health especially on the farm and as a means to gain control over the potential threat of the "feeble-minded".⁴⁷³ The WI was also concerned with the disruption of home and hearth during this period but their minimal action outside their communities was in part a result of their diminished national presence.

The perennial concern with venereal disease was amplified during the war years. Promiscuity was the underlying generalized social anxiety which was heightened by the circumstances of war.

The social and moral factors are factors which exist in no other type of disease. The venereal diseases are sinister manifestations of our failure to achieve an ideal society and an ideal society depends very largely on the establishment of a proper attitude towards the relations of men and women and upon the conservation of the human life of the country. This is to a peculiar extent the responsibility of our women.⁴⁷⁴

There were a couple of key ideas in this address that were continuations from earlier campaigns including the fight against the sexual double standard, the nature of intimate relationships and the reinforcement of the position that women were the guardians of

⁴⁷³ AM, MBWI MG 10 C8 October 21, 1936, p. 1. "Program of Health Study - VD" "Dr. Jackson invited questions on the above or any other subject. One member enquired if the Department was prepared to send out people to speak on Sterilization. Dr. Jackson hesitated for a moment, then replied that the question is of a controversial nature; nevertheless, speakers will be sent when asked for." Other minutes available in this series continue to indicate their support for sterilization programs in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba and petitions to the provincial and federal governments through to at least 1947. It is possible that the discussion took place with a representative from the Agricultural College rather than the medical school because of the ties between the Agricultural schools and the Women's Institutes through their extension programs.

⁴⁷⁴ NCWC *Yearbook* 1943 p. 68.

sexual purity. Also, carried forward was the notion that there was a ripple effect from individuals to community to nation that would affect not just the physical environment but the social one as well. In terms of the changing content and function of relationships and general conduct of citizens, the effects of negative conduct or mentally and physically “deficient” individuals on the family and the nation were highlighted. This was also seen in the Department of National Health and Welfare’s (DNHW) assessment of the accessibility of sex workers: “Clandestine prostitutes and promiscuous women are “the next important source of venereal disease” among soldiers, sailors and workers in war industries, the report asserts.”⁴⁷⁵ The inability to achieve an ideal society due to improper social and sexual relationships reinforced the efforts of women’s organizations to reform individual and collective conduct. In an information item from the Local Council of Women of Winnipeg several of these ideas were evidently coming together:

Interested in the control of venereal disease, the supervision and education of youth, in providing recreational facilities or aiding in their provision, the consideration of an establishment of economic and attractive hostels for young women. The report shows an interesting table depicting the location of contacts and frequency in venereal diseases, dance halls and cafes taking first place.⁴⁷⁶

The surveillance of youth and the provision of acceptable recreation and sites of interaction along with the studies connecting these sites where venereal diseases were reportedly contracted were made throughout the minutes. Unfortunately, the complete report was not included in the file to demonstrate their methodology or how it was known that these were locations where VD was being contracted. It is useful to note

⁴⁷⁵ RG 29 vol 212 file 311-v3-5 pt 1 December 27, 1942.

⁴⁷⁶ NCWC *Yearbook* 1946 p. 109.

however, that these locations were already morally suspect and that the kinds of activities youth were participating in while there were also problematic for social reformers.⁴⁷⁷

In a letter to DNHW officials the noted eugenicist and birth controller A.R. Kaufman also connected the contraction of VD to social spaces:

I noticed a reference in the paper to the Conference on venereal diseases which apparently are of "terrifying magnitude". I also noticed in the paper recently that 45% of the car accidents involve the use of liquor. I am wondering whether the beer parlours and drinking otherwise are responsible for about half of the infections. I understand that too many girls fall easy victims to unscrupulous men who treat the girls in the beer parlours. I also understand that many boys under the influence of liquor frequent houses of prostitution when they would not be so likely to do so when sober. I do not know whether it is possible to ration liquor to the point where no one gets sufficient to do much harm, but I do think that there should be more education on the dangers in High Schools and also the higher form in Public Schools since many of the children do not go to High Schools.⁴⁷⁸

For Kaufman the connection between sexual behaviour and social or medical disease was absolute. His understanding of the "perpetrators" of immoral social practices (including sex) were usually based on class and gender. However as Adams notes, the "focus on dance halls emphasizes their primary difference from other 'bad' places: dance halls catered to, indeed they depended on young women as well as young men. As places where young people of both sexes would gather they had the potential to foster not simply delinquency, but heterosexual delinquency and immorality."⁴⁷⁹ In order to prevent this type of delinquency and the potential contraction of VD, the

⁴⁷⁷ Hunt "Regulating Heterosocial spaces:..."

⁴⁷⁸ LAC RG 29 vol 212 file 311-v3-5 pt 1 December 7, 1943.

⁴⁷⁹ Adams "Almost anything can happen: ..." p. 224.

Peterborough LCW urged “that a plan be worked out which would establish a clinic where young girls could get advice that would guide them to a safer path in their social contacts. This would keep them more secure from ill health which is in many cases the result of a lack of any source to whom they can go for advice.”⁴⁸⁰ The resulting shift in the norms for intimate behaviour for both military and civilian populations was writ large through the reports of most social service organizations during this time. Further to this a 1944 in the NCW *Yearbook* report claimed that:

Many of our Local Councils are keenly interested in the final annihilation of this vicious and crippling disease, and have worked in co-operation with other men’s and women’s organizations in arranging a highly educational program on the radio – through the press – by poster – by meetings, etc. There is however, a feeling that the fundamental cause of the increase, and possibly the incidence of Venereal Disease, is a lack of attractive home life for young adults and a lack of bright light and attractive recreational centres, where young people may safely and happily congregate en masse when off duty, or if in uniform – on leave on entering a strange city. ... Our Councils have long declared that the most potent way to combat the evils of beer parlors and their associated dangers is to counter attract – and if the Physical Fitness program is idealized, could be transformed into a reality in every community in Canada, it would go a long way toward solving one of our greatest social and health problems. Let us all get behind it – study it, and take actions as our community needs.⁴⁸¹

In this statement, not only were homes unattractive places for young adults, but the “evils” of leisure spaces created new dangers for sociable youth. The establishment of physical fitness programs that would improve both character and physical fitness was supported. The program’s aim was to instil specific values and beliefs that would modify the problematic behaviours of young adults. A 1944 comment and resolution

⁴⁸⁰ NCWC *Yearbook* 1944 p. 100.

⁴⁸¹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1944 p. 97.

posted by the Health Committee:

noted with great satisfaction the establishment of a National Council for the promotion of Physical Fitness set up by the Minister of National Health, under the recently passed Physical Fitness Act. This recreational program will be adapted to all ages of our population and will help build up a sound physical and mental health, and create a popular demand for a recreation more constructive than the present bright lights of less desirable entertainment centres. We would urge that sufficient funds be made available to ensure recreation centres of a highly attractive character.⁴⁸²

Organizations such as the Health League of Canada (formerly known as the Canadian National Council for Combating Venereal Disease) who were affiliated with the NCW had the programs and tools that could be easily distributed to their members as part of an education program.⁴⁸³ Films such as “No Greater Sin” and publications such as “The Month of Marriage”, “The Bright Shield of Continence” and “Teen-Age Tragedy” were authored or supported and distributed through the Health League of Canada to other social hygiene and women’s organizations.⁴⁸⁴ One viewer of “No Greater Sin” wrote to the Director of the Services of Public Health for the DNHW: “May

⁴⁸² LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 61 file 5 Reel H-2018.

⁴⁸³ See for example, Jay Cassel, “Making Canada Safe for Sex: Government and the Problem of Sexually Transmitted Disease in the Twentieth Century” in C. David Naylor (Ed) *Canadian Health Care and the State: A Century of Evolution* (McGill-Queens University Press: Montreal-Kingston, 1992); Cassel, *The Secret Plague: Venereal Disease in Canada 1838-1939* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1987); Suzann Buckley and Janice Dickin McGinnis. “Venereal Disease and Public Health Reform in Canada” *Canadian Historical Review* 1982 63(3): 337-354.

⁴⁸⁴ Between 1942 and 1943 “No Greater Sin” was shown to 509,405 people across the country (except for Prince Edward Island). 70,000 copies of “The Bright Shield of Continence” were distributed to the Forces. NCWC *Yearbook* 1943, p. 173. For a discussion of other educational films see: Carstairs et al. *Be wise! Be healthy! ...* esp. Ch. 3; John D. Stevens, “Sex as Education: A note on pre-1930 social hygiene films” *Film & History* 1983 13(4): 84-87; Suzanne White, “Mom and Dad (1944): Venereal Disease “Exploitation” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 1988 62(2): 252-270; John Parascandola “VD at the Movies: PHS Films of the 1930s and 1940s” *Public Health Reports* 1996 3: 173-175; Robert Eberwein *Sex Ed: Film, Video, and the Framework of Desire* (Rutgers University Press: New Jersey, 1999).

I be permitted to say that this is the first time I have seen a picture worth presenting from an educational and healthy point of view. I would strongly recommend it to every boy and girl of sixteen and over. Unfortunately, too many parents, although they do not realize it, do their children more harm than good by forbidding them to witness the presentation of such a film."⁴⁸⁵ The author felt that this was a film that should be seen by high school students, civil servants and members of the armed services.⁴⁸⁶

The HLC's primary activity was to raise awareness of sexual diseases as a social disease and offer medical programs to decrease the overall incidence of VD. This would be accomplished through the promotion of premarital and prenatal blood tests as a form of detection for syphilis to protect families and children. This subject became a regular part of the NCW's yearly report and lobbying efforts. These concerns in tandem with support for blood tests to ensure the mental and physical health of both spouses before marriage were also continued action items. The HLC was also active in local health clinics and related events to raise awareness of the physical dangers of an immoral life. It was felt that by making individuals "healthy" they would be better parents, workers, providers, and possible members of the citizen army.⁴⁸⁷

In the Army: gender, enlistment, and building character at home

The community of West Algoma (now Thunder Bay) was held as an example of good progress in the fight against immoral behaviours. It was noted that:

⁴⁸⁵ RG 29 vol 212 file 311-v3-5 pt 1 December 18, 1942.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁷ This would continue to be a feature of postwar national fitness especially in the United States. See for example: Jeffrey Montez de Oca " "As Our Muscles Get Softer Our Muscle Race Becomes Harder": Cultural Citizenship and the "Muscle Gap"" *Journal of Historical Sociology* 2005 18(3): 145-172.

there has been a definite decrease in venereal diseases for the past year and the number of new cases submitted has decreased 25 per cent. This convener very fitly points out that greater knowledge is contributing to the decrease, and the modern approach to the subject used by the Army where regular exercise, and lectures by competent physicians show excellent results.⁴⁸⁸

Programs offered by affiliates or other experts, in this case the Army and “competent physicians” helped to reinforce the interconnectedness of efforts to (re)create positive or appropriate ideals of physical health and social relationships. The theme of physical health as a national objective was another visible social and physical element of individual, community and national “fitness”. The use of army physical training programs in both civilian and military contexts in this instance also reinforced the notion of a uniform state oriented approach to creating a standard of physical and sexual fitness. This would be beneficial not just for the individual but the community and subsequently the nation through the appropriately masculine channels of strength training and bodily comportment. It was also noted by Department of Health officials that:

the development of the physique, the character, and the mind, should be our ideals and our national resources are admirably suited to the furtherance of this objective. Major Eisenhardt spoke of the cost of cure and care of physically or mentally ill, and urged us to think of the importance and value of prevention rather than cure, and of the common sense of using our money for the former rather than the latter.⁴⁸⁹

The addition of physical fitness classes both on the base and in the community would not only have a physical effect but as noted above it also built good and sustainable character. When it comes to character and physical fitness here is not much difference

⁴⁸⁸ NCWC *Yearbook* 1941, p. 98.

⁴⁸⁹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1944 p. 34-35.

between being a civilian and being a member of the armed service until questions of gender arise.

While the archival documents suggested that the organizations were more concerned with civilian women during this period, there were a few instances where the circumstances of women serving in the armed forces were addressed. Women in the Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRENS) were advised during hygiene lectures from senior officers that, “every normal woman has natural sex urge. Satisfying of this instinct very difficult.” [sic]⁴⁹⁰ This acknowledgement that women were sexual beings also came with many warnings and consequences if not pursued in the proper venue. An example where the “sex urge” would have been problematic was if WRENS had leave from their duties and senior officers to pursue either casual dates or intimate experiences and become pregnant while unmarried. If this occurred it was determined that they “should be kept in service as long as she is not obviously with child then be discharged & Pens. & Nat. Health [the federal Department of Health] will look after pre-natal care & hospital treatment.”⁴⁹¹ The assumed threats to a woman’s character by participating in the (male) military services were compounded as the state of femininity was threatened by participating in the male world of war. When pregnancy was an outcome of a sexual relationship this was an added concern that working in the services that created as it was outside women’s seemingly traditional spheres and spaces.

Further to this, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene prepared a

⁴⁹⁰ LAC, MG 30 C183 file 1 & 2 “Lecture - Hygiene - Dr. R. Haight” September 10.

⁴⁹¹ LAC, MG 30 C183 file 1 & 2 “Executive Officer’s duties; Administrative Officer”.

bibliography "on Sex and Marriage to be utilized by officers in the Canadian Women's Army Corps" at the "request of the Consultant in Psychiatry to the Canadian Army."⁴⁹² Again, the assumption was that women would want to go home and be married and the military needed to know how to work with that norm. With the number of women holding military employment at a range of levels, even the military needed to learn how to "deal" with women members. The continued concern for women's proper role as wife and mother remained an issue while women served in the armed forces, in part due to the unconventional nature of the employment. Related to this was the potential for women to be changed by this type of employment into a more "masculine" nature which threatened women's "normal" and accepted gender role. The range of appropriate conduct for women was at odds with their occupational roles making courses and strategies of surveillance common.

Throughout the war, whisper campaigns or complaints based on gossip and innuendo based on a woman's potentially immoral conduct had the potential to destroy a military (or civilian) woman's career should she be caught in compromising situations. Most complaints were related to a woman's presumed sexual availability and actions that diminished a woman's performance of femininity. Her on-the-job clothing and expectations of beauty were a challenge to gender norms of the workplace. Again, gender roles were of issue on multiple fronts: home, work, military service and the time spent at leisure. According to Hegarty, "the military spoke of 'moral suasion' in the

⁴⁹² LAC, RG 29 vol 97 file 156-2-4 1944 p.2. The National Committee for Mental Hygiene was the precursor to today's Canadian Mental Health Association. The name was changed in 1950.

same breath with prophylactics: soldiers insisted sex was here to stay, and sexualized women appeared as responsible both for maintaining morale and spreading venereal diseases. The authorities had found the 'enemy' and she was everywhere."⁴⁹³ One anonymous letter from the suggestion box at National Defense Headquarters felt that more should be done as:

In my opinion, calling public meetings and displaying posters and stickers are not sufficient. The ones who should attend the meetings will not be there; posters are seldom read.

An army of young girls has commenced to work since the beginning of the war. The majority consider themselves capable of deciding the affairs of the universe - until they encounter difficulties. Then they are very little girls indeed. It seems to me that the place to reach these girls is where they are employed. If they could be talked to frankly by doctors or nurses - by persons who would be able to speak authoritatively and impress upon them the seriousness of this social menace - I think much good might be accomplished. Such talks would promote discussion among female members of staffs, and youth is very imitative. There is a lunch room in this building which is well suited for such a meeting.

I have been prompted to make this suggestion after hearing a girl of 18 years telling another stenographer of the wonderful time she had with a "repat" whom she had picked up, who was in Ottawa on his way to Winnipeg.⁴⁹⁴

Additional letters and concerns for working women and good time girls continue

⁴⁹³ Marilyn Hegarty, "Patriot or Prostitute? Sexual Discourses, Print Media, and American Women During World War II" *Journal of Women's History* 1998 10(2): 119; M. Michaela Hampf "'Dykes' or 'whores': Sexuality and the Women's Army Corp in the United States during World War II" *Women's Studies International Forum* 2004 27: 13-30; Phil Goodman, "'Patriotic Femininity': Women's Morals and Men's Morale During the Second World War" *Gender and History* 1998 10(2): 287-288; Marilyn Lake "Female Desires: The Meaning of World War II" *Australian Historical Studies* 1990 21(95): 267-284. Marilyn Hegarty has expanded this discussion using the United States as an exemplar: *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality during World War II* (New York University Press: New York: 2008).

⁴⁹⁴ RG 29 vol 212 file 311-v3-5 pt 1 March 28, 1944.

to stress the tensions between changing social norms and sexual relationships. Throughout the war years both the NCW and the WI supported and encouraged women's participation in the military. A report from the YWCA President Mrs. Agnew, speculated that there were problems with recruiting because of "the rumours about the moral standards of girls in the services which are current."⁴⁹⁵ The second question raised by Mrs. Agnew was "why women the services doing the same jobs as men, are not paid at the same rates as men."⁴⁹⁶ The concerns for the moral health of women in the services contrasted with the concerns for rates of pay is interesting. "Moral standards" was an undefined concept that left room for significant speculation as to the behaviours of women that appear to be of concern. In response to the question of moral standards Brigadier General James Mess responded by asking the Council:

... to function in a maternal fashion to women of the armed forces, not to condone their faults, but rather to guide and help them and refuse to allow anyone to criticize them. "We have traced rumours up hill and down dale and found nothing to them," said the Brigadier, and we want you help in stamping out these rumours."⁴⁹⁷

There were however, caveats surrounding their endorsement of the type of work the women would and could do and what it would mean to their "altered" feminine state as war had been deemed to be an explicitly male endeavour. Brigadier General Mess also claimed that civilian (and military) women working within the forces were necessary for several types of employment. He praised these women for being willing to engage in war work and eased fears that young women were in moral danger through

⁴⁹⁵ LAC, NCWC, MG 28 I25 vol 47 file 1. Meeting minutes June 18, 1943. sic.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.* sic.

⁴⁹⁷ NCWC *Yearbook* 1943 p. 61.

their participation in the armed forces. The Brigadier General stated that they

..did not overlook the problem relating to the inclusion of women in the Forces, but did state that they are secure, if not more so, under the supervision of the forces than they can possibly be in any other field. The tremendous and rapid development of the services has resulted in many unsatisfactory conditions, but these are being corrected as rapidly as is humanly possible.⁴⁹⁸

Unfortunately the entire speech is not included in the file so there isn't a response to the question of wages. A resolution put forth by members of the Vancouver Local Council during the same meeting in June 1943 reinforces this question:

The National Council of Women of Canada recommend that a woman in the armed forces who has been successful in passing the same trade test as a man should be entitled to receive the same rate of pay as that of the man she has replaced.⁴⁹⁹

This resolution was adopted and put forward to the relevant agencies. Throughout this period, the NCW continues to support women in their daily lives as workers as well as their moral health as women.

Dating, "pick ups" or "prostitutes"?: crafting a message for leisure time

The NCWC's concern for the moral health of women who worked for the armed services, was twinned with other types of health and sex related initiatives the military offered their soldiers:

Whereas the problem of syphilis, unsolved, results in widespread illness, inefficiency and death; and

Whereas a large proportion of syphilis cannot be diagnosed by any other means than the use of the Wasserman Test;

Therefore be it resolved that the National Council of Women of

⁴⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1943 p. 64.

Canada go on record as to the value of the general application of this test in industry, in the army, navy and air force, in hospitals and in the apparently well population at large, and as a pre-marital and pre-natal test.

Also we congratulate the Department of National Defence on the recently announced application of this test to the members of the Armed Forces.⁵⁰⁰

The threat of sexually transmitted diseases through indiscriminate dating by soldiers on leave continued to present difficulties for both social and health organizations. Figuring out which women were “safe” to date was difficult as the discourses contributing to the social construction of single women especially was limited to the “pick up” or the “prostitute”. The most simplistic distinction for health promoters between these two archetypes during this time was that the “professional prostitute” knowingly was a (potential) carrier of disease and infection. According to Pierson “the crucial definition of the “loose woman” was not necessarily defined by taking money for sex, but having sexual intercourse out of wedlock and with more than one partner. It was as sexually independent women that both prostitutes and “pick-ups” were blamed as the primary source of venereal infection.”⁵⁰¹ In comparison the laxity in the policing of male sex practices suggests that male continence was not as heavily promoted or made an issue of during World War II as it had been in earlier sexual morality campaigns.⁵⁰² As Pierson

⁵⁰⁰ LAC, NCWC, MG 28 I25 vol 85 file 1 (1943-1944).

⁵⁰¹ Pierson, *“They’re Still Women After All”: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, 1986, 1990) p. 101-107, 211; Page Dougherty Delano “Making up for War: Sexuality and Citizenship in Wartime Culture” *Feminist Studies* 2000 26(1): 33-68; Leisa Meyer “Creating G.I. Jane: The Regulation of Sexuality and Sexual Behavior in the Women’s Army Corps During World War II” *Feminist Studies* 1992 18(3): 581-601.

⁵⁰² Hegarty, “Patriot or Prostitute?” p. 117.

continues, “the educational material warned women that, under the influence of alcohol, they might dangerously lower their standards of morality; men, their standards of female companionship. ‘Liquor plus loose women equals Syphilis and Gonorrhoea’ soldiers awaiting repatriation were to be admonished.”⁵⁰³

Generally, women employed by the military were placed at the other end of the spectrum when it came to sexual possibilities and social morality. They were expected to maintain a higher standard of behaviour due to their working environment and be aware of the potential for both physical and social danger. While men in the forces were provided condoms on a regular basis by either physicians or through prophylactic stations, women were not.⁵⁰⁴ Military women were not afforded the same consideration in the matter of birth control or venereal disease education thus reinforcing the civilian ideals of sexual innocence and restraint. The issuance of condoms to soldiers held a contradictory position that also existed in the civilian realm: on the one hand they were seen to be contributing to general moral corruption and sexual permissiveness while on the other attempting to decrease the rates of venereal disease thereby preserving the health of both soldiers and civilians.⁵⁰⁵ The public good loophole was being used in the

⁵⁰³ Pierson, *“They’re Still Women After All”*:... p. 206. See also Pierson, “The Double Bind of the Double Standard: VD Control and the CWAC in World War II” *Canadian Historical Review* 1981 62(1): 31-58.

⁵⁰⁴ RG 24 vol 12521, 12573, 12630 contain multiple files outlining the requisition and distribution numbers for condoms in Canadian “Prophylactic Ablution Centres” mostly in Britain. These files also indicate concerns for higher rates of VD where there are soldiers hostels and “pick ups” or “enthusiastic amateurs”.

⁵⁰⁵ See for example, Tone “Contraceptive Consumers:...”; Beaudry also notes that “Even condoms, perhaps the most accessible method of artificial contraception, were not so easily obtained. Condoms could be purchased at drugstores, but they were accompanied by the stigma of disease. In fact, it was mandatory that condom packages contained the provision that they were to be used only for the prevention of disease.” Beaudry *Birth Control and the “Public Good”*:...

distribution of condoms and other contraceptives.

During the war era both civilian and military women were considered in new ways different from the model of domestic femininity in the 1930s. The differences during war time included women returning to the labour force in vast numbers, shifts in child care and child rearing practices and other sites where women could be found before war would all become sites of attention for women's organizations. The concern for women's economic stability during the war period extended into an examination of how best to maintain women's employment. "The morale of unemployed women has occupied the attention of many organizations and it is urged that the strongest support of Local councils be given to those organizations which deal with this problem."⁵⁰⁶ There were questions being raised as to the type of formal and informal economies that women were participating in and what this would do to women over time.

As part of the research program during this period, the convener sent questions to the local councils to investigate this issue:

1. Can you obtain any information as to whether prostitution has increased with unemployment in your community?
2. Is there in your community an institution where women being treated for syphilis can remain until all danger of their carrying infection is past?
3. Has the level of wages for household workers fallen appreciably since 1929? Can you give approximate prevailing maximum and minimum wages?
4. Have there been given in your community any training courses for houseworkers, and if so have they proved satisfactory?
5. If you have no policewomen in your city have any further steps been taken towards having one appointed?⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁶ LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 71 file 9 Reel H-2024 Moral Standards October 31, 1936.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

While seemingly unconnected in their focus, these questions all demonstrated the potential dangers that working-women or working-class women might face. These questions also associate sex with employment levels. Their concerns for women who became sex workers during an economically difficult time as a possible stop-gap measure to feed themselves and their families were not only held up as subjects of pity but were subjects of greater concern for the family unit and the community at large. The women who became infected with syphilis and their subsequent segregation was as much about their health status as it was about removing them from their immediate surroundings and shielding their dubious moral character from the wider community.

Also mentioned in this memo were low paid houseworkers (domestic servants) and warnings that low wages could lead to exploitation and “the effect upon the morale of such girls is to lower their resistance to every influence for evil.”⁵⁰⁸ The implication was that if paid well, houseworkers would not have to participate in dubious behaviours and possibly shady black-market dealings to make their money stretch as far as they needed it to. Being well paid would also save houseworkers from becoming delinquent and a visible member of the morally suspect.

By 1944, it was acknowledged that single women’s wages had improved. Mrs.

Smith of Montreal commented on:

... the gains which women have made in many lines of occupation, prejudices which have been removed, wage levels which have been maintained where men and women are doing equal work in the same employment, and the lowering of wages where women are only employed in Household Work: - levels in their field are raised only when employer

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

and employee are both trained.⁵⁰⁹

Domestic work continued to be undervalued and underpaid while it also was positioned as a preferred type of work that connected more readily with women's roles at home.

Mrs. Smith continued:

Better working facilities and equipment would make the job easier and more attractive, more free time and greater respect by the community for the job would all help to make housework a more desirable occupation. ... The National Council of Women requests that after the war the National Research Council be asked to extend their research work on household utensils, materials, etc., to aid in the upkeep of the home.⁵¹⁰

Elevating the status of domestic work to women themselves through improving the tools required for work employs an industrial approach that puts domestic work in the same realm as other forms of employment. As will be demonstrated during the postwar period, working outside the home continued to be more attractive to women.

As well as the concerns raised about employment and femininity, available leisure and recreation opportunities continued to be problematic for the NCW and the WI. While media of varying sorts were promoting a more laissez faire type of social interaction, women's organizations were having difficulty making that transition or acceptance.⁵¹¹ Patriotic femininity meant that civilian women had a duty and obligation

⁵⁰⁹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1944 p. 43.

⁵¹⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹¹ See for example: M. Susan Bland, "Henrietta the Homemaker, and "Rosie the Riveter": Images of women in advertising in *Maclean's* magazine, 1939-50" *Atlantis* 1983 8(2): 61-86; Emily Spencer *Lipstick and High Heels: War, Gender and Popular Culture* (Canadian Defence Academy Press: Kingston: 2007); Bilge Yesil "'Who Said this is a Man's War?': propaganda, advertising discourse and the representation of war worker women during the Second World War" *Media History* 2004 10(2): 103-117.

to explore and exhibit their potential for intimate encounters to keep up the morale of the soldiers and the rest of the nation but all within reason.⁵¹² However not many of the NCW's policy and program ideas reflected this form of moral uplift. An exception to this is seen here:

Resolved that the Dominion Government be urged to take immediate action in providing a hall where the young civilians brought to Ottawa due to wartime conditions could find some amusement. We would especially recommend a hall where they could meet socially as it is evident that the morale of these young people needs the same consideration as the Armed Forces and that the form of entertainment desired by the majority of the young people is dancing. The idea of the Red Triangle Club where games and social activities, etcetera; could be combined, is ideal; such an undertaking to be sponsored by organizations such as our own, through which we feel that these young people would be greatly heartened.⁵¹³

The notion that heterosocial meeting places should be organized spaces with dedicated activities, and chaperoned had been consistent from early twentieth-century efforts by women's and social service organizations.⁵¹⁴ By World War Two, as socially provocative as spending leisure time in various types of cafés and clubs was, gathering spaces were relatively entrenched in the leisure opportunities among both youth and adults.

⁵¹² Hegarty, "Patriot or Prostitute? ..."; Jeffrey Keshen "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II" *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 1997 30(60): 239-266; Keshen *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver, 2004).

⁵¹³ LAC NCWC MG 28 I25 vol 61 file 5 Reel H-2018 1943 Ottawa Local Council Resolution. In 1939 a questionnaire was distributed to the local Moral Standards Committees by the national convener Mrs. Milton Gregg. The areas for investigation included stating their local council's efforts to uphold moral standards, the use of professional speakers, and obtaining statistics regarding juvenile delinquency. Members were also asked "if there is a military training centre in or near your city, what steps have been taken by the community to provide wholesome recreation for the soldiers when off duty?" LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 77 file 6 Reel H-2026 October 20, 1939.

⁵¹⁴ Hunt, "Regulating Heterosocial Space: ..."; Susan K. Cahn, *Sexual Reckonings: Southern Girls in a Troubling Age* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2007) p. 181-210, 241-268.

According to Collins “during the war, a new sort of club emerged casual in method and mixed in membership. After it, the mixed clubs flourished, girls’ clubs vanished and boys’ clubs began their gradual but irrevocable decline.”⁵¹⁵ The prevalence and preference for homosocial activities had decreased by this time and was limited to formal organizations that were already single sex in composition. Social spaces had become more conducive to new forms of courtship and social experimentation and not just amongst the youth but adults with disposable income too. More popular leisure activities had become mixed sex social opportunities and at least initially group oriented for most ages. Under the guise of morale building for both civilians and soldiers, acceptable spaces of recreation for youth were offered. While youth were quite capable of creating their own entertainments, the emphasis for women’s and social service organizations was on defining and maintaining appropriate recreation venues and activities that would adhere to specific forms and standards of conduct.⁵¹⁶ As Comacchio notes “by regulating commercial amusements through legislation and intrusive adult supervision, and by summoning up wholesome alternatives to these through school, church and club, worried adults tried to limit the transgressive potential of adolescent leisure...”⁵¹⁷ By repurposing recreation and leisure time into additional time for instruction on conduct and expectations for youth as they aged towards adulthood,

⁵¹⁵ Marcus Collins *Modern Love: An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (Atlantic: London, 2003) p. 59.

⁵¹⁶ See for example McBee, *Dance Hall Days: ...*; Anne Gagnon “ ‘Our Parents Did Not Raise Us to be Independent’: The Work and Schooling of Franco-Albertan Women, 1890-1940” *Prairie Forum* 1994 19(2): 189-206.

⁵¹⁷ Cynthia Comacchio, “Dancing to Perdition: Adolescence and Leisure in Interwar English Canada” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1997 32(3): 14.

women's organizations and social service organizations effectively limited the amount of time that youth would spend socializing in reportedly undesirable spaces.

In some contexts, adult women and men were expected to be more aware of their behaviours and appropriately circumspect as they positioned as potential role models for an increasingly public youth culture. Alternatively, adults were sometimes allowed to be a little laxer as they provided comfort and stability through morale boosting, the maintenance of home-lives and newly created families in the face of increasing uncertainty. A 1942 report from the Moral Standards convener in Alberta demonstrated the first approach:

Our cities and towns are full of uniformed men, away from home, looking for diversion, for an "abundant life" while it is to be had.

When there is an alarming increase in illegitimacy.

Venereal disease is spreading at a tremendous rate.

Sunday as a day of worship seems to be old-fashioned.

.... Wholesome recreations are a great necessity. Good clean sport, happy social gatherings where beverage alcohol is never served, and where some of the hymns the boys have learned at home are sung.⁵¹⁸

The above two resolutions shared more similarities than differences as both showed an eagerness to establish what they deem to be appropriate recreation and social opportunities. For the NCW and the WI these gatherings were meant to gather men and women in a setting that mimicked alcohol free family gatherings. The Toronto Local Council of Women they went further to state that: we "... know that bigamy, desertions

⁵¹⁸ Alberta *Yearbook* 1942, p. 53.

and immoral living are increasing at an alarming rate, and because we believe that the consumption of alcohol is not only a great economic waste, but also results in a lower moral standard. Therefore, we ask the National Council of Women of Canada to again urge the Dominion Government as a wartime measure, to restrict as far as possible the sale of alcoholic beverages.”⁵¹⁹ The difference is in the tone of the two propositions. In the Ottawa resolution, there was a sense of almost permissiveness and an encouragement of fun. The resolution from Alberta was more severe and reserved with the use of religion to inform and support specific forms of recreational activities and related content. The resolution from the Toronto council places alcohol at the root of most social problems. Both resolutions however, reinforce temperance and the regulation of sexual and social diversions.

Further surveillance and regulation of recreational spaces were made throughout the war era. A resolution from the Toronto LCW actively sought to prohibit women from accessing specific sites: “(1) Sending of recommendation to City Council that the Exhibition grounds and other areas around military camps, be “Out of Bounds” for women and girls.”⁵²⁰ Through organized sites of heterosocial interaction, the NCW could hope to monitor the conduct of soldiers and civilians while reinvigorating the moral standards of young adults. There were also genuine concerns for the safety of the general public around military camps that cannot be ignored. There was however, a

⁵¹⁹ LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 79 file 7 January 23, 1941.

⁵²⁰ AO, TLCW F 805 - 1- 0 - 5, October 13th, 1942. The Calgary LCW also lobbied for the suppression of the “Red Light District”, amending the Dance Hall By-law so as to prevent the admittance of children under 18 years of age at a public dance, and for a Detention Home for Women of confirmed evil habits. Calgary LCW *Yearbook* 1941 p. 32.

greater concern for protecting the morality of young men and women. Similarly, the public health convener put another resolution forward:

... In the communities where there are young uniformed adults in training - or where there is a greatly increased population in war industry we must give special leadership either directly or through our affiliated organizations in contributing to a health-conserving program for leisure hours. The "Beer Parlour" and its ally "Immorality" are the direct cause of much ill-health through Disease - and a more popular counter-attraction for men and women off-duty is the Preventive. We must provide home hospitality-games; group sing - songs (men love to sing!), pictures, smart brief health and other educational talks. Talks on food - on Social Relationships - on maternal care are popular. Many young men are just thrilled with the idea that they are soon to become a parent and with their young wives, they are intensely interested in everything that has to do with what the expectant mother should eat and do to make the best baby in the world! The fields are ripe-let us not fail in our effort.⁵²¹

As with previous resolutions there was a notion that there were rules or avenues of proper conduct that could and should be learned as a visible indicator or performance of good moral standing and citizenship. These programmes were also best delivered through official means with the attendant authority figures and scientific knowledge to validate the experience. There were inherent class positions in their program to guide and govern social and sexual relationships during the war years. In this instance the outcome of the lectures on social relationships would have optimistically provided the grounding in marital relationships that appeared to be missing when attending the "Beer Parlour" or other socially problematic leisure venues. The "natural" progression from youthful dalliances to adult marital relationships and family was not as linear as it

⁵²¹ LAC NCWC MG 28 I25 vol 82 file 16 - Public Health Correspondence; clippings October 28, 1942.

had been in decades past and came with their own social and sexual scripts.⁵²² It may have been overly optimistic to expect that men would have been as enthusiastic towards this type of organized recreation as the author of the above resolution hoped, but what is inferred here was that there was an ideal middle-class form of relationship and standard for masculinity and fatherhood.⁵²³ Soon-to-be fathers were expected to participate in their wives pre-natal rituals which would contribute to the image of “successful” family. This image of family is one that is not only reproductive in form and function but compliant with the attributed gender roles of the period. In addition, this expectation would help to solidify the content of the marital relationship as well as the father’s position within the family unit as a visible and active presence.

Convening heterosexual sex: education with marriage in mind

As with most groups of the period and beyond, the NCW was devoted to preserving the sexual relationship to the marriage bed:

We stand for the sacredness of marriage (and against pre-marital sex relations) and we urge upon parents the primary duty of imparting to their children an understanding of the physical and emotional aspects of sex behaviour, and the need for positive preparation for marriage.

We urge that graded sex education be incorporated in the school curriculum.⁵²⁴

Sex education was a subject that parents were supposed to be able to teach their children the accepted gender roles and of the proper place of sex in life and marriage. However,

⁵²² McComb, “Rate Your Date:”

⁵²³ See Christopher Dummit, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (University of British Columbia Press: Vancouver, 2007); Cynthia Comacchio, “ ‘A Postscript for Father’: Defining a New Fatherhood in Interwar Canada” *Canadian Historical Review* 1997 78(3): 385-408.

⁵²⁴ LAC NCWC MG 28 I25 vol 61 file 8 Reel H-2018 1945 “Importance of Home” Resolution V and VI.

the increasing prominence and growth of scientific knowledge of human anatomy often left parents out of the loop when it came to raising their children. Experts assumed that the changing social and cultural expectations of marriage, sex and family confused parents who were accused of perpetuating superstitions and old wives tales.⁵²⁵ The implication of this was that children would not be equipped for the future and as a result they would not have the tools that would make them contributing citizens without the input of experts. Parents could however, impart the values of chastity prior to marriage as a cultural and individual value which demonstrated the restraint, commitment, and character of the youth.

Parents were brought into the education debate because there were general concerns around children being taught by individuals outside the home. Teachers were suspected of potentially possessing social and cultural values and priorities of a different generation as the children's parents which would present conflict in both the public and private realm creating a discontinuity in behaviours. On the other hand, as previously shown, it was thought that most parents did not have the right kind of knowledge to properly equip children for the new century's realities. The Health League of Canada described schools as:

... magnificent opportunities to inculcate desirable boy and girl relationships. In general it is better to create these opportunities in a positive way than to act negatively as a censor of undesirable behaviour at social events.

... Education regarding the relationship of the two sexes should help youth

⁵²⁵ See for example, Gleason *Normalizing the Ideal...*; Gleason "Embodied Negotiations: Children's Bodies and Historical Change in Canada, 1930-1960" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 1999 34(1): 112-138. Comacchio *Dominion of Youth: ...* p. 87.

to realize the dignity of the human body and the creative purposes of sex. They should be led to the conviction that the best things in life are not to be had free or at cut rates. They must be paid for in full. Those who offer discounts are frauds. The only way to realize complete sex-fulfilment is by accepting the responsibilities of marriage. Students should be reminded that marriage is a sacrament which rules out self-indulgence and substitutes the welfare of the life partner and posterity itself. Anything less is a cheat in which all parties are losers.⁵²⁶

As the HLC pointed out, schools provided the space and knowledge for gender role and relationship socialization. Through interactions with their classmates and future potential marital partners, they would continue to learn proper behaviours. The education portion of the process would help to reinforce the values of the marital sexual relationship. Children would also learn that premarital sex devalued their character, reputation, and prospective marital partners. Sex education was used to construct an ideal marital state that was physically, emotionally, and socially complete and bonded husband and wife. Classes also provided a further definition of what the roles, rules and responsibilities were for both the future husbands and wives which supported the separate spheres model for the couple. The involvement of the parents in their child's education to help transmit these values however, was still preferred.

Conclusion

To conclude, throughout the 1940s both the NCW and the WI treated sex education and family life education as both a public health and social issue. At once it affected both the health of the nation and the individual through preventive messages, treating physical disease and outlining proper forms of conduct in social settings. By the

⁵²⁶ LAC, HLC MG 28 I332 vol 132 file 12 "Report of Committee on Education Regarding Venereal Disease" (nd) p. 2.

1940s sex education had been accepted as inevitable and necessary. However, there were several concerns about family life education programmes. First, what information should be passed to the individuals participating in the classes. Second, at it should children be classes attending sex education classes (age appropriate education). Third, the involvement of parents as educators for their own children was both necessary and yet suspect. Parents could impart values and habits that would inform their child's conduct and help in making their children better citizens. However, parents were not always seen as the best source of facts for their children. The era's high regard for science as the best source of knowledge replaced parental experience which was treated as outdated or flawed with their mistakes and inexperience.

The National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes extended their reach through the support and implementation of programmes and classes within their communities. Following what they had determined to be the public's wish for sex education, they continued their involvement in the field. Their attachment to these formal education strategies meant that they could incorporate their own agenda and influence gender roles, strengthen the family unit and their communities in a time of crisis. By claiming that there was a better way to live ("right living") then supporting classes to demonstrate such, the individual was then provided the tools with which to self-govern.

It is interesting to note that there was no one age group that was the specific target population here. Courses were offered to both children and adults as both groups were deemed in need of assistance. Some of the messages remained the same for both

groups such as: domestic science skills, health and disease prevention, marital sexual relationships, social and peer relationships and civic engagement in their communities. Contextualizing their aims for the individual and the community meant embracing a wider plan to construct the productive Canadian (with a predominant interest in the female) citizen.

In this period, the issue identified as being most problematic to womanhood and the nation by the NCW, was unregulated or unchaperoned social and sexual experiences. Most of the resolutions supported during this period addressed the increasingly public hazards of youth. The linking of venereal disease to moral laxity and improper lifestyle choices meant that more needed to be done to preserve the health and character of women. The governing of recreation sites and their condemnation of activities deemed socially unprofitable (such as beer parlours) were aimed at both men and women. As women were expected to conform to a higher standard of behaviour, women's social activities were scrutinized and suggestions were made for alternative ways of spending their time and energy. Recognizing that these types of social activities would also harm men in their roles as future husbands and fathers, the creation of educational activities to redirect leisure time for men was also a priority.

Both civilian and military women came under scrutiny for their potentially precarious moral state. Women who participated in the war effort as part of the armed forces were under a moral threat from other quarters by the nature of their occupation and living quarters. In some quarters questions were raised regarding the necessity of women having their femininity "trained" out of them and replaced with a more

masculinized woman worker. Would she still be marriage material after she left the services? The moral standards of women in the military were called into doubt as their exposure to previously unknown pressures and situations were all framed as potential hazards. The reassurance the National Council received from a serving General did much to mitigate their fears and they continued to support this group of women. Their praise for the Department of National Defence's inclusion of tests to detect venereal diseases was linked not only to the prevention of immoral sexual activity but a healthy fighting force that was helping to preserve democracy. These measures also meant that men who fell "victim" to another woman's charms would not be bringing home sexually transmitted diseases to his sweetheart. The army's care for their soldiers was translated to the public in the form of physical education classes led by the army and the continued advocacy of blood tests prior to marriage to ensure healthy marriages and children. The distribution of condoms to serving members fell directly into the fulfilling the requirement of the public good. Exercise for the mind and body would make for better parents and citizens.

Civilian women were also considered to be in various forms of danger through their general social protocols including where they spent their time (work and play). Morale boosting social activities were organized and programmes on social relationships were offered to balance this in a more constructive fashion. Gatherings and classes that were predominantly instructive in nature by an expert of some form would provide guidance towards healthy and "appropriate" lifestyles. This would include active educational demonstrations of proper conduct including dress, postures, hygiene and

social interactions. The trope of the beer parlours as harbingers of disease and social disorder were held up as evidence of poor lifestyles and a more generalized social decay which needed to be rectified through “right living”. For many Council and WI members the beer parlour was the starting point for delinquency, immorality and eventually family breakdown. Because they positioned themselves as protectors of women the petitions and activities offered by other groups that reinforced family and gender roles were readily supported by these women’s organizations.

The National Council of Women and the Women’s Institutes approached other issues the war years brought from different perspectives. Both groups were intent on performing war work such as organizing fundraisers for military wives and their children, initiating programs and lobbying efforts on behalf of women who had been deserted or whose husbands had been killed during the war, and seeking better conditions more generally for working civilian women. This placed them at the centre of moral regulation projects through the creation of programmes and advocacy for specific regimes of conduct in both public and private spaces. By supporting women whose husbands were involved in the war wives were valorized on the home front and accorded a new status.

Both organizations focused on the domestic side of these issues and made use of nationalist discourses and images to support women working for the war effort. The Women’s Institutes offered positions on the farm for their daughters and other young women who were able to be persuaded to leave their urban lives and employment.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ Halpern, *And on that farm he had a wife: ...* p. 106-109.

This would ensure relatively stable food production for the nation and for the homemade packages going to the military members overseas and in domestic operations. An important outcome for including the farm as a potential source of employment for this type of war work would have been to reintroduce young women to farm work or domestic skills. Thus, it appeared that the NCW more frequently worked on the political or lobbying side of these issues while the WI worked to employ women on the farm. While immediate issues of conduct and social relationships occupied much of this period, the postwar era avenues for governing conduct would include a reconstitution of the postwar family and a challenge to the sexual behaviours of women of the wartime context.

Chapter Seven: Reconstructing Families and Maintaining Ties: Postwar Era to 1955

Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine the adaptations to the post World War II social landscape the National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes undertook through the lens of family reconstruction and reconstitution. As was shown in Chapter Five, the links made between improperly spent leisure time and individual and/or family delinquency were in their perception obvious and severe in their outcomes. The governance of conduct within leisure spaces would continue into the following period alongside their need to reaffirm the dominance of the family even though the roles and trajectories of family had changed. Amid this the Kinsey Report challenged what they believed to be true regarding women's sexual lives.

Creating a new agenda: postwar fears and realities

In the postwar era, women's organizations seemed to lose the sense of focus that the war provided. Their agenda became less structured as they struggled to reclaim a sense of normalcy through both social and environmental (this would include the physical conditions of communities, for example) means. The Port Arthur LCW reported that,

... the base of our society falling apart is in the ease of living. We seem to be building a whole social order which avoids any difficult task or duty. Our rebuilding must be the building of character.⁵²⁸

As a means of continuity in the immediate aftermath of the war, many women's organizations chose to bolster the structure and solidity of the family unit alongside

⁵²⁸ NCWC *Yearbook* 1952, p. 71.

character formation projects that were part of the wartime agenda. For these organizations, reconstructing families was one of the more important activities they undertook during this time because the family was framed as the backbone of the nation in a time of chaos. Both groups took up the challenge to suggest ways of reestablishing the family and social relationships to adapt to new gender roles. In addition, there was concern was for men reentering Canadian society after the war as both workers and family members. The NCW was just as concerned about women leaving their employment and returning to the home: “with the large numbers of married women, old and young, employed outside the home, and with the founding of crèches, etc., there is bound to develop a prodigious post-war problem – the re-adjustment of women into the home to preserve the family, that all-important unit of the nation.”⁵²⁹ In this instance, the reintegration of women into the home and caring for their children instead of using daycares was a potential challenge for women especially those who enjoyed working and accruing the benefits that came with employment. This required organizations to rethink these roles and redefine the caregiver role as a more socially desirable position for women than that of worker in the new postwar context. It was not just the fact that women would be returning home, but that they would need to readjust to a schedule that predominantly included raising children. While social organizations supported and advocated for working women, they were still concerned with women’s family role.

Along with family, the other challenges women’s organizations deemed important in the postwar period included: “working for racial groups, promoting an

⁵²⁹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1942 p. 79.

increase of Canada's population, stressing the sanctity of family life, working for higher educational standards, developing citizenship, emphasizing spiritual values and many others."⁵³⁰ They also continued to work with the changes in social mores regarding the nature of relationships between the sexes (both intimate relationships and everyday social interactions), the public debates regarding sex, and the increased access to sexual knowledge and its practice. All of which were reflected in the precariousness of social life that was shaped by wartime social change. Learning how to relate to one another as husbands and wives in the uncertain postwar period created a new strain on relationships and families. As part of their continued drive to create stable family and reduce delinquency, the NCW and related social service organizations continued to endorse marriage classes. This did not address other social anxieties created by wartime conditions. Organizations would take particular interest in additional real or perceived anxieties such as the rise in the rates of sexual crimes, the punishment or treatment of offenders and the publicity of other "deviant" sexual behaviours, and the use of sex as cultural commodity and product. First they needed to address the deficits in community infrastructure in order to support healthy families.

Wartime housing in many cities and regions across Canada was poorly constructed and overcrowded in part due to the repurposing of building materials and extreme economic circumstances for many families. The reestablishment of a "normal" home life included regenerating and reinforcing the physical, mental, and spiritual

⁵³⁰ Glenbow Calgary LCW M5841/29 April 18, 1946 p. 54. "Racial groups" are not defined in this report, however it could be speculated that "racial group" means postwar immigrants and establishing their footing within Canadian society.

welfare of families. These social characteristics were necessary however, families still needed housing and neighbourhoods with sufficient resources and services to grow into. According to Keshen:

A 1943 investigation in Montreal discovered tenants living in warehouses, garages, huts, factories, sheds and five-foot-high cellars. To make matters worse, several landlords excluded children from their premises, considering them noisy and destructive. Numerous parents were forced to place their offspring in shelters, orphanages, or foster homes while searching for accommodation.⁵³¹

To counteract the real or perceived poor availability of housing and the deterioration of surrounding communities, the National Council of Women prepared a “Program for Post-War Planning” in 1943. The proposed program covered both international and national concerns. Nationally, their plan called for broad social and economic planning, health and nutrition issues, education, and social insurance programs, labour and housing solutions, new rules for immigration and of course, answering the question of how women would provide leadership in the postwar world. Locally, as early as 1944 the Toronto LCW had developed a program for physically and socially re-creating neighbourhoods that had been restructured by war. This would be accomplished through several projects, including securing suitable and affordable housing and building the necessary recreational facilities so families could grow in an environment that was both physically and socially healthy. In the case of the Local Council of Winnipeg, Miss Harland noted that one of the challenges of town planning

⁵³¹ Jeffrey Keshen “Wartime Jitters over Juveniles: Canada’s Delinquency Scare and Its Consequences, 1939-1945” in Keshen *Age of Contention: Readings in Canadian Social History, 1900-1945* (Harcourt Brace: Toronto, 1997) p. 366.

was business itself.

...one of the greatest causes of starting a neighborhood toward slum or semi-slum conditions is in the encroachment of business places, resulting in crowded housing conditions. Careful and early planning would help in the avoidance of such developments, as would restrictions on the number of business places permitted in any community. Community services, such as social centres; nursery schools, etc., are developments to be expected in future planning.⁵³²

Business was necessary for economic growth both locally and for families, however business expansion needed to be balanced with resources that would support neighbourhoods and families alike. Resources such as stable health care services were included in their plans. With easier access to medical services it was felt that this would assure appropriate levels of pre- and post-natal care for the hoped for surfeit of babies that would ensure the survival of the family unit and the nation. Appropriate neighbourhood infrastructure should support all families and by extension, the nation would then benefit.

At the local level councils were also preparing women for a return to the home from the workforce so that men could have jobs upon returning home. The Toronto Council planned for

...a physical, mental and spiritual welfare by giving leadership in an educational drive which will secure suitable housing for every family, adequate recreational facilities that will offset the lure to less safe health surroundings, a security bill which will insure hospital and medical attendance to keep families well and to insure adequate pre-natal and maternal care. Add to this they are interested in seeing that work is assured for every man of the home, so that he may develop physically, mentally and spiritually as the head of his own home.⁵³³

⁵³² NCWC *Yearbook* 1944 p. 42-43.

⁵³³ NCWC *Yearbook* 1944 p. 100.

This agenda had two aims: to recreate and maintain the insular and nuclear family and second, to retain the place of fathers as heads of households and primary breadwinners making this an inherently gendered approach to postwar reconstruction. With many women being encouraged to leave the workforce in order to return to home and family in order to create jobs for returning servicemen, there was a fear that women would not remember how to be wives and mothers. This model of neighbourhood development worked to recreate and support women's social roles. Infrastructure improvement schemes relied on well-established gender roles heavily tied to masculine and feminine identities and tasks. While they were planning to support women, who decided to remain in the workforce, it was not necessarily the Council's first choice.

In contrast to the NCW's plan, a 1944 report from the Manitoba WI (MBWI) sought to "examine the problems relating to the re-establishment of women after the war..."⁵³⁴ This report pointed out ways to include women - especially working women - in solving the potential problems of reconstruction in the post war era. In this case, farm women were framed as workers in their own right and recognized that farm women didn't have much choice when it came to combining or separating home and work. They acknowledged that women still had a role to play in the employment realm and that women were enjoying the benefits of financial and social independence. The authors acknowledged that there would be women who wished to return to the home:

We believe that the right to choose is not going to operate to make every woman, or even much larger groups of women want to leave their homes

⁵³⁴ AM, MBWI MG 10 C8 Box 1, Book 1940-1948 - Minutes March 8-9, 1944.

for the labour market. It is the right to choose which is demanded. Happier homes, and, therefore a happier democracy, will result from the recognition that women choose or do not choose marriage as their vocation. It must be remembered that for many single women marriage will be an impossibility because of the casualties of the war.⁵³⁵

The WI report also acknowledged that for many women, either married or single, the work they did during the war was the first time they had received money for their labours. Having employment allowed them to develop new skills that many wanted to keep using in the postwar era. Financial independence and the resultant social independence had been on the rise for many women in the early twentieth-century and remained an area of tension for both the NCW and the WI. Independence was viewed as a positive characteristic so long as it did not disrupt the family structure, women's gendered role within the family, and its ability to function in a healthy environment. For women on the farm, the report's authors recognized that by nature farm work was responsible for the uncomfortable lifestyle conditions on the farm. "Under present conditions young women are leaving the farms and the older women are bearing intolerable burdens. Some way must be found to make rural life less arduous and more attractive to women."⁵³⁶ With this in mind, they proposed that farming be promoted as one of the largest occupational fields open to women in the postwar reconstruction era. This view combined the work of farm women with their already established homemaker status and made homemakers workers. The suggestions for upgrading the farm to help make it more attractive to women as both a source of income and as a lifestyle as work

⁵³⁵ *ibid.*

⁵³⁶ AM, MBWI MG 10 C8 Box 1, Book 1940-1948 - Minutes March 8-9, 1944.

and home were located in the same space. This included not just infrastructure improvements for farming communities but encouraging entrepreneurial ventures for contributing to the household income such as traditional farming enterprises (selling of fruits and vegetables, poultry and dairy operations, flowers, bulbs and seed production, medicinal herbs, and handicrafts). Other recommendations included non-traditional uses for farms such as tea rooms, convalescent or vacation homes for those who wanted to leave the city for their vacations.⁵³⁷ While these suggestions required new skills and the cooperation of both husbands and wives for many of these ventures it promoted a place for the farming life rather than an exodus to the city and urban life.

As part of the postwar programme, both organizations had to take a position on working women that would not conflict with their primary work as wives and mothers. As late as 1954 there were extensive studies and analyses commissioned by social service organizations to investigate and determine the social, psychological, emotional, and physical impacts of the working mother on the well-functioning of homes and communities. Experts indicated that women's employment outside the home contributed to a lack of time for mothers to express love and affection to their family, patience, and maintaining the balance of home and work responsibilities. All of these expressive tasks were judged to be highly desirable feminine characteristics. The perceived outcome of this imbalance for working women was the frustration she would undoubtedly experience when she considered that she would rather be home raising the children. Additionally, there were the potential harmful psychological effects to consider

⁵³⁷ *ibid.*

for the oldest child who took on the increased responsibilities of the absent mother. The positive effects of women working outside the home were assumed to be considerably less and have less value than their domestic responsibilities: added financial security, and children developing independence too early. Alternatively,

mothers whose instincts are not domestic may find they can express themselves in a more acceptable way by working outside the home, and thus the emotional stability gained will be reflected in the lives of their children.⁵³⁸

It was reluctantly agreed by some organizations and members that women may have added time to be at home due to financial status, and that there was an educational value acquired by working mothers that could “make her a more interesting person.”⁵³⁹

The reports conclusion was that while not the ideal:

... even allowing for possible social problems which might arise as a result of mothers being away from their children, the services of working mothers are an essential part of our society. It was felt that the right of every woman to express herself as she wishes should be protected; that we have no right either by law or by planning to determine the career of a woman, whether married or single.⁵⁴⁰

Their proposed solutions to working women were many including: breaking down the prejudice against working women within general society, educating communities regarding the potential social problems that may arise and providing means to curb potential delinquency, increased co-operation amongst mothers and fathers in home and child care, better working hours, more neighbourhood day nurseries, supervised

⁵³⁸ NCWC *Yearbook*, 1954, p. 46-47.

⁵³⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁴⁰ *ibid.*

recreation facilities, and child guidance clinics and “guidance officers” in schools.⁵⁴¹ These solutions considered delinquency to be located internally to the home and with the results radiating to the external community at large. For the NCW and the WI there appeared to be no difference in the origins of delinquency as the internal and external sources could be seen to influence each other. Both organizations were moderately supportive of working women as they recognized the changing economic structure and the needs of both the family and the nation. This does not mean that they viewed it as the most positive or desirable outcome for either women or their families.

Homes and Families: “Would schools for marriage prevent broken homes?”⁵⁴²

In keeping with the postwar theme of household harmony and democracy, marriage education classes were continued by the YWCA, the Canadian Council on Social Development, and the National Council of Women. Calls for marriage classes and family life education programs to aid in the establishment of better and socially constructive relationships were renewed in the face of new social realities. The basic means of reducing the traditional causes of family disruption included removing alcohol from both social events and the home environment and diminishing real or perceived rates of juvenile delinquency resulting from the apparent lack of parenting skills. As this submission from the Hamilton LCW noted:

Seeing youths responsible for so many of crimes committed, this committee, thinks lack of parental guidance is often responsible. Where there are broken homes and loose living, children suffer. Parents’ clubs, married couples’ groups are proving helpful; recreation centres and sport organizations are helping youth. The

⁵⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁵⁴² NCWC *Yearbook*, 1951, p. 122.

increasing number of men and women in beverage rooms, their loud, vulgar talk and actions, are disgraceful. Efforts have been made to limit the licenses; protests made by affiliate groups to clubs supplying liquor have brought results.⁵⁴³

The language of democracy used to frame the content of marital and social relationships was not just meant for adults. Besides the basic curriculum of marriage classes during the war years for adults, postwar classes now included lessons on how to maintain relationships that were hastily created as service men and women went to war, and how to adapt as service members came home. Home was the new battleground and education for relationships was the way to improve their content and stability. The physical, social and economic effects of the war itself was also proposed as a potential source of discord within families. As Farhrni notes:

the usual strains of new relationships were exacerbated by problems of inadequate housing, lodging with in-laws, and the attendant lack of privacy. Yet even long-established relationships suffered from the strains of separation. Many husbands found wives changed by the time apart, imbued with a new sense of independence and self-sufficiency.⁵⁴⁴

The idealized construction of happy marriages as a form of localized democracy was consistent with other marital and expert literature of the time. The language of political democracy arising out of the war period was meant to instil some hope for states and citizens. Political democracy was also used to create social cohesion through shared language and imagery. In the case of family and intimate relationships, democracy meant not just fairness and cooperation, or the ability and necessity of working together

⁵⁴³ NCWC *Yearbook*, 1949, p. 81.

⁵⁴⁴ Magda Farhni "The Romance of Reunion: Montreal War Veterans Return to Family Life, 1944-1949" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 1998 9(1): 190.

as a couple, but recognizing the skills and strengths of the individuals. For intimate relationships this was taken to mean a roughly equal partnership between marital partners and a renewal of the ideals of companionate marriage.⁵⁴⁵ A resolution in this period further illustrates this:

Partnership in family life has been accelerated during the war years when much of the household work has been shared by all members of the family because the wife has had to work outside the home. This has resulted in each member of the family learning there is “nothing in household work more particularly suited to one sex than the other.” If this pattern of co-operation is to continue into peace, our schools must teach both boys and girls the elements of homemaking and each must have freedom of choice. Is not the secret of a happy marriage “that sense of equal partnership, community of interests, and mutual understanding and a sharing together of the common tasks which go to the making of the family home?”⁵⁴⁶

The reality of companionate or democratic marriage was much different. Wives were still “subservient” to their husbands and gender roles were enacted. Men were considered the primary breadwinners regardless of the growing number of women who worked to supplement the family income or to maintain their own incomes. The anxiety over women working outside the home as illustrated earlier, meant that partnerships like the one described above appear to be little more than lip-service. Adapting to new gender norms that reflected the change of power dynamics within some families was more difficult to reconcile than simply adding the language of democracy. Marital classes continued to emphasise behaviours associated with rudimentary gender and social roles, general homemaking skills for women, and improving communication

⁵⁴⁵ Finch and Summerfield “Social reconstruction and the emergence of companionate marriage, 1945-59” p. 7-32.

⁵⁴⁶ LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 61 file 8 February 2, 1945

between husbands and wives. While men and women were encouraged to meet, be social and pair off into couples, there were ways of initiating these encounters that were deemed more appropriate than others. As seen below, women's organizations continued from their wartime interest in regulating the spaces of youth recreation and the activities of their parents. The above was directed at setting examples for youth while below other suggestions continued with similar themes for adults:

The component parts of these committees are as keenly interested in projects to keep our babies' and children's health and welfare protected, as they are in trying to solve the problem of diverting young adults from the highly commercialized idea of smartness in drinking liquor, with its final profoundly malevolent effect on family stability and health. Says one report: Who can hear the boisterous, uncontrolled talk of men and women, when passing a liquor-selling room, and believe this a healthful recreation? Councils must seek to reach men who pursue power through the gains of its manufacture and sale. A number of reports have pointed out the need for more vigilance in the enforcement of the Narcotic Drug Act and for the extension of control to import of habit forming synthetic drugs.⁵⁴⁷

This opening statement to a public health committee report demonstrated the continued link for women's organizations between health, recreation, and public morals. The "bad behaviours" that were at issue in the early twentieth-century had never really left the agenda of social service and women's organizations. A report from Kingston Police Matron Hinson "tells of checking up on girls and women in city haunts and hang-outs and of getting some of them into steady homes and new jobs. The work also goes into the realm of married folk with problems of housing, maintenance, desertion and divorce, neglected children. She presents a striking plea for more shelters and homes for

⁵⁴⁷ NCWC *Yearbook*, 1948, p. 95.

delinquent girls.”⁵⁴⁸ Their commentaries on appropriate conduct for men and women who took their leisure time outside the home were predictably negative and framed as a cause for rising rates of children’s delinquency. Also of concern was the length of time that men and women were taking to settle down into responsible and productive marital patterns which was another causal factor to social problems. Delaying marriage and parenthood were framed as the effects of problematic behaviours such as delinquency, sexual relationships outside the confines of marriage and the rejection of ascribed roles and functions of men and women.

The identification of women with their homes and families was paramount to their own organizational mandate but not necessarily reflective of the reality of the population. The war disrupted this and their postwar programs were designed to reinforce women’s place in their homes, communities, and nation. In some ways the war also enhanced women’s identification with home as women’s war work was associated with maintaining the needs of the country while men fought. In a 1942 nutrition education campaign purposefully used the word “kitchen” as a way to communicate the place of home and women both as food consumers and providers for family meals:

Reports in general show that our National Council slogan decided on at Winnipeg has been popular and practical. “Victory through Nutrition Education in every *Kitchen* in Canada” with slight variations has been much used. The word “Kitchen” has been emphasized and generally used, as was our wish.⁵⁴⁹

As discussed previously, plans to create healthy families consisted of remaking

⁵⁴⁸ NCWC *Yearbook* 1948 p. 88.

⁵⁴⁹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1942 p. 76. Emphasis in original.

communities' spaces into places that would reinforce the family unit as a primary social unit. Neighbourhoods would support this vision through networks of social support and services that would encourage the growth and development of the family. If women had to work then their suggestions for mitigating the effects of the "loss" of full-time mothers to full-time workers were part of their plans. The organization's members also proposed to remake families that had been disrupted by war through the continued support of classes that would reintegrate families and maintain gender expectations. Their concern for working women was framed in the context of what *could* go wrong for the family unit with a working mother at the helm. It was acknowledged that some women may have either wanted or needed to work but there were potentially hazardous effects for the home, the children and the marriage that required careful consideration. Highlighting the real or perceived effects served the purpose of not only illustrating preferred behaviours but the spaces which were deemed to be problematic. The continued regulation of social spaces and the amount of leisure time spent outside the home established a framework for recognizing healthy and unhealthy men, women and families. The potential for the dissolution of the family unit was too high a threat and a causal link was made between family distress to time spent paying attention to popular culture and other unhealthy pursuits.

Reading and viewing sex in the "oversexy" society

As has been shown with the previous period, in the public realm sex and sexual behaviours were framed in the context of sex education, the fear of disease, and disruption to the family unit caused by World War II. In the postwar period, this theme

continued. However, it now covered the blatant sexual representations and possibilities for intimacy that had already been fostered in the first half of the twentieth-century in popular culture. Popular culture media especially books, magazines and film were all seen as possible sources of social problems, degeneracy, and crime.

Changes to “acceptable” courtship activities and patterns, social changes, and the accompanying images such as the “new woman,” the flapper and the modern war veteran were now imbued with specific meanings. As Owram notes from a study of such types of sources, “the modern woman could not, in other words, deny sexuality without being cast aside socially and branded maladjusted. The omnipresent discussion of ‘problems of frigidity’ in everything from magazines to major novels says much about the obsessions of the age. As society had become more relaxed about sexual matters, it had accepted that growing up involved sexual experimentation.”⁵⁵⁰ While there may have been some measure of acceptance of sexual play or experimentation amongst youth, blatant sexuality used in media consumption was a source of anxiety for these organizations. Women’s sexual status as virgin or sexually innocent before marriage was back in vogue after the liberalisation of wartime sexual relationships. According to Blank, “although romantic and even sexual dating had become quite commonplace by the start of the World War II, sexual intercourse was still often reserved for an engagement or for marriage itself for the simple reason that women were justifiably terrified of ending up unwed mothers. This was part of what lay behind the trend

⁵⁵⁰ Doug Owram *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1996) p. 257-258.

toward very youthful dating during World War II and immediately after it.”⁵⁵¹ The status of virgin however was not without problems as virgins had to be constructed as medically well-adjusted and able to enjoy sex in the marital context without fear. This was a key message in many novels and marital manuals in the period.⁵⁵² While women’s sexuality was framed within the context of marriage and children, the endorsement of a positive sexual experience while being intimate with her spouse was already part of the adult sex education program and within popular literature. During this period marital manuals also asserted that women were likely coming into marital relationships with some measure of sexual experience which challenged the dominant view of sexual experience and bodily knowledge. Experts cautioned that these premarital experiences were not to be discussed with their partners and categorically denied if the woman valued the man and their relationship.⁵⁵³ This demonstrated one disjunction that continued to publicly define sex and sexual relationships as socially problematic. While virginity (for women) before marriage was preferred, more women were entering their marital relationships with a measure of sexual experience.

Women’s groups remained committed to advocating for women entering marital relationships and in creating a healthy partnership. They left discussions of sex to the experts and worked through the lens of vice and sexual crimes. However, with the postwar period they turned many of their efforts towards contributing to a new definition of what was deviant or problematic about what essentially was a private act

⁵⁵¹ Hanne Blank *Virgin: The Untouched History* (Bloomsbury Group: New York, 2007) p. 178.

⁵⁵² See for example Percy Ryberg *Health, Sex and Birth Control* (Anchor Press: Toronto, 1943).

⁵⁵³ *ibid.*

(sex) that was making very public waves. To this end they related social maladjustment or difference to sexual and social delinquency. In the postwar period sex crimes were receiving attention in the media and in their communities and considered to be on the rise and a general threat to the population. If families were to thrive, sexual deviance needed to be treated in obvious ways such as increased policing and new laws to protect women and children. Women's organizations frequently made the case that popular culture was responsible for much of the social and sexual deviance that was being used in paperback novels and in daily crime reporting. In the 1947 Yearbook, a report from the Toronto LCW convener for Cinema and Printed Matter claimed that:

Undesirable publications produce literary malnutrition; many publications place abnormal emphasis on sex, crime and violence, contribute to decline in moral standards, are responsible for growing crime wave. Comic book industry said to have annual turnover of 18 million dollars. Problem of controlling output of undesirable literature is agitating decent people; "undesirables" includes the salacious, the pulp, "Confessions" and many movie and comic strip books. Women's organizations are trying to arouse public opinion against the menace; zeal of Criminal Code officials depends on strength of public opinion.⁵⁵⁴

The National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes continued to be active in the monitoring and censorship of audio and visual materials (either available for sale or use in public libraries and other venues) as part of their long-term general agenda.⁵⁵⁵ It was heightened in this period due to the publication of *Playboy* in the early 1950s, the easy availability of pictures of pinup girls and racy pulp and crime novels, popular culture films and celebrities which all served to heighten the anxiety in an

⁵⁵⁴ NCWC *Yearbook* 1947 p. 61. [sic]

⁵⁵⁵ For an analysis of their activities before the period covered here see: Kinahan "A Splendid Army of Organized Womanhood" Chapter 6.

increasingly sexual age.⁵⁵⁶ Mrs. Wilson from St. John noted that “many could write well and intelligently and make a living writing decent clean books; over-emphasis on sex is largely due to poverty of intellect and imagination.”⁵⁵⁷ The content of films, comics and other books whether under the category of educational or popular culture were all carefully scrutinized.

According to Adams,

before Kinsey, public discussions of sex had taken place in the context of related issues such as birth control, divorce, sexual crime, and venereal disease. While marriage manuals with explicit descriptions of sexual activities had been published throughout the first half of the century, these were not the subject of mainstream, everyday discussion. Certainly such material was unlikely to find its way into newspapers and magazines.⁵⁵⁸

Of particular interest throughout this period were easily available pulp novels that were reputed to be a menace to children and young adults. It was regularly reported that the morals of youth were being corrupted: “movies advertised as ADULT entertainment are tending to corrupt the morals of young people and defile the sanctity of marriage.”⁵⁵⁹ Not only was there a present threat to families but there was the threat of “degenerate literature rising threat to nation” it was stated that:

it is disturbing to note the sharp increase in the number of highly dramatic crimes in recent years. They follow in most cases, one or the other of the

⁵⁵⁶ Joanne Meyerowitz “Women, Cheesecake and Borderline Material Responses to Girlie Magazines in the Mid-Twentieth Century United States” *Journal of Women’s History* 1996 8: 16-35.

⁵⁵⁷ NCWC *Yearbook* 1948 p. 60.

⁵⁵⁸ Adams, *Trouble with Normal*:... p. 37. I would agree with Adams for the most part regarding the public discussions of sex and marriage manuals; however, marriage manuals were reviewed in many newspapers, journals, and other alternative presses during the period under investigation here. *The Western Producer* for example reviewed Bertrand Russell’s *Marriage and Morals* April 17, 1930 p. 7.

⁵⁵⁹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1954 p. 100. Emphasis in original.

threadbare patterns of trashy books. No doubt there are many contributing factors, but the sad plight of the modern, popular, so-called literature is largely responsible. It has been well said that we should never underestimate the power of a book. It sows seeds of good or evil. Unless we very soon begin to exercise greater care, encouraging good books and discouraging the bad, we shall be faced with an impossible situation.⁵⁶⁰

The perceived spheres of leisure and educational materials were beginning to overlap with the force of media driven culture. The longstanding Cinema and Printed Matter Committee continued their examination of books and films that may have been used in family life education classes for elementary and high school aged children. Throughout the 1950s many local councils continued to preview sex education films and course curricula to ensure proper standards of morality and appropriateness for all groups. Committees from the NCW and the WI continued to survey and discuss the moral standards of materials available on library shelves, on newsstands and in the movie theatres and in some cases chastised their communities for not doing more to preserve the moral health of the community.⁵⁶¹ In the context of the 1950s anxieties around overt sexuality, greater numbers of community investigations were undertaken. Also, a request for a hearing to discuss “before the Special Committee of the Senate dealing with the production, sale and distribution of salacious and indecent literature, publications otherwise objectionable from the standpoint of crime promotion, and lewd and

⁵⁶⁰ NCWC *Yearbook* 1951 p. 59. For an introduction to the racy pulp and paperback novel trade in Canadian society see Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo “Maple Leaf Pulps” *Beaver* 2004 84(2): 14-17; and an examination of the content of the period: Strange and Loo *True crime, true north: the golden age of Canadian pulp magazines* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004).

⁵⁶¹ NCWC *Yearbook* 1947 p. 60. The convenor from Fort William (now Thunder Bay) noted that “On whole cinema improved, but drinking scenes and gun play might be eliminated, especially in children’s films. Visual education in rural areas appreciated. Obscene literature displayed. Women could change things if they would.” [sic]

unwholesome pictures” was made to the government.⁵⁶² Unlike their involvement in sex education, much of their agenda was directed towards monitoring undesirable publications to prevent “literary malnutrition” and the use of sex in popular culture forms. This included petitioning government at all levels to enforce Section 207 of the Criminal Code which meant the government had to be involved and could not leave it to voluntary organizations at the community level to police.⁵⁶³ Since the original drafting of obscenity laws, their enforcement has remained problematic and sporadic as there was no agreement on what constituted “obscene”. This question is raised amongst many documents across multiple Federal departments, including a memorandum to the Minister of Justice from Parliamentary Counsel:

At the present time Sections 207 and 209 provide penalties for distributing, making, selling or having in possession for such purposes or transmitting through the mails obscene pictures.

To make having them in possession an offense would I think be going too far altogether - certain classes of obscene pictures which while obscene are permissible for instance Hogarths works and many works of art, and it is quite impossible to satisfactorily distinguish them for legislative purposes.

It is like obscene books - am I to be hauled into court because I have Shakespeare unexpurgated or Boccaccio[?].⁵⁶⁴

Women in social organizations had little doubt as to what constituted obscene. For these women, the increased publicity surrounding sex in both the public and private realms

⁵⁶² LAC NCWC MG28 I 25 vol 128 file 4 June 16, 1953. During this same period, they were also interested in suppressing the publication of crime and sex comics.

⁵⁶³ NCWC *Yearbook* 1947 p. 61.

⁵⁶⁴ LAC RG 13 vol 249 file 1920-1204 “Memorandum to the Minister of Justice from Parliamentary Counsel” May 11, 1920. A second problem noted across these files is that when complaints are raised, individuals are referred to their Provincial Attorneys General to implement a Federal law.

were leading to an “over-sexy” society. Miss Lottie O’Boyle Chairman of the Cinema and Printed Matter Committee commented in 1950 that:

It is very evident that the government ban on crime comics has brought an increased production of lewd literature, often the communists’ ally. In this age of graphics public opinion must be aroused to demand individual action and effective censorship of dangerous publications. Lurid advertising of certain films and books, glorifying immorality was protested at the Spring Executive with good results. We must continue to wage an endless battle against insidious influences especially on youth and seek to give greater prominence to the best literature, particularly Canadian, and to encourage the production of documentary films and of colourful, interesting strips on history, art, science, biography.⁵⁶⁵

As Kinahan has noted, “essential to the Council’s approach was not only the support of legislative attempts to suppress such material, but strategies to involve Canadian parents in a larger program of reform. Council focused on the need to educate parents and children, to supply healthier alternatives to sensational literature, and inform a program of moral regulation and instruction.”⁵⁶⁶ In this postwar period however, there is less of an emphasis on parental involvement in guiding their children’s reading habits but the assertion that immoral literature was everywhere and no one (government, family or other institutions) was doing anything about it. The concern for easily accessible proper literature culminated with the release of the Kinsey Reports of 1948 and 1953. The Kinsey Reports embodied both concerns - sexual activity and reading about sex in public.

⁵⁶⁵ NCWC *Yearbook* 1950 p. 70.

⁵⁶⁶ Kinahan “*A Splendid Army of Organized Womanhood*” ... p. 209.

“Sexual passion, is in a way, like the jellied gasoline of napalm bombs. It tends to adhere to whatever comes in contact with it and to set it afire.”⁵⁶⁷

The Kinsey Reports into the *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* and the *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* were two of the first studies of this era to examine and then make public the sexual habits of Americans.⁵⁶⁸ Frustrated with the silence surrounding sex education Alfred Kinsey, a biologist at Indiana University, undertook interviews and surveys with a wide variety of American men and women. While these studies remain methodologically problematic, they are stunning for their results in the context of sexual history in postwar America. Much of his evidence was conveyed to the public through statistics rather than the accumulated oral history data thereby creating some distance between the public and his “distasteful” results.⁵⁶⁹ The Kinsey Reports went beyond the basic curriculum of family life education and documented rates of premarital sex, adultery, homosexual sexual activities, women’s orgasmic potential and sexual experiences with achieving orgasm, types of sex practices people were performing in public or private, with or without their partners and other “deviant” proclivities. As Simmons remarked,

Later sexual studies conducted by Alfred Kinsey and others confirm the impressions of social commentators in the 1910s and 1920s that new patterns of sexual behavior were emerging. Middle-class women born

⁵⁶⁷ LAC Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) MG 28 I10 vol 62 file 492 (1951-1953) Report of the Committee on Revision of the Criminal Code “The Making of a Sex Offender” Richard Jenkins Appendix B pg. 4.

⁵⁶⁸ Alfred W. Kinsey *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Saunders: Philadelphia, 1948); *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Saunders: Philadelphia, 1953).

⁵⁶⁹ See for example, Irvine, *Disorders of Desire: ...*; Liz Stanley, *Sex Surveyed, 1949-1994: From Mass-Observation’s ‘Little Kinsey’ to the National Survey and the Hite Reports* (Taylor and Francis: London, 1995).

after 1900 were increasingly willing to engage in premarital petting and intercourse and, when married, reached orgasm more often than those born in the nineteenth century. One observer of youth claimed that middle-class high school boys visited prostitutes less often by 1920 because their social class peers were acting as sexual partners. The guardians of purity were descending from their pedestals.⁵⁷⁰

The results of these studies provoked a variety of reactions and most were negative as Kinsey's findings effectively disrupted the myths about the sexual habits of Americans across the social spectrum and then publicized them. These myths were closely held and sustained even when debating the separation of sex from reproduction, sexual activity within (and increasingly outside) the marital relationship, and the pleasurable acts and sexual relationships that were deemed inappropriate or unhealthy for men, women, and society.

With these publications it was reluctantly recognized by some previously unyielding social service organizations that the place of sex and its level of importance in relationships had changed dramatically. Women and men were *supposed* to have fulfilled sexual experiences as a part of a healthy marital relationship. Alternatively, women who were unable to express their sexual desires were thought not to have a positive relationship with either their husband or confidence in themselves. Women who were over expressive with their sexual wants and desires were considered to be

⁵⁷⁰ Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression" in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons (Eds) *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Temple University Press: Philadelphia, 1989) p. 160. For similar perspectives see also Gordon, "From an Unfortunate Necessity to a Cult of Mutual Orgasm: ..."; Laipson " 'Kiss Without Shame, For She Desires it': ..."; Neuhaus "The Importance of Being Orgasmic: ..."; Pamela Haag "In Search of "The Real Thing": Ideologies of Love, Modern Romance, and Women's Sexual Subjectivity in the United States, 1920-1940" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1992 2(4): 547-577.

brazen and over confident with their husbands.⁵⁷¹ Kinsey “challenged the assumptions of the generation relative to how society behaved. Sex was now sufficiently open and important in the public mind that society placed a premium upon successful sexual relations. Yet old taboos lingered, and contradictions abounded between marriage expectations, personal fears, and social restrictions.”⁵⁷² It was this very public “attack” on women’s sexual experience tightly linked with middle-class womanhood that irked organizations such as the National Council of Women and the Women’s Institutes.

As discussed previously, women’s and social service organizations were in favour of providing information regarding sexual health so long as they were able to have influence over its content and the intended audience. The Kinsey Report on the *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* was no exception. The public outcry over the final results frequently raised questions of the morality of the author and the study itself. One of the only Councils that submitted a resolution regarding the issue of public access to Kinsey’s work came from the Toronto LCW. Their resolution was sent to the Provincial Council of Women:

Whereas, The Kinsey Report recently published contains a great deal of Statistical and scientific information dealing with “Sexual Behavior of the Human Female” of use only to the Medical Profession and those allied to it and whereas, this publication if circulated freely would be detrimental to the best interests of the Canadian people.

Be it therefore resolved that the Dominion Government take all necessary steps to prevent the general sale and distribution of this book in Canada. Signed by Mrs. Ralph Day, Convener of Moral Standards.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ Groneman *Nymphomania*:

⁵⁷² Owram *Born at the Right Time*... p. 257.

⁵⁷³ AO, TLCW F 805 - 1- 0 - 5 November 21, 1953.

In this instance their acceptance of this Kinsey's work for the exclusive use of those in the medical profession seems surprising, as most commentators (both professional and lay) were quick to discredit the studies.⁵⁷⁴ The Catholic Women's League (CWL) claimed that Kinsey "degraded science and acted as a charlatan" and that, "with bunk and arrogance he deplores the influence of Church, home and family in the field of sex education."⁵⁷⁵ Further to this the Catholic Women's League resolved to:

... discourage by all legitimate means the circulation especially among youth of such harmful, ersatz material; And be it further resolved that we express our sympathy to the Protestant and Jewish ladies so rudely maligned on the flimsy basis of 7,500 women interviewed out of a total of eighty million.⁵⁷⁶

It is not explained why they felt that Catholic women were not similarly maligned by the results of the Kinsey Report as they interpreted other women of faith to be, however it could be suggested that they didn't think that any practicing Catholic would participate in either contraceptive use or the study.

Unlike the Toronto LCW, the NCW executive was not convinced that Kinsey's work had value for the medical profession:

WHEREAS very lurid, sexy, nauseating publicity is being given to the new Kinsey book, "The Sexual Behaviour of Women", notably in the *May Redbook* and *Woman's Day*, with the boast that over a million of the first book, "The Sexual Behaviour of Men" were sold, and

WHEREAS the May issue of *Scientific American Magazine* in four special

⁵⁷⁴ Donna J. Drucker " 'A most interesting chapter in the history of science': intellectual responses to Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*" *History of the Human Sciences* 2012 25(1): 75-98.

⁵⁷⁵ LAC, CWL Annual Report 1953, p. 107.

⁵⁷⁶ *ibid.*

articles, rather pagan in outlook, states the scientific value of the book is very doubtful, and

WHEREAS the Health League of Canada has strongly condemned the book,

BE IT RESOLVED that the National Council of Women, realizing the great danger to public morals and Christian living in this over-sexy age, do hereby vigorously protest the entrance of this about-to-be-published American book into Canada and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of National Revenue and the Postmaster-General.⁵⁷⁷

While both resolutions comment on the public availability of the report, the resolution from the NCW executive comments specifically on the public dissemination and promotion of Kinsey's studies in the popular media.

The Kinsey report also received significant attention in the popular press. Within Canadian magazine circles, *Chatelaine* too reported on this study. As part of the interview the author participated in the survey with Kinsey and made further positive comment on the social importance and significance of the study.⁵⁷⁸ The article did not receive the same response from the NCW executive as articles from *Redbook* and *Woman's Day* did. Kinsey's results disturbed groups such as the NCW because they had the potential to normalize behaviours and values the NCW and the WI simply did not accept. With the publication of results in popular magazines and opinion pages of local newspapers, individuals had the opportunity to compare their own sexual experiences to the data and see their desires as "normal". According to McComb "the publication of statistical norms and averages in the mass media created a new frame of reference for young people. The standardized, age-segregated peer group established by the

⁵⁷⁷ LAC NCWC MG 28 I25 vol 128 file 3 Reel H-2032 May 31, 1950.

⁵⁷⁸ "Dr. Kinsey Talks About Women" *Chatelaine* August 1949.

organization of classrooms now became further standardized and widened to encompass the entire nation."⁵⁷⁹

This did not mean that the Kinsey Reports could not serve as a data source to justify specific programmatic aims concerning the sexy society. Kinsey's results were used selectively by social service organizations. For example, W.T. McGrath of the Delinquency and Crime Division with the Canadian Council on Social Development used data from the Kinsey Report to point out the difficulty with defining sex crimes:

Despite the fact that we do not have enough information to frame suitable laws, information on the topic would raise a number of questions. One difficulty is the definition of what act should be defined as Sex Crimes. For instance, in the famous Kinsey Report (Kinsey, Alfred Charles, Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders Co., 1948) states that one-third of the men interviewed in a study admitted to homosexual activity and one-sixth admitted that this was their chief means of sex gratification for a period of at least three years. Is it wise to treat an offence as common as this as a crime?⁵⁸⁰

Laws are a reflection of social norms and which comprise the content of criminal statutes and their subsequent enforcement is also based on the norms of the community. Asking if homosexual activity should really be an offence is quite novel for the period. In one of the only mentions in this series of records, the CCSD investigated lesbians within the context of criminal behaviours including seduction. In 1958 a social worker was attending to "juvenile delinquents" living in Hull (now Gatineau), Quebec some of whom "belong to a group of lesbians" aged 17 to 25, "generally not too intelligent and some of them are former prostitutes." It was felt that the best that could be done for

⁵⁷⁹ McComb "Rate your Date" ... p. 43.

⁵⁸⁰ LAC CCSD MG 28 I10 vol 61 file 492 B Letter dated June 10, 1953.

them outside of bringing in the police was to “give the individuals involved some sense of propriety so they would not make an exhibition of themselves. Also some protection for young girls against this kind of seduction would probably be possible.”⁵⁸¹ A meeting with the police Chief and others was held to address their presence in the community. While it wasn’t possible to lay the blame for this “group of lesbians” solely at the foot of Kinsey, the continued growth of sexual imagery as normal in popular culture was framed by organizations as giving tacit encouragement to youth to “act” outside the real or perceived norms of the period.

In another example, Dr. Gordon Bates Director of the Health League of Canada (HLC) contributed a response to the release of the Kinsey Report:

... Kinsey’s bulky volume is weighed down with concern over sex relations, whether in or out of marriage. So much so that readers would gather that the physical side of marriage is the one of utmost importance, heavily outweighing all other considerations. Such inferred total neglect of the overriding spiritual values of marriage, such flagrant disregard for the spiritual and mental aspects of love, and the sharing of all life, can only serve to debase our concept of marriage and family and love and render the relationship of man and woman devoid of all the overtones that raise it above animal level. Kinsey, a zoologist, appears to have forgotten that he was not dealing with alley cats! The young, the inexperienced and the undiscerning are in peril of patterning themselves after such creatures.⁵⁸²

In the context of trends in dating practices, the role that sex played within (and outside) relationships were altered dramatically. The popularization of a strong and positive sexual relationship within media and educational contexts overtook the more stable

⁵⁸¹ LAC CCSD MG 28 I10 vol 61 file 492 B Letter dated March 5, 1958.

⁵⁸² LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 105 file Kinsey Report 1950-53. Rebecca L. Davis “‘Not Marriage at All, But Simple Harlotry’: The Companionate Marriage Controversy” *Journal of American History* 2008 94(4): 1137-1163.

notion of companionship and marital suitability. The construction of marriage as little more than a reproductive union and spiritual endeavour had been slowly dismantled over the course of the early twentieth-century. Bate's contention that the physical side of marriage was being given higher weight was already embedded within marital advice manuals and in the content of some sex education classes. The emphasis on positive sexual experiences between a married couple as an indicator of a successful marriage acted as a means of bonding a couple together in a different way. The endorsement of the Health League of Canada's resolution by the NCW was nothing new as both agendas in the area of marital relationships were similar and soundly supported. For example, the NCW and the WI continued to support earlier petitions by the HLC regarding venereal disease and premarital blood testing for couples about to wed.⁵⁸³ The response to the Kinsey Reports was distributed as a press release by the HLC who also raised concerns about the state of society and research itself.

To confirm that similar organizations were acting similarly to the HLC, Dr. Bates corresponded with groups such as the American Eugenics Society and the American Social Hygiene Association. These American organizations also sent letters of protest regarding access to the Kinsey Reports and more generally its content to their governments. Internally, the Canadian response was similar.⁵⁸⁴ The wait and see attitude

⁵⁸³ Reel H-2015 vol 48 March 2, 1949 p. 59-60. Resolutions regarding premarital blood testing and venereal disease.

⁵⁸⁴ According to archivists at the Kinsey Institute Archives, there are letters on file alternately protesting or applauding these publications including letters from Canada. Unfortunately, they are not filed according to country of origin making a systematic examination and inclusion of these letters here impossible at this time.

on the government's behalf did not do much to appease those groups with concerns about the public release and availability of Kinsey's research. Dr. Bates sent a letter of protest to Paul Martin the Minister of National Health and Welfare urging that the "importation of the forthcoming issue of the so-called Kinsey Report dealing with the sexual life of women be forbidden in Canada except for distribution to scientific bodies under special license."⁵⁸⁵ He continued with the assertion that the previous report on men was unscientific and unsound and "furthermore, it is the belief of the Committee that general distribution of reports of this type in bookstores and public newsstands which make them available to people of all ages and all walks of life may be subversive of public morals."⁵⁸⁶ While it is doubtful that this considerably sized volume would have been able to be bought at newsstands, the threat to public morality and sensibilities was considered to be imminent and vast. In response to the letter sent by the Health League of Canada, Mr. Martin noted the approach taken by the Postmaster General: "if the book is immoral, we have the power to prohibit the use of the mails for its distribution, but such an order would apply to all mailings as it would not be practical to distinguish between copies addressed to scientific circles and those addressed to the general public."⁵⁸⁷ This became another instance where the response of the government towards issues of obscenity were at odds with what social organizations considered to be a matter of the national interest.

The release of this controversial research and the subsequent responses to it

⁵⁸⁵ LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 105 file Kinsey Report 1950-53 June 16, 1950.

⁵⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ LAC, HLC, MG 28 I332 vol 132 file 3 1940-1948.

generated three types of reactions amongst the women's organizations: first, it followed an established agenda of monitoring popular culture and censorship that maintained the ideals of moral governance, propriety and conduct that these middle-class women's organizations strove for. As Kinahan found in the early formation of the National Council of Women, framing themselves as moral arbiters for taste, judgment and propriety was of second nature given the tenor of moral and social reform movements in the early part of the twentieth-century.⁵⁸⁸ It continued into the 1950s in response to the increased diversity and availability of publications. Stemming the rise in crime comics, sex magazines and other morally problematic and troublesome publications that weren't designed to improve character remained part of their agenda. Second, the Kinsey Reports challenged the established ideals of middle-class womanhood and femininity as something to be upheld and retained which provoked a backlash to their views. It also confronted the assumption that women were unable or reluctant to voice their own sexual wishes. The Kinsey Report and other publications of this time offered validation that women's sexual desires and experiences were not deviant. Third, incorporating sex and obscenity in immoral literature and films at libraries and cinemas demonstrated the social and moral decline that these organizations had been forecasting since at least the 1920s was underway. The data from the Kinsey Report confirmed and what is more important in some respects, made public, these changes. As Kinahan concluded; the NCW in the 1893 to 1918 period

... creat[ed] two important roles for itself. On the one hand, it was

⁵⁸⁸ Kinahan "A Splendid Army of Organized Womanhood"... p. 217.

the institutional expression of informed, enlightened and educated womanhood, collectively organized to affect positive change in Canadian society. Additionally, as such an embodiment of educated womanhood, Council members were moral guardians and moral exemplars for “other” Canadian women. Careful to assert a productive and appropriate role for women in Canadian public life, Council discourses rested on the public dimension of women’s moral influence, and presented the organization as an effective means of achieving the various projects of “social uplifting.”⁵⁸⁹

The position of various social organizations was that society was already under threat given the time and events and to add the Kinsey Report to this would encourage immoral social and sexual behaviours. Other similar investigations or projects within the obscenity committee may have retained that language (as was shown above) but it does occur less often over time as they settled into their role and grew in the public realm.

Conclusion

It appears that the general agenda in the areas under investigation here were focused in several disparate issues during this period. They did have common threads however, of morality, character and family. Their concerns for the preservation of femininity, women’s roles and the nature of women’s sexuality continued and they struggled to adapt to changing social expectations. The NCW and WI maintained their interest in motherhood, the family, femininity, and sexual relationships. They accomplished this through the support of marital and sex education alongside their attempts to stem the importation of the Kinsey Reports. This part of their agenda was met. By framing sex and motherhood in the context of morals and conduct, their actions and concerns for the post war period were consistent over time.

⁵⁸⁹ *ibid.*

This era saw a retrenching of gender roles for women's organizations as a means of adapting to the new status quo and establishing a social conformity that came with new rules and roles. The anxiety surrounding sex and motherhood was exhibited in women's economic roles outside the home and in popular culture. They felt that they had no control or influence in its development or the restriction of access however they continued to lobby and police their communities. The Kinsey Report brought to the surface the anxieties of women's organizations in a way that previous sexual education campaigns could not. The difference, as mentioned previously, was in the ability of women's organizations to shape the message of the programs, aid in the selection of the experts and determine the audience to be attracted and offered lectures. The very public nature of the Kinsey Reports and other growing media (culminating in publications such as *Playboy* and *Esquire*) limited the influence of women's organizations as the public's consumption of pulp fiction, films, and magazines grew. Moreover, the Kinsey Reports were reflecting a reality much different from what the organizations were claiming men and women actually wanted or experienced. The Kinsey Report diminished the image of women as wives and mothers while highlighting the sexual aspect that women were experiencing and possibly enjoying. Media complicated women's role and expanded it to more than just a wife and mother which was problematic for the NCW. This difficulty can be seen in the way they approach issues of postwar reconstruction. While reluctantly agreeing that women may want to work outside the home, they insisted that it was still a woman's duty and obligation to be a wife and mother first. The WI on the other hand expanded women's role as potential workers along with the motherhood status to

include women living and working on the farm.

The continued scrutiny by women's organizations of magazines and other popular publications as a source of immorality or "literary malnutrition" was also part of the postwar agenda. The remedy to the anxieties that accompanied the general upheaval of the period included an emphasis on both conforming behaviours and strong gender roles. The role of popular culture as a mechanism for influencing cultural values and social characteristics continued to replace the position they had favoured as guardians of morality. The work they had done before the Kinsey Reports to conserve and promote a specific vision of middle-class lifestyle was again under threat.

As was demonstrated in this Chapter, the postwar period provided the National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes with many ways to frame women's lives and their conduct. As workers, the NCW and the WI placed motherhood ahead of the possible economic contributions women could make to the family (or their own) purse. They framed motherhood as women's preferred role with detrimental outcomes for women (frustration for neglecting their role), men (masculinity and primary breadwinner role), and children (suffering from neglect and poor role models). Marriage classes could help structure women's relationships, and make the couple happier, healthier, and more stable. The NCW and WI's framing of leisure spaces as detrimental to women and their families was a continuation of the governance of leisure spaces and the conduct within. Through course lessons, delinquency would be decreased because women and men would know what to do and how to conduct themselves. Working in tandem with this were their initiatives to construct family friendly neighbourhoods that

encouraged and supported (through better build houses, playgrounds, physicians, and other infrastructure measures) women to be wives and mothers.

The final set of issues for this period culminated in the publication of the Kinsey Reports. Bringing sex or other problematic and delinquent behaviours into the public realm as portrayed in novels, films and books had already come under the scrutiny of the NCW and the WI. The Kinsey Report brought it into high relief. While minimal, the NCW meeting minutes do demonstrate a concern for the easy availability of the Report and what the Report claimed to be women's sexual experience. While condemning the notice that popular magazines paid to Kinsey and his research, the NCW and the HLC feared that the public would interpret Kinsey's work to mean that sex and pleasure were more important than both reproduction and the marital relationship. In their resolutions and related correspondence with the government, the NCW and HLC were adamant that the volumes be banned from Canadian bookstores.

All of these projects taken separately or together, demonstrate an anxiety related to the women's roles, and the state of intimate relationships. The National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes reconstruction efforts in the postwar period were large-scale infrastructure developments that were not seen in the other two periods. Instead the combination of both small- and large-scale measures were used to solve the dilemma of sex.

Chapter Eight: Solving the dilemma of sex and moving beyond vice and decay?

Introduction

The National Council of Women and the Women's Institutes were part of a social reform movement beginning in the late nineteenth-century aimed at improving the social, political, economic, and legal status of women. To accomplish this, they used their status as wives and mothers to gain a footing on the national public stage lobbying and promoting women's participation in civil society. The NCW and WI established themselves as umbrella national bodies to gather diverse social organizations that would enable their members to "speak" with one voice on common issues and develop support for others. This would allow reformers more exposure to all levels of government than they had operating on their own and through this collaborative process members gained a growing confidence in their message and were able to have success. Given that Canadian women's organizations were not unified in their aims and agendas their solidarity and ability to generate consensus was not automatically assured. Women's organizations were also diverse internally through opinion, membership, social and political interests, employment, religious affiliations, race, and class. Members may have joined these organizations to fill their sense of civic duty, to facilitate in creating new friendships, or to participate in wider social change which would impact their level of concern for various aspects of Canadian society. All these interests would impact how consensus was generated or if it was at all. By 1930, the National Council of Women of Canada and the Women's Institutes had established themselves as an authority speaking for women's interests and had many successes at the National and local levels.

Making the shift from the social purity ideals of sex to the 1930s incorporation of sex as a matter of the biological and social lifecycle involved the incorporation of new knowledge and an adaptation of social norms. This occurred in tandem with other changes to social norms including the status and content of motherhood, reproductive health, employment and economic participation, and social interactions including dating and the intimacy of marriage. By 1930, NCW and WI activities were no longer as oriented towards social purity as social hygiene. As discussed previously, social purity aimed to create and maintain a standard of conduct for both men and women that conformed to a separate spheres ideology and practice: "... social purity spoke to a deep anxiety about changing sex relationships in a secularizing and urban society that seemed to be witnessing the destruction of the family..."⁵⁹⁰ Social purity also framed "deviant" sexual behaviours (such as prostitution, the sexual double standard, etc.) as vice which spoke to less redeemable social interactions and character defects. Social hygiene was a more clinical representation of these ideas with a basis in science which could then be relied upon to explain issues such as poverty, disability, crime, and unemployment. The prevailing social discourses of the 1930s expressed a continuity and belief in science, which served to order, organize and catalogue human social relations. The rationalization of sexual behaviours reflected the greater belief in science and fact which would enable social organizations to move towards a greater truth about human life and interaction.

As has been shown in this work, there was continued emphasis on organizing

⁵⁹⁰ Cook " "Do not ... do anything that you cannot unblushingly tell your mother"..." p. 218.

social relations through reforming character and conduct and programming to adapt to new social and sexual expectations. Their programming was aimed at both the formal and informal spaces that the general public occupied. Their programmes ranged from sex education to domestic science would have a significant impact on the social and norm based expectations for women across Canada. The shift from social purity to social hygiene and beyond was not easy but retained some of the same themes that could be drawn on to generate programming by women's organizations. The ideals of the various organizations themselves however, had to adapt to new forms of conduct as a process of rational education.

The diversity of membership and skills within the organizations allowed social service organizations to rely on internal research capacities to identify how communities were changing and thereby support women in their everyday lives. This type of data or information was then used to develop formal and informal norms that would reflect the inclusion and exclusion of individuals, groups, and practices within Canadian society. The use of social surveys and related tools offered a way to quantify the rates of delinquency for example, and identify needs within their communities. The NCW and WI used the data to chart the social and political "threats" to mothers and children to support efforts to improve maternal health, support marriage and the family unit, diminish promiscuity and the potential for sexual diseases, navigate forms of deviance, and "teach" individuals how to be good and productive citizens. Using statistical data offered organizations greater legitimacy in accomplishing their aims than anecdotal evidence would. In addition, the data that was generated from their local studies

informed the programmes they were able to establish within community structures and institutions such as schools and other organizational spaces.

Social reform organizations such as the NCW and WI promoted frameworks of gendered social conduct by both indirect and direct means. Classroom environments were used not only to instruct young women and men they traded on the imagery of learning imposed by the setting. Courses were available on everything from household management to bodily deportment, manners and social conduct, to the content of intimate relationships. Another strategy that social reform organizations used was lobbying for legal changes to the Criminal Code and other provincial or municipal legal codes to protect not only individuals and communities but the nation. For example, the NCW and WI were more likely to lobby the various levels of government, influence course curriculum in schools for children, and organize local classes for adults. This would allow them to attend to a segment of each age group and audience (formal/government and informal/public). Moving into the 1960s, women's organizations participated in Commissions on the status of women or crime and punishment for example.⁵⁹¹ These initiatives also formalized the ways of including or excluding individuals in local and national contexts based on those behaviours.

Moral regulation: authorities and issues

What moral regulation allowed me to demonstrate several key features: first, the authority with which the organizations acted; second, their identification of norms or issues considered problematic; third, their programming that encouraged reformation of

⁵⁹¹ National Council of Women of Canada *Brief to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: publisher not identified, 1968).

the self; and lastly, that these issues were not fully resolved. The issues themselves were influenced by the composition of the population, social, technological and economic capacities. Moral regulation also allowed me to show how they framed sexual issues as “moral” and new social and sexual norms were influencing their vision of Canadian society which would direct how they proceeded to respond to these problems. While the meeting minutes do not allow for a full discussion of the content of some of the programmes that they supported or carried out, the minutes and related documents do indicate that these organizations and the general public were struggling with issues of sex and striving for consensus in changing times.

Three figures for three times

As discussed early in this dissertation, the data coding process informed the three key time periods and three key issues: 1930 to 1939 (birth control and motherhood), 1940 to 1945 (dating, mating and delinquency) and 1946 to 1955 (family reconstruction, sex in popular culture and delinquency). The documents themselves demonstrate the use of specific forms of language to indicate their moral component. Using the language of a variety of fields including medicine, social sciences, politics, and economics amongst others offered these organizations a way to related to institutions and the public.

Along with the use of language forms to communicate their message, three straw figures were generated by social organizations that correspond to the dominant issues of the period as it relates to the areas I investigated: “voluntary parenthood”, “civic femininity” and “reconstructed motherhood”. These straw figures offer a generalizable

way of examining how they understood and illustrated both the population, “risk” and the norms to which they were adapting. While not overly specific in the characteristics of the straw figures, they were specific in the use of moral images to communicate conduct deemed desirable or problematic.

1930 to 1939 - voluntary parenthood

In general terms, a straw figure of Canadian womanhood was used by social organizations to demonstrate changing norms and regimes of conduct in women’s lives. While not explicitly defined through race or age, it could be suggested that these characteristics were built into these straw figures by the content, description, and actions of the figures themselves within the frames of birth control, dating and mating, and motherhood. The content and experience of women’s intimate lives contributed to the formation of a new sexual subject the non-reproductive woman. Amongst the multi-level changes that contributed to this shift the reframing of women’s intimate experiences *away* from motherhood were the most significant.

Voluntary parenthood was part of the reproduction debate in the late nineteenth-century and it was made popular again as part of Margaret Sanger’s birth control campaigns which combined the quest for reproductive determination with eugenics.⁵⁹² By the 1930s several different discourses such as voluntary parenthood, eugenics, birth control and maternal health were being used to explain the choices women had while making their own reproductive choices. The lack of consensus within the organizations as was demonstrated in Chapter Five reflected the same feelings within the general

⁵⁹² Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women...*

population.

Throughout the 1930s women's organizations and their allies worked from discursive frames they already knew – motherhood was a signifier of social value and related female roles. What changed through this period was the incorporation of the language and ideals of women's health. As a tactic women's health functioned to make the issue of birth control and voluntary parenthood more palatable and position women's reproductive lives in a way that did not emphasize sex for pleasure. Regardless, women's health needed attention at many levels if they were to be able to raise their families, and that women's lives were not solely lived in the private sphere.

Birth control as a panacea had the potential to solve specific social problems that resulted from real or perceived physical, mental, and social decay while encouraging fitter families. The challenge was in the combination of the medical and social debates which would start the dialogue for women's bodily autonomy. In the 1930s the idealized healthy family for example, was framed more through a eugenic lens of social and financial success than the language of choice and the non-reproducing woman. For some organization members these efforts placed the embodiment of class, race, and gender roles as primary markers in healthy family development. Motherhood was caught in this eugenic language to describe the duty or obligation women had to their families to be healthy and fit citizens and to raise their children as such. A second challenge to existing norms came with the birth control debates which opened up the possibility that women would delay having children and families. This allowed for the possibility that women would make a different choice and partake in non-reproductive sex which would make

women not only a maternal subject but an erotic one as well. Making space for women's choices regarding non-reproductive sex was reflective of the changing content of relationships, popular media and the lifecycle. The reading list developed by the NCW's Education Committee in the 1930s offered members not only knowledge about birth control but information on how women's sexual lives should be contextualized within the realm of family.

Some members of the NCW and the WI favoured eugenic arguments to bolster a pronatalist sentiment asserting that women should be mothers and continued to promote healthy motherhood in accordance with eugenic principles. This was not a point of consensus as other members relied on medical arguments to make the case that women were having too many children and the toll that physical and psychic exhaustion on mothers had the potential to lead to delinquency. For some this was reason enough to extend access to birth control to women who already had children while others argued for birth spacing as a remedy for this which challenged the dominant conception of women's social role was that of mother regardless of the cost. This debate made the further separation of sex from reproduction a difficult issue to address for these groups. Instead this theme was made apparent through in their concerns for leisure, marriage, and parenting as a way of indirectly working around the issue. Whether through supporting birth control clinics, lobbying government, or holding information sessions some members of women's and social organizations were dedicated in their efforts to encourage contraceptive availability and its use "for the public good."

Birth control was the only issue out of the three discussed in this work that members openly resisted the NCW executive council's direction and wanted to be able to investigate on their own. The areas of contention settled around two issues, first the acceptance of birth control as a subject to lobby around and second the social meaning and purpose of birth control. Members were divided as to the benefits in advocating for birth control and were further struggling with their individual values and articles of faith. The extant minutes or letters that included comments from NCW members who were part of birth control societies and clinics demonstrated that there was some support for birth control in local areas such as Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto. This also illustrated the disconnect between the values of their organization and membership and the choices and decisions made in women's personal lives. The addition of the Hamilton Birth Control Clinic in the 1954 as an affiliate to the Local Council included a positive report of their activities in the annual report and illustrates their change in direction and endorsement.⁵⁹³ The Hamilton Clinic as well as the creation of other Birth Control Societies in Toronto, Winnipeg and Calgary mentioned throughout this dissertation, could indicate that birth control was a part of the community regardless of whether the NCW and the WI could formally support it or not. While the organizations may not be openly working with birth control advocates they were not prohibiting their affiliation either. Lastly, they wanted to work for women who had already had children and whose health was at risk. These women were held in example of their service to

⁵⁹³ LAC NCWC MG 28 I25 vol 98 file 8 1954 *Yearbook* "Highlights from the Annual Reports of the Organizations Affiliated with the Local Council of Women - Hamilton" p. 4.

motherhood and society and were subsequently entitled to appropriate health care.

The lack of consensus on birth control opened a strategic possibility for organizations such as the National Council of Women that allowed members to investigate and organize in their communities (such as supporting or working with birth control clinics) without the outright prohibition of the executive council. As a strategic decision this allows the organization to retain a hands-off position outwardly while internally raising the issue and setting the stage for future work. The overall decline in the debates of both the NCW and the WI regarding birth control in the post-1930s decades could be related to the onset of the World War II and the urgency of wartime issues.

It is interesting to note that birth control debates did not surface again until the 1960s when a major overhaul of social policy and laws was being undertaken in conjunction with a number of other social reforms initiated by social movements. Both the WI and the NCW would move into the 1960s with a more direct and open conversation with their members and create policy towards accessing contraception. It was reported in 1967 that Women's Institutes were willing to tackle a number of issues that they saw as being related to the birth control issue:

Delegates meeting this week in national convention recommended abortions be allowed if the pregnancy results from criminal assault or if there is danger of mental or physical health to the mother. They will also ask the federal government to legalize the advertisement, sale and use of contraceptives. The convention also wants law making it compulsory for couples to have medical examinations before they marry and the establishment of family planning centres across the

country.⁵⁹⁴

The NCW's submission to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1968 also put birth control, abortion and obscenity together and advocated for legal change:

The National Council of Women has made repeated submissions to the federal government for the removal of the harsh restrictions on the dissemination of birth control information. The proposed legislative changes now before Parliament would remove from Section 150(2)(c) of the Criminal Code all restrictions on family planning; at the same time adequate control over the advertising of contraceptive devices would be provided under the Food and Drug Act.

When this archaic legislation is removed from the statutes, we would recommend:

- (a) an extension of public health clinics and other approved agencies which could legally implement a program of effective family planning attuned to the realities of present day living;
- (b) health clinics be allowed to dispense contraceptives to the persons who need them.⁵⁹⁵

It is worthwhile to note that there is not a moral judgement attached to the use of birth control in either of these statements. Further research would help assess the debates leading to the development of both of these proposals.

1940 to 1945 - "civic femininity"

During the war period, this straw figure embodied a multitude of lifestyle concerns. "She" was not only more likely to be single, working outside the home and possibly have some form of higher education, she was also caught in the circumstances

⁵⁹⁴ "WI Asks for Widening of Code" *Calgary Herald* June 16, 1967.

⁵⁹⁵ NCWC Brief to the Royal Commission... Section D p. 15. It is interesting to note that the other sections of the report detailed the impact that issues such as economics, divorce law, taxation, employment and training had on women's lives. The section pertaining to birth control and abortion included no such detail. This could indicate a continued resistance to increased access to birth control and abortion or that these issues worked in conjunction with the rest of women's lives.

of war. As a result a new set of civic ideals emerged where women were still relied upon to be primarily mothers, but also, and in some cases just as much, workers, civic actors, norm-enforcers, autonomous sexual beings, and community leaders. This variety of social positions required some consistent and generalizable actions and ideals.

Dating and leisure activities were presented as being more precarious than in previous generations due to potentially unregulated social and sexual conduct. These spaces were somewhat redeemed through chaperoned activities and lectures. Alternatively dating was viewed as a natural evolution of the social spaces women were inhabiting however dating did not offer a guaranteed pairing as courtship did. Work and leisure had their own perils, norms and expectations that came with greater independence such as participating in social activities. No longer were couples moving from their parents' house to their spouse's house, they were creating new youth oriented social spaces and leisure activities. Dating offered another way for women to negotiate sex and intimacy without the bonds of marriage which appeared to be as lawless and ungovernable except through courses and legal access to the space.

Women's organizations adapted to this new leisure activity through community courses that actively dealt with sex and bodily conduct. The war years were a challenge as women were expected to participate socially yet with restraint, to be both moral and uplifting in their interactions. Rushed marriages were a stated concern as they were entered into without enough knowledge about their potential spouse which would possibly create greater social delinquency with higher divorce rates. The real or perceived outcomes of these relationships offered another chance to illustrate a causal

dimension of decay or delinquency to their members and the community at large. The use of education programmes as a strategy offered a way to not only regulate conduct but “guide” individuals for the future resulting in appropriate conduct. Courses for children highlighted bodily awareness and knowledge tempered with gender role instruction and the demonstration of a suitable character form. Classes for adults took these messages and strengthened the gender role component with the aim of encouraging participation in civil society. In some cases, the classes went further and framed them in terms of social health and fitness with the aim of contributing to a more stable society.

As a project, nation-building is never truly finished and women’s organizations understood that and used it to great effect. Their contribution to this process was as mothers and women helping to create the social infrastructure that would feed and care for the ever-evolving nation. The 1940s meeting minutes reminded women of their place in the leadership of the community and the nation. These reminders reinforced their claims to authority and maintained the direction and purpose of the organization’s efforts. It also encouraged women to do their civic duty in shaping their communities and nation.

With specific regard to motherhood, the National Council of Women, and the Women’s Institutes, promoted an ideal that would maintain their status in the public sphere and provide leadership pertaining to standards of appropriate middle-class conduct. They accomplished this in several ways. Using committees at local, provincial, and national levels to investigate and organize data about their communities, they

defined problematic spaces and moved to initiate projects that would delineate both proper and improper conduct that was associated with those spaces. In some ways identifying problematic spaces during the war was easier as leisure itself changed. Whether it was a dance hall, a beer parlour or a movie theatre, women and men of all ages were warned of the moral danger that was connected to that physical place and subsequently the content of the activity.⁵⁹⁶ As was seen in the report from Winnipeg for example, the increased rates of venereal disease were specifically linked to a social space. The use of moral imagery or adjectives to demonstrate the value and/or individuals who participated in activities at these spaces served as an indicator of not only the health of the city but their moral health. The association of negative or problematic behaviours with an identified space and population offered a target for the organizations to generalize towards as a morality tale.

The physical health of citizens during wartime was also highlighted in the local council's reports. The connection between physical health, character, and behaviour was another way of articulating the moral nature of citizens and the nation. The maintenance of physical health would keep a reserve citizen army available for future use but would also translate into better character and social habits in the long term. Additional initiatives also centered on the fit physical body and were supported through other agencies with the resources or personnel that would offer appropriate programme planning. These included blood tests and venereal disease tests such as the Wasserman

⁵⁹⁶ For example, the 1941 Calgary *LCW Yearbook* includes a line item of activities for the year including: "That the City of Calgary have the Dance Hall By-law amended so as to prevent the admittance of children under 18 years of age at a public dance." p. 32.

test to keep the military and the home front safe. Condoms for servicemen were made available by the army to fight against disease and physical incapacitation rather than focusing solely on sexual relationships or promiscuity. Women who were part of the armed services were not afforded the same care.⁵⁹⁷ They were framed as being under a moral and physical threat by working in the military as they were put in close contact with men and as equally important, performing a man's job. The military was also aware of the problems of women's "natural sex instinct" and the potential for dating (and distraction) based on the mixed sex environment. Through whisper campaigns and educational information, the roles and expectations of women workers were communicated and enforced. While not explicitly part of the NCW and WI's programme, concerns were articulated regarding the defiance of working women enacting their gender role and women's adaptation to home life once the war was over.

Changing social and sexual scripts for young adults, during the 1940s and 1950s meant there was an increasing flexibility in the life a woman made for herself and on occasion outside conventional social and marital relationships. No longer was she only a daughter or a wife. There were new roles associated with education, employment, and the chance for the attendant social and sexual experiments. Women's organizations had to concede this. Members were however, adapting or incorporating this new state of sexual possibility and worked to protect women through regulating social spaces. Their programme initiatives connected to leisure time reinforced the family ideal through gender lessons encouraging men and women to act in ways mimicking family roles. The

⁵⁹⁷ Pierson "The Double Bind of the Double Standard:..." p. 32.

NCW and WI also supported, promoted and in the case of the WI, contributed to the writing of prescriptive manuals that would illustrate desired and appropriate conduct for women. The advice presented to women not only pertained to household management but the appropriate character of a wife and mother. According to meeting minute entries included throughout this research, men were also encouraged to play their part by taking an active interest in their wives' prenatal care for example, and by fully inhabiting the male breadwinner role. The continued support for programmes pertaining to sex education and marriage classes reinforced the perceived deficiencies of this period. As a process of adaptation, the challenge to gender roles offered a space for women's organizations to demonstrate that women's lives were far beyond that of homemaker. This would be highlighted in their Royal Commission submission when they ask: "Is absenteeism due to pregnancy a more disrupting factor than absenteeism due to a heart attack? The true career woman is a dedicated, hard worker. Recognition should be given to the fact that brains have no sex, and women should be recognized for the contribution they can make."⁵⁹⁸

Through initiatives during the war years, women's organizations were not only able to address a variety of health issues but guide the messages of social and moral consequences of new and harmful social mores. Programs emphasized the gender roles and expectations for both sexes and the potential implications for the state. They continued to create or support options that were firmly rooted in their vision of a proper female sexual subject - she was married with children and a successful homemaker.

⁵⁹⁸ NCWC *Brief to the Royal Commission...* p. 10.

Through sex education or family life programs, they were seen to be progressive in supporting public knowledge of biology and reproduction. These topics were also tied to appropriate gender roles and lifestyles and included material including dating, marital communication and expectations of and for the couple. Issues pertaining to sexually transmitted infections were contextualized within inappropriate social and sexual preoccupations and causally tied to the nonconformity of gender roles. The NCW's and WI's contributions to the content of these programs would ensure the health of future generations as well as reinforce social and sexual habits and roles that were socially acceptable. The use of classes also provided a monitoring mechanism for teachers to confirm that their "students" were incorporating these lessons into their daily practices and becoming better citizens.

1946 to 1955 - "reconstructed motherhood"

The third straw figure arose out of the post war period. In this period the figure is shaped by the legacy of war and the quest for stability of social and interpersonal structures. Social and cultural interferences were providing too many temptations for all and new avenues for accessing and consuming popular culture. The NCW and WI continued to monitor recreation and cultural materials and submitted details of inappropriate media based materials for governments to act upon through censorship or laws prohibiting importation. Through the recognition of new rules for social and intimate relationships, families were reconstituted into valuable commodities for reproducing healthy communities. The real or perceived cases of juvenile delinquency, sex crimes, and divorce for example, would become a barometer of social stability and

normative adaptation.

The postwar period continued to address the themes of sex and motherhood. The reconstruction of the family unit through the social and physical environments (such as neighbourhoods) combined with the continued use of marriage classes to support the readjustment of men and women to the postwar life were viewed as one beneficial way to support the family. It was also suggested that through the better parenting skills learned in marriage classes, there would be less delinquency amongst both teens and adults thereby creating better citizens and would deter attendance in spaces without structured recreation activities. For the NCW and WI the combination of child-rearing practices and the social contexts in which children were being raised had the potential to lead to poor and unproductive adults - morally, socially, economically. However, it could be ameliorated through the incorporation of family ideals and better child-rearing practices.

The NCW and the WI reacted to changes in women's additional status in paid employment occasionally in positive ways. Advocating for working women was a pre-existing platform for women's organizations and the postwar period was no different. Women who had no additional economic supports, whose husbands were unemployed in the postwar period or were heads of households themselves as single parents were framed as contributing to the community and town planning needed to respond to that. Again, this was an area that saw little consensus within the organizations and their affiliates. The report on postwar reconstruction outlined the negative effects of working mothers for families and reaffirmed women's primary role as mothers. For women who

enjoyed working outside the home or did so out of necessity it was recommended that the neighbourhood be vigilant and ensure that delinquency and other negative social behaviours did not become part of their community. For the WI the nature of farm life meant that women had to work as business and family remained connected through their home. In this case, rural women had additional options in securing the family by expanding their role on the farm. Community support systems were encouraged to build not only a cohesive neighbourhood but a self-sustaining one.

1950s popular culture as expressed through magazines, books and films would challenge the continued efforts of the NCW and the WI to ensure good conduct and character. The growth and easy availability of “objectionable material” such as comics, salacious crime reports, novels, and pin-up magazines for example, had continued support for suppression from the membership. The example of the Kinsey Report in Chapter Seven highlighted the NCW’s efforts to regulate materials that disrupted their sense of proper (sexual) conduct for women. Through their participation in censorship cases such as The Kinsey Reports women’s organizations were able to maintain their status as the guardians of public morals and criticize the state for their foot dragging. Overall, they placed a higher value on stable marital relationships over the fashionable concern for sexual relationships offered in novels and film. The Kinsey Reports combined with the content from family life education classes described sexual experiences that many wished to deny were occurring. Other publications under scrutiny were deemed problematic for much the same reason - they described a social world that seemed at odds both morally and socially to their long-held values. The

“new” sexual culture was once again bringing sex into the public conversation.

Conclusion

Middle-class women’s organizations such as the National Council of Women and the Women’s Institute made efforts to represent the views and needs of Canadian women. These needs were focused through a range of issues such as workplace health and safety, women’s health, law, housing, natural resources and economics, and immigration. Many of these areas were reflected in the general political domains led by their male counterparts. Their involvement was translated into initiatives that included education, extension classes, health promotion and lobbying at all levels of government. Using a variety of initiatives to communicate their anxieties such as classes, publications, lobbying and direct local involvement they were able to demonstrate the positive and negative in individuals and their communities.

Overall, their work brought mixed success but they were able to reflect the needs of their communities. In the years that would follow, they would continue to lobby and work for equal pay, daycare, and legal changes to women’s situation through a myriad of other issues. Their place in a sexual history within Canada during the years studied here shows them as active members within the debates, yet not able to speak for the then growing diversity of sexual and lifestyle experiences. This does not mean that their contributions did not have value, it does mean that it reflected an experience or generalized ideal, and as was seen earlier, one without a unanimous voice. This offered an opportunity to be strategic in their actions and created unconventional opportunities that reflected the spaces and places that women were occupying.

As agents for moral regulation projects, these middle-class women's organizations were consistent in their message and their strategies even while possibly disagreeing internally. By claiming specific behaviours as moral and better for women and the nation they were able to continue to shape their world as they saw it. Through education, lobbying efforts and supporting programmes that accomplished their goals the NCW and the WI occupied the position of expert to outline the social anxieties of the time and potentially solve them. Through their archival records, I have been able to demonstrate that they were able to move beyond the dichotomy of vice and decay that was part of the popular sentiment of the period to adapt to women's lives and Canadian society.

Appendix A – Number of local branches of the Women’s Institutes 1931 to 1943 and number of members 1931 to 1943.

Year - Institutes	BC	Alta	Sask	MB	ON	PQ	NB	NS	PEI	Total
1931	146	265	248	129	1185	82	139	115	226	2535
1933	161	244	275	131	1250	81	149	126	255	2672
1935	161	267	330	135	1304	86	165	130	282	2860
1937	165	265	372	145	1378	93	180	140	258	2996
1939	174	229	416	157	1400	100	180	140	265	3061
1941	189	214	426	160	1360	100	214	149	264	3076
1943	181	214	385	158	1294	92	225	147	258	2954
Total over time	1177	1698	2452	1015	9171	634	1252	947	1808	20154

Year - Members	BC	Alta	Sask	MB	ON	PQ	NB	NS	PEI	Total
1931	4500	4600	4400	3500	4100	1700	2800	2800	4000	32400
1933	4500	3500	5800	3474	42000	1700	2800	3300	4000	71074
1935	4000	4337	6450	3383	42000	1800	3000	3016	4000	71986
1937	3555	3500	7630	3702	42000	2000	3400	3200	4000	72987
1939	4275	3300	8300	4000	42000	2150	3400	3200	4000	74625
1941	4490	3679	7900	3600	38850	2200	4000	3462	4145	72326
1943	3800	3679	6500	3266	36700	1915	4500	2928	4000	67288
Total over time	29120	26595	46980	24925	247650	13465	23900	21906	28145	462686

From: *Annual reports of the Women’s Institutes*

Appendix B - Local and National affiliates with the National Council of Women of Canada

Vancouver	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Alexandra Community Activities				x			Lion's Ladies Club				x		x
Alexandra Orphanage	x	x	x				Mother's Club, Alpha Delta Pi Sorority				x		
Altrusca Club						x	Mother's Council			x			
American Women's Club	x		x	x		x	Mother's Union				x		
Art, Historical and Scientific Society	x						Musical Clubs and Symphony Orch. Societies			x	x		x
Assn. for Help of Retarded Children						x	National Council of Jewish Women	x		x			x
Assn. for the Protection of Fur Bearing Animals						x	Native Daughters League of BC Post No. 1	x					x
Aux. Assn. Property Owners						x	New Era League	x	x	x	x		
B.C. Festival Competition Society			x	x			Nurses Assn. and Reg. Nurses	1	1	1	2		2
B.C. Friendly Aid Society				x			Pensioners						2
B.C. Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals				x			Primrose Club				x		x
Beta Sigma Phi						x	Progressive Conservative Women's Assns.			2	2		
Business and Professional Women's Club		x	x	x		x	Quota Club						x
Business Unit Catholic Women's League			x				Rebekah Lodge (No. of Branches)				2		2
C.C.F. Central Women's Council			x	x		x	Royal Needlework Guild	x		x	x		
Canadian Daughters' League (No. of Branches)	1	1	1	1		6	Salvation Army						x
Canadian Federation for the Blind		x	x	x			School for Citizenship						x
Canadian National Institute for the Blind		x	x			x	Scottish Dance Society						x
Canadian Social Service Club	x						Scottish Ladies' Society	x					
Catholic Daughters of America	x						Senior Citizens Assn.						x
Catholic Women's League	x	x	x	x			Silver Cross Women						x

Vancouver	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	3	13	15	13		19	Social Credit W.A.						4
Community Self Help Group			x				Soroptimist Club		x	x	x		x
Daughters of England (No. of Branches)	1	2	3	2		1	Ukrainian Women's Assn.						x
Designer's & Dressmakers Guild			x				United Church Social Service Club				x		
Elizabeth Frye Society				x			University Women's Club						x
Girl Guides of Greater Vancouver		x				x	Vancouver Women's Building Auxiliary	x					
Hadassah				x		x	Vancouver Women's Building Ltd.	x		x			
Heather Lodge, Daughters of Scotia	x	x					Victorian Order of Nurses	x	x	x	x		x
Helping Hand Circle	x						War Widows or Dependents Assns or Aux. (No. of Orgs.)	4	3	3	5		3
Horticultural Society W.A.		x	x	x			WCTU (No. of Branches)	6	7	8	11		10
Hospital Aid Auxiliaries or Associations		2	2	3		3	Western Association for the Blind	x					
Hotel Greeters of America, Charter 44				x		x	Women's Auxiliary to the Hellenic Community		x				
International Woodworkers of America						x	Women's Club, Study Groups						6
IODE (No. of Branches)	4						Women's Auxiliary to Alexandra Orphanage	x					
Kings Daughters (No. of Branches)	2	3	2	1		1	Women's Benefit Association			x			
Kiwassa Club			x	x		x	Women's Building Ltd.	x	x		x		
Ladies Orange Benevolent Association (No. of Branches)	3	3	3			3	Women's Educational Auxiliary to United Church	x	x	x	x		
Lady Aberdeen Scottish Country Dance Society				x			Women's Institutes (No. of Branches)	1	2	2	1		1

Vancouver	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Lady Laurier Club				x			Women's International League for Peace and Freedom	x	x	x			
League of Women Voters		x	x	x		x	Young Women's Christian Association	x		x	x		x
Liberal Women's Associations (No. of Branches)		1	1	1		4	Zonta Club						x

Victoria	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Aged Pensioners Association				x			Lions Club Auxiliary				x		
Anti-Vivisection Society	x						Luxton and Happy Valley W.L.			x	x		
Army and Navy Women		x					Mother's Union	x	x	x	x		x
Aux. Army, Navy, Air Force, Sailors						x	Native Daughters of B.C.	x	x	x	x		x
C.C.F. Women's Assocs. (No. of Branches)			1	2		1	Parent Teacher Assns./Nursery School Assn.	x					x
Canadian Daughters (No. of Branches)	1	2	1	1		1	P.E.O. Sisterhood		x	x	x		
Canadian Forestry Corps Auxiliary				x			Provincial W.C.T.U. Home for Girls	x	x	x	x		
Catholic Women's League	x	x	x	x			Queen Alexandra Solarium W.A.				x		
Children's Aid Society			x	x			Queen Alexandra Review No. 1, W.B.A.						
Children's Aid Society W.A.				x			S.P.C.A.			x	x		
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	8	7	4	5		8	Salvation Army W A			x			
Connaught Seaman's Institute Ladies Guild.				x			Social Credit W.A.						x
Conservative Women		x	x				Social Service League	x					
Daughters of St. George	x	x					Soroptimist Club		x	x	x		x

Victoria	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Family Welfare of Victoria			x	x			Typographical Women's Union	x	x	x	x		
Friendly Help Association	x	x					University Women's Club		x	x	x		x
Girl Guides	x	x				x	Victoria Business and Professional Women's Club		x	x	x		x
Greater Victoria Chapter of Credit Unions				x			Victorian Order of Nurses	x	x	x	x		x
Hebrew Ladies' VRP Auxiliary		x					WCTU (No. of Branches)	4	3	2	2		2
Hospital Aid Auxiliaries or Associations						x	Women's Institutes (No. of Branches)	5	4	4	4		2
Housewives Guild			x				Women's Benefit Association		x	x	x		
IODE (No. of Branches)	3	4	3	2			Women's Canadian Club		x	x	x		x
James Bay P.T. Association		x					Women's Co-op Guild			x	x		
John Howard Society				x			Women's Conservative Association				x		
Kings Daughters of B.C.				x			Women's Educational Club	x					
Ladies Auxiliary to B'nai Brith			x	x			Women's Club, Study Groups						x
Ladies Guild for Sailors	x						Women's Liberal Club Assn.						x
Ladies Musical Club	x						Young Women's Christian Association	x	x	x	x		x
Lake Hill W.L.			x	x			Zeta Chapter, Beta Sigma Phi				x		
Liberal Women's Forum		x	x	x									

Edmonton (1908)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Alberta Hairdressers' Association Better Health Camp Council			x				Royal Alex Hospital Aid	x					
Alumnae Royal Alexandra Hospital			x	x			Royal Purple Auxiliary to Elks	x	x				
Business and Professional Women's Club			x	x		x	Royal Society St. George	x					
Catholic Women's League	x						Soroptimist Club			x	x		

Edmonton (2008)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Central United W.A. Association				x			Sunset Division LAORC		x				
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	4	7	2	2		5	University Club	x		x			
Consumer's League				x			University Women's Club				x		
Council of Jewish Women	x	x	x	x			Victorian Order of Nurses	x		x	x		
Edmonton Dist. Alta. Registered Nurses			x	x			W.A. Typographical Union	x		x			
Edmonton Emergency Welfare Association			x	x			W.I.L. Peace and Freedom			x			
Family Welfare Bureau				x			West Edmonton Lodge, LA to B of RT	x	x				
GIA to Brotherhood Loco. Engineers			x				Women's Business Club	x					
Home Economics Club				x		x	Women's Canadian Club	x					
Humane Society		x				x	Women's Canadian Labour Council	x					
L.A. Sunset Division Order Railroad Conductors			x				Women's CCF Club			x	x		
Ladies Auxiliary Typographical Union		x					Women's Conservative Club	x	x	x			
Ladies Aid Fed. Association Letter Carriers		x	x	x			Women's International League				x		
Ladies of Royal Purple			x				Women's Labour League		x				
Ladies' Society		x					Women's Liberal Club	x	x	x			
League of Peace and Freedom		x					Women's Teachers Club				x		
Literary Society			x				Women's University Club		x	x			
Lotus Arts and Literary Club		x					YWCA	x	x	x	x		
Loyal Star of America		x					WCTU (No. of Branches)	2	3	3	1		

Edmonton (1908)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Nurses Association			x				Women's Institutes (No. of Branches)	2	2	2	1		
Professional and Business Women's Club		x											

Calgary (1912)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
American Women's Club	x	x					Soroptimist Club			x			
Anti-Tubercular Society	x						St. Vincent de Paul Society	x					
Arts & Crafts Club	x						The Humane Society	x					
Authors' Association (CAN.)		x					The Pensioners' Society				x		
Calgary Branch of Business and Professional Women's Clubs			x	x			Unemployed Women's Association			x			
Calgary Council of Jewish Women	x	x	x	x			United Church Social Service	x		x			
Calgary Liberal Women's Association				x			University Women's Club		x	x	x		
Catholic Women's League	x						WCTU (No. of Branches)	2	2	1			
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	11	4	4	3		2	Women's Section Canadian Labor Party		x				
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Women's Club			x	x			Women's Canadian Club	x					
Douglas System of Social Credit		x					Women's Council of Mount View Social Service Home				x		
Graduate Nurses' Assoc.		x					Women's Hostel	x	x				
Hadassah Chapter of Jewish Women			x	x			Women's Institutes (No. of Branches)	1	1	1	1		
Home Economics Club				x			Women's International League for Peace and Freedom		x	x	x		

Calgary (1912)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Humane Society	x						Women's Labour League	x	x	x	x		
IODE (No. of Branches)	6	1					Women's Research Club				x		
Langevin & Bridgeland Handicrafts Guild			x				Women's Section of Dominion Labour Party			x			
Lend-A-Hand Society	x	x					Women's Section Ukrainian Labour Temple Association			x			
Parent Teacher Assns. (No. of Branches)	8	9	2				YMCA	x	x	x	x		
Social Service Home	x	x					YWCA	x	x	x	x		

Toronto (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Altrusca Club					x	x	Park School Old Girls Association		x	x	x		
Alumnae Assn. (University, College & Schools)	7	7	5	5	6	6	Polio Patients Comfort Club						x
American Women's Club of Toronto	x	x	x	x	x	x	Protestant Children's Home				x		
Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals				x	x	x	Protestant Federation of Patriotic Women of Toronto (Ontario Branch)				x		
Aux. Boy Scouts					x	x	Protestant Women's Federation, Girls' Club					x	x
Aux. Druggists					x	x	Public Library Staff					x	x
Big Sister Association	x	x	x	x	x	x	Rest Home Association					x	
CAC					x	x	Rosary Guild		x				
Canadian Association of Mining Women, Toronto Branch	x						Rosary Hall Association	x	x				
Canadian Business and Professional Women's Club	x		x	x	x	x	Rosedale League, School of Art	x					
Canadian Daughters' League Assembly		x		x	x	x	Rosedale Women's Community Club	x	x	x	x		

Toronto (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Cancer Research Society and Auxiliary						x	Runnymede Travel Club	x	x				
Catholic Ladies Literary Society	x						Salvation Army Workers	x	x	x	x	x	x
Child Welfare	x	x					Samaritan Club	x	x	x	x		
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	2	8	7	12	15	16	Separate School Teachers' Association		x	x			
College Heights Women's Educational Club		x	x	x			Silver Cross Women of the British Empire			x	x	2	
Daughters of Scotland	x						Swastika Club	x	x				
Dietetic Association					x	x	Teachers' Wives					2	2
Girl Guides		x			x	x	The Chatsworth Girls' Club	x					
Girls' Friendly Society	x	x	x				The College Heights Women's Club	x					
Good Neighbours' Club			x				The Protestant Federation of Patriotic Women, Toronto Branch	x					
Guinakes Club	x	x	x	x			The Toronto Kindergarten Association				x		
Hadassah Organization of Toronto			x	x	x	x	The Toronto Religious Educational Council of the Girls' Work Board	x					
Handicrafts School Committee					x	x	TOC H League of Women Helpers Eastern Canadian Region				x		
Hebrew Benevolent Society, Sisterhood					x		Toronto Council of Women International Union Auxiliaries				x		
Hebrew Ladies' Aid and Child Welfare Association	x						Toronto Dental Assistants' Association		x	x			

Toronto (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	
Hebrew Maternity Aid Society		x	x	x			Toronto Dietetic Association				x			
Home and School Council	x	x	x	x			Toronto District Council Auxiliary, Canadian Legion BEFL	x	x					
Hospital Aid, Auxiliary, Associations, Staff (No. of Orgs)	7	9	8	8	5	5	Toronto Humane Society	x	x	x	x			
Hospital Hostel, Home Boards					x		Toronto Kindergarten Association	x		x				
Humane Society, SPCA						x	Toronto Liberal - Conservative Women	x	x					
Infants Home and Infirmary	x	x	x	x			Toronto Public Library Staff Association				x			
International League for Peace and Freedom						x	Toronto Public Library Women's Association		x	x				
IODE (No. of Branches)			1	1	1	1	Toronto Social Hygiene Club	x	x					
Junior Samaritan Club				x			Ukrainian Women's Association					x	x	
Kindergarten Association					x		Ukrainian Women's Organization					x		
King's Daughters		x	x				Ukrainian Women's Trident Club				x			
Ladies Board of Alexandra Industrial School	x	x					United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada	x						
Law Association					x		United Nations Society					x	x	
League of Nations Society	x	x	x	x			University Women's Club	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Liberal Women's Assns. (No. of Orgs.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	Victoria Women's Association			x				
Local Council of Jewish Women	x						Victorian Order of Nurses	x	x	x	x			
Lyceum Women's Art Association	x	x	x	x	x	x	WCTU (No. of Branches)				1	1	1	2
Mother's Union					x	x	Wendiwin Literary Circle			x	x			
Mothercraft Society					x	x	Weston Sanitarium Club	x	x	x	x			

Toronto (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Musical Clubs & Symphony Orchestra Societies					x	2	Women's Clubs Study Groups					5	6
National Council of Jewish Women	x	x	x	x	x	x	Women's Division of the Toronto Branch of the Health League of Canada			x			
New Symphony Orchestra Association	x	x					Women's Progressive Conservative Assns. (No. of Branches)	1		4	3	4	2
Nurses Assns, Alumnae & Registered Nurses	2	2	3	2	2	5	Women's Committee Ward Nine Community Association		x				
Occupational Therapy Association	x	x	x				Women's Law Association	x	x	x	x		
Ontario Provincial Council Canadian Daughters League				x			Women's Teachers Association	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parents' Council for Retarded Children						x	Young Women's Christian Association	x	2	2	x	x	x

Ottawa (1894)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Aberdeen Mutual Benefit Association	x		x	x			Neighbourhood Services						x
Alumnae Schools of Nursing	2		1	1		3	Nurses Associations & Registered Nurses			1	1	1	2
Aux. Kiwanis Club						x	One Hundred Club, Ladies' Auxiliary			x			
Aux. United Commercial Travellers						x	Order of the Eastern Star (No. of Chapters)			2			
Beta Sigma Phi						x	Orphans and Children's Homes						x
Big Sister Association	x		x	x	x		Ottawa Dietetic Association			x	x		
Blessed Sacrament Parish Tabernacle Society	x						Ottawa Ladies College Alumnae	x					

Ottawa (1894)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Bonne Entente League	x		x				Ottawa Public School Women's Teachers Association				x		
Bronson Memorial Home			x	x			Ottawa Secondary School Women's Teachers Association				x		
Business & Professional Women's Club			x	x	x	x	Ottawa Women Teachers' Association			x			
Can. Girl Guides, Local Ass'n. of				x			Ottawa Women's Canadian Club	x		x			
Can. Legion Ottawa Branch, B.E.S.L.			x	x		x	Ottawa Women's Club	x		x	x		
Canadian Daughters' League Assembly			x	x	x	x	Ottawa Women's Liberal Club			x	x		
Canadian Repertory Theatre						x	Perley Home for Incurables Women's Auxiliary	x		x	x		
Catholic Girls' Club	x			x	x	x	Prog. Con Business Women's Club of Ottawa and District			x	x		
Catholic Women's League (No. of divisions)	3						Protestant Children's Village Board			x	x		
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	27		28	27	30	32	Protestant Federation of Patriotic Women of Canada	x		x			
Congregation de Notre Dame Alumnae	x						Protestant Girls Club	x		x	x		2
D'Youville Alumnae, Sacred Heart Convent	x						Protestant Home for the Aged, Ladies Auxiliary	x					
Daily Vacation Bible School Aux.	x		x	x			Protestant Infants' Home and Protestant Children's Hospital	x					
Day Nursery, Ottawa	x		x	x	x	x	Protestant Orphan's Home	x					
Featherstone Lodge, OBA	x						Protestant Women's Federation				x	2	

Ottawa (1894)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Friends of the Poor Society	x						Quota Club					x	x
Girl Guides, Ottawa Local Association	x				x	x	Red Cross Association, Ottawa Branch	x		x	x	x	x
Grenfell Association	x		x	x		x	Rosary Hall Association	x					
Hadassah, Ottawa Local Council of	x		x	x		x	Rosedale Women's Municipal Assoc.	x		x	x		
Hebrew Benevolent Society, Women's Historical Society			x	x		x	Sisterhood Adath Jersurun Cong.				x		
Home and School Council	x		x				Soroptimist Club						x
Home Economics Association						x	St. Andrew's Association, Scottish Ladies Clan					x	
Home for Aged						2	St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum Ladies Auxiliary	x					
Home for Friendless Women	x						TOCH Service League (Women)				x		
Hospital Aid, Auxiliary, Associations	1		1	2	1		University Women's Club	x		x	x	x	x
Human Society, SPCA						x	Veteran Women's Association	x					
IODE (No. of Branches)	5		8	6	1	9	Victorian Order of Nurses	x		x	x	x	x
King's Daughters' Guild	x		x	x	x	x	WCTU (No. of Branches)	10		7	6	1	4
Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society	x						Women of Rotary			x	x		x
Lions' Club Women's Auxiliary	x		x	x	x	2	Women's Clubs Study Groups					x	x
Lyon's Club Women's Auxiliary	x						Women's Liberal Club					x	x
May Court Club of Ottawa	x		x	x	x	x	Women's Canadian Club				x	x	x
Merivale and City View Women's Institute	x						Women's Canadian Historical Society	x		x	x		
Morning Music Club	x						Women's Conservative Assns (No. of Orgs)			1	1	1	2
							Women's Teachers Associations	2					2

Ottawa (1894)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Morrison Lamothe Women's Assn.						x	Y.M.C.A. - Women's Aux.	x		x	x	x	
Mothercraft Society					x	x	Young Women's Christian Association	x		x	x	x	x
National Council of Jewish Women				x	x	2	Zonta Club of Ottawa			x	x	x	x

Montreal (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Altrusca Club					x	x	Montreal Graduate Nurses' Association	x	x	x	x		
Alumnae Assns. Hospitals	2	2	3	3			Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association	x	x	x			
Alumnae Association (College & University)	1	1	1	1	1	4	Montreal Soldiers' Wives League				x		
Alumnae Schools of Nursing	1	1	1	1	1	4	Montreal West Women's Clubs	x	x	x	x		
American Association of Medical Social Workers - Eastern Canada Division	x	x	x	x	x	x	Mount Royal Women's Community Club		x	x	x		
American Women's Club	x		x	x	x	x	Musical Clubs & Symphony Orchestra Societies					x	3
Army, Navy, Air Force, Sailors Auxiliary						x	National Council of Jewish Women				x	2	2
Arts and Crafts, Handicrafts, Needlework Guilds	2	2	2	2	3	2	Notre Dame de Grace Women's Club	x	x	x	x		
Auxiliary Museum Fine Arts						x	Nurses Association & Registered Nurses					x	x
Auxiliary of Old Neighbourhood House					x	x	Orphan's Home Society					x	x
B'Nai B'Rith Women's Assoc.					3	6	Outremont and North End Women's Club	x	x	x	x		
Beta Sigma Phi					x	x	Parks & Playgrounds Association					x	x
Big Sister Association		x	x				Pioneer Women's Organization					x	x
Blue Goose Auxiliary					x		Playground, Community Centre					x	

Montreal (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Brehmer Rest Preventorium	x	x	x	x		x	Polish Women's War Refugee Committee (Guest Affiliation)				x		
Business and Professional Women's Club	x	x	x	x	x	x	Protestant Industrial Rooms	x	x	x	x		
CAC						x	Protestant Orphans' home	x	x	x	x		
Canadian Association of Social Workers				x	x	x	Protestant Women Teachers' Association	x	x		x		
Canadian Home Reading Union					x	x	Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds	x	x	x			
Canadian Housewives' League: Montreal				x			Queen's Alumnae				x	x	
Canadian Jewish Congress - Women's War Efforts Committee				x			Quota Club						x
Canadian Legion, BESL					3	3	Salvation Army			x	x		x
Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals			x	x			Silver Cross Women					2	2
Cancer Research Society and Auxiliary						x	Society for the Protection of Women & Children					x	x
Catholic Daughters of America			x	x			Soldiers' Wives' League						x
Catholic Women's League (No. of Divisions)	2			1	1	1	Soroptimist Club						2
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)	3	3	3	4	8	12	St. Andrew and St. Paul Dorcas Ladies' Aid Society	x	x	x			
City Improvement League						x	St. John Ambulance Brigade	x	x	x	x	x	x
Civics League				x			St. Lambert Women's Club		x	x	x		
Cote des Neiges and Snowdon Women's Club	x	x	x	x			St. Laurent Women's Club		x				
Council of Jewish Women of Montreal		x	x				St. Paul's Women's Club		x	x	x		

Montreal (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Day Nursery					x	x	Ste. Anne de Bellevue Women's Club		x	x	x		
Diet Dispensary					x	x	Summerhill House - Protestant Orphans Home				x		
Ex-Service Women's Club	x						TOC H League (Women's Section)				x	x	x
Faithful Circle of the King's Daughters	x	x					Ukrainian Women's Association					x	x
Federation of Protestant Women Teachers of the Island of Montreal		x		x			University Settlement		x	x	x	x	x
Girl Guides Association		x	x	x	x	x	University Women's Club					x	x
Girls' Cottage Industrial School				x	x	x	Verdun Women's Club			x	x		
Girls' Counselling Centre				x	x		Veterans' Kith and Kin, Non-Pensioned Widows						x
Girls' Work Committee					x		Victorian Order of Nurses	x	x	x	x	x	x
Grenfell Labrador Medical Mission			x	x			WCTU	4	5	3	4	3	4
Hadassah			x	x	x		Welfare Council League, Service Clubs					x	x
Hellenic Ladies' Benevolent Society						x	Westmount Women's Club	x	x	x	x		
Hervey Institute	x	x	x	x	x	x	Women Teachers Association					x	2
Hospital Aid, Auxiliary, Association	1	1	1	1	2	1	Women's Directory	x	x	x	x		
Inner Wheel Women of Rotary					x	x	Women's Liberal Club Assns.	2	3	1	1		1
IODE			x	x	x	x	Women's Branch Antiquarian & Numismatic Society	x	x	x	x	x	x
Iverley Settlement	x	x	x	x			Women's Canadian Club				x	x	x
Jewish Junior Welfare League				x			Women's Clubs Study Groups					15	14
Junior League of Montreal	x	x	x	x	x	x	Women's Institutes						x
King's Daughters	x	x	x	x	x		Women's Personnel Group						x
Libraries, Public and Children's						x	Women's Progressive Conservative Assns. (No. of Orgs)		x	x	x	x	x

Montreal (1893)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Maritime Women's Club		x	x	x			Women's Voluntary Services				x		x
Montreal Council of Jewish Women	x		x				YM and YWHA						x
Montreal Diet Dispensary	x	x	x	x			Young Women's Christian Association	2	2	2	1	1	1
							Zonta Club				x	x	x

Halifax (1894)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Acadia Club			x				Ladies' College Alumnae	x	x	x	x		
Alumnae Association						2	Ladies' Musical Club	x	x	x	x		
Altrusca Club						x	Liberal Women's Club	x	x	x	x		x
Anti-Tuberculosis League	x	x	x	x		x	Mental Hygiene						x
Auxiliary, Royal British Veterans	x						Mount Allison Alumnae			x			
Business and Professional Women's Association						2	National Conservative Women's Club			x			
Canadian Girls in Training						x	N.S. College of Art	x	x	x	x		
Canadian Institute for the Blind	x	x	x	x			North End Mission	x					
Catholic Women's League	x	x	x	x		x	Nurses Assn. and Registered Nurses						x
Children's Aid Society			x	x		x	Prisoner's Welfare			x			
Children of Mary	x	x	x	x			Protestant Orphans' Home	x	x				
Church Women's Organizations (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, DVBS, Hebrew, Presbyterian, Ukrainian, Unitarian, United)		9	8	10	8	22	Public Health Nurses Service						x
Currie Auxiliary, Fort Massey	x						Pythian Sisters						x
Dalhousie Alumnae	x	x	x	x			Red Cross - Dartmouth	x					
Dalhousie University Public Health Clinic				x			Richmond Home and School Association			x			
Fortnightly Club	x	x	x	x			Salvation Army	x	x	x	x		
Girl Guides				x		x	Soroptimist Club				x		x

Halifax (1894)	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955		1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955
Girls' Friendly Society, St. Paul's	x						St. Patrick's Alumnae		x	x	x		
Halifax Branch Home Economics				x			St. Patrick's Home - Ladies' Association			x	x		
Halifax Branch Registered Nurses Assn of Nova Scotia			x	x			Silver Cross Women						x
Halifax Chapter Ladies' Hadassah		x	x	x		x	Sisterhood Robie Street Synagogue				x		
Halifax Club Business and Professional Women			x	x			SPCA		x		x		
Halifax Dispensary	x	x		x			Teachers' Club	x	x		x		x
Halifax Protestant Home				x			Twentieth Century Liberal Club		x	x			
Halifax Welfare Bureau				x			University Women's Club			x	x		x
Hebrew Ladies' Aid	x			x			Victorian Order of Nurses	x	x	x	x		x
Henrietta Szold Chapter, Junior Hadassah Society			x	x			Welfare Assn. Council League, Service Bureau						x
Home Economics Association						x	Women's Auxiliary Royal British Veterans			x			
Hospital Aid, Aux, Assn.	1	2	2	2		x	WCTU (No. of Branches)	4	2	2	2		1
Infants home	x	x	x	x			Women's Canadian Club			x	x		x
Inner Wheel Women of Rotary						x	Women's Conservative Club in Halifax		x	x			
IODE	4	5	8	7		5	YMCA - Auxiliary	x	x	x	x		
Jost Mission	x	x	x	x			YWCA	x	x	x	x		x
Junior League of Halifax				x		x	Young Business and Professional Women's Club			x	x		

Data for these tables were collected from the *Yearbook* annual reports.

It should be noted that missing data for some of the local councils (especially Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary and Halifax) is unexplained in the *Yearbook* reports. Organizations with numbers indicates the number of auxiliaries, branches, chapters or councils that were indicated within the individual entries.

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Dominion Council of Health	RG 29
Catholic Women's League	MG 28 I345
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Department of Justice	RG 13
National Defence	RG 24
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	RG 18

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Calgary Herald
Edmonton Journal

National Affiliates

Organization	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Canadian Council of Girl Guides' Association	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare		x	x	x	x																					
Canadian Dietetic												x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Canadian Division of the National Council of Jewish Women									x	x	x	x	x	x												
Canadian Dominion Council The Mothers' Union									x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Canadian Federation of University Women																								x	x	x
Canadian Home Economics Associations																							x	x	x	x
Canadian Home Reading Union																							x	x	x	x
Canadian National Parks Association *	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x															
Canadian Nurses	x	x	x																							
Canadian Social Hygiene Council	x	x	x	x	x	x																				
Canadian Welfare Council						x	x	x	x	x																
Dominion Fire Prevention Association *	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dominion Women's Association of the United Church of Canada													x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Girls' Friendly Society in Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x														
Hadassah Organization of Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Health League of Canada							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire and Children of the Empire (junior)	x																									
IODE (Junior Branch)							x																			
IODE (National Chapter of Canada)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
King's Daughters and Sons of the International Order	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
League of Nations Society in Canada *			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lyceum Club and Women's Art Association of Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Medical Alumnae, University of Toronto	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
National Canadian Girls in Training Committee Council of Churches																							x	x	x	x
National Council of Jewish Women of Canada																							x	x	x	x
National Council of YWCA	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
National Girls' Work Board of the Religious Education Council of Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Queen's University Alumnae Association	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Salvation Army in Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Silver Cross Women of British Empire (1946)																										
Social Hygiene Council	x																									
The National Girls' Work Board	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x															
The Salvation Army - Women's Service										x	x															
Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ukrainian Women's Organization C.E.																										
United Nations Society in Canada *																										
Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
WCTU	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Women's League of Health and Beauty																										
Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
National Advisory Comm. on Manpower *																										
Physical Fitness Awards Comm. *																										
National Employment Committee *																										
National Advisory Council on Vocational Training *																										
National Education Week *																										
Canadian Association of Consumers *																										

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