

‘Irreconcilable Differences’?:
*The Experiences of Middle-Class Women Combining Marriage and Work in Post-War
English Speaking Canada (1945-1960)*

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Abstract

Following the Second World War, middle-class married women in English speaking Canada became for the first time a significant proportion of the labour force. Nonetheless, society still encouraged them to take up their domestic roles as housewives and mothers. They were subjected to discriminatory government policy, justified by traditional gender norms supported by academic research and popular social commentators. As a result, their lives became increasingly divorced from the prescriptions that encouraged them to remain at home. The differences meant that their work, and its associated challenges, went unrecognized.

Drawing on a broad range of sources, this thesis explores how and why middle class women – especially married ones- entered the workforce, the public’s reactions to their work, and how they negotiated the difference between prescriptions and their lives. It demonstrates that the 1950s were a watershed moment for women’s labour. Married women gained greater recognition of their place in the workforce, and obtained incremental changes to minimize discriminatory policy, practice, and attitudes. Accordingly, their efforts were foundational for the future women’s labour movements and Second Wave Feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Dedication

*For Rita, Linda, and
all working wives and mothers.*

You continue to be an inspiration.

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Chapter I: *An Introduction*

*Women's history can illuminate mind, myth, and fantasy in Canadian history.*¹

Following the Second World War, women re-entered the workforce driven by a combination of personal and family aspirations.² The rise in their labour force participation sparked heated debates within the Canadian government, academia, and popular press. This resulted in women being bombarded with an array of prescriptions that encouraged them to become housewives and mothers rather than workers outside of the home. Those prescriptions, and the government policies that reinforced them, were underpinned by a pervasive separate sphere ideology, which rendered working married women and their challenges invisible in the social and political realms. Nevertheless, women increasingly combined marriage, motherhood, and work. These women confronted a number of obstacles stemming from restrictive government policy, workplace practices, and social attitudes. As they became a permanent fixture of the labour force, the demand that they withdraw from the workforce upon marriage increasingly contradicted their daily lives. Women were forced to reconcile the discrepancies between government and social preferences regarding their work and their own needs and ambitions. In doing so, they became more vocal in defending their right to work and challenged the policies and attitudes that curtailed it. The 1950s became a watershed moment for women's work in Canada, as more and more women claimed their space in the workforce and confronted issues they encountered there. They undermined the policies and practices that opposed women's presence in the workforce, and called for them to be replaced by more accommodating ones. The

¹ Elaine Silverman, "Writing Canadian Women's History, 1970-1982," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 63 no. 4 (December 1982): 516.

² Byron Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Micro Study* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970), 12.

changes to married women's work in this period became a foundation for future movements by women who sought greater rights and opportunities in the workforce.

Post-war married women's labour trends, along with the policies and attitudes regarding their work, are crucial to understanding broader social, political, and economic trends of the same period. As well, they are critical to understanding the emergence of women's labour movements in the 1960s and 1970s.³ This thesis examines the rise of married women's participation in the workforce throughout the 1950s and its effect on post-war Canadian society. It first describes how married women entered the labour force, and then examines their work opportunities and challenges. It then discusses the reason why women were combining marriage, motherhood, and work. It also examines the reactions of government officials, social scientists, and the popular press to their increased labour force participation rate. It looks at how women negotiated the contradictions between prescriptions and daily life by examining norms concerning women's employment and domestic responsibilities alongside women's own understandings of these responsibilities and work. It examines how women confronted these limiting norms to ultimately achieve greater recognition of married women's rights in the workplace in the post-war period. Ultimately, this thesis argues that the 1950s were a critical period for women's labour rights. Their activity provided a foundation for the continued efforts of women in the 1960s and 1970s as they secured their place in the labour force, fought for improved working rights and opportunities, and gained greater social acceptance by government officials, businesses, and social commentators.

³ The women's labour movements here refer to the organized activities of women. They advocated for wage equality, greater access to certain occupations and positions, public child care, recognition of unpaid labour, and sought greater legal recognition of their social, economic, and political rights.

Historiography

The historiography has traditionally overlooked the importance of the 1950s in shifts in married women's labour force participation rates. It has placed a greater emphasis on the Second World War or the women's labour movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Instead, historians studying the immediate post-war focus on the period's political and social traditionalism. The 'Baby Boom' and the Cold War are assumed to be evidence that the period was a return to the past. The result has been a separate sphere interpretation of women's lives, which was supported by the government, institutional, and media sources of the period. In comparison to the 'excitement' of the Second World War and the 1960s' Second Wave Feminism, the immediate post-war period seems rather uninterestingly conformist and conservative.

Until the late 1970s, historians argued the Second World War had been a critical turning point. It allowed women to break free from existing restrictive gender norms, which had prevented them from entering certain industries or occupations.⁴ This interpretation was supported by the abundant government propaganda praising women's participation in the war effort and the extensive literature by women seeking to retain their place in the workforce in the post-war period.⁵ This interpretation became the 'popular' narrative of the war's legacy for women, and was internalized by many of them. Their perception of the war's impact on their potential for better employment opportunities in the post-war was perhaps exaggerated.⁶ Although historians recognized the fact that wives and mothers were pushed out of the labour

⁴ Johanna den Hertog, "What did they Fight For, How did they Organize?" *Kinesis* 5, no. 59 (September, 1976):14.

⁵ See K. Glover, *Women in the Post-War World* (Toronto: Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1944); A.M. Royden, *Women's Partnership in the New World* (Toronto: Canadian Legion Educational Services, 1945); Renée Morin, "Women After the War," *Canadian Affairs* 2 no. 4 (1945).

⁶ Joan Sangster, "New Departures in Women's History," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'étude Canadiennes* 23 no. 1 (Spring 1988): 234; Ruth Roach Pierson, *They're Still Women after All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 12.

force; however, there was no definitive examination of the mechanics that permitted that process, despite the seeming abundance of sources indicating the war had improved their rights in the workplace. Consequently, the popular narrative that the war critically changes women's standing following the war remained.

In 1986, Ruth Roach Pierson published *They're Still Women After All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, to challenge the popular narrative.⁷ Her crucial monograph revisited women's efforts in the war and their lasting effect on the post-war period.⁸ Although she had written on the subject as early as 1976, which had an immediate impact on the discipline, her 1986 seminal work combined her previous works and became turning point in the historiography.⁹ She argued that the Second World War did not lead to widespread changes to married women's rights or status as a worker in post-war society, in either government policy or public perception.¹⁰ Instead, she demonstrates that the post-war witnessed an increase in discriminatory practices against women in the workforce.¹¹ Pierson's study has since become the cornerstone of the historiography, as she effectively dismantled the idea that the war was an agent of change. She encouraged historians to emphasize the continuity of pre-war norms and policy in the post-war period.

Historians favoured Pierson's interpretation that the war did not have a lasting legacy on women's labour force participation from the late 1970s, when Pierson first wrote on the subject, until the early 1990s. Accordingly, they treated the participation of women in the workforce

⁷ Joan Sangster, "New Departures in Women's History," 234.

⁸ Ruth Roach Pierson, *They're Still Women after All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, 12.

⁹ Ruth Roach Pierson, "'Women's Emancipation' and the Recruitment of Women into the Canadian Labour Force in World War II," Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers* (1976): 141-173; Ruth Roach Pierson, "'Jill Canuck': CWAC of all Trades, but no 'Pistol Packing Momma'," Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers* (1978): 106-133.

¹⁰ Ruth Roach Pierson, *They're Still Women after All: The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, 33.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 220.

during the 1950s with a degree of skepticism. Official statistics of women's participation rising notwithstanding, historians typically emphasized how women's lives remained the same instead of how they were changing.¹² As a result, the prevailing interpretation of the women in the post-war period focused on domesticity and social traditionalism. Marie Ann Boutilier and Sue Bland examined the media's treatment of women while transitioning from war to peace. According to their analyses, the popular press continued to view women as domestic beings despite their contributions to war effort.¹³ Boutilier and Bland demonstrate that journalists (Boutilier) and advertisers (Bland) immediately reversed to pre-war descriptions of women following the war. Consequently, the war-time promotion of the 'working wife' was a short-term, war induced one, and not a reflection of general acceptance for working wives.¹⁴

In the 1980s, Pat and Hugh Armstrong analyzed the labour force structures that limited women's employment opportunities and effectively withdrew them all together.¹⁵ Sociologists like Paul and Erin Phillips defined the period as the "high point in the traditional family, in the separation of the private, female sphere from the public male sphere."¹⁶ They argued that the recommended domesticity of the period delegitimized the option of work for women, except for a few years between school and marriage. Phillips and Phillips concluded that it was not until the 1960s that things began to change.¹⁷ They explain that only then did "a new feminist movement emerge which challenged the [...] foundations of the cult of domesticity, including the central

¹² Pat and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1985), 50.

¹³ Marie Ann Boutilier, "Ideology Surrounding Women's Work in Canada, 1931-1956" (McMaster University, 1977), 121; Sue Bland, "Henrietta the Homemaker, and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in Maclean's Magazine, 1939-50," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (April 1983): 62.

¹⁴ Marie Ann Boutilier, "Ideology Surrounding Women's Work in Canada, 1931-1956," 14.

¹⁵ Pat and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work*, 21, 23.

¹⁶ Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market*, 1st ed. (Toronto: James Lormier and Company, 1983), 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

premise that a woman's place was in the home."¹⁸ Historian Doug Owram offers a similar interpretation in his study of the Baby Boom generation. He argues that the 1950s marked a period of traditionalism and domesticity, reducing the 1950s labour pattern to: "Women remained in the home. Men worked."¹⁹ The belief that the 'spheres' were separated in the period however obscures the critical trend that emerged in the 1950s: married women permanently entered the work force.

More recently, Ann Porter and Jennifer Stephens have used Pierson's interpretation to explore the way policy makers' implemented a 'full demobilization' strategy for women following the war.²⁰ The government enacted a number of restrictive policies that targeted women, specifically married women, and prevented them from capitalizing on their wartime experience. They demonstrate that while better wages and increased opportunities pulled more women into the workforce during the war, they were not viewed as permanent workers.²¹ Instead, the government still treated them as a reserve labour force, and they were last hired, first fired. The focus on government and media reactions at the end of the war substantiated the argument that women's workforce participation had reverted to pre-war patterns. Consequently, the immediate post-war period has been treated as a trough between two periods of meaningful work by women, first during the Second World War and second in the 1960s when the Second Wave Feminist emerged.

¹⁸ Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market*, 14.

¹⁹ Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 22.

²⁰ Ann Porter, *Gendered States: Women, Unemployment Insurance, and the Political Economy of the Welfare State in Canada, 1945-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 20; Jennifer Stephen, "Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demobilising Canada's Women Workers after World War Two," *Atlantis* 32, no. 1 (2007): 124.

²¹ Jennifer Anne Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 26.

That said, beginning in the early 1990s, historians began to revisit this interpretation. In 1993, Veronica Strong-Boag studied the debate over working wives in the popular press, and found that there was no consensus about married women's participation in the labour force.²² She instead concludes that though women were the target of policies, practices, and commentary that encouraged them to be housewives and mothers, the prescriptions were not as ubiquitous as previously believed. Strong-Boag argues that there was a crucial gap between pervasive prescriptions and married women's realities. She concludes that women were facing a distorted mirror.²³ Though her work highlights the discrepancies between prescription and experiences, it does not explain how women negotiated those discrepancies.

In 1997, Jeff Keshen called for a greater examination of women's work in the 1950s and challenged the prevailing historiography of women's work in the post-war period. In his article "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women during World War II," Keshen examines women's labour force participation during the war and immediately after. He demonstrates that women became increasingly part of the labour force in the post-war period, and argues that the war played a critical role in this rise in participation.²⁴ By doing so, he questioned the notion of continuity with the pre-war period. Keshen claims "while much first-rate work has appeared to explain the basis for social continuity" in the study of women's labour trends in the post-war period, "not enough attention has been devoted to mapping out the process of historical change."²⁵ He suggests that greater attention to women experiences, and their own interpretations of their work, would be useful to understand how and why women were re-entering the workforce in the face

²² Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29 no. 3, (Fall 1994): 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁴ Jeff Keshen, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," *Histoire Sociale / Social History* 30, no. 60 (November 1997): 239.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

unsympathetic cultural norms, and even formal obstacles. Moreover, doing so would illuminate how women challenged these barriers to gain a greater rights and opportunities in the labour force.

In the last two decades, more and more historians have since followed his advice, most notably Magda Fahrni and Joan Sangster. To do so, both scholars have sought to re-integrate the “lived experience” into the historical narrative. Sangster argues that using women’s experiences allows her to speak to a broader understanding of the post-war period, stating: “they offer the possibility of piecing together a picture of women’s paid work in post-war Canada.”²⁶ By examining women’s perceptions of their own lives, through oral interviews or questionnaires, Fahrni and Sangster have developed interesting counter-narratives that illuminate a more complex reality than those suggested by government or media sources. Moreover, they have found, as Strong-Boag has suggested, that domesticity was not as common as the media or government records would suggest.²⁷ These scholars use women’s interpretations of their daily lives to demonstrate how they negotiated the challenges combining work and marriage. In addition, their work focuses on the experiences of lower class women, and women in aboriginal and immigrant communities.²⁸ Thus, rather than depicting the homogenous experience of a privileged class, the recent historiography has revealed a variety of previously obscured experiences, which elucidates the complexity of women at work in the post-war period. Sangster has suggested that historians seeking to study women’s labour in the post-war period should use

²⁶ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour Women and Work in Post-War Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 17.

²⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960,” 14; Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour Women and Work in Post-War Canada*, 10.

²⁸ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour Women and Work in Post-War Canada*, 10; Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Post-War Reconstruction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 108-123.

this approach, which examines government, institutional, and media sources in combination with women's own voices.²⁹

Another important historiographical trend important to this thesis is the question of the extent to which women organized and worked to challenge barriers in the work place stemming from limiting government policy, business practices, and social prejudice. Although historians no longer believe that women wholly exited the labour force under the combined pressures of government policies and social norms, the belief that women were unable to gain meaningful advancements for women's workplace rights and opportunities in the 1950s remains.³⁰ Early studies of women's resistance to workplace challenges often conclude that most of the achievements in recognition of their rights were nominal at best. Gail Brandt's "'Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten': The Work of the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women, 1943" found that the Canadian Government's intent to push married women out of the labour force impeded any efforts to improve the post-war status of women by this Subcommittee (SPWPW).³¹ She found that though the SPWPW addressed many of the concerns of post-war women, including their preference for work, their recommendations ultimately fell upon the deaf ears of government officials who sought to remove women from the workforce completely.³² Historians like Ruth Milkman argue that 1950s working women did not actively set out to change many of the discriminatory structures that led to their systematic employment in lower paid jobs.³³ Further, Milkman argued that unions were not a viable option for many women as the structures

²⁹ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour Women and Work in Post-War Canada*, 13.

³⁰ Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: Job Segregation by Sex* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 22; Pat and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work*, 50.

³¹ Gail Brandt, "'Pigeon-Holed and Forgotten': The Work of the Subcommittee on the Post-War Problems of Women, 1943," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 15, no. 29 (1982): 239.

³² *Ibid.*, 240-241.

³³ Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: Job Segregation by Sex*, 22.

of class consciousness, which underpinned union activity, were incompatible with gender consciousness.³⁴ Accordingly, it would be the women of the 1960s that would truly engender meaningful change.³⁵

Beginning in the mid-1990s, historians increasingly examined post-war women's activity in unions. Julie Guard's doctoral thesis and article, "Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE," challenged the long standing notion that unionism and gender consciousness were mutually exclusive.³⁶ Instead, Guard demonstrates how women organized within their unions to gain greater support for women's rights by using class conscious discourse.³⁷ In her work *Earning Respect*, Joan Sangster examines the way women, primarily lower-class or blue collar working women, organized in unions to engender change.³⁸ Greater attention has been given to women's activism in unions due to many early women's historians beginnings in labour history with an interest in female workers.

However, women's advocacy outside of unions has been overlooked in examinations of women's resistance in the 1950s. Individual efforts by women are difficult to track, and yet were the most common form of resistance during this time. Magda Farhni has demonstrated in *Household Politics: Montreal Families and post-war Reconstruction*, workplace inequity and

³⁴ Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: Job Segregation by Sex*, 22.

³⁵ Elaine Silverman, "Writing Canadian Women's History, 1970-1982," 517.

³⁶ Julie Guard, "Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE," *Labour / Le Travail*, 37 (Spring 1996): 166.

For this type of historical framework see Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex During World War II*.

³⁷ Julie Guard, "Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE," 152-153.

³⁸ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 139-140.

discrimination were challenged regularly but often on an individual basis.³⁹ The low participation rate of middle-class women in unions, due to their greater concentration in non-unionized workplaces, has left the impression that they were relatively indifferent to unfair treatment in the workforce. For example, Pierson argues that although lower-class women were active in the labour movement, middle class women felt short:

A few voices on the middle classes' widening sphere of debate did call for 'equal pay and equal work' and fought against sex discrimination in pensions and unemployment insurances and coverage. But by and large, even those who advocated for middle-class women's right to work did not question the husband's right to head of the family. Nor did they seek a holus-bolus dismantling of the ideology of separate spheres that underpinned men's privileged position in both home and workplace.⁴⁰

Yet middle class women did press for improved rights and opportunities at this time, though not necessarily through union participation. Judith Fingard has examined women's organization and activity outside of unions in her study *Mother of Municipality: Women, Work and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*. She describes the way that women, particularly those in non-unionized workplaces, joined women's professional groups to advocate for change.⁴¹ In *Household Politics*, Magda Fahrni explores how women individually managed to challenge work place issues to seek immediate and local improvements to their daily problems.⁴² Ultimately, as Brian Thorn has demonstrated in his 2016 monograph, *From Left to Right: Maternalism and Women's Political Activism in post-war Canada*, the political or class associations of women did not

³⁹ Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Post-War Reconstruction*, 112-116.

⁴⁰ Ruth Roach Pierson, "The Politics of the Domestic Sphere," in *Canadian Women's Issues, Volume II: Bold Visions*, ed. Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Griffin Cohen (Toronto: James Lormier and Company, 1995), 3.

⁴¹ Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Post-War Reconstruction*, 110.

⁴² Judith Fingard, "Women's Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women's Activism," in *Mother of Municipality: Women, Work and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, ed. Judith Fingard and Janet Guildford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 25-26.

determine the level of their activism.⁴³ Women advocated for improved rights regardless of their socio-economic class, they just did so in different ways.

Methodology

The recent scholarship exploring the changes to married women's labour force participation and the type of activity they engaged in to challenge workplace barriers and discrimination has relied heavily on women's interpretations of their experience. Historians have used 'women's experiences' to challenge the universality of grand narratives by exploring how this experience differed from the dominant narrative.⁴⁴ This 'difference' in experience has been critical in legitimizing women's history.⁴⁵ While it had been a popular concept early in the historiography, by the 1990s, some women's historians began to question its methodological soundness. In 1991, Pierson wrote an article seeking to 'problematise' experience as a historical concept, finding that historians had given experience an undue privilege as a source of knowledge without properly theorizing it.⁴⁶ She found that while identifying differences between women's descriptions of their experiences and dominant historical narratives based on male experiences, women's historians failed to identify the differences in experiences among women, based on race, class, and ethnicity.⁴⁷ The result has been the domination of certain

⁴³ Brian T. Thorn, *From Left to Right: Maternalism and Women's Political Activism in Post-War Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2016), 106.

⁴⁴ Joan Kelly's "Did Women Have a Renaissance" (1984) is an optimal example as to how women's historians have used experience to challenge grand narratives, she demonstrates the partiality of elite male's experience in the periodization of the Renaissance period. She argues that given the different experience of women, including elite women, it is questionable if women experienced a renaissance at all.

⁴⁵ Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," *Canadian Historical Review* 76, no.3 (September 1995): 357.

⁴⁶ Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance, and Voice," in *Writing Women's History: International Perspective*, ed. By Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall (London: MacMillan Press, 1991), 86.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

women's experiences, particularly of white middle-class, and the marginalization of others, like women of colour, lower class women, and immigrant women.⁴⁸

Increasingly, historians have set out to uncover the variations within women's experiences, particularly those that have had been previously neglected, mainly women of colour and lower class women. Historians have had to address the methodological concerns with 'experience' to understand these marginalized women's lives since they were notably absent in media or government sources. Franca Iacovetta managed to do so in 1992 with *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Post-war Toronto*. While examining the experience of working-class Italian immigrant women, she relied heavily women's interpretations of their own experiences.⁴⁹ She argued that exclusively examining government, media, and institutional sources was insufficient and by "isolating only the structural factors we learn very little about how the women themselves learned to cope under these conditions and, moreover, how they have given meaning to their lives."⁵⁰ Consequently, she argues that integrating women's 'experience' is critical for a broader understanding. In more recent work, she has suggested that to properly use experience as a historical tool, one must "use new sources, as well as ask new questions of old sources, to analyse the shifting interactions among race/ethnicity, class, and gender."⁵¹ Acknowledging the different facets of identity that affect experience, including race, gender, and class, Iacovetta has demonstrated how differently Italian female immigrants experienced the post-war period than middle class white women, whose experience dominates the narrative.

⁴⁸ Ibid.; Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice," 359.

⁴⁹ Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Post-war Toronto* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 24-26.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁵¹ Franca Iacovetta, *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, ed. Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), xi.

Joan Sangster has also used this approach to examine the working lives of women who were not discussed in the popular press or government policy document. Sangster has used women's own voices, expressed in interviews, questionnaires, and journals, to uncover their experiences which differ greatly than the one of the middle class, white women.⁵² In addressing the methodological concerns of 'experience' she has suggested a similar approach to Iacovetta be taken: "every source presents its own partialities and interpretative dilemmas, but taken together, interrogated against each other, and viewed critically in their own provenance, intent, assumptions, and voices, they offer the possibility of piecing together a better picture."⁵³ She and Iacovetta have revealed the heterogeneity of women's post-war work experience, but also provided a methodological blueprint as to how to address this heterogeneity. Their work has brought into sharp relief the discrepancies between their experiences and the promoted norms of the period. Moreover, their approach poses an interesting opportunity to understand potential discrepancies between popular prescriptions and the middle-class women they were targeting to understand their experience.

This thesis examines the experiences of middle class women working of English speaking Canada in the 1950s and the political and social debate regarding their work, using women's own understandings of their work and its effect on other areas of the lives to uncover how they negotiated the growing discrepancies between their lives and norms. The 'middle-class' was primarily an Ontarian phenomenon. This does not mean it did not exist in other Canadian provinces; but as Ontario was the most populated province, when we speak of the middle-class in post-war Canada, we are speaking largely about its middle-class. This thesis has primarily used Ontario sources; however, it has also has used sources originating from other

⁵² Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 139-140.

⁵³ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Post-war Canada*, 17.

provinces where available. Consequently, this thesis' findings speak to experiences of middle-class married women in Ontario; however, these findings are likely applicable to other parts of the country.

The approach advocated by Sangster and Iacovetta has not yet been applied to married middle class women. Although middle class women's lives were more likely to respect those norms than immigrant, or refugee women, they could still significantly depart from them, and the prevalence of these norms obscured the nature of married women's work. Moreover, greater focus on working married women in general is required. While single women in the post-war period have received more scholarly attention in recent years, married women remain understudied.⁵⁴ Married women faced a number of obstacles in their daily working lives without proper support from governments or society, which were sustained by the non-recognition of the differences between prescription and reality. Yet, throughout this period women called greater attention to these differing realities; through collective and individual activism, they prompted greater social acceptance and key policy changes in the post-war period that would be critical for the successes of the later women's labour movements in the 1960s.

This thesis relies on a broad range of sources, all discussing the issues of married women's work: government documents, media publications, contemporary social science works, and union and women's organizations records. Following Iacovetta and Sangster's suggestion, each is critically examined within their context and interrogated against one another to piece together a broader picture of women's post-war labour. Government documents, reports, and policies are examined to understand the government's immediate approach to married women wanting to work, and the way their attitudes changed over the post-war period. Key points of

⁵⁴ This is largely in part due to the historiographical focus on the "baby boom" generation in the period. See: Doug Owsram's *Born at the Right Time* (1996) and Christabelle Sethna's "The University of Toronto Health Service, Oral Contraception, and Student Demand, 1960-1970" (2005).

study will be the Sub-Committee of Post-War Problems for Women, Canadian Vocational Training regulations, surveys by the National Selective Services and Women's Bureau, the *Unemployment Insurance Act*, particularly regulation 5A (which add special qualifications for married women), and *Ontario's Female Employee's Fair Remuneration Act*. These show that there was a variety positions among government of government departments, both at the provincial and federal levels. Moreover, they reveal how government perspective on married women's labour transformed over the post-war period.

Canadian periodicals, including newspapers and magazines, are used to gauge public opinion about married women's work throughout the decade. They are useful in mapping the changes and continuities in prescriptions for middle class women. By 1954, magazine circulation in Canada reached 4.2 million people, which was approximately 28% of Canadians.⁵⁵ Jeff Keshen discusses the potential pitfalls and benefits of using newspapers as a barometer of public opinion in his article "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women during World War II". He concludes that cautiously and critically examined in the context of other sources, they provide a useful insight into married women's work.⁵⁶ They reveal the gender roles women were expected to follow, which sustained the preferred social order.

Chatelaine, *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Star Magazine* encompass a broad spectrum of ideas and opinions, and have been selected for this reason. *Chatelaine* was a general interest magazine for women, which presented a variety of views in its feature articles and opinion pieces.⁵⁷ *Maclean's* was a general interest magazine that became more news oriented throughout

⁵⁵ Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. *Canada Year Book, 1955* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1955), 205.

⁵⁶ Jeff Keshen, "Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," 240

⁵⁷ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 52.

the 1950s; it largely targeted middle-class Canadians and was known for its articles on town and city life.⁵⁸ *Saturday Night* was a long-running general interest magazine that targeted upper middle class, and this is reflected in the positions taken on women's work in its articles.⁵⁹ Finally, *Star Weekly Magazine* was a general interest magazine which featured articles, fiction, recipes, sports, and lifestyle pieces. It was widely distributed in suburban and rural Ontario, especially where daily newspapers did not circulate widely.⁶⁰ Four issues of each periodical (published in September, December, March, and June.) were selected annually from 1949 to 1961.⁶¹ Additional Canadian periodicals focusing on family, homes, parenting, and marriage were also occasionally consulted (using the same approach described above) to provide greater sight into social norms and gender roles.⁶² This thesis examines how these periodicals discussed married women's employment by analyzing the number of articles or opinion pieces relating to married women's roles, including household duties and employment. It also examines how the articles explored married women's work, including how they framed it and the language used to describe it. Finally, it discusses how the issue of married women's work evolved over the post-war period, if at all.

Union and women's organizations archival documents provide information about women's struggle for greater recognition and rights in the workplace, focusing primarily on two women's organizations, the Business and Professional Women's Organization (BPW) and the

⁵⁸ Mary Vipond, "Canadian Nationalism and the Plight of Canadian Magazines in the 1920s," *The Canadian Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (March 1977): 223.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁶⁰ Earle Beattie, "Mercy Killing of the Star Weekly: The F.P. Southam Star Syndrome," *Canadian Journal of Communications* 1, no. 1 (1974): 8-10.

⁶¹ The sample months for issues were chosen to capture a view of the entire year, including any seasonal variations. In periodicals that publish multiple issues per month, including Maclean's, Saturday Night, and Star Weekly, all issues published within the sample months were consulted.

⁶² Other periodicals consulted include Weekend Magazine, Canadian Home Journal, Bride Book, and National Home Monthly.

National Council of Women (NCWC), and two unions, the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) and the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers in Canada (UE). The Canadian districts of the USWA and the UE were two of the largest unions operating in Canada throughout the 1950s, and had a high number of female members.⁶³ Throughout the post-war period, female members worked tirelessly to solve workplace issues. The archival records of BPW and the NCWC provide insight into how women's organizations organized to advocate for improved working rights for married women.⁶⁴

Finally, by using interviews with married women workers, individual resistance to unfair employment practices that is not captured in union or women's organizations' sources are examined to inform the discussion of how women challenged workplace problems in situations where collective resistance was not possible or desirable. Additionally, how women negotiated prescriptions from government, social scientists and the media, will be analyzed primarily through women's own perceptions, as expressed in interviews, questionnaires, and opinion pieces submitted to periodicals. This thesis has used interviews conducted by women's historian Jean Bruce for her study of women during the Second World War and the immediate post-war period; and by Joan Sangster and Veronica Strong-Boag who have interviewed a number of working women, in person, by phone, or using questionnaires, for their respective works on blue-collar women and suburban wives.⁶⁵ Bruce interviewed over 150 women between the ages of 63

⁶³ University of Pittsburgh, University Library System (PITT ULS) Special Collections and Archives, United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers, District 5, National Archives (UENA) "1957 Conference on the Problems of Working Women, Responses to Questionnaires," 15; UENA, "Publicity Department, Women, Miscellaneous Correspondence", 20 June 1962.

⁶⁴ Ontario Archives (OA), BPW Papers, MU 6319 files; Library and Archives Canada (LAC), National Council of Women (NCWC) Papers, MG 28 125, vol 97 files.

⁶⁵ LAC, Jean Bruce Interview fonds, R5638-O-8-E tapes, 1-40; Veronica Strong-Boag's "'Their Side of the Story': Women's Voices from Ontario Suburbs, 1945-1960," in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 46-74; Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*.

and 85 years of age in the 1990s, the transcripts of these interviews can be accessed at Library and Archives Canada. Sangster and Strong-Boag used their interviews in a variety of printed sources, excerpts of these questionnaires and transcripts can be found in their works. These interviews reflect women's own views of their work, and the experiences, challenges, and the opportunities they perceived. These interviews were primarily conducted with middle class women of Ontario, and their descriptions have little to nothing to say about the experiences of women of colour or lower class women.⁶⁶ The interviews used discuss a broad time span, from the Second World War into the 1970s, and were conducted years after the period that was being discussed. Making sense of women's memories years after the fact can be difficult and potentially problematic.⁶⁷ Women's lives and memories are not easily segregated into periods of time that align to capture certain social, economic, or political events and movements. This thesis will attempt to account for these potential memory distortions in interviews by corroborating their information them with other sources.

Finally, although interviews are used here as evidence for women's experience, they are not privileged over the other sources used. The intimate and informal nature of these interviews can lead to a perception that they represent a 'raw' or 'authentic' description of women's experiences; yet, it is important to acknowledge that these experiences are no less or more filtered and constructed than union briefs or government reports.⁶⁸ Consequently, these sources will be used to complement and expand on other sources used on this thesis. They are to speak about women's lives where other sources cannot. Veronica Stong-Boag has argued that we

⁶⁶ Veronica Strong-Boag's "'Their Side of the Story': Women's Voices from Ontario Suburbs, 1945-1960," 103.

⁶⁷ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 305.

⁶⁸ Joan Sangster, "Embodied Experience," in *Through Feminists Eyes, Essays on Canadian Women's History*, ed. Joan Sangster (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011), 355-356.

cannot ignore these sources, due to potential methodological issues, as they are critical to reconstructing women's post-war work in totality, rather than a mere caricature.⁶⁹

Chapter I discusses the historical context surrounding women's work in the 1950s. Its primary objective is to understand the fundamental changes to policies, the economy, and society that occurred at the end of the Second World War. It focuses on how these changes affected the role of married women at home and at work. It favours an approach that maps historical change, rather social continuity, as suggested by Jeff Keshen in order to understand the growing married women's labour force participation in that period.⁷⁰ The next chapter examines those married women's post-war labour trends. It first analyzes how women entered the workforce, including job opportunities and limitations. It then describes married women's employment patterns. Finally, it examines the different levels of discrimination married women faced, as women, wives, and mothers. This chapter demonstrates that despite the policies and practices that were established in the years following the war, women were entering the workforce in rising numbers. Chapter IV seeks to understand why women were entering the workforce in that period. It looks at both the economic reasons, as well as the more personal reasons, for married women to do so, including family need and personal aspirations. An exploration of these reasons will demonstrate that women were motivated to enter the workforce by a variety of factors that were usually not addressed by government policy and social commentary (and even have not been acknowledged by historians).

The fifth chapter explores the reactions to married women's work. By using a variety of sources that discuss married women's labour, this chapter analyzes the ongoing tensions between

⁶⁹ Veronica Strong-Boag's "'Their Side of the Story': Women's Voices from Ontario Suburbs, 1945-1960," 50.

⁷⁰ Jeff Keshen, *Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II*, 239-240.

the prescriptive literature encouraging women to remain at home and rising married women's employment. It covers the reactions of government officials, who over the course of the 1950s became more sympathetic to the presence of married women in the workforce. It then examines prominent North American sociologist and psychologist interpretations of women's labour, followed by an analysis of reactions in the Ontario popular press. Finally, the chapter examines women's own interpretation of their workforce participation, as well as the growing discrepancies between their daily lives and the barrage of social commentary they encountered. The last chapter examines how women negotiated these discrepancies to call greater attention to their rights in the workforce. Individually and collectively women managed to surmount many obstacles posed by employment policies and practices. This chapter demonstrates that this activity in the 1950s was foundational to the women's labour movements' successes and achievements. By exploring women's labour patterns, their motivations for employment, the dynamic debate that surrounded their work, and how women dealt with the consequential barrage of prescriptions, this thesis demonstrates that the 1950s marked a watershed moment in the long process of women's rights and recognition in and out of the work place.

Chapter II: *A Brave New World – Family, Economy, and Governance Change in Post-War Canada*

*Let us talk about the good new days.
The old days are not coming back for any of us.*⁷¹

The Second World War fundamentally changed Canadian society, resulting in transformations in governance, the economy, and the family. These changes had profound effects on women's labour force participation. Fearing a surplus of workers after demobilization, the Canadian government implemented a number of policies to remove women, particularly married women from the labour force in preparation for peace. Yet, the peace time economy sustained a demand for female workers, which in turn introduced a new social order that saw wives and mothers as wage earners. This chapter first examines how and why the Canadian government attempted to send married women back to the home and keep them there as it prepared for peace. It then discusses the post-war economic changes that resulted in increased demand for women's labour. It finally explores the demographic changes that made it almost inevitable that married women would satisfy this demand, and shows how the Canadian government's policies and regulations trying to limit married women's work were no longer tenable in post-war Canada.

The Second World War had profound effects on the participation of women in the labour force. Canada's war commitments necessitated the enlistment of women in military services and their employment in civilian and war industries.⁷² Prior to the summer of 1940, war production was low; however, as the war escalated, the Canadian Government soon adopted a 'total war'

⁷¹ Dorise Nielson, *New Worlds for Women* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1944), 22.

⁷² Roslyn Louise Cluett, "Soldiers of Industry: Women in the Canadian Labour Force, 1939-1951," offers an in depth analysis of the way in which war industry drew on Canadian women throughout the war.

economy.⁷³ By end of 1941, the war industry had absorbed the 400 000 working-age men who had previously been unemployed.⁷⁴ The supply of available male workers was dwindling rapidly. Consequently, the Canadian Government needed an alternative supply of labour to meet the growing needs of the war industries, and quickly turned to women, and soon to married ones, who were channeled into key industries.⁷⁵ From 1940 to 1943, when the demand for labour was at its zenith, the Government encouraged the participation of married women into military service, war work, and civilian jobs (replacing the men who had left for active service). By 1943, there were 250 000 women employed in war industries and over 400 000 women employed in non-war (or civilian) industries.⁷⁶ These women accounted for 30.3% of the labour force.⁷⁷ Additionally, there were over 50 000 women serving in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS), Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC), and the Royal Canadian Air Force – Women's Division (RCAF-WD).⁷⁸

The Second World War created conditions which could change the socially constructed cultural pattern of behavior regarding men and women's employment. In the pre-war period, young women were told that marriage and motherhood should be their goal, and this precluded their work outside of the home after marriage.⁷⁹ However wartime demands necessitated a narrative that supported the combination of work with marriage and motherhood. Extensive

⁷³ Serge Durflinger, *Fighting from Home the Second World War in Verdun, Quebec*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 127.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁷⁵ Sandra D. Burt, Lorraine Code, and Lindsay Dorney, eds., *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 120.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁷⁷ Patricia Connelly, *Last Hired, First Fired: Women and the Canadian Workforce* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1978), 78.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 78-79..

⁷⁹ Alison Prentice et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 312.

propaganda campaign messages permeated society through a variety of mediums (including radio, film, reference books, posters, and pamphlets).⁸⁰ They tried to strike a balance between industrial efficiency and understanding of female nature by endorsing a new, yet familiar, type of femininity.⁸¹ Women were presented as dutiful and patriotic, equally competent as workers as they were mothers and housekeepers. One interesting example can be found in the Mrs. Jack Wright photo series produced by the National Film Board, on behalf of the Wartime Information Board (WIB), which focused on the role of mothers in war industries.⁸² The series pictures (see **Appendix 1**) a woman war worker, never named other than ‘Jack Wright’s wife’, balancing her role as a mother and worker. Mrs. Jack Wright was home to get her children up and fed, to run her errands, go off to work and contribute to the war effort, and could still be home to provide dinner and read a good night story.⁸³ The photo series was a part of many campaigns that demonstrated how women could work outside of the home and remain good housekeepers and mothers.

According to Ruth Roach Pierson, the deliberate depiction of women as primarily mothers and wives ensured that women continued to be viewed as domestic beings, ensuring that they would resume their domestic duties as mothers and wives after the war. Yet, for many Canadians, the propaganda campaigns normalized the idea of married women working. In the end, this change to women’s gender norms was difficult to reverse at the end the war as women

⁸⁰ Carol Payne, “Made in Canada: Labour, Gender, and Class during the Second World War,” in *The Official Picture: The National Film Board of Canada’s Still Photography Division and the Image of Canada, 1941-1971* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2013), 91.

⁸¹ Julia Brock, *Beyond Rosie a Documentary History of Women and World War II* (Fayetteville, AL: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 14.

⁸² LAC, R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3830 – 3854, “Mrs. Jack Wright Photo Series,” National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. 1944.

⁸³ Ibid; Teresa M Nash, “Images of Women in National Film Board of Canada Films during World War II and the Post-War Years, 1939-1949” (Doctorate Dissertation, McGill University, 1982), 129.

had grown accustomed to the experience and benefits of work.⁸⁴ In particular, they had realized they were capable of tasks that they had long been considered unable to do. Moreover, they had worked as mothers and wives without any apparent harm to their families.⁸⁵ Consequently, female war workers were interested in continuing to work, and ultimately they would account for the largest increases to the paid labour force in the post-war period.⁸⁶

Women's wartime increased opportunities and broadened experiences in the labour force shaped their experiences in the post-war period. Wartime work meant the "cult of true womanhood", or the belief women could find fulfillment only through domesticity lost much of its credibility; women had been encouraged to find fulfillment through service and work.⁸⁷ The wartime experience had a remarkable impact on women's consciousness in the post-war period. One woman who became a professor at the University of Manitoba described it in this way: "A new self-awareness developed during the war. Many of us began to ask 'Who Am I?' and to question our role in life. Many of us were fundamentally changed. If it had not been for the war, I would not have increased my participation in public life to the degree I did."⁸⁸ When

⁸⁴ Throughout the war wages had been substantially higher in war industries, and many women knew that they would not be able to attain comparable wages in peace; however, it did motivate them to seek equal remuneration and better job opportunities with higher pay.

Canada. Department of Labour - Women's Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities* (Ottawa: Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, 1958), 2.

⁸⁵ As Jean Bruce's conducted interviews with women on their lives from 1941 until the 1990s, the range of years the interviewee are covering will be indicated between [] in the citation; for example [speaking of her experiences between 1941 and 1945] and [1941 to 1945] following hereafter).

LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Gloria L [speaking of her experiences between 1941 and 1945], (25 July 1991); LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Susan B [1941 to 1945], (22 June 1991).

⁸⁶ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968), 16.

⁸⁷ Joan Sangster, "Doing Two Jobs: The Wage Earning Mother, 1945-1970," in *A Diversity of Women, 1945-1980* ed. Joy Parr, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 102-103.

⁸⁸ Gertrude Laing, *A Community Organizes for War: The Story of the Greater Winnipeg Coordinating Board for War Services and Affiliated Organizations, 1939-46* (Winnipeg: Women's Press, 1948), 3.

considering the war effect in the mapping of historical change and continuity, women reflecting on the period frequently identified it as one of change – irrevocable change. Norma Walmsley, who had entered the paid labour force during the war, likened the war to ‘Pandora’s Box’, too much had changed in women’s lives to return to pre-war norms as “women proved their ability in many fields... and now they knew they had choice.”⁸⁹ There was a common feeling that the Second World War had dissolved barriers, allowed women to “blow away myths.”⁹⁰ This made women’s employment in jobs that had been closed to them before the war more acceptable. Moreover, women sought further training to gain access to a greater number of occupations in the post war period. In a 1943 survey by the National Selection Service Women’s Division (NSS-WD), respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they wanted greater training to enter new professions rather than returning to pre-war “women’s jobs”. (see **Appendix 2**)⁹¹

The wartime image of the Canadian women victory worker or servicewoman, who would return home after the war, was consequently vastly different from what women wanted for themselves.⁹² By 1943 the Canadian government and the public in general began preparing for peace, and as the *Montreal Standard* observed this was “a favourite indoor sport for thousands of Canadians, including government officials and professional politicians, university professors, welfare workers, and just plain everyday citizens.”⁹³ The Canadian Government sought to avoid the kind of post-war social disruption and economic upheaval that had followed the First World

⁸⁹ Norma Walmsley, “The Gatineau Hills; Love at First Sight,” *Up the Gatineau!* Vol 22 (1996): 9.

⁹⁰ Laura Greenway, *Saturday Night* (19 June 1943), 26.

⁹¹ LAC. RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, “W. M. Taylor, Royal Canadian Air Force to Marion Graham,” March 29, 1946; LAC. RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, “D. I. Royal, Lt. Col. Staff Officer, CWAC to Graham,” March 18, 1946; LAC. RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, “Adelaide Sinclair, Captain, WRCNS, Department of National Defence Naval Service to Graham,” March 23, 1946.

⁹² LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Susan B [1941 to 1945], (22 June 1991).

⁹³ Leonard L. Knott, “Post-War Preview,” *Montreal Standard* (30 October 1943).

War. The memories of mass unemployment, social unrest, and economic decline remained vivid, and policy makers wanted to spare Canadians from such a fate. Throughout the post-war planning phase, the government consulted with number of experts in economics, labour, and social sciences to ensure their reconstruction plan would be a success.⁹⁴ For the first time, an alliance was formed between political leaders, policy makers, and independent specialists.⁹⁵ In 1943, the House of Commons Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment was formed; it would spend the next three years determining how to employ and house returning soldiers, and how to manage the transition to a peace time economy.⁹⁶ The committee recognized the transformational effects of the war, and endeavored to ensure that its lessons would not be wasted:

We shall not, upon the morrow of victory, enter into a brave new world. If we are to attain the ideals for which we are fighting, everyone must continue during the post-war period to work with an energy and determination comparable to that which has been displayed during the last two years.⁹⁷

Ultimately, policy makers supported an ‘orderly decontrol’ guided by two primary principles according to Jennifer Stephens: (1) transitioning smoothly to a peace time economy and (2) stabilizing Canadian households by endorsing traditional family structures supported by pre-war gender roles.⁹⁸ The Second World War had restored full employment levels and incomes to Canadians largely through government intervention and a lack of competition from international

⁹⁴ Maurice Lamontagne, *Business Cycles in Canada: The post-war Experience and Policy Directions* (Toronto: James Lormier & Company, 1984), 45-46.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁶ Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence (no. 1- 22)*, Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-Establishment. (Ottawa: E. Coutlier Publisher, 1944), 13.

⁹⁷ LAC, RG 107, McG, F. Cyril James Papers, Addresses and Other Papers (1943) “Address during CBC radio *Faust*,” (30 January 1943), 2.

⁹⁸ Jennifer Stephen, “Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demonbilising Canada’s Women Workers After World War Two,” *Atlantis* 32 no. 1 (2007): 128.

markets (that were in the midst of reconstruction). In the eyes of government officials it was critical to maintain high levels of employment and expand the economy after the war.

After the war, the Canadian government assumed the responsibility for achieving high, stable levels of employment. This policy was explained in the White Paper on employment and income published in April 1945, and in the Green Book proposals issued in August 1945. The Government decided to adopt counter-cyclical economic policies.⁹⁹ It considered “a large part of the foundation of an economy of high employment and welfare must be new investment.”¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, the shortage of housing, industrial conversion, and civilian employment were at the top of the federal government’s action plan for stimulating Canada’s post-war economy with investment.¹⁰¹

Depression and war had taken a toll on the material conditions of domestic life. Housing stock was insufficient, and overcrowding was commonplace. In 1939, over one million Canadians were estimated to live in residences with less than one room per person, and this only worsened during the war as thousands of Canadians moved to urban centres to work in the expanding war industries.¹⁰² In 1944, a study was conducted by housing planner Humphrey Carver, on behalf of the Canadian Welfare Council, to determine the housing demands of Canadians over the next decade. He concluded that Canada would need approximately 731, 000 new dwellings over the next ten years;¹⁰³ the current rate of construction would only have

⁹⁹ Canada. Dominion –Provincial Conference on Reconstruction, 1945-46, *Proposals of the Government of Canada*, (Ottawa: E. Coultier Press, 1945), 18.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰¹ Maurice Lamontagne, *Business Cycles in Canada: The post-war Experience and Policy Directions*, 47.

¹⁰² Peter Neary and Jack Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), 211.

¹⁰³ Humphrey Carver, *Houses for Canadians: A Study of Housing Problems in the Toronto Area* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), 45.

achieved one-third of the required homes in that span.¹⁰⁴ To address such needs the *National Housing Act* (NHA) was revised in 1944 and offered reduced interest rates and increased amortization periods for Canadians seeking their first mortgages. In addition, the Government planned a one billion dollar investment in construction across the nation, which was part of the new strategy to stimulate the economy.¹⁰⁵ In June 1945, the Canadian Government announced that thirty-five percent of the dwellings built in the immediate future were to be set aside for returning soldiers and their families.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, it would take over a decade for housing construction to match demand. Yet, the growing availability of housing greatly affected families' need for a good income as more and more Canadians were moving into and furnishing these new homes.

Canada emerged from the war with an improved infrastructure that sustained a stronger economy with more industries. As peace drew near, the Canadian government sought to continue such "vigorous industrial activity."¹⁰⁷ The goal was to convert industries' from wartime to civilian production to satisfy domestic demand for consumer goods, which Canadians could purchase using wartime savings. Accordingly, tax incentives were offered to private enterprises to purchase government owned factories, convert them to peace time production, and increase investment in Canadian industry.¹⁰⁸ The need for plant reconversion to peacetime conditions

¹⁰⁴ Humphrey Carver, *Houses for Canadians: A Study of Housing Problems in the Toronto Area*, 43.

¹⁰⁵ L. B. Smith, "The Housing Task Force," *The Canadian Banker* Vol. 76 (March/April 1969): 66; L. B. Smith, "A Model of the Canadian Housing and Mortgage Markets," *Journal of Political Economy* Vol. 77, (September/October, 1969), 54.

¹⁰⁶ John Sewell, *Houses and Homes for Canadians*, (Toronto: James Lormier and Company, 1994), 20.

¹⁰⁷ LAC, RG 28, W.A. Mackintosh Papers, Box 2 file 41, "Note particularly memoranda entitled 'Post-War Economic Problems,'" (13 March 1945), 1.

¹⁰⁸ Maurice Lamontagne, *Business Cycles in Canada: The post-war Experience and Policy Directions*, 47.

produced an outburst of private capital investment.¹⁰⁹ In addition, the Canadian government and private enterprises sought to capitalize on the increased export opportunities that emerged following the war. Europe's devastation during the war and the inclusion of Canadian goods in the American Marshall Plan meant there was an increased foreign demand for Canadian goods.¹¹⁰ In doing so, the Canadian government hoped to maintain both high production and employment levels. As the war industries and infrastructure were converted to peace time use, Canada found itself with an industrial base that fueled a strong and sustained period of growth. The continued investment in manufacturing and industry offered a number of opportunities for returning soldiers.¹¹¹ Those higher levels investment and domestic/foreign demand would sustain the demand for labour in the post-war period.

The Liberal Government made many efforts to ensure the high employment and re-employment of returning soldiers to fulfil its 1945 electoral campaign promise of "High and stable levels of employment."¹¹² Employers, both private and public, were encouraged to offer veterans their old jobs.¹¹³ Moreover, under the Veteran's Charter, all veterans were offered the opportunity to access post-secondary education or training to facilitate their re-entry into the civilian labour force.¹¹⁴ Though the traditional functions of the government were extended in

¹⁰⁹ Canada. Parliament, Canadian Trade Committee. *Canadian Economic Policy Since the War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), 139.

¹¹⁰ Maurice Lamontagne, *Business Cycles in Canada: The post-war Experience and Policy Directions*, 47

¹¹¹ Canada. Dominion –Provincial Conference on Reconstruction, 1945-46, *Proposals of the Government of Canada*, (Ottawa: E. Coultier Press, 1945), 33.

¹¹² Robert M. Campbell, *The Full Employment Objectives in Canada, 1945-1985: Historical, Conceptual and Comparative Perspectives* (Ottawa: Economic Council of Canada, 1991), 3.

¹¹³ Sirvan Karimi, *Beyond the Welfare State: post-war Social Settlement and Public Pension in Canada and Australia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 28.

¹¹⁴ Peter Neary and Jack Granatstein, *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada*, 211.

this sense, as they ensured housing and training for all veterans, most of the new jobs were to originate from the private sector.¹¹⁵

Though policy makers felt confident in their plans to facilitate a smooth transition to a peacetime economy, the household front still troubled them. Thousands of women had participated in the war effort, and though women were considered a valuable labour reserve, policy makers soon saw these female workers as a potentially disruptive force capable of destabilizing the post-war labour market.¹¹⁶ Further, concerns for child delinquency and corrupted family morals also justified women's return to the household after the war.¹¹⁷ Government officials believed that the key to a stable domestic front lay in a withdrawal of women from the labour force. The demobilization of women was planned prior to the war's end. In 1944, Allan Peebles, Director of Statistics and Research, Department of Labour, requested immediate action from the National Selection Service (NSS) as "it was better to make the problem go away [...], while there was still time."¹¹⁸

A sub-committee was created in order to develop a plan to lay off female war time workers and manage women's post war expectations. The Sub-Committee on the post-war Problems of Women (SPWPW), comprised entirely of women, was formed in January of 1943 to enquire into the problems they may experience after the war and recommend solution.¹¹⁹ The

¹¹⁵ Jennifer Stephen, "Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demobilising Canada's Women Workers After World War Two," 125 – 126.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 126.

¹¹⁷ Jeff Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 150.

¹¹⁸ LAC, RG 27, Vol. 605 File 6-24-1, pt 2, NSS Employment of Women – General. "Peebles to MacNamara," (18 February 1944), 2.

¹¹⁹ LAC, MG28-103, file 362 no 40. Advisory Committee on Reconstruction Subcommittee on Post-War Problems of Women, Notes of Report, "Statement of Chairman of Subcommittee on Post-War Problems of Women, (10 August 1943), 1.

subcommittee published their findings and recommendations at the end of 1943 after consulting a variety of informants, including working women, employers, government experts, and business organizations.¹²⁰ Their findings and subsequent recommendations illustrate the ambiguous nature of women's work at the time. The report largely supported the withdrawal of women from the paid labour force, finding that "married women should not be allowed to work if their husbands have a good position and can keep the family and home comfortable."¹²¹ However, it also promoted the right of "all women regardless of marital status ... to have a job and the one they want."¹²² The subcommittee's report urged the government to expand employment opportunities for women, and contained a specific number of recommendations for aiding different categories of women, including single women, married women, married women with children, and widows.¹²³ Though many recommendations sought to address the real challenges that women working outside of the home faced, including equal access to jobs, training, fair pay, and child care, the report continued to emphasize domesticity for women.¹²⁴ Their final report ultimately concluded that although the women had the right to work, these rights should not undermine the social norms of domesticity.¹²⁵ The report was submitted to the House of Commons on the 28th of January 1944. It failed to receive any serious attention, and the majority of the report's recommendations were ignored. Instead, government officials' belief that female workers were

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ LAC, MG28-103, file 362 no 40. Advisory Committee on Reconstruction Subcommittee on Post-War Problems of Women, Notes of Report, "Women Workers in War Industries - Suggestions," (15 July, 1943), 1.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Canada. House of Commons, Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, Sub-Committee on Post-War Problems of Women. *Post-War Problems of Women: Final Report of the Sub-Committee*, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1945), 5.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 5-10.

¹²⁵ Jennifer Stephen, "Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demonbilising Canada's Women Workers After World War Two," 133.

excess labour, and threatened to take jobs from veterans, and other men, shaped their post-war policies.

Janet Keith, a journalist writing in *Canadian Business*, questioned Government policies that sought to “drive women out of employment,” as they failed to include women in their promises of full-employment.¹²⁶ She argued that the removal of women from the workforce directly countered the government’s approach to the post-war economy.¹²⁷ The White Paper on Employment and Income (1945), which had set out the government’s aims to ensure high employment and stable incomes for Canadians, also predicted that most war-time female workers would voluntarily retire from the labour force to take up their rightful domestic role.¹²⁸ Their strategy neglected to acknowledge the needs, interests, and ambitions of post war women. Such a position contradicted the interests expressed in the SPWPW’s final report, in which women overwhelmingly expressed “I want a post-war job.”¹²⁹ Official’s narrow conceptions of women’s role in the post-war period failed to account for the fundamental changes they had undergone. Moreover, it did not predict that the post war economy would require the mass employment of women – even married women.

The Canadian Government employed a number of policies and measures to push women out of the workforce after the end of the war. They specifically targeted married women. Jennifer Stephen has demonstrated in her recent work *Pick One Intelligent Girl* that post-war planners employed the same elaborate psychological, economic, and managerial techniques that had been

¹²⁶ Janet R. Keith, "Situations Wanted: Female," *Canadian Business* (November 1944): 75.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Canada. Canadian Trade Committee, “The White Paper on Employment and Income: with Special Reference to the Initial Reconstruction Period,” (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1945), 1-4.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 4.

used to draw women in the wartime workforce to achieve the opposite effect.¹³⁰ In order to re-establish pre-war patterns of employment, policy makers adopted a national strategy that sought to pull women out of the workforce, or to restrict the few remaining working women into low-waged occupations.¹³¹ This began with training opportunities for post-war employment, as it was a way to regulate and contain women's employment in specific areas. Women seeking work were directed to Vocational Training Programs, which offered training in basic jobs skills for various occupations and work. The National Selection Service, Women's Division had hoped to channel women into "natural professions" where women's "wages and hours were reasonable and all social stigma removed."¹³² These professions included domestic services, health/medicine and teaching.¹³³ Married women were channeled into training for domestic skills more often than their single counterparts, as the training would improve their ability to run a household and care for their husbands and children.¹³⁴ Ultimately, the government understood that although it could not prevent married women from seeking employment, it could try to channel them towards the home.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Jennifer Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 74.

¹³¹ Ruth Roach Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 223.

¹³² LAC, RG 27, Vol. 605, File 6-24-1, pt. 1, NSS Employment of Women-General, "Department of Labour News Release, Address of Mrs. Rex Eaton, Assistant Director of National Selective Service to National Council of Women," (June 17, 1943), 4-5.

¹³³ LAC, RG 27, Vol. 1516, file 0-26-1. NSS Correspondence with UIC "RE: Vocational Training Pre-Employment Courses. Toronto-Junction Report," (August 1944), 2-3.

¹³⁴ LAC, Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) papers, MG28 I 103, vol. 362, file 2, "Olive Russell, CBC Interview - Transcript," Vancouver (25 March 1946), 1-2.

¹³⁵ Ruth Roach Pierson, *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*, 159.

Much of the debate around married women's work in the post-war period was centred on the need to provide returning servicemen with training and employment.¹³⁶ Married women were specifically targeted; as they were supposed to be supported by their husbands, they did not need a wage like single women or men themselves.¹³⁷ This attitude is demonstrated by the way married women were treated by the Government's new unemployment insurance (UI) policy. This insurance scheme, established immediately following the war, was a key piece of legislation in Canada's post-war welfare state; it sought to provide greater industrial stability, and provide security in times (hopefully transitional) of unemployment. Under the new UI policy, additional qualifications were required of married women. Regulation 5A brought into effect on November 15, 1950 disqualified 12,000 to 14,000 married women from UI annually.¹³⁸ Women were disqualified from UI benefits for two years following their marriage unless they fulfilled certain conditions that would prove their attachment to the labour force, conditions not required of single women or men. Specifically, a woman had to work at least 90 days after her marriage, if she had not been employed on that date, or 90 days after her first separation from work after her marriage, if she was employed when she married.¹³⁹ Certain government officials and journalists suggested that married women were a drain on the UI fund, and could potentially misuse the system.¹⁴⁰ The Unemployment Insurance Commission (UIC) records, contains

¹³⁶ LAC RG 30, Vol 13105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, "Synopsis of Correspondence in Connection with Employment or non-Employment of Female Employees," no date.

¹³⁷ Ibid; LAC, UIC Records, RG50, vol. 60, UIAC Reports 1941-1947, "'Raiding Jobless Insurance Fund,' Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Bulletin," (20 December 1946), np.

¹³⁸ LAC, UIC Records, RG 50 vol. 56, "Committee of Inquiry into the Unemployment Insurance Act, (Gill Committee) Report," (1962), 31.

¹³⁹ LAC, UIC Records, RG50, vol. 60, UIAC Reports 1941-1947, "'Raiding Jobless Insurance Fund,' Edmonton Journal and Edmonton Bulletin," (20 December 1946), np.

¹⁴⁰ LAC. UIC Records, RG50, vol. 59, file 1, UIAC Reports "Correspondence 1946-1947, J.G. Bisson, Chief Commissioner to Hon. Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour," (30 August 1947), 1.

multiple instances of policy makers arguing that women, who had worked during the war, had no intention to continue to work, but were drawing benefits anyway.¹⁴¹ Moreover, women who were married were not considered “unemployed” and thus requiring benefits, due to the prominent belief in the ‘bread winner’ model.¹⁴²

Reducing married women’s employment continued to be treated as a way to prevent potential men’s unemployment.¹⁴³ There was a real impetus among business and organizations, including the Canadian Federal government, to re-enact restrictions on married women’s employment through marriage bars.¹⁴⁴ Major employers, including school boards, the civil service, telegraph agencies and railway companies all re-enacted marriage bars as a way to ensure that returning veterans could obtain their previous jobs.¹⁴⁵ Between 1944 and 1946, many married women were released from their positions, in war and civilian industries, to accommodate returning servicemen.¹⁴⁶ Surveys were circulated among federal civil service departments to determine which married women could be dismissed to make room for returning veterans. By 1947, it was ruled that married women who were not primary breadwinners would

¹⁴¹ LAC, UIC Records, RG50, vol. 53, 16th meeting UIAC, July 1949, “C.A.L. Murchison, Commissioner UIC to UIAC,” (11 July 1949), 1.

¹⁴² Ann Porter, “Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962,” *Labour/Le Travail* 31 (Spring 1993): 134.

¹⁴³ Margaret H. Hobbs, “Gendering Work and Welfare: Women's Relationship to Wage-Work and Social Policy in Canada During the Great Depression,” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1995), 54.

¹⁴⁴ LAC RG 30, Vol 13105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, “Synopsis of Correspondence in Connection with Employment or non-Employment of Female Employees,” no date.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid; LAC RG 30, Vol 13105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, “Memorandum Cover the Employment of Married Women . ‘Commercial Telegraphers’ Agreement, (October 1945), 2; LAC RG 30, Vol 136105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, “Letter from RC Vaghan, President of the Canadian National Railways,” (4 October 1945), 1.

¹⁴⁶ LAC, Civil Service Commission, RG 32 vol. 379 “Circular Policies,” (1945), 13.

be the first ones to be laid off.¹⁴⁷ Though certain employers, such as individual school boards, found marriage bars discriminatory and did not implement them, most employers adopted the practice after the war. Marriage bars were even accepted in unionized workplaces. Unionized railway members contested the dismissal of women from the work place at the end of the war, but not the one of married women because they considered the latter necessary to reduce the workforce.¹⁴⁸ The re-establishment of marriage bars as the war ended signifies that married women were still a reserve of labour, and were the first to be released if layoffs became necessary.¹⁴⁹

These policies ultimately fell short of permanently reducing women's labour force participation. The decline in women's labour force participation following the war did not last long, hitting its bottom in 1947.¹⁵⁰ By 1951 women were again entering the workforce at sustained rates. (see **Appendix 3**)¹⁵¹ Their re-entry into the workforce was encouraged by the favorable economic conditions that emerged following the war. Canada experienced fairly consistent economic growth until the late 1950s. Throughout the decade, the gross national product rose from 17.3 billion in 1952 to 36 billion in 1962.¹⁵² The economic boom was sustained by increased demand for goods both internationally and domestically. Ultimately, the

¹⁴⁷ Along with 'persons whose services are not fully satisfactory'; 'persons ready to accept retirement'; 'part-time, casual' employees; and those above 'normal retirement age'.

LAC, Civil Service Commission, RG 32 vol. 379 "Circular Policies," (1947), 7.

¹⁴⁸ LAC RG 30, Vol 136105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, "letter from RC Vaghan, President of the Canadian National Railways," (4 October 1945), 2.

¹⁴⁹ OA, 200 Series 1234 File 297 - Employees, Employment of Wives, 1930-1952, "Report 10 of the Board of Control," (4 May 1944), 2-3.

¹⁵⁰ Bryon and Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Microstudy*, (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970), 22.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁵² Joy Parr, "Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada," *International Labour and Working-Class History* 55 (Spring, 1999): 112-113.

heightened demand for Canadian goods led to an increase demand for labour. The White Paper on Employment and Income had set the Canadian goal to achieve economic stability through export growth.¹⁵³ American investment in Canada's resource sector grew steadily over the decade and fueled exports of resource products to the United States. Throughout the post-war period, sixty percent of exports went to the United States, another twenty percent to the United Kingdom.¹⁵⁴ The Canadian steel, oil, and natural resources (particularly lumber and mining) industries expanded in the post-war period to meet international demands.¹⁵⁵ By the end of the 1950s, the traditional export mix had been expanded to include new energy sources, like Canadian uranium. Further, these new or expanded sources of energy lowered manufacturing costs and facilitated greater production capacities.¹⁵⁶ As a result, manufacturing continued to expand, requiring new investments in plant and machinery, and new types of skilled labour. Although these industries relied on a male labour force, their growth had an indirect impact on the female labour market. First, some men moved out of low paying, gender neutral jobs like those in retail, which left room for women. Second, industrial growth was accompanied by growth in the clerical and retail sector.

This expanding economy led to the creation of many more jobs and ample employment opportunities. Demands for skilled and unskilled labour meant women were increasingly needed. This was being particularly true due to the expansion of three important fields in the post-war period: the federal civil service, education, and the distribution/retail sector. During the war, the

¹⁵³ Canada, Canadian Trade Committee, "The White Paper on Employment and Income: with Special Reference to the Initial Reconstruction Period," (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1945), 12.

¹⁵⁴ Canada. Parliament, Canadian Trade Committee. *Canadian Economic Policy Since the War*, 139.

¹⁵⁵ Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 24.

¹⁵⁶ Peter Li, *The making of Post-War Canada* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12, 15.

federal civil service nearly double in size, and this growth continued as a result of the need to administer Canada's new welfare state programs. It was this demand for white collar and administrative employees that led to the end of the marriage bar in 1955. At the same time as the expansion of the civil service, the explosion of the Canadian population during the post-war period coupled with a greater government emphasis on education, increased demand for teachers, clerks, and administrative employees to staff the expanding school system. Finally, and perhaps most importantly to the rise of women in the paid labour force, was the massive increase in jobs in the distribution and retail sector. The increased production of, and demand for, consumer goods, created a need for an expanded sale infrastructure. This was complemented by increased suburbanization, which required the opening of retail facilities in new developments. The result was a quickly growing service sector.

The booming economy allowed Canadians to spend more on domestic goods. Demand for goods was fueled by pent-up demand from years of depression and war, the 'baby boom' period of high marriage and birth rates, and high levels of immigration.¹⁵⁷ In the post war years, adults of all ages were more likely to marry, and marry at a young age, which resulted in a 'cult of marriage'.¹⁵⁸ Rates of marriage soared in 1946 and remained steady until the mid-1950s, with more than 1.2 million weddings throughout this period.¹⁵⁹ At the time, marriage and family was the young adults' path to respectability, a notion reinforced by social psychologists, politicians, and religious leaders. Simultaneously, the population rose remarkably as the birth rate exceeded 26 per thousand during most years. Additionally, European immigration to Canada was substantial, accounting for one third of Canada's population growth. By 1948, the Canadian

¹⁵⁷ Joy Parr, "Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada," 112.

¹⁵⁸ Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation*, 16, 21.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

population had reached 13.5 million – the population that had originally been projected for 1971.¹⁶⁰ The remarkable rise in marriages and births not only attested to the general feeling of prosperity, but also reflected the changing circumstances of many Canadians, particularly women. As increasing number of Canadians were getting married, they also purchasing and furnishing new homes, while supporting themselves and children.

In the post-war period, Canadians were able to consume more than ever before. Personal savings from relatively high war wages and victory bonds stimulated consumer spending. Couples were buying new homes, automobiles, refrigerators, and other such consumer goods.¹⁶¹ The 1950s brought a sharp increase in the number of owner-occupied dwellings, particularly in cities and suburbs. By the end of the 1950s, the number of owner occupied homes had risen to 66% from 57% a decade earlier.¹⁶² The rise of home ownership meant more couples bought furniture and appliances, especially in the larger houses in suburban developments. Joy Parr has demonstrated that Canadians furnished these homes over the course of the decade and never in one full sweep.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, buying and furnishing homes put pressures on family budgets, which could be alleviated by a second income.

The heightened demand for Canadian goods resulted in a substantial demand for workers. However the generation that was reaching working age (those born during the Depression) was thin, and consequently there were not enough men and unmarried women to satisfy the demand. There was also a deficit in the older Great War generation, and of course, a fair number of men

¹⁶⁰ Landon Jones, *Great Expectations: America and the Baby Boom Generation* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geogheagan, 1980), 3.

¹⁶¹ Joy Parr, “Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada,” 114.

¹⁶² James R. Miron, *Housing in Post-War Canada: Demographic Change, Household Formation, and Housing Demand* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queens University, 1988), 33.

¹⁶³ Joy Parr, “Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada,” 113.

of working age had been killed during the two wars.¹⁶⁴ Further exasperating the demand for labour, the age at which people were entering the workforce substantially increased. As Arthur Lower observed in 1955, adolescence was lasting longer: “In our wisdom, we Canadians have discovered a method of prolonging it to 18, 19 and in certain cases, 20 years of age.”¹⁶⁵ Throughout the 1950s, it was generally believed that the new economy required a better educated labour force, so if parents could afford it, they kept their children in school longer. Following the war, enrollment in Canadian secondary school (ages 14-17) rose steadily, growing from 28.6% in 1951 to 55.5% by 1960.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the population aged between 18 and 24 was increasingly enrolling in post-secondary schools and training throughout the decade as well: rising from 16.4% in 1951 to 52% by 1960.¹⁶⁷ Parents wanted to give their children what they had been deprived of – a worry free youth, devoid of the necessity to work.¹⁶⁸ However, children working had been a pre-war source of supplemental income and now families required a new source while children remained in school. Ultimately, this high demand and low supply of workers created favourable conditions for women’s re-entry into the labour force.

Married women then became a permanent fixture in the Canadian labour force in post war Canada. (see **Appendix 4**) The cumulative patterns of change across state, market, and family landscapes following the Second World War led to a fundamentally altered Canadian

¹⁶⁴ Wolfgang Illing, *Population, Family, Household and Labour force Growth to the 1980s. Economic Council of Canada Study*, no. 19 (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1967): 15.

¹⁶⁵ Arthur Lower, “Our Elderly Adolescents,” *Saturday Night*, (28 May 1955), 29.

¹⁶⁶ F.H. Leacy and M.C. Urquhart, *Historical Statistics of Canada 2nd edition* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1965), 56.

The rate of enrollment far exceeded the rising population during the decade.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *Cultures of Citizenship in Post-War Canada, 1940-1955* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queens University, 2003), 201-202; Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation*, 164; Arthur Lower, “Our Elderly Adolescents,” 29.

society. Government investment and domestic/ foreign demand for goods resulted in a growing Canadian economy that increased labour market demands, which in turn opened opportunities for women. Further, a small birth cohort in the previous decades and older workforce entry ages created openings in the workforce for married women to fill. A rise in consumer spending and family formation necessitated higher incomes, which meant married women were willing to continue working to provide for their families. And finally, the social attitudes and government policy that at the outset of the post-war period limited women's participation with the work force slowly changed, permitting greater and greater engagement in the post-war labour force. Whatever the supposed moral consequences of working mothers peddled by conservative commentators, businesses and governments recognized the important economic role of married women's increased labour force participation. Consequently, between 1945 and 1960, Canada saw married women's labour force participation in the labour force increase from one in twenty-five to one in five.¹⁶⁹ Further, Canadian women did not remain unchanged while society transformed around them. Instead, like the society in which they lived – women emerged from the war shaped by their wartime experiences looking for greater opportunities and experiences in the paid labour force. The following chapter will examine the ways in which the war had shaped these women, and how they had hoped to live in the post-war period.

¹⁶⁹ Joy Parr, "Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada," 120.

Chapter III: ‘Little Women’ No More –Post-War Women’ Labour Trends

The labour market behavior of women in our culture is significant, and it is this element which accounts for the characteristic variability [in the labour force] – over time and space.¹⁷⁰

Women flooded into the paid labour force as Canadian society adjusted to post-war reality. Despite the restrictive policies implemented by the Canadian Government, married women’s participation in the post-war years was the most remarkable change in women’s workforce participation. Following the war, each successive year saw a significant rise in the ratio of married women to single women in the workforce, doubling over the course of the decade.¹⁷¹ This trend was a defining feature of women’s employment in the twentieth century. The increased presence of married women in the paid labour force greatly changed the shape of the labour market and family life. This chapter examines how women entered the workforce, what their job prospects were and what challenges they faced. It explores their employment patterns, including the occupations and sectors they entered, the factors that affected their employment duration, and whether they worked full-time, part-time, or seasonally. Despite the policies and practices that were promoted in the years following the war, married women’s participation in the labour force expanded in unprecedented numbers.

The war was immediately followed by a sharp decrease in female employment rates due to war industries closing (male employment rates also dropped in the same period).¹⁷² The national female unemployment rate hit its peak in 1947, but once veterans were reintegrated into the workforce, women re-entered it as well. Women’s labour force participation again climbed,

¹⁷⁰ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968), 1.

¹⁷¹ LAC, RG 27, Department of Labour - Women’s Bureau Papers, vol 4171, “Submission of the OFL to Royal Commission on the Status of Women, (RCSW)” (14 May 1965), 3.

¹⁷² Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al., *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1979), 33.

and by 1960 women accounted for 33% of the total workforce.¹⁷³ Married women were primarily responsible for this growth.¹⁷⁴ Prior to the war, only 12.7% of women working were married, and represented only 4.5% of the total workforce.¹⁷⁵ Immediately after the war, they represented 30% of working women and 11% of the total workforce. However, between 1951 and 1961, married women were one half of the female labour force, and 22% of the labour force in general. This percent change was greater than for both single and widowed/divorced women,¹⁷⁶ and their labour participation had increased more than five times since 1941.¹⁷⁷

Patterns of married women’s employment nonetheless reflected their unchanging domestic responsibilities, which remained the care of their husband and children. Consequently, marriage and child-rearing greatly affected their employment type and duration. Married women’s participation in the labour force was highly dependent on the number and age of their children. According to Alice Nakamura *et al.*’s study of the employment and income of married women, one of the most critical determinants of women’s work was the number of young children (under 6 years old) and school age children (between 6 and 14) she had.¹⁷⁸ In the pre-war period, women were expected to drop out of the labour force when they married – and most did.¹⁷⁹ The 1921 and 1931 censuses show that women older than 25 were only half as likely to be

¹⁷³ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al., *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 33; Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-1960,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 29 no. 3, (Fall 1994): 14.

¹⁷⁴ KAH Buckley and MC Urquhart, *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillian Press, 1965), 54.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Bryon and Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Microstudy* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970), 12.

¹⁷⁸ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 45.

¹⁷⁹ There is a long tradition of married women bringing in an income without being wage earners. According to Peter Baskerville and Melanie Buddle, married women often ran small businesses or worked in family owned

working as those younger, and only 10% of those working past 25 were married.¹⁸⁰ The limited increases in female employment before the war came from the 20-24 age cohort. However, after the war, this cohort only increased 4%.¹⁸¹ Instead, the most remarkable increases in women’s labour force participation came from women between 35 and 64 years of age, whose participation increased 55% between 1951 and 1961.¹⁸²

This considerable shift in working women’s ages reflects a new trend in the 1950s, a ‘two phase’ female working pattern. Working women who married, or entered the workforce shortly after marriage, worked for a short time until the birth of their first child, usually within 15 months of marriage.¹⁸³ They then typically retired from the labour force for a period of time while they had additional children in quick succession. This pattern corresponds with the limited labour force participation of women younger than 35, as women’s average age at marriage was 23, and they had had their first child before 25.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, women’s reproductive life was compressed as the birth rates among women over 35 dropped substantially in the years following the war.¹⁸⁵ Women typically waited until their youngest was in school, and then re-entered the workforce. These women were then over 35, and felt confident that they could work without

business even after marriage. In the post-war period, we see more women working for wages or salaries, rather than in /family businesses or being self-employed; Melanie Buddle, *The Business of Women: Marriage, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Columbia, 1950-51*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 145; Peter Baskerville, *A Silent Revolution?: Gender and Wealth in English Canada, 1860-1930*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 239.

¹⁸⁰ Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, *Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, (A Labour Force Study in the 1961 Census Monograph Programme)* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 16; Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census, Advance Report* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961), N. AL-1 (Table 2).

¹⁸¹ Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, *Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, (A Labour Force Study in the 1961 Census Monograph Programme)*, 16.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al., *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 32.

¹⁸⁴ Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Vital Statistics* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1951), 99.

¹⁸⁵ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 8-9.

neglecting their families. In 1958, *Chatelaine* did a special report discussing married women with jobs, including their risks, gains, and greater chances for happiness; the report stated that: “the period of complete commitment to the home is narrowing down to women with small children.”¹⁸⁶ By 1962, never-married women spent 45 years in the workforce, married women spent 35 years, and married women with children spent 25 years.¹⁸⁷ This amount of time had increased significantly, as fifteen years earlier women had only spent less than 10 years in the workforce, if at all.¹⁸⁸ Now women spent more time in the work force than outside of it. Consequently, their workforce participation could no longer be defined as marginal or transitory.

Once in the workforce, women faced a number of challenges that restricted their choice of work, reduced the likelihood of career advancement, and left them comparatively underpaid. An enduring issue women faced was pay inequity.¹⁸⁹ Female remuneration patterns, particularly those of married women, reflected discriminatory social attitudes that argued that women worked for frills or to temporarily supplement their husbands’ salary. Even when women were doing the same work as men, they received substantially less pay. In heavily masculine occupations, pay differentials tended to be greater. For example, women working in transportation and manufacturing earned only 55.7% of what males did. Whereas, in clerical and communication fields, which were highly feminized workplaces, female employees earned 74% of what their counterpart males did. Even within feminized workplaces, women were paid less when they held a position that was disproportionately male. For example, female managers earned 51.6% of

¹⁸⁶ *Chatelaine* “Women at Work, A Special Report,” (March 1958), 33.

¹⁸⁷ Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18.

¹⁸⁸ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al., *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 33.

¹⁸⁹ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 41.

their male counterparts’ wages/salary. These pay differences were greater for part-time or seasonal workers. In retail workplaces, where women were disproportionately employed on a part-time or casual basis, female employees earned only 44% of what males, more often full-time employees, earned.¹⁹⁰

Pay inequity was principally sustained by gender segregation and occupational distribution. Women were disproportionately concentrated in lower paying jobs, like retail or clerical work, which resulted in their earning substantially less than men. Moreover, businesses could use gender segregation to excuse different pay for comparable work.¹⁹¹ A small difference in work, as minute as sweeping the factory floor at the end of shift instead of stacking pallets could justify a wage gap.¹⁹² Fair remuneration legislations at the provincial and federal level struggled to address this type of inequity as it did not acknowledge the fact that women were systematically channeled into lower paid work or work described as “different.”

Job stereotyping remained fairly constant over the decade, and limited women’s employment to a few sectors that were less paid and offered fewer opportunities for career advancement. Growing job opportunities for women were in feminized fields. The increased production resulted in the increase of job opportunities in clerical and retail positions, for which women were considered “particularly well suited.”¹⁹³ The job stereotyping that still prevailed through the 1950s resulted in nearly two thirds of women being channeled into retail and clerical

¹⁹⁰ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 41.

¹⁹¹ Ontario, House of Commons, *Debates* vol 28, (March 1951), H-3.

¹⁹² PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, District 5 – Local 524, “Summary of Payroll Reports” (January 1961), 2-14.

¹⁹³ *The Labour Gazette*, 52 no. 10 (October 1952), 145.

sectors.¹⁹⁴ In 1951, over half of married women were employed in three main occupational sectors: clerical, sales, and service.¹⁹⁵ The remainder of married women found work as factory workers, like their single counterparts.¹⁹⁶ (see **Appendix 5**) They experienced a slight disadvantage in obtaining positions compared to single women in occupations such as service, processing, and machining or fabrication.¹⁹⁷ However, married women appeared to obtain a greater number of managerial occupations than single ones, presumably because they were older and more experienced.¹⁹⁸ Nonetheless, notwithstanding the popular debate regarding married women’s work, their career patterns did not differ greatly from their single counterparts.¹⁹⁹ This job segregation allowed women to enter the labour force without trespassing into masculine spheres of work.²⁰⁰ As noted by the Women’s Bureau in 1956: “women do not as a rule compete in the labour market as men.”²⁰¹ Consequently, one important facet of conservative reactions to women’s work, the fear of massive male unemployment, faded away as it was soon evident that “men’s work” could co-exist, protected, alongside “female’s work.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁴ OA, WB F 207 – 5 -5-9, “Women’s Bureau Job Selector: A Report of Employment Preferences of Women and Girls” (March 1952), 1.

¹⁹⁵ Canada. Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada: Work Chapter Updates*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1977), 22.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-60,” 7.

¹⁹⁸ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 33.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ OA, WB F 207 – 5 -5-9, “Women’s Bureau Job Selector: A Report of Employment Preferences of Women and Girls” (March 1952), 2.

²⁰¹ Canada. Department of Labour, Women’s Bureau, *Women at Work, Canada*, (Ottawa: Department of Labour, Women’s Bureau, 1956), 10.

²⁰² Joan Sangster, “Doing Two Jobs: The Wage Earning Mother, 1945-1970,” in *A Diversity of Women, 1945-1980* ed. Joy Parr, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 122.

‘Ghettoization’ into female fields had peaked by 1956, and by the end of the decade other sectors were beginning to hire women as well.²⁰³ As the war ended, women enrolled in various CVT programs, taking preparatory courses for university, or enrolling in university.²⁰⁴ These programs allowed women to receive training in variety of fields, and allowed them to enter professions that were considered ‘traditionally male’.²⁰⁵ In 1958, The Women’s Bureau observed that women had begun to enter new fields and careers. By the end of the decade, 65% more women became chemist or metallurgists, 45% more women became architects or drafters, and 22% more women became physicians.²⁰⁶ However, women transgressing job-stereotyping were typically not married, and even less likely to have children.

Married women faced job segregation and pay discrimination like their single counterparts, but they also faced greater job discrimination by employers who questioned their loyalty to the workforce, and greater familial responsibilities that led to double days. Labour studies indicate that married women were more likely to work in a feminized position, and had greater difficulties moving out of them.²⁰⁷ Marriage bars prevented their employment in certain workplaces and occupations, including the Civil Service (until 1955), in specific Teaching Districts (as late as 1960), and in certain Railway and Transportation companies (until 1956).²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Louise Kapp Howe, *Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women’s Work* (New York: Putnam, 1977), 103.

²⁰⁴ LAC, Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) papers, MG28 I 103, vol. 362, file 2, “Olive Russell, CBC Interview – Transcript,” Vancouver (25 March 1946), 2.

²⁰⁵ Noah Meltz, *Man Power in Canada: 1931 to 1961 – Historical Statistics of the Canadian Labour Force*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1965) Tables A.2 –A.3

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work*, 11.

²⁰⁸ LAC RG 30, Vol 13105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, “Memorandum from Cove – ‘the Employment of Married Women in ‘Commercial Telegraphers’ Agreement’,” (October 1945), 1; LAC RG 30, Vol 136105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, “Letter from RC Vaghan, President of the

Discriminatory policies implemented by the government sought to limit married women’s employment to certain occupations and fields. Society was often skeptical of married women’s labour. Their employment was considered supplemental at best, and their commitment to the labour force was seen as transient because they were already supported by their husbands and did not “need” to work.²⁰⁹ This in turn, led to greater discrimination, including being passed over for promotions or being hired on a part-time basis instead of full-time.²¹⁰

Nevertheless, there was a growing demand for labour fueled by the expansion of the Canadian economy.²¹¹ Thus businesses recruited “every available source believed to be productive”, even if that meant having to hire married women.²¹² Policy makers and business owners found that, economically speaking, “an attempt to drive married women out of the labour market would surely create more difficulties than it would solve.”²¹³ For their part, married women entered the workforce in spite of discriminatory policies and employment practices for their own reasons.²¹⁴ Condemnation of working wives (without children) decreased over the course of the decade, as social attitudes, employment practices, and legislations evolved to reflect the reality of women’s work. Accordingly, the largest barriers to married women’s work that had existed in the pre-war period, including marriage bars or social attitudes that delegitimized married women’s labour force participation, eventually gave way. However,

Canadian National Railways,” (4 October 1945), 2; LAC. UIC Records, RG50, vol. 59, file 1, UIAC Correspondence 1946-1947 “J.G. Bisson, Chief Commissioner to Hon. Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour,” (30 August 1947), 2.

²⁰⁹ Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work*, 11.

²¹⁰ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 41.

²¹¹ Marie Ann Boutilier, “Ideology Surrounding Women’s Work in Canada, 1931-1956” (McMaster University, 1977), 121.

²¹² Francis Oakes Baldwin, “Wives with Pay Cheques,” *Canadian Business* (February 1954): 55.

²¹³ *The Labour Gazette* (April 1947), 297.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

working married women were viewed with suspicion by employers who assumed they would eventually withdraw from the workforce to have children, an obstacle not faced by single women.²¹⁵

Married women with children faced outright social condemnation, discriminatory employment practices, and a dearth of supportive services (including maternity leave or daycare).²¹⁶ Younger mothers who began their working life in the 1950s saw the pregnancy bar as the next frontier after marriage bars had been removed.²¹⁷ Restrictive stereotypes and paternalistic prejudice meant that barriers for married women with children remained although they lessened for working wives without children. By the end of the decade, the key factor affecting women’s employment was child-bearing and rearing. During this time, discriminatory and prejudicial hiring practices towards women approaching child-rearing age, or those with children, were common. Working women were expected to resign when they became pregnant, and were occasionally dismissed if they did not do so in due course. However, some women continued working whilst pregnant, hoping to avoid detection as long as possible.²¹⁸ Occasionally, sympathetic management would permit a woman to continue working during pregnancy, though this informal paternalism or kindness was not the same as a legal right.²¹⁹

There was a strong resistance to this type of maternity and child care services. Following the war, economic and social conservatism led the federal government to terminate its federal-

²¹⁵ *The Labour Gazette* (April 1947), 116.

²¹⁶ Joan Sangster, “Doing Two Jobs: The Wage Earning Mother, 1945-1970,” 108.

²¹⁷ LAC, RG 27, Department of Labour – Women’s Bureau Papers, vol 1904. 38-11-3-4, “Maternity Protection for Women Workers Report,” (1967), 2-3.

²¹⁸ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Elanor T [1954-1960], January 1991.

²¹⁹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Diane C [1955-1959], July 1992; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Beverly M [1957-1962], 8 August 1991.

provincial cost-sharing day care program. The program, which had been introduced during the war to encourage greater female participation in the war industries, was no longer required according to Government Officials as the war industries were winding down and women would return back home.²²⁰ Many provinces adopted a provincial-municipal cost sharing program, in the post-war period in response. However, these programs were substantially underfunded, and resulted in increasingly insufficient daycare options for working mothers. In Ontario, the *Day Nurseries Act* (1946) established minimum regulations and standards, as well as funding arrangements. It provided a joint cost-sharing between municipal and provincial governments, with the municipalities assuming half of the cost and taking responsibility for the administration. The act was ultimately a double edged sword, according to the *Globe and Mail*:

[The] Act proved to be a double-edged sword. Because the government was doing two contradictory things-setting good standards, but refusing to fund the service adequately-the net effect of the legislation was to close down a number of centres.²²¹

As the municipalities were responsible for the administration of daycare programs, available services were inconsistent and bound to the respective interests and preferences of city councils.

In general, municipal government officials argued that should child cares services be used, they should only be used for emergencies by full-time homemakers and not as a normal option for working women.²²² They argued that the only working women who should be provided with public daycare services were those who were unwed or in dire economic circumstances. Cities

²²⁰ Ruth Roach Pierson, “Women’s emancipation and the recruitment of women into the labour forces in World War II,” in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women’s History* ed. S. Mann Trofimenkoff and A. Prentice (Toronto: Mclelland and Stewart, 1977), 142.

²²¹ P. Shulz “Day Care in Canada: 1860-1962” in *Good Daycare* ed. K Gallagher-Ross (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1978), 153.

²²² OA, RG-29-01-840. Deputy Minister of Public Welfare. “Supplementary Memorandum on Day Nurseries,” (July 3 1948), 1; Toronto Public Library Archives, Schulz Collection, Interview with Dorothy Millichamp (Day Nurseries Branch) - Transcript, 20 April 1977, 14.

offered reduced pricing for women who met strict criteria that demonstrated their economic necessity for employment. By 1951, eligibility for public day care services were extremely strict, and excluded children whose mothers’ worked for any other reason than dire economic need.²²³, Municipalities often raised the fees for public child care for families not meeting these criteria so that the cost of childcare services was prohibitive and women could not justify working when their earnings could scarcely cover the fees. In Toronto, city council officials stated that fees should be doubled to “eliminate from care those children of mothers who work from choice rather than economic necessity.”²²⁴ Moreover, cities often employed strict regulations as to which families could send their children to day care and fill the rare openings in the system.

Despite the lack of nurseries or daycares, women typically found care for their children while at work. The majority of working women with pre-school children, who were particularly pressured to remain at home, used relatives or friends.²²⁵ Most working mothers in the 1950s and 1960s had school age children, and these women relied on older children, domestic staff, short-term baby sitters, and family.²²⁶ A 1956 Labour Department Study found that the majority of working women used ‘grand mothers’ as a child care solution.²²⁷ This continued until the 1960s when social attitudes and legislative policies began to address the issues of working

²²³ OA, Toronto City Council Minutes, *Committee on Public Welfare, Report No.4* (February 14, 1951), 619.

²²⁴ OA, Toronto City Council Minutes, *Committee on Public Welfare, Report No.5*. (February 20, 1946), 228.

²²⁵ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 112.

²²⁶ Ibid; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Beverly M [1957-1962], 8 August 1991.

²²⁷ Canada. Department of Labour – Women’s Bureau, *A Report of the Survey of Married Women Who are Working For Pay* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1956), 15.

mothers’ access to child care.²²⁸ Nevertheless, the rising number of wives and mothers entering the workforce indicates that women were able to cope with these shortcomings.

Childbearing and rearing pulled women out of the labour force, and frequently delayed career advancement. Women who had children typically withdrew from the workforce completely for six to ten years, and lost their position and any seniority.²²⁹ According to the Women’s Bureau, roughly 80% of women did withdraw completely from the workforce when pregnant. Although most women were able to return to their previous place of work, they did not necessarily return to the same position, nor did their seniority carry over.²³⁰ As one woman indicated, every time she left the workforce, re-entering felt like she was ‘starting over’.²³¹ Married women with children thus found it difficult to move beyond entry level positions.

Unfortunately, the women who entered and exited the workforce according to the needs of their families did not gain the same benefits as those working for long durations in full time positions. As family demands determined married women’s labour force participation, they also shaped the character of their employment. Married women more often than not tended to be part-time, intermittent, casual, or ‘seasonal’ workers with fewer benefits than full-time workers.²³²

²²⁸ Jessica Haynes, “The Great Emancipator? The Impact of the Birth-Control Pill on Married Women in English Canada, 1960–1980,” Doctorate Thesis (Carleton University, 2012), 39.

²²⁹ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1979), 33.

²³⁰ Department of Labour – Women’s Bureau, *Occupational Histories of Married Women Working for Pay*, 25-29.

²³¹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Diane C [1952-1958], July 1992.

²³² Nakamura, Nakamura, Cullen et al., define as part-time any position that is not full-time employment, which includes casual, intermittent, or less than 37.5 hours weekly. Moving forward, the use of “part-time” will refer to casual, intermittent, as well as and part-time positions.

Women were typically hired on a part-time, intermittent, or casual basis through employment agreements, which meant that they were not eligible to full-time wages and other benefits. There were (and remains) no legal requirements to hire a person as a full-time employee, and provincial legislations do not specify that require part-time, seasonal, or casual employees have to work less hours than full-time employees.

Part-time work allowed women to contribute to the family income while rearing children; this was particularly true for younger mothers, who needed to also be home for their kids. Yet, women working part-time, specifically intermittent and casual employees, frequently worked equivalent hours to full-time workers, 59.4% of employed women worked for forty or more hours a week (compared 74% of employed males), but only half of these women had formal full time positions.²³³ Part-time positions were usually low paying and less secure, and despite potentially working comparable hours to full-time male or female employees, they received substantially less pay and access to benefits. Moreover, women who took up part-time work were far less likely to move beyond the entry-level positions.²³⁴ Consequently, the character of their employment highlights the conflicting nature of married women’s labour at this time while married women became a permanent fixture of the labour force, but they still worked casually, seasonally or on a part-time basis.

Despite women entering the workforce in record numbers, their roles at home did not change. The common challenge married women faced was how to reconcile and balance domestic life and work life. “Women [were], and continue to be, at the centre and heart of family life,” and balancing work and domestic roles resulted in frequent fatigue.²³⁵ More importantly, it brought into sharp relief the failings of society to support the wage earning wife and mother, as well as the unequal experience of men and women both inside and outside of the home. Husbands, who performed a substantial amount of household work, particularly chores done by

Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1979), 95.

²³³ Ibid., 95-96.

²³⁴ Canada. Department of Labour – Women’s Bureau, *A Report of the Survey of Married Women Who are Working For Pay*, 15.

²³⁵ LAC, Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) papers, MG28 I 103, vol. 362, file 2, “Marion Royce, CBC Broadcast Radio Program ‘Canada at Work’ – Transcript” (1945), 6.

women, were a distinct minority.²³⁶ One woman working as a librarian stated that “despite the fact that I was working full time, I did most of the indoor work. Saturday mornings was housecleaning, laundry etc. while my husband played golf.”²³⁷ So the majority of women who were employed were forced into a ‘double-day’.²³⁸

Women developed coping strategies to deal with the double day, from regimenting their household, purchasing some domestic services (including hiring domestic staff, or sending out laundry), and lowering expectations. As one mother explained, “eventually, my kids had to wear some wrinkled clothes.”²³⁹ This set of problems was rarely acknowledged beyond the confines of women’s magazines like *Chatelaine*. Yet, the toll of the double day was universally felt by working women with families. As one woman noted it felt as though her life was driven by a race to some unknown: “run, run, run, as fast as you can – you can’t catch me... what makes us run? Stop the world I want to get off!”²⁴⁰ The overwhelming fatigue accumulated over years, and became an important facet of women’s calls for social support and policy for working women.

The 1950s were a critical point in this women’s participation in the labour force. It was not simply a trough between two high points of employment, the first being the Second World War and the second Second Wave Feminism.²⁴¹ Instead married women increasingly became a

²³⁶ F. Kielty, C. Hatton, and P. Munsche eds., *Canadians Speak Out: The Canadian Gallup Polls*, 1980 Edition (Toronto: The MacNamara Press, 1980), 75.

²³⁷ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Shirley M [1955-1961], 8 August 1991.

²³⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-60,” 20-21.

²³⁹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Shirley M [1955-1961], 8 August 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Elanor T [1948-1956], 12 January 1991.

²⁴⁰ LAC, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Vol 9 – Ontario “Letter to Florence Bird,” (April 1968), 2.

²⁴¹ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Post-War Work Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 17.

permanent fixture of the Canadian economy. Further, they entered new occupations that had opened in male dominated fields. However, combining mother work and wage work took its toll.²⁴² Women had to negotiate many more obstacles than men. In this sense, the women of the 1950s were certainly neither blind nor complacent to the struggles they faced; instead they were acutely aware of their situation. Yet, they persevered. The next chapter will examine why women endured these challenges, and what drove them to enter the workforce in unprecedented numbers.

²⁴² Joan Sangster, “Doing Two Jobs: The Wage-Earning Mother, 1945-1970,” 125-127.

Chapter IV: *Great Expectations – Why Women Worked in Post-War Canada*

*A wife or mother who sees an opportunity to raise her family's standard of living by becoming a wage-earner will find it irksome indeed if this freedom of choice is denied her.*²⁴³

English-speaking Canadian women were motivated by a number of factors that pushed and pulled them into the workforce. Most married women entered the workforce out of economic necessity, and had very little choice in the decision to work or not, while others, better off married women, chose to enter the workforce for personal reasons. Ultimately, the cumulation of these circumstances, necessity or choice, resulted in the sustained growth of married women's labour force participation. As society looked askance of working wives, little efforts were made to understand why they did so. However, these reasons are critical in understanding the female labour force's changing composition. This chapter explores the factors that pushed or pulled women to enter the labour force in the post-war period. It examines the economic reasons that drove many women and the personal interest or ambition that encouraged others to work. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates that women entered the labour force for a number of reasons despite the challenges that awaited them in the workplace.

For many married women, employment was not a 'choice', as their households required a second income to achieve a decent standard of living. In a 1958 study conducted by the Department of Labour Women's Bureau, 75% of married women cited 'economic motives' as the reason for their employment.²⁴⁴ As one young mother explained, "you were supposed to be married, stay married and have your husband bring home the bacon. But that didn't work out... I

²⁴³ M.E. Macpherson, "Working Mothers," *Chatelaine* (August 1945), 88.

²⁴⁴ Canada. Department of Labour – Women's Bureau, *Women's Bureau, Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities* (Ottawa: Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, 1958), 58-59.

started to work because I had to.”²⁴⁵ Most married women indicated it was a “financial matter” rather than a ‘social’ or ‘personal’ decision.²⁴⁶ Consequently, the desirability of working as a wife or mother was irrelevant to many women, and the debates as to whether they should work became irrelevant as well. While society may have preferred that wives not work, without their second income many couples could not afford proper housing, education, and other necessities.²⁴⁷

A husband’s occupation had the greatest influence on married women’s participation in the workforce. Paul Douglas, in his pioneering study *The Theory of Wages* (1934), demonstrated strong and inverse relationship between male income and married women labour participation. He concludes the greater the husband’s income, the less likely his wife works.²⁴⁸ A number of labour studies, including those by Sylvia Ostry (1968), Byron Spencer and Dennis Featherstone (1970), and Alice Nakamura *et al.* (1979), confirm this relationship for post-war Canada. Each study concludes that a husband’s income was the primary determinant (even more than the number of children) for families with a single income of under approximately \$8 500.²⁴⁹ A woman’s husband’s occupation would also influence when and even where she would work. As one working wife glibly recalls, “my husband’s occupation was *the* determining factor [...] any jobs I had after marriage were simply found along his route from home to work, so that he could

²⁴⁵ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Patricia M [1949-1954], 20 June 1991.

²⁴⁶ Canada. Department of Labour, Women’s Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight*, 59; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Heather M [1953-1957], 19 July 1991.

²⁴⁷ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Monica K [1952-1959], 4 December 1989.

²⁴⁸ Paul H. Douglas, *The Theory of Wages* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934), 32.

²⁴⁹ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968), 22; Bryon and Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Microstudy* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970), 12; Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al., *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1979), 33.

drop me off and pick me up. Otherwise, how would I have been home on time to cook his dinner?”²⁵⁰

Married women’s employment closely followed fluctuations in their husband’s income and level of household expenses. Wives’ earnings were particularly important for periods when the husbands’ income was lower than his permanent income or potential income.²⁵¹ Among young couples starting out, many wives entered the workforce to help accumulate savings, which would help provide financial security in the years to come.²⁵² According to Byron Spencer’s study of married women in the labour force, a wife typically took employment to supplement a husband’s income until her husband’s income “matured” and reached its potential.²⁵³ Women also worked when the family had debt or was likely to accrue some, a situation that temporarily rendered the single household income insufficient. By the end of the 1950s, household “debts” as a share of household income was approximately 60%.²⁵⁴ Short term debts, more than long term debts, pushed married women into the workforce to supplement the household income to meet heightened expenses, particularly among married women without children.²⁵⁵ Short-term debts were temporary increases to household debt for moderate amounts; these could include personal

²⁵⁰ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean R [1949-1963], 9 July 1991.

²⁵¹ Current income is a person’s earnings in any particular moment; they often fluctuate, and can reflect any temporary deviations from the “norm” that can occur for a variety of reasons. Permanent income is a person’s earnings according to occupation, experience, and income. It is the normal one expected without any deviations. Potential income is the expected earnings over the course of a given career. For example, a man starting in a position will not make as much as he is projected to in five years or ten years.

²⁵² Ibid, 23; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Rachel H [1952-1958], 9 July 1991.

²⁵³ Bryon and Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Microstudy*, 13-14.

²⁵⁴ Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, *Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, (A Labour Force Study in the 1961 Census Monograph Programme)*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 56.

²⁵⁵ Bryon and Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Microstudy*, 14; Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 33.

loans, tuition and credit payments, or the purchase of appliances or expensive furnishing.²⁵⁶ Fluctuations in household expenses and incomes resulted in temporary employment that moved women in and out of the work force.

Above all, married women's incomes were critical for families whose household income, less her wages, was under \$1 999.²⁵⁷ In 1951, families with an annual income of \$2 000 or less were considered low-income.²⁵⁸ In the same year the average national household income was approximately \$3 500, and frequently, according to a study by the National Council of Welfare, half of these families would have been low income without the income of the wife.²⁵⁹ Among families with incomes of approximately \$3 500, wives earned on average between \$1 350 - \$1 450, which meant the husband's income was barely sufficient to escape the low income category.²⁶⁰ The rising labour force participation of married women, as well as rising male wages, was crucial to the reduction in the number of low income households, and throughout the 1950s, the proportion of low-income households fell from 42% to 27%.²⁶¹ Additionally, wives' incomes also made up a significant portion, approximately 30% - 50%, of the total household

²⁵⁶ Long-term debts included expenses that were regular over a long period of time or indefinite, for example mortgages, bill payments, etc.

Bryon and Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Microstudy*, 13-14.

²⁵⁷ Households that spent 70% or more of their income on necessities (including housing, food, and basic amenities) were categorized as low income. In 1951, the National Welfare Council of Canada deemed that households with an income of \$2 000 or less would be classified as low income. Canada. National Council of Welfare, *Low Income Families in Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Health and Welfare, 1960), 12.

²⁵⁸ J.R. Podoluk, *Census Monograph: Incomes of Canadians* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), 13.

²⁵⁹ Canada. National Council of Welfare, *Women and Poverty* (Ottawa: Department of Health and Welfare, 1970), 20.

²⁶⁰ Canada. Department of Labour – Women's Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities*, 8.

²⁶¹ Canada. Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada, Families: Statistics on Low Income*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1977), 93.774.

income in households where a husband's annual income was less than \$5 000.²⁶² These wages were critical to the economic wellbeing of low to middle class families.

In these instances, getting a job was not truly a 'choice', but the only option to avoid a low standard of living. For many women, work was then a commitment to their family. As one woman indicated "we were there because we had to be there, because it takes two salaries to live."²⁶³ By combining motherhood and marriage with employment, dual income couples achieved noticeably better lives for themselves and their children. When popular press, government policy, and even historical scholarship discuss their employment in terms of 'choice', the economic reality that compelled women to work is frequently overlooked or minimized.

Married women's economic reasons for working were not limited to meeting a basic standard of living. Even among families that could be supported by the husband's income, the wife's income was understood as the difference between mere survival and the comfort of a better life. In his study of socio-economic classes in Canada, John Porter had found that by 1959, a family's income had to be approximately \$8 000 to secure a 'middle class' standard of living.²⁶⁴ Yet, a single 'bread winner' income typically ranged between \$3 000 and \$4 999, and the middle class standard of living that many sought was frequently unobtainable without a second income.²⁶⁵ Many women were forthright about their dreams for economic advancement,

²⁶² Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census, Advance Report*, N. AL-1 (Table 23); J.R. Podoluk, *Census Monograph: Incomes of Canadians* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968), 54.

²⁶³ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean R [1949-1963], 9 July 1991.

²⁶⁴ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 4.

²⁶⁵ W. Irwin Gillespie, "Taxes expenditures, and the redistribution of Income in Canada, 1951-1977," in *Economic Council of Expenditures, and the Redistribution of Income in Canada, 1951-1977* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1980), 30.

not just making do – as they had done for so many years before.²⁶⁶ In 1961, a married women's income increased the average family earnings by 30%, raising the average Canadian household earnings to \$5 800.²⁶⁷ Porter's ideal middle class income was out of reach for many even with two incomes, yet these Canadian families were nevertheless demonstrably better off with these two incomes.²⁶⁸ By 1961, between 25% and 33% of Canadian families earned enough annually to be considered middle class according to Porter.²⁶⁹ Two out of three of those were 'dual income' families. Households straddling the low- and middle-class boundary were also comprised primarily of dual income households.²⁷⁰ Consequently, families that relied on a "bread winner" model were frequently found at the two ends of the income spectrum, among the poorest and richest of Canadians (see **Appendix 6**).²⁷¹

While social commentators expressed concerns about the growing materialism of the middle class, couples who had lived through the deprivations of depression and war sought better quality of life for themselves and their children. The women coming of working age in 1951 were those born between 1927 and 1936, and nearly half of them entered the workforce.²⁷² For married women, work was an "opportunity to raise her family's standard of living by becoming a wage-earner."²⁷³ In particular, working women hoped to provide greater opportunities for their

²⁶⁶ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canada's Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class," 16.

²⁶⁷ Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census, Advance Report*, N. AL-1 (Table 23); J.R. Podoluk, *Census Monograph: Incomes of Canadians*, 54.

²⁶⁸ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, 4.

²⁶⁹ Unfortunately, the Dominion Bureau of Statistic's records of Canadian Family Incomes does not interval their income amounts in the same fashion as John Porter, consequently, the range of Canadians meeting Porter's 'middle class lifestyle' is difficult to pin point.

²⁷⁰ J.R. Podoluk, *Census Monograph: Incomes of Canadians*, 133.

²⁷¹ W. Irwin Gillespire, "Taxes expenditures, and the redistribution of Income in Canada, 1951-1977," 30.

²⁷² Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, *Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, (A Labour Force Study in the 1961 Census Monograph Programme)*, 16.

²⁷³ M.E. Macpherson, "Working Mothers," *Chatelaine* (August 1945), 88.

children. As one mother indicated: “If they [her children] were to have an education, then I had to work.”²⁷⁴ The desire to provide better opportunities for her children frequently conflicted with common belief that to adequately raise children women had to stay at home.²⁷⁵ Although there were conflicting opinions on the effect of wage work on woman’s ability to mother, many saw their employment ultimately as beneficial to their children. Consequently, women came up with a variety of strategies and rationales as to how their labour would not threaten their ability to parent. One woman writing to *Chatelaine* rationalized her intention to work as:

You may work for a while after marriage but when the babies arrive, he'll want you at home [...] On the other hand, many of my friends in their forties are now taking jobs to help with the college fees. I'll probably do the same. By the late teens my sons' characters have been formed.²⁷⁶

The expenses of raising children became a primary economic motivation for women in the post-war period. As more children’s toys and clothing became increasingly available, and education lengthened, married women were committed to ensuring their children had what they had not had, even if that meant challenging social norms to work.²⁷⁷

Throughout the 1950s, standards of living improved for a broad range of Canadians as incomes rose, the range of consumer goods widened, and their prices dropped. However, the majority of families could not afford many of them on a single income.²⁷⁸ Families with working wives could afford some of the visible manifestations of middle class-ness: notably better

²⁷⁴ Outboard Marine Oral History Project, interview with Ellen R [1954-1959], 1990.

²⁷⁵ See Ashley Montague’s *The Natural Superiority of Women* (1953) for a standard interpretation of the importance for women to stay at home with their children in their formative years. The predominant social beliefs among popular and academic social sciences will be explored further in the next chapter.

²⁷⁶ Phyllis Lee Peterson, "Letter to My Daughter - in - Law," *Chatelaine* (October 1957), 18.

²⁷⁷ See Doug Owsram’s Chapter “Consuming Leisure” in *Born at the Right Time* for the importance of leisure, play, and consumerism among children in the 1950s.

²⁷⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class, 1945-60,” 15.

housing, cars, appliances, and better-quality clothing.²⁷⁹ The ability to purchase these items further facilitated married women's continued employment. New appliances, especially washing machines, electrical refrigerators, and vacuum-cleaners, reduced the amount of time spent doing domestic work. For these women, outside work became increasingly feasible and interesting for daily enjoyment.²⁸⁰ Many married women wrote to *Chatelaine* and *Maclean's* to argue that with these new appliances, housework had become part-time work.²⁸¹ Yet, work and housework remained daunting for low income women as they could not afford many of these appliances. Consequently, low income women working out of economic necessity frequently did not have the tools to cope with a double day, while middle class working women were able to purchase the appliances that facilitated their employment.²⁸² Moreover, middle-class families could also typically hire help, such as maids or laundresses, who could do the heavy cleaning in the home while the wives worked.

Married women often cited economic need as the primary motivation for their participation in the labour force, largely due to the greater social acceptance of working out of economic need than personal pursuit.²⁸³ Married women typically had to justify their employment, and many – including married women themselves – were critical of working mothers. One former housewife explained that she and others in her community “saw working mothers as selfish – putting themselves ahead of the children they brought into this world.”²⁸⁴ Unless their wages were required to make ends meet, then working mothers were frequently

²⁷⁹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Rachel H [1952-1958], 9 July 1991.

²⁸⁰ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Majory H [1957-1961], 2 April 1991.

²⁸¹ Eileen Morris, "Housework is a Part - time Job!" *Chatelaine* (March 1960), 28 - 29, 71 - 74, 76.

²⁸² LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Majory H [1957-1961], 2 April 1991.

²⁸³ Canada. Department of Labour – Women's Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities*, 59.

²⁸⁴ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Ruth C [1953-1959], 23 July 1991.

criticized. One working wife and mother described the scrutiny she faced in the workplace for returning to work after her first child, stating that her experience was “heightened by the fact that one of the women in my department took it upon herself to lecture me while in front of the staff about leaving my son at home while I went back to work.” She added that “I always resented the invasion of what was, to my husband and I, a joint decision that I go back to work for a while to help out with finances.”²⁸⁵ Consequently, women describing their reasons why they worked may have overstressed economic necessity in order to be spared from social judgement.

Many wives continued to work long after their husbands’ wages alone could allow the families to live comfortably. According to Sylvia Ostry’s study of women’s participation rates between 1950 and 1960s, married women with young children appeared more likely to stop working when their husband’s income reached a comfortable level (Ostry suggests this was approximately \$6 000) (see **Appendix 7**).²⁸⁶ This pattern suggests that young mother’s primary motivation for working remained economic. However, this pattern is less salient for women without children or women with older children (6 and older). Instead, women continued to work even as their spouses’ income reached a ‘comfortable’ level.²⁸⁷ Nearly half of the wives without children who worked were married to husband whose income was over \$8 000, and another quarter with children over six also worked. This indicates that they were influenced by non-economic factors to seek work. The growing number of working wives, whose households did not require a second income, marked a change in married women’s labour patterns in the post-war period. Teasing out their motivations can be difficult due to the general social disapproval of

²⁸⁵ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Majory H [1957-1961], 2 April 1991.

²⁸⁶ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 27.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

married women's work, particularly when not for economic necessity. Nevertheless, women have identified a variety of factors that drove them to work.

Education was an important factor in influencing married women's participation in the labour force. Throughout the war and post-war period, a greater number of women enrolled in training and secondary education.²⁸⁸ By 1961, the number of women who had completed high school increased by 33%, and the number of women with a university degree had nearly doubled.²⁸⁹ Just under one half of married women with a high school education or greater entered the work force.²⁹⁰ According to various labour studies, the more education a woman had, the greater likelihood that she would enter the workforce after marriage.²⁹¹ Over half of married women who had attended university went on to participate in the workforce.²⁹² Women who had obtained a post-secondary education were understandably reluctant to waste it and abandon work upon their marriage.²⁹³ Consequently, there was a strong correlation between labour force participation and education. Most women interviewed stated that they enjoyed the intellectual stimulation, and women argued that they "wanted to keep up with the times, things were changing in the profession, and didn't want to get left behind."²⁹⁴ Additionally, women expressed a level of professional pride to explain why they continued working outside of the

²⁸⁸ Frank J. Whittingham. *Special Labour Force Studies – Educational Attainment of the Canadian labour Force*, (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1967), 63.

²⁸⁹ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1979), 26.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 30; Frank J. Whittingham. *Special Labour Force Studies – Educational Attainment of the Canadian labour Force*, 64.

²⁹² Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada*, 30.

²⁹³ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Franny M [1954-1962], 19 July 1991.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

home.²⁹⁵ This was particularly true of women who worked in professional jobs. For example, a young wife and teacher remarked that she “taught for the fulfillment, not the money.”²⁹⁶

Pride and independence were not limited to white collar or professional jobs either, nor were they the only pull factors for employment. Developing a community and companionship were considerable pull factors for working women. Although many women described their experience living in the suburbia fondly, some felt incredibly isolated from the outside world. Veronica Strong-Boag explored in depth the effect of the “Suburban Experiment” on housewives.²⁹⁷ She reveals that by and large many women liked living in the suburbs, as they were able to develop meaningful connections and interests within their communities. But she also found that there were a number of women who yearned for lives that offered them “more contact with the wider world.”²⁹⁸ Though their lives could be filled with caring for their husbands, children, and the house – the process was often quite lonely.²⁹⁹ Husbands were gone for most of the day, as were children when they reached school age.³⁰⁰ Suburban women sought employment (part-time or full-time work) to alleviate some of the loneliness they felt.³⁰¹ Through employment, women could build networks of friend and acquaintances independently of their husbands and children, which helped assuage the restlessness they were feeling in the suburbs.

²⁹⁵ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Shirley M [1951-1955], 8 August 1991.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960,” *Canadian Historical Review*, 72 no. 4 (December 1991): 782.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Loreen B [1952-1958], 11 July 1991; Bruce Lee, “Does Your Husband Work Longer Than You?,” *Star Weekly*, 11 August 1956.

³⁰⁰ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Donna B [1953-1957], 25 June 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Majory H [1957-1961], 2 April 1991.

³⁰¹ Christina Cleary, “Why I’m Going Back to Work,” *Star Weekly Magazine* (Dec. 17 1960): 12 - 14. See also Byrne Hope Sanders, “Unhappy Wives,” *Chatelaine* (Apr. 1948): 2.

Working women also noted the importance of personal satisfaction and esteem they experienced in the working world.³⁰² Many young wives and mothers knew the freedom and satisfaction employment could potential bring, despite the double day, especially if they had seen their mothers work.³⁰³ Frequently, working women wrote editorials to *Chatelaine* explaining the liberating nature of leaving the home to work. They described how work had improved their lives, which in turn improved the lives of their husbands and children.³⁰⁴ Some women just preferred the satisfaction of providing for their family.³⁰⁵ The considerable improvement to their family's budget caused a sense of pride among many working women. For many women, developing an individual identity or deriving personal satisfaction outside of the home did not necessarily take away from their responsibilities as a mother or the satisfaction motherhood brought. As one mother described in an interview, "I left work a number of times, but always came back. I loved the girls, and I loved the independence."³⁰⁶ The community of the workplace and the pursuit of one's own ambitions meant a great deal to women, providing a sense of positive identity.³⁰⁷ As a consequence, women increasingly combined working and domestic identities.

Increased demands for workers in the private and public sectors pulled women into the workforce; at the same time, economic need encouraged some women's search for wage work.

³⁰² LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Donna B [1953-1957], 25 June 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Loreen B [1952-1958], 11 July 1991.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Christina Cleary, "Why I'm Going Back to Work," *Star Weekly Magazine* (Dec. 17 1960): 12- 14; Byrne Hope Sanders, "Unhappy Wives," *Chatelaine* (Apr. 1948): 2.

³⁰⁵ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Loreen B [1952-1958], 11 July 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Franny M [1954-1962], 19 July 1991.

³⁰⁶ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Donna B [1953-1957], 25 June 1991.

³⁰⁷ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Donna B [1953-1957], 25 June 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Franny M [1954-1957], 19 July 1991.

The desire to reach financial security drove many married women in the post-war period into the workforce, whether it was to afford basic necessities, to make do in rough patches, or to acquire the comfort of a middle-class lifestyle; and some married women who were comfortably in the middle-class worked for non-economic reasons. Although the ‘middle-class’ tends to be treated as an undifferentiated mass, with common aspirations, morals, and norms; the many aspirations and motivations among working married middle-class women working in this period demonstrates the multiplicity of their needs, desires, and experiences.

Working mothers entered the workforce first, for economic necessity; second, for a desire to improve the quality of life for their family; and, third, for their own needs and even satisfy their personal ambitions. As they were well aware that they were frequently viewed with suspicion many women stressed economic security and advancement for their families when discussing their participation in the labour force.³⁰⁸ It was primarily the knowledge that their income was needed by the family which gave working mothers the fortitude to enter the workforce and face the challenges posed by unsympathetic social attitudes and government policy. However, throughout the decade women began to express/articulate their interest in working out of personal interest and ambition. Although there were clear economic benefits to work, married women also cited happier, healthier families and homes as a reason for their labour. They also argued that work made them happier and healthier themselves. It was this type of growing discourse that sparked debate among social commentators. The next chapter examines how media, academics, and government officials reacted to the growing trends in women’s labour and the increased interest of married women in seeking employment.

³⁰⁸ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Loreen B [1953-1957], 11 July 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Clara L [1948-1959], July 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Rachel H [1954-1958], 11 July 1989; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Brenda G [1952-1959], 25 June 1991.

Chapter V: *Portrait of a Lady – Government, Academic, and Public Reactions to Working Wives*

*The woman's place is no longer in the home,
and the Canadian home is no longer what it used to be.*³⁰⁹

Increased married women labour force participation challenged the norms promoted by government policy, academic and popular social scientists, and media outlets. Following the war, policy makers and the popular press supported a return to traditional norms, hoping this would secure economic and domestic stability.³¹⁰ Post-war North American academic social sciences also prescribed traditional gender and family roles. Consequently, married women encountered a number of prescriptions that enjoined them to remain at home, and working wives experienced growing tension between norms and experience. Married women's increased labour force participation directly challenged common perceptions that underpinned the government's restrictive policies. This chapter will explore the social commentator's reactions, including government officials, academic social scientists, and the popular press. It will demonstrate that their prescriptions were utterly divorced from the reality of many working wives, and failed to acknowledge the factors pushing and pulling them into the workforce.

Wage-earning wives and mothers were not a new phenomenon, and their numbers had gradually grown since the turn of the twentieth century, particularly among immigrant, low income, or women of colour.³¹¹ What was 'new' was the influx of white, middle-class women into the workforce. The discourse regarding working wives displayed a strong middle-class bias.

³⁰⁹ Omer Leroux, "All this Suffrage Too," *Financial Post* (4 September, 1954): 22.

³¹⁰ Jennifer Anne Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada's Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 113.

³¹¹ Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Gainfully Employed by Occupation, Industry, etc., Eighth Census of Canada, 1941*, vol. 7 (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1942) 229; Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force: Occupations and Industries, Ninth Census of Canada, 1951*, vol. 4 (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1953), 234; Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1950* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1951), 749-751; Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *The Canada Year Book, 1960* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1961): 725.

As acknowledged by the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, in a study on the “problem” of working women: “we recognize that this work probably represents a middle-class point of view, a middle-class morality... but it should be emphasized that this middle-class morality is the great stabilizing force in our society.”³¹² Those who commented on the desirability of working wives limited their discussions to these middle class women, and their search for a stabilizing middle class norm only took into account the perceived needs, challenges, and options of this narrow demographic group.

After the veterans had been re-integrated into the civilian workforce, the potential ‘threat’ of married women’s employment had diminished. Moreover, the growing labour need of the expanding service and clerical sectors could only be satisfied if married women joined the workforce.³¹³ This new reality was incompatible with policies that restricted married women from working. Throughout the 1950s, the laws were changed to adjust to the reality of women’s work.³¹⁴ The federal civil service repeal of the marriage bar in 1955 was one such critical change. It marked the beginning of the repeal of the marriage bar in various sectors, including railway companies, teaching, and communication companies.³¹⁵ Politicians and managers decided that a woman’s decision to work should be between her and her husband, and there was

³¹² Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, *Canadian Family Study 1957-1960* (Toronto: Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1960), 24,27.

³¹³ Canada. Parliament, Canadian Trade Committee. “Canadian Economic Policy Since the War,” (1966), 139.

³¹⁴ Ontario, Legislature of Ontario. *Debates* (12 March 1951), vol. 28, H-3; LAC, UIC Records, RG 50 vol. 56, “Committee of Inquiry into the Unemployment Insurance Act, (Gill Committee) Report,” (1962), 31; Canada. House of Commons Debates, vol 407 “Civil Service (Women Recruits),” (16 January 1955), c54W – 95.

³¹⁵ Canada. House of Commons Debates, vol 407 “Civil Service (Women Recruits),” (16 January 1955) 407 c54W – 95; LAC, Canadian Telegraph and Railways fonds, RG 30 vol. 13105, file 4805-X2 “Employment of Married Women,” (16 October 1956), 1; Canada. House of Commons Debates, vol 397 “Clause 23 – Appointment and Dismissal of Teachers in County Schools and in Auxiliary Schools,” (10 March 1948) cc 2368 – 92.

no need to legislate the matter.³¹⁶ According to a memorandum on the subject, “the fact of marriage should not be used for denying a woman freedom of choice.”³¹⁷ In addition to the end of the marriage bar, policy makers introduced a number of key modifications to policy including the fair remuneration acts and the removal of specific regulations targeting married women in the unemployment insurances act (both of which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter VI). Changes to government policy, like the removal of the marriage bar, allowed more women to enter the labour force.³¹⁸

While changes to certain policies indicated greater acceptance of working wives, prejudicial attitudes remained.³¹⁹ Policy makers remained skeptical of married women’s decision to work and disapproved non-economic motives for their decision.³²⁰ Officials argued that in lieu of a marriage bar, an “economic necessity” test should be applied to married women seeking employment.³²¹ But pretending the growing trend of working married women was exclusively a product of economic necessity reduced their work to a temporary or a supplementary source of income only acceptable in certain economic situations.³²² The greater acceptance of married women in the workforce remained limited to Department of Labour officials; traditional views of

³¹⁶ LAC, Civil Service Commission, RG 32 vol 379. Volume 2 File 14, “Memorandum, Burns to Words,” (5 December 1955), 2.

³¹⁷ Ibid, 1.

³¹⁸ Canada. House of Commons Debates, vol 407 “Civil Service (Women Recruits),” (16 January 1955), c54W – 95.

³¹⁹ LAC, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Vol 9 – Nova Scotia “Letter to Florence Bird,” (March 1968) np.

³²⁰ LAC RG 32 vol 376, file 25-4, “letter to Mr. C.H. Bland, Chairman of Civil Service Commission, Ottawa, from Mrs. G.D. Finlayson, Corresponding Secretary of the National Council of Women of Canada,” (5 December 1945), 1.

³²¹ LAC, Civil Service Commission, RG 32 vol 379. Volume 2 File 14, “Memorandum, Burns to Words,” (5 December 1955), 2.

³²² K. Archibald, *Sex and the Public Service* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1970), 17.

women as homemakers did not change among other government agencies.³²³ Policy makers only accepted married women's participation in the labour force insofar as there was an unmet demand for female labour. Policy changes were limited to those that affected married women trying to enter specific fields where there were labour deficits. They did not implement programs to support their employment in general, such as child-care subsidies or paid maternity leave. Remaining prejudice and lack of legislative support for married women meant government policies were not meeting the needs of married women³²⁴

Government policy was buttressed by social scientist's recommendations for a return to traditional gender roles. Following the war, professionals from all fields including social scientists, psychologists, and physicians promoted traditional gender norms as a way to achieve a stable post-war society. The war had challenged customary gender norms. Consequently, social scientists' discourse shored up traditional attitudes towards gender, which threatened to shift following the Second World War.³²⁵ They encouraged a 'separate sphere' ideology, which claimed women naturally belonged in the private realm and men were naturally suited for the public realm.³²⁶ Among others, this ideology would minimize conflicts between returning servicemen and women who had held wartime positions.

³²³ In other areas, the Canadian Government was very clear that it expected mothers to remain at home with their children.

See: Canada. Department of National Health and Welfare, *Up the Years from One to Six* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), 106-107; Canada. Department of Labour, "Married Women Workers: The Home Situation," in *Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. B.R. Blishen, F.E. Jones, K.D. Naegele, and J. Porter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 176.

³²⁴ LAC, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Vol 9 – Nova Scotia "Letter to Florence Bird," (March 1968), 1.

³²⁵ Samuel Laycock, "What Can We do about Juvenile Delinquency," in *Education for a Post-War World* (Toronto: Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1945): 90.

³²⁶ Samuel Laycock, "Psychological Factors in Marriage," *Prairie Messenger* 28, (January 1950), 10; Paul Popenoe, "First Aid for the Family," *Maclean's* (1 May 1947): 19.

Social scientists and psychologists told women that they had to be good wives and mothers to occupy their proper place in post-war life.³²⁷ They argued that their domestic responsibilities were just as challenging, and thus as valuable as men's work.³²⁸ As one Toronto psychiatrist observed, "Today we think of marriage as a partnership of equals."³²⁹ The sexual division of labour stressed women's unique qualities as house keepers, consumption managers, and parents.³³⁰ Women were considered irreplaceable in the home, and thus could not spend time outside of it like their husbands. According to Ashley Montague's best seller *The Natural Superiority of Women* (1953), women's special biological role as mothers meant "they must play a more basic role in the growth and development of their children."³³¹ Accordingly, wives and husbands had different responsibilities in marriage, which limited women to certain spaces and legitimized men's domination in others: "the husband will dominate in certain fields, such as the handling of family's finances while the wife will dominate in the handling of children... they must assign spheres of influence to each other if this modern concept of partnership is going to work."³³² While husbands spent most of their time in workplaces dominated by "rationality, impersonality, and self-interest", women raised children guided by "love, sharing, and

³²⁷ Samuel Laycock, "Psychological Factors in Marriage," 10.

³²⁸ Ashley Montague, *The Natural Superiority of Women*, (New York: Macmillan, 1953): 188; Joan Morris, "The Scientific Truth about 'Male Superiority,'" *Canadian Home Journal* (July 1957): 15, 45.

³²⁹ Dr. K.S. Bernhardt, 'Happily Ever After,' *Bride's Book* (Fall/Winter 1952): 75; James G. Snell, *In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900- 1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 91-92.

³³⁰ Ashley Montague, *The Natural Superiority of Wome*,: 52.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

³³² William Blatz, "Why Husbands and Wives Nag Each Other," *Chatelaine*, (November 1955): 17.

cooperation.”³³³ Women were encouraged to treat their domestic responsibilities as full-time work.³³⁴

The construction of women as full-time homemakers by post war academic social scientists was at odds with reality.³³⁵ Despite “experts” insistence on married women’s exclusive investment in housewifery and motherhood, a growing number of women were working outside the home.³³⁶ Facing this trend, social scientists and psychologists warned of the potential effects of working women on society. They raised two main concerns with married women working, the first being a disruption to married couples’ relationships due to undermined gender roles, and the second the risk to their children’s wellbeing. The success of the “partner” based marriage was dependent on the satisfaction of both husbands’ and wives’ psychological needs and fulfillment of their gender appropriate responsibilities.³³⁷ When one partner failed to fulfil his/her responsibilities, the needs of the other partner were not met. Montreal psychiatrist, Dr. Alastair MacLeod, described the consequences to readers of *Chatelaine*:

Father no longer has opportunities for pursuing aggressive competitive goals openly at work. Some of his basic masculine needs remain unmet. Mother no longer feels she has a real man for a husband and becomes openly aggressive and competitive herself, even moving out of the home into industry in her efforts to restore the biological balance. Faced with an increasingly discontented and dominating wife, father becomes even more passive and retiring ... certain trends [the rise of working wives] in modernity are theoretically capable of disturbing the biological harmony of family organization. The resulting disharmony can lead to psychological and psychosomatic illnesses.³³⁸

³³³ Jan E. Dizard and Howard Gadlin, “Family Life and the Marketplace: Diversity and Change in the American Family,” in *Historical Social Psychology*, ed. K.J. Gergen and M.M. Gergen (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), 9.

³³⁴ Samuel Laycock, “Psychological Factors in Marriage,” 10; Marion Hillard, “Stop Being Just a Housewife,” *Chatelaine* (September 1956), 11.

³³⁵ Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in post-war Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 60-63.

³³⁶ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968), 2.

³³⁷ Samuel Laycock, “Psychological Factors in Marriage,” 12.

³³⁸ Dr. Alastair MacLeod, “The Role of Sex in Happy Marriage,” *Chatelaine* (March 1959): 214.

Psychologists were blunt in their condemnation of women who refused the idealized middle class feminine role.³³⁹ As psychologist Lee Travis argued, “the man wants a partner in marriage, not a competitor. The woman in her fight for the rights has put herself too much in a competing position. She has tried to turn man [*sic*] instead of remaining woman. A man does not want to marry another man.”³⁴⁰ Wives entering the workforce led to the husbands’ loss of identity and dominance in his relationship, workplace, and family.³⁴¹ Ashley Montague warned that “a wife’s wages might endanger the very core of the fragile male personality.”³⁴² Ultimately, their work was a disruption to the gender roles that were the bedrock of the modern marriage.

Psychologists and social scientists were also concerned about the effect of working women on their children’s mental health and on juvenile delinquency.³⁴³ Throughout the 1950s, studies of children repeatedly concluded that issues of moral laxity, delinquency, or behavioral problems were caused by the inadequacies of the mother.³⁴⁴ Absent mothers, who were working, substantially increased the risk of these issues.³⁴⁵ A woman’s presence was critical to the well-being of younger children, as they were responsible for shaping children into “good citizens”

³³⁹ Samuel Laycock, “Psychological Factors in Marriage,” 12.

³⁴⁰ Lee Edward Travis and Dorothy Walter Baruch, *Personal Problems of Everyday Life: Practical Aspects of Mental Hygiene* (New York: Putnam Books, 1944), 233.

³⁴¹ Dr. Alastair MacLeod, “The Role of Sex in Happy Marriage,” *Chatelaine* (March 1959): 215; Samuel Laycock, “Psychological Factors in Marriage,” 12.

³⁴² Ashley Montague “Women are the Stronger Sex,” *Weekend Magazine* (22 January 1955): 2.

See also Ashley Montague, ‘Why Men Fall in Love with You,’ *Chatelaine* (October 1958): 23, 58, 99.

³⁴³ Anna W.M. Wolf, *The Parents’ Manual: A Guide to the Emotional Development of Young Children*, (New York: Putnam Books, 1946), 216-217; Alan Brown and Elizabeth Chant Brown, *The Normal Child*, (Toronto: Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1948): 160.

³⁴⁴ LAC, Laycock Papers, v/ Publications, Articles, and Addresses, “Honour Thy Son and Daughter,” (1953), 1-3; Susan Contratto, “Mother: Social Sculptor and Trustee of Faith,” in *In the Shadow of the Past: Psychology Portrays the Sexes* ed. Miriam Lewin, (New York: Macmillan, 1984), 243.

³⁴⁵ Anna W.M. Wolf, *The Parents’ Manual: A Guide to the Emotional Development of Young Children*, 218.

with healthy minds.³⁴⁶ Accordingly, their absence could result in a number of behavioral issues that would stunt their children's development.³⁴⁷ Older children could be starved of their childhoods, critical for the development of healthy adults, as working mothers led to greater household responsibility for the children.³⁴⁸ Moreover, older children could get into trouble without their supervision.³⁴⁹ Either way, mothers' work fit uncomfortably with the preferred gender norms that demanded that women were dedicated entirely to their children.

However, this insistence on motherhood and housewifery paralleled concurrent concerns about "over-mothering"; the notion that mothers were increasingly smothering their sons, which ultimately produce ineffectual and effeminate boys.³⁵⁰ Benjamin Spock's influential book *Baby and Childcare* warned mothers not to allow children to become too dependent, from being overly affectionate or overly nagging.³⁵¹ Canadian family psychologist Samuel Laycock explained that a mother was "fundamentally interested in her children because of what she gets from in shape of dependence and affections."³⁵² Consequently, women discontent as housewives and mothers were detrimental to their families, as "women are frustrated themselves," so they "frustrate their

³⁴⁶ Baruch Silverman and Herbert R. Matthews, "On Bringing Up Children," *Canadian Home and School* 10 (September 1951): 4.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6; Canada. Department of National Health and Welfare, *Up the Years from One to Six* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961): 106.

³⁴⁸ Arthur Lower, "Our Elderly Adolescents," *Saturday Night*, 28 May 1955; Samuel Laycock, "How Parents Hinder Adolescents' Adjustments," *Understanding the Child* 12 (April 1945): 35-39.

³⁴⁹ Samuel Laycock, "Conflicts between Teenagers and Their Parents," *Home and School Quarterly*, 13 (December, 1944) 16; S.C.T. Clarke and J.G. Woodsworth, *Youth and Tomorrow: A Guide to Personal Development in the Early and Middle Teens*, (Toronto: Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1956), 69.

³⁵⁰ Harry C. McKown, *A Boy Grows Up* (New York: Putnam Books, 1949) 203; J.D. Ketchum, "The Family: Changing Patterns in Industrial Society," in *Canadian Family Study 1957-1960* (Toronto: Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1961), 9.

³⁵¹ Benjamin Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, (New York: Pocket Books, 1946), 166.

³⁵² LAC, Laycock Papers, v/ Publications, Articles, and Addresses, "The Nagging Parent," in *School for Parents: A Series of Talks Given on the National Network of the Broadcasting Corporation*, (Toronto: National Network of Broadcasting Corporation, 1944), 11.

children.”³⁵³ In these instances, academic professionals suggested that a housewife should find ways to overcome her unhappiness and “develop other interest to round out her life, [which] enable her to feel that her own activities are important and as an individual she has value.”³⁵⁴ Yet, this solution still kept her within her private sphere; dissatisfied women were not encouraged to work.³⁵⁵

Throughout the 1950s, working wives and the desirability of their employment was debated regularly in the mass media. Canadian periodicals including *Chatelaine*, *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Star Weekly* offered a variety of opinions on the subject, which serve as a useful indicator of Canadians' opinions on married women's work. The positions of editors writing for these widely distributed magazines were shaped simultaneously by what they thought their readers expected and by the needs and interests of advertisers.³⁵⁶ These periodicals' opinions on working wives can be evaluated in a number of different ways. The first is the number of articles focused on married women's work in the magazine and second a qualitative analysis of the opinions or arguments for or against their work.³⁵⁷

In general, feature articles and opinion pieces discussing married women's work outside of the home rose from 4.2% in the pre-war period to 12.5% in the post-war period.³⁵⁸ These articles discussed a number of themes from training and work opportunities to the mal-effects of

³⁵³ George Kisker, “Why You Fight with Your Wife, Husband,” *Maclean's* (1 August 1947), 36-37.

³⁵⁴ LAC, Laycock Papers, v/ Publications, Articles, and Addresses, “The Nagging Parent,” 11.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

³⁵⁶ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 52.

³⁵⁷ Marie Ann Boutilier, “Ideology Surrounding Women's Work in Canada, 1931-1956” (McMaster University, 1977), 121; Sue Bland, “Henrietta the Homemaker, and ‘Rosie the Riveter’: Images of Women in Advertising in Maclean's Magazine, 1939-50” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (April 1, 1983): 62.

³⁵⁸ A survey of Canadian periodicals (*Chatelaine*, *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *National Home Monthly*) from 1950-1956 in Marie Ann Boutilier, “Ideology Surrounding Women's Work in Canada, 1931-1956,” 121.

their work on husbands and children. Magazines that catered to a mixed general audience, like *Maclean's* discussed working wives very differently than magazines targeting a primarily male readership, including *Saturday Night* or *Star Weekly*, and differently than women's periodicals like *Chatelaine*. Moreover, this debate also received varying degrees of attention depending on the type of audience the magazine held. *Chatelaine* published more articles discussing working wives than *Maclean's* or *Saturday Night* and *Star Weekly*, in part because it was a women's magazine, in part because it was willing to explore the existing counter-discourse.³⁵⁹ Moreover, *Chatelaine* discussed broader themes of married women's work, including challenges in the workplace or struggles with a 'double day'. Conversely, *Saturday Night* and *Star Weekly* limited their discussion to the desirability of married women's work.³⁶⁰ These latter periodicals rarely moved beyond asking "do married women really need to work?" or "should married women work?"³⁶¹ The varying opinions offered in these magazines reveal how married women's work was discussed, and expose the growing discrepancies between prescriptions about married women's lives and their day-to-day reality.

Academic professionals' findings were frequently relayed by the popular press, and many often wrote for non-academic periodicals, including magazines and newspapers.³⁶² Throughout the post-war period, their conclusions on the effects of working wives on marriage were used by the popular press to justify or support various sides of debate on the subject. The desirability of their employment was often framed in terms of its effect on the health of their marriage, the disruption to their household, and the well-being of their children. *Star Weekly* and *Saturday*

³⁵⁹ Author's survey of *Chatelaine*, *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Star Weekly* from 1949-1960; Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, 54.

³⁶⁰ Author's survey of *Chatelaine*, *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and *Star Weekly* from 1949-1960.

³⁶¹ See anonymous, "Careers and Marriage Don't Mix," *Saturday Night* (1 November, 1949); Hugh Garner, "Put Your Husband Back on a Pedestal," *Star Weekly* (March 1960) as examples.

³⁶² Samuel Laycock, "Psychological Factors in Marriage," 8.

Night contributors disapproved of working wives, as it distracted them from their household responsibility and their husbands.³⁶³ Contributors argued that women could not possibly fulfil their obligations as wives mothers, *and* workers; as one contributor argued, a husband has a “right to have his wife’s undivided attention.”³⁶⁴ Moreover, contributors argued that women should not expect husbands to do housework.³⁶⁵ As one writer argued, “I don’t see how a job gives a woman a legitimate out on housekeeping. She still has the basic responsibility to run a home for the family.”³⁶⁶ His argument echoed professional social scientists’ discourse that doing so threatened male identity and dominance: “a man whittles himself to less of a man by consistently performing women’s work.”³⁶⁷ Other articles published in *Star Weekly* and *Saturday Night* confirmed this sentiment.³⁶⁸ Additionally, they expressed concerns about the disruption to gender roles. They feared the potential reversal of roles, which increased the risk of ineffectual men and pushy women.³⁶⁹ These concerns were frequently used to condemn married women’s employment.³⁷⁰ Should a wife work, opinion pieces warned, resentment and jealousy would

³⁶³ Elsieliese Thorpe, "Does He Resent Your Working?" *Star Weekly* (May 1953): 7; Jean Libman Block, "Husbands Should Not Do Housework!" *Star Weekly* (November, 1957): 6.

³⁶⁴ Elsieliese Thorpe, "Does He Resent Your Working?" *Star Weekly* (May 1953): 7.

³⁶⁵ Jean Libman Block, "Husbands Should Not Do Housework!" *Star Weekly* (November, 1957): 6; anonymous, "Careers and Marriage Don't Mix," *Saturday Night* (1 November, 1949): 32.

³⁶⁶ Jean Libman Block, "Husbands Should Not Do Housework!" *Star Weekly* (November, 1957): 6.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Charles A. Cerami, "Are You Jealous of Your Husband's Job?" *Star Weekly* (November 1958): 30; Bernice Coffey, "A Word to the Wives," *Saturday Night* (March 1957): 16; Miriam Chapin, "Can Women Combine the B.A. and Baby," *Saturday Night* (February, 1948): 24.

³⁶⁹ David MacDonald, "Farewell to the Fifties," *Star Weekly*, (January, 1960): 10-11.

³⁷⁰ Irving Leiberman, "Do Women Push Men Around?" *Star Weekly* (January, 1957): 33; Richard Lunn, "Men, Let's Get Tough," *Star Weekly* (February, 1960): 12; Hugh Garner, "Put Your Husband Back on a Pedestal," *Star Weekly* (March 1960): 10 - 11.

result from the competition between husband and wife.³⁷¹ Ultimately, critics of married women's work concluded that employment and marriage were not compatible.³⁷²

Editors and contributors to *Star Weekly* and *Saturday Night* discussed the common dissatisfaction of housewives; however like academic social scientists, they argued that women were responsible for their own unhappiness.³⁷³ Articles like "Housewives are Self-Centered Boreds" and "Cocktail Parties and Women Alcoholics" did not spare any criticism for housewives, yet were very clear that pursuing wage work would not solve their problems.³⁷⁴ In fact, they argued that seeking employment would only tire women more.³⁷⁵ Instead they suggested women should rearrange their daily duties in the home to make housewifery and motherhood more fulfilling.³⁷⁶

The *Star Weekly* and *Saturday Night* capture Canadian popular attitudes in the post-war period, particularly among white upper middle class males, who rarely had a need for supplemental incomes.³⁷⁷ The writers and editors of *Saturday Night* and *Star Weekly* belonged to this social class.³⁷⁸ Moreover, their readers were upper-middle class men (*Saturday Night*) or rural ones (*Star Weekly*).³⁷⁹ The discussions of working wives in these periodicals were then

³⁷¹ Elsieliese Thorpe, "Does He Resent Your Working?" *Star Weekly* (May 1953): 7; Charles A. Cerami, "Are You Jealous of Your Husband's Job?" *Star Weekly* (November 1958): 30.

³⁷² anonymous, "Careers and Marriage Don't Mix," *Saturday Night* (November, 1949): 32.

³⁷³ Jane Hamilton, "Housewives are Self-Centred Boreds," *Star Weekly* (May, 1959): 38, 45.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.; Annie Fromer, "Cocktail Parties and Women Alcoholics," *Star Weekly* (January 1959): 3 - 4, 37.

³⁷⁵ Annie Fromer, "Cocktail Parties and Women Alcoholics," *Star Weekly* (Jan. 17 1959): 2; Elsieliese Thorpe, "How You Can Beat Housewife Fatigue," *Star Weekly* (February 1956): 11.

³⁷⁶ Elsieliese Thorpe, "How You Can Beat Housewife Fatigue," *Star Weekly* (February 1956): 11.

³⁷⁷ Doug Sanders, *The Public Intellectual In Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 46-47; Noel Robert Barbour, *Those Amazing People!: The Story of the Canadian Magazine Industry, 1778-1967* (Toronto: the Crucible Press, 1982), 122.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ The rural readership of *Star Weekly* is relevant, as married women living on farms or rural areas typically had greater household responsibilities and performed more unpaid labour . They certainly would struggle to balance paid work and unpaid work in these settings.

limited to the impact on these men's marriages and men's responsibilities in the home.³⁸⁰ They thus argued in favour of traditional, sharply defined sex roles, which supported male led-households and domestic women. Challenges to these attitudes were rarely published in *Star Weekly* and *Saturday Night*.³⁸¹ Opinion pieces that were penned by women echoed the sentiments of regular contributors, and only a handful of articles throughout the 1950s were remotely sympathetic to a working wife.³⁸² The debate, or lack thereof, offered in these periodicals over the desirability of working wives did not evolve much over the 1950s.³⁸³ Ultimately, their limited discussion of married women's employment contributed to the divergence between media prescriptions for middle class wives and their lives experiences.

Periodicals such as *Maclean's* that catered to a broader, more mixed audience than *Star Weekly* or *Saturday Night* offered a greater variety of perspectives on the subject. The bi-monthly *Maclean's* audience was more likely to include a dual income home than *Star Weekly* or *Saturday Night*.³⁸⁴ Its articles were more likely to acknowledge that wives worked, while still supporting the "middle class morality" popular among the social science experts.³⁸⁵ It is also worth noting that *Maclean's* was owned by the same publication company as *Chatelaine*, and

³⁸⁰ Jean Libman Block, "Husbands Should Not Do Housework!" *Star Weekly* (November, 1957): 6.

³⁸¹ Based on author's survey of *Saturday Night* and *Star Weekly*.

³⁸² See Elsieliese Thorpe, "Does He Resent Your Working?" *Star Weekly* (May 1953); Bernice Coffey, "A Word to the Wives," *Saturday Night* (March 1957); Christina Cleary, "Why I'm Going Back to Work," *Star Weekly* (December, 1960): 12.

³⁸³ Based on author's survey of *Saturday Night* and *Star Weekly*.

The first opinion piece penned that challenged the attitudes presented in these periodicals was first published in 1960. Christina Cleary penned a piece in *Star Weekly* that offered insight *why* women worked, and how it was beneficial to her and her husband.

³⁸⁴ Noel Robert Barbour, *Those Amazing People!: The Story of the Canadian Magazine Industry, 1778-1967*, 138.

³⁸⁵ Paul Popenoe, "First Aide for the Family," *Maclean's* (May 1947), 19; George Kisker, "Why You Fight with Your Wife," *Maclean's*, (August, 1947): 36-7; Patricia Clarke, "Stop Pitying the Underworked Housewife," *Maclean's Magazine* (July 1958): 8, 37 - 38.

their editors shared the same offices.³⁸⁶ The increased exposure to the women's publication may have influenced *Maclean's* willingness to publish more diverse articles regarding married women's employment.³⁸⁷

Throughout the 1950s, contributors to *Maclean's* explored the question of married women's work in greater depth and published feature articles/opinion pieces that both opposed and supported working wives.³⁸⁸ Articles and opinion pieces opposing married women's work reiterated many of the concerns offered in periodicals like *Star Weekly* or *Saturday Night*, including risks of upsetting gender roles and adversely affecting the well-being of children.³⁸⁹ However, the periodical also published a number of pieces that were more sympathetic to working wives.³⁹⁰ In 1951, *Maclean's* ran a comparatively progressive feature article that questioned "Why Married Women Work," which attempted to explain the rising trend of working wives.³⁹¹ Author Sidney Katz argued that women worked primarily out of economic necessity; however, husbands were frequently bitter and women exhausted.³⁹² This article captured writers' and editors' general sentiments throughout the remainder of the decade. Though they rarely approved, *Maclean's* contributors seemed to be more realistic about married women's participation in the workforce. Their articles acknowledged the growing trends in

³⁸⁶ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, 48.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

While readership declined for most periodicals over the post-war period, *Chatelaine* actually increased its readership. Consequently, writers and editors for *Maclean's* wanting to capitalize on *Chatelaine's* success may have ran more well-rounded opinion pieces that would attract comparable readership.

³⁸⁸ Anonymous, "A New Way to Keep House and Hold a Job," *Maclean's* (November 1957): 18, 19, 88, 90 – 94; John Nash, "It's Time Father Got Back in the Family," *Maclean's* (May 1956): 28.

³⁸⁹ John Nash, "It's Time Father Got Back in the Family," *Maclean's* (May 1956): 28; George Kisker, "Why You Fight with Your Wife," *Maclean's*, (August, 1947): 36-7.

³⁹⁰ Sidney Katz, "Why Married Women Work," *Maclean's* (June, 1951): 12; Anonymous, "A New Way to Keep House and Hold a Job," *Maclean's* (November 1957): 18, 19, 88, 90 - 94.

³⁹¹ Sidney Katz, "Why Married Women Work," *Maclean's* (June, 1951): 12.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 13.

women's work and discussed married women's growing role as wage earners alongside mothers and wives; however, their tolerance remained similar to the Canadian Government's: wives could work so long as this was economically needed and it did not detract from their responsibilities as mothers and children.³⁹³

The growing proportion of wives working was better reflected in women's magazines like *Chatelaine*. Throughout the decade, *Chatelaine* explored several different facets of women's work, including the desirability of their employment, as well as a discussion of employment experiences and related challenges. *Chatelaine* was Canada's most popular women's general interest magazines, and by 1959, one in every three English speaking women in Canada read *each* issue of *Chatelaine*.³⁹⁴ Their issues regularly discussed the risks and benefits of married women's work and typically approached the debate from a variety of angles not found in other general interest's magazines.³⁹⁵ Even so, there was no consensus in its pages as to the desirability of a working wife.

Opponents to married women's work in *Star Weekly* or *Saturday Night* condemned women for challenging standard gender roles by working. *Chatelaine's* opponents on the other hand questioned the reality of their financial needs.³⁹⁶ In the pages of this magazine targeting middle-class women, opponents argued that their economic needs were unconvincing.³⁹⁷ Furthermore, economic needs or advantages were rarely considered worth the risk to marital relationships or children. This was particularly true for women who were working for the

³⁹³ Robert Thomas Allen, "How Children Remodel their Parents," *Maclean's* (6 August 1955): 36.

³⁹⁴ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, 48.

³⁹⁵ Author's review of *Chatelaine* articles regarding women's work between January 1949 and December 1959.

³⁹⁶ Lillian D. Millar, "Young Couples on Two Pay Envelopes," *Chatelaine* (May 1947): 24.

³⁹⁷ Anita A. Birt, "Married Women, You're Fools to Take a Job," *Chatelaine* (January 1960): 41.

“frills”.³⁹⁸ Opponents argued that these women were too materialistic or inefficient household budgeters.³⁹⁹ As one *Chatelaine* contributor remarked: "Nuts, say I to working wife. She's a quitter and a Judas. She can't cope with a budget, nags her husband for things he can't afford, and hands her kids over to other people to raise. What of the gals who stay home and make do? There are still a few of us around."⁴⁰⁰ Those contributors suggested that working wives ought to have made greater effort attempting to find more savvy and thrifty ways to run the home efficiently, instead of living outside of their means.⁴⁰¹ As one writer argued: “Running a home efficiently, which is the wife’s responsibility; takes planning and energy, and while the mother is forced to be otherwise employed she has no time for plans and no energy to execute her home duties.”⁴⁰² Moreover, by choosing to work instead of challenging themselves at home, children and families suffered.⁴⁰³

Chatelaine contained feature articles and opinion pieces that were the most sympathetic, even supportive, of working wives.⁴⁰⁴ Those challenged critics who argued that working wives were greedy or too materialistic.⁴⁰⁵ Moreover, they argued that work did not detract from their

³⁹⁸ Mary Juke, “It Makes Married Life Easier,” *Chatelaine* (September 1948): 22-23.

³⁹⁹ Dorothy Manning, “I Quit My Job to Save my Marriage,” *Chatelaine*, (June 1955).

⁴⁰⁰ Helen Stewart, "Look Here Mr. Psychiatrist, You're All Wrong," *Chatelaine* (May 1948): 35.

⁴⁰¹ Hector Bolitho, "The Queen's Conflict. How Can One Woman Fulfill the Dual Role of Monarch and of Mother?" *Chatelaine* (February 1953): 12-13, 36, 38.

⁴⁰² Lillian D. Millar, “Young Couples on Two Pay Envelopes,” *Chatelaine* (May 1947), 24

⁴⁰³ Dr. Alastair MacLeod, "The Babies Who Want to Die," *Chatelaine* (June 1957): 11, 44 - 46, 48 - 49; Cynthia Steers, "How Much Are You Worth to Your Husband?" *Chatelaine* (Apr. 1959): 34 - 35, 128 - 29; Gertrude P. Kagan, "Should Wives Be Salaried?" *Chatelaine*. (May 1958): 42; Ada Jean Mecham, "Should Wives Be Salaried?" *Chatelaine*. (May 1958): 43.

⁴⁰⁴ Jeannine Locke, "How Will Your Family Live 25 Years from Now?" *Chatelaine* (January 1958): 10; Eileen Morris, "Housework is a Part - time Job!" *Chatelaine* (March 1960): 28 - 29; *Chatelaine* Editors, “What We Found Out About You,” *Chatelaine* (September 1958): 46. Anonymous, "Going Back to Work," *Chatelaine*. (September 1960): 37, 51 - 52.

⁴⁰⁵ Anonymous, "Going Back to Work," *Chatelaine*. (September 1960): 37; Memo from Rosemary, "How I Do My Two Jobs," *Chatelaine* (May 1954): 4.

ability to parent or manage the home.⁴⁰⁶ As one supporter put it, “some of our healthiest and happiest children were raised in homes where both parents worked.... True, children need to feel that their home is not threatened, and that their parents love them, but there is no reason why they must get this reassurance 24 hours a day.”⁴⁰⁷ This was certainly true for women with children of school age.⁴⁰⁸ *Chatelaine* supporters offered rationale for their employment beyond “economic need or advantage”; throughout the 1950s many articles pointed to the personal satisfaction achieved from working outside of the home.⁴⁰⁹ In the face of “housewife fatigue” and “suburban isolation”, contributors to *Chatelaine* argued that reinvigorating their domestic life was not the solution to their ills; instead seeking employment outside of the home could offer greater happiness and mental health for women.⁴¹⁰ As one contributor argued: “women must work at more than housekeeping to be happy within themselves and their lives today. Wives need a second job they enjoy to break monotony and loneliness.”⁴¹¹ Although *Chatelaine* did not have a set position on the desirability of married women’s work, it ran articles that both championed and criticized married women who worked. However, throughout the decade it participated in the debate more than other periodicals, and showcased a variety of opinions.

Beyond the desirability of work for wives, *Chatelaine* explored the challenges and opportunities married women encountered in the workforce. At the outset of the decade, *Chatelaine* articles primarily discussed *why* women work, and whether or not they should work,

⁴⁰⁶ Eileen Morris, "Housework is a Part - time Job!" *Chatelaine* (March 1960): 28 – 29; Memo from Charlotte, "How to Live a Double Life," *Chatelaine* (September 1952) 16.

⁴⁰⁷ Elsieliese Thorpe, "If You Are a Working Mother," *Chatelaine* (November 1956): 11.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid; Eileen Morris, "Housework is a Part - time Job!" *Chatelaine* (March 1960): 28;

⁴⁰⁹ Jean Pringle, "How I broke out of solitary Confinement," *Chatelaine* (May 1948); Gwyn LeCapelan, "I Worked My Husband's Way Through College," *Chatelaine* (April 1949): 4;

⁴¹⁰ Memo from Rosemary, "How I Do My Two Jobs," *Chatelaine* (May 1954): 4; Mrs. Win Keith, letter to the editor, *Chatelaine* (March 1960): 148; Florida Scott - Maxwell, "Do Men Fear Women?" *Chatelaine* (November 1959): 50; Memo from Charlotte, "How to Live a Double Life," *Chatelaine* (September 1952) 16.

⁴¹¹ Memo from Anne, "Stop Being Such a Housewife," *Chatelaine* (September 1953), 4.

like their general periodical counterparts.⁴¹² However, as the decade progressed and more and more women worked, articles began discussing *how* women participated in the workforce, including articles like “What Every Young Woman Should Know About Offices” or “How to Dress for the Office” or “How to drive Your Boss Nuts” (an article discussing proper professional behaviour and good employee habits).⁴¹³ In addition, *Chatelaine* increasingly published profiles of women in the work force, typically women in clerical or feminized positions, yet there was also a notable increase in profiles of women in business and finance positions (23.2% of profiles) by 1956.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, during this period, editorials became increasingly vocal against the traditional preference for “women’s domestic duties” or “women as housewives”.⁴¹⁵ Finally, towards the end of the decade, there were an increasing number of reports regarding women’s work experiences that resulted in a call for change and more services for working women.⁴¹⁶ Though *Chatelaine* articles grew increasingly supportive of women’s labour, like other periodicals, they still debated the issues. Yet, the flow of opinion in these periodicals generally followed the trend in women’s employment rates.

Unfortunately, the varied opinions explored in women’s periodicals like *Chatelaine* reached only women, and the issues they discussed were rarely acknowledged by men.⁴¹⁷ However as demonstrated by Valerie Korinek, *Chatelaine* is a key source to understand the post-

⁴¹² Anonymous, "Going Back to Work," *Chatelaine*. (September, 1960): 37; Chatelaine Editors, “What We Found Out About You,” *Chatelaine* (September 1958): 46.

⁴¹³ Author’s review of *Chatelaine* articles regarding women’s work between January 1949 and December 1959. *Chatelaine* (November 1953); *Chatelaine* (January, 1955); *Chatelaine* (September 1955).

⁴¹⁴ A survey of *Chatelaine* articles from 1950-1956 in Marie Ann Boutilier, “Ideology Surrounding Women’s Work in Canada, 1931-1956” McMaster University, 1977, 125-126.

⁴¹⁵ Eileen Morris, "Housework is a Part - time Job!" *Chatelaine* (March 1960): 28 – 29; Anonymous, "Going Back to Work," *Chatelaine*. (September 1960): 37, 51 – 52; Memo from Rosemary, "How I Do My Two Jobs," *Chatelaine* (May 1954): 4.

⁴¹⁶ Special Report, “The Wife with a Job: Her Risks, Her Gains, Her Chances of Happiness,” *Chatelaine* (June 1958):62.

⁴¹⁷ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, 15.

war development of women's consciousness. Further, despite the strong currents of gender conservatism and mother blaming in the popular press (including *Chatelaine*), a number of contributors challenged the entrenched beliefs about the employment of mothers (or married women).⁴¹⁸ In the 1950s, very few commentators expressed preference for employment of married women over full-time homemaking, especially if children were involved. Nevertheless, they chipped away at the predominant beliefs that condemned employed mothers and pitied their children. Thus, the development of a counter discourse was vital to greater opposition to restrictive policies and prejudicial attitudes towards working wives.

Throughout the 1950s, government officials, academic professionals, and the popular press debated the desirability and value of their employment. Critics primarily argued that their labour threatened the stability of families and the economy. However, this theoretical debate occurring amongst experts and the media failed to address the challenges that women were facing in their lives. As one woman remarked, "our legislators, predominantly male, fail to realize how hard the majority of women work to raise children, educate them, provide extras that are in no way luxuries, and ease the burden on the husband. Working mothers are helping provide the citizens of the future."⁴¹⁹ Ultimately the concerns of social commentators became increasingly divorced from married women's lives.⁴²⁰ As one working mother indicated in an interview, the prescriptive norms touted in the popular press frequently frustrated her, as "they weren't in touch with reality."⁴²¹ Consequently, working women negotiated the prescriptions through an

⁴¹⁸ Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing it in Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*, 15.

⁴¹⁹ LAC, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Vol 9 – Nova Scotia "Letter to Florence Bird," (March 1968), 2.

⁴²⁰ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean F [1957-1963], 20 July 1991; Rosemary, "How I do My Two Jobs," *Chatelaine* (May 1954): 4; Chatelaine Editors, "What We Found Out About You," *Chatelaine* (September. 1958): 46.

⁴²¹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean F [1957-1963], 20 July 1991.

internalization process shaped by wartime experiences, family obligations, and economic necessity.⁴²²

Facing these often conflicting discourses, women had to negotiate a path that benefited both themselves and their families. The contradiction between the considerable pressure to fulfil their domestic roles and their increasing role as a worker complicated women's identities in the home and in the workplace. Women working frequently felt uncertain about which part of their identity to embrace, the 'wage worker' or the 'homemaker'.⁴²³ They negotiated gender, class, and cultural roles by drawing upon past experiences. Women relied on their war experiences, gender norms, and new counter-discourses to these norms; however, their specific circumstances and their families' immediate needs played the greater role. In the end, it was this last factor that was the primary determinant in their relation to the labour force. Many women focused on how their employment was beneficial to their families. Women justified that their choice to work or not as an individual one, arguing it was above all their right to work if they chose to. As one woman writing to *Chatelaine* indicated: "this [deciding to work] is a pretty personal decision, which every woman who wants to work has to make on the basis of what is good for her family."⁴²⁴

Some mothers expressed regret or guilt for working, arguing that their kids "lost something along the way."⁴²⁵ This sentiment was supported by the onslaught of material telling working

⁴²² LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Loreen B [1954-1957], 11 July 1991; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean F [1957-1963], 20 July 1991; Elsieliese Thorpe, "If You Are a Working Mother," *Chatelaine* (November 1956): 11; Sidney Katz, "Why Married Women Work," *Maclean's* (1 June, 1951): 12.

⁴²³ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Post-War Work Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 7.

⁴²⁴ Rosemary, "How I do My Two Jobs," *Chatelaine* (May 1954): 4.

⁴²⁵ Canada. Department of Labour, Women's Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities* (Ottawa: Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, 1958), 59.

mothers their children would become juvenile delinquents if they worked.⁴²⁶ Other mothers pointed to the opposite, arguing it allowed them to be better mothers as it gave them independence and an identity outside of the home. They found that the latter allowed them to relate to their children and husbands better.⁴²⁷ One woman captures the common sentiment: “for me, and I can only speak for myself, I think a women who wants to work and is prepared to plan can end up being a better wife and mother because of the outside activities – not despite it.”⁴²⁸ However, married women justifying their employment, and its benefits to their family, anchored their decision to their own individual circumstances.

In the end, women ended up combining motherhood and work, for the most salient fact about women’s labour force participation in the 1950s was that it increased significantly over time.⁴²⁹ Given the contradictory opinions regarding women at work, it seems understandable that women themselves had complex feelings about their own work lives. Policy makers’ and social commentators’ opinions evolved slowly, if at all. While some government departments’ policies indicated a greater tolerance for married women’s employment, others’ did not mirror this tolerance, and continued to endorse traditional norms. Similarly, Canadian magazines grew more tolerant to varying degrees. Throughout the 1950s, magazines that targeted male audiences not only offered a single point of view, but it did not change over time. *Maclean’s* began to explore married women’s work over the decade, but sympathy was only given in certain economic situations. Finally, *Chatelaine* explored married women’s work to a high degree in the post-war period, but there was no consensus as to what was best for women and their families. Ultimately,

⁴²⁶ Sheila Stringer Coe, “I Won’t Be a Working Wife,” *Weekend Magazine* (July 1957): 10-11; Dr. Alastair MacLeod, “The Babies Who Want to Die,” *Chatelaine* (June 1957): 11; John K. Thomas, “How to Stay Married: Can Motherhood and Career Mix?” *Canadian Home Journal*, (March 1955): 4-6.

⁴²⁷ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Loreen B [1953-1957], 11 July 1991.

⁴²⁸ Rosemary, “How I do My Two Jobs,” *Chatelaine* (May 1954): 4.

⁴²⁹ Alice Nakamura, Masao Nakamura and Dallas Cullen et al. *Employment Earnings of Married Females*, 33.

wives decided what was best based on their own specific circumstances. The decision to combine work and motherhood then meant women had to reconcile the contradictory nature of the respective identities. As Veronica Strong-Boag has argued, married women saw themselves in a distorted mirror.⁴³⁰ However, the growing schism between the discourse regarding their lives and their day to day realities left women seeking greater acknowledgement and support for their employment.

⁴³⁰ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Canada’s Wage-Earning Wives and the Construction of the Middle Class,” 21.

Chapter VI: Pride & Prejudice – Women’s Organizing and Challenging Workplace and Social Problems

*The well-being of the home depends on the well-being of the union.*⁴³¹

Married women, especially those with children, who entered the labour force, faced not only criticism, but covert and overt discrimination. However, as they became more numerous, they became less willing, and better able to push back. Like all working women, married ones dealt with their difficulties through individual accommodation, negotiation or resistance, but also through collective action as members of trade unions or professional organizations. The tactics women selected were shaped by their individual circumstances and perceived options, all affected by class, race, marital status, and education.⁴³² Women who did not have access to unions or women’s organizations could solve localized problems in the workplace, which in some cases had a broader impact on workplace practices. Individual action enabled women to develop coping strategies that minimized their problems while protecting them from potential retaliation from their employer.⁴³³ Women working in industrial sectors, usually lower-middle and working class women, joined unions to improve conditions in specific workplaces and for women workers in general. Middle and upper-middle class women for their part joined professional organizations, which sought to improve women’s rights, including those in the workplace. This chapter examines how women challenged workplace problems and how their activity in the 1950s contributed to the incremental, yet fundamental changes regarding women’s workplace rights. Ultimately, their organization and activity built a sturdy foundation for the 1960s and 1970s women’s labour movements.

⁴³¹ University Library System (PITT ULS) Archives, UENA Archives, United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers, District 5, District Council Meeting, 19-20 June 1954, Transcript of Minutes, 2-3.

⁴³² Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Review*, 91 no. 5 (December 1986): 1055.

⁴³³ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, (Toronto: University Press, 1995), 139-140.

Women entering the labour force faced no shortage of challenges in the post-war period. Discriminatory government policies and social attitudes often made for unfair working conditions and prejudicial employment practices. These included but were not limited to: unequal pay, job segregation, sexual harassment, lack of paid breaks, and a lack of maternity or child care. Society’s preference for women as housewives and mothers, and the lack of sympathy for working women, particularly married women, meant there was very little social or political support for women seeking to alleviate these problems. Consequently, women were often left to face these challenges themselves, individually or collectively. Yet as Joy Parr has stated, for all the issues women faced, they viewed them as “challenges to surmount, not barriers.”⁴³⁴ As a result, the 1950s were a watershed moment as women called attention to problems borne out of the discrepancies between social norms and their working lives, and actively sought solutions to alleviate them.

Married women, like all workers irrespective of age and sex, could and did seek individual solutions to their problems. Although collective activity through union and professional group membership has been given more attention by historians, individual and informal resistance played an important role in combatting inequalities, sexism, and discrimination.⁴³⁵ Though it is not always easy to track individual responses to workplace issues, they played an important role in the development of improved working conditions in the post-war period. Unions or professional groups did not address daily issues. Instead they sought to remedy broader labour ones, including wage levels, hours of work, workplace discipline, and employee benefits. Thus, women often combined broader collective action, with immediate individual responses to

⁴³⁴ Joy Parr, *A Diversity of Women: Ontario 1945-1980*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 10.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid*, 111.

address daily issues.⁴³⁶ At an individual level, women negotiated, and occasionally out-right rejected, discriminatory practices.⁴³⁷ Resistance in the form of “voting with one’s feet,” or leaving a job in search of one with better working conditions was a common form of individual resistance. It was a readily available remedy that allowed women to avoid specific workplace problems or indicate their discontent with the workplace conditions.⁴³⁸

Women also negotiated with employers in an attempt to persuade them to improve unpleasant working conditions, including lack of washroom or coffee breaks.⁴³⁹ However in doing so, women could put their jobs at risk by speaking out against their employers. Consequently, women felt safer challenging employers when they had the backing of a formal organizations’, like a union or professional group.⁴⁴⁰ Even if women were not union or professional group members, they could challenge employers in solidarity with their members. For example, in an interview one woman describes how she navigated challenging workplace practices without directly disobeying her manager.⁴⁴¹ When asked to report on women taking unapproved breaks, she entered the washroom with closed eyes and instructed her colleagues to exit before her departure. She then reported to her manager that she did not see anyone in the washroom. As her supervisor’s personal assistant, she did not feel comfortable disobeying her manager’s orders, but also sympathized with her colleague’s cause. Accordingly, she found a

⁴³⁶ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 167.

⁴³⁷ Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and post-war Reconstruction*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 110.

⁴³⁸ Alice Klein and Wayne Roberts, “Besieged Innocence: The ‘Problem’ and Problems of Working Women – Toronto – 1896-1914,” in *Women at Work, 1850-1930*, ed. Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith, and Bonnie Sheppard (Toronto: Canadian Women’s Educational Press, 1974), 15.

⁴³⁹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, Margaret P [1952-1959], 03 March 1990.

⁴⁴⁰ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*: 169.

⁴⁴¹ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, Margaret P [1952-1959], 03 March 1990.

strategy that minimized the risks of resisting. Many women dealt with grievances in a similar manner.⁴⁴²

Individual responses such as this are hard to pin point, and it is even harder to find out what caused a woman’s dissatisfaction. However, when patterns of individual actions emerged, as when a workplace experienced a massive turnover, broader changes to workplace conditions could occur and we can observe the effects of individual actions to challenge workplace problems. Joan Sangster’s study of Westclox and General Electric (1995) demonstrates that large scale individual resistance had tangible effects on working conditions. When women kept resigning because of lack of washroom breaks, Westclox changed its practice to prevent further turnover.⁴⁴³ Although aggregate individual resistance only resulted in improvements in individual work places, it had an impact on the overall attitudes of employers. Moreover, employers were aware of other workplaces’ policies. If Westclox modified its washroom policy for women, then others, like General Electric, realized that theirs had better be acceptable too. Consequently, individual action to improve workplace conditions improved women’s daily work, but also could have an impact on attitudes outside of it.

As women tended to be in specific industries and workplaces, they could construct strong support networks. These in turn provided a basis for collective resistance.⁴⁴⁴ Women put forward their own vision of good workplace conditions and wages, whether they participated in strikes or petitioned employers. Women usually had more success when they banded together to challenge

⁴⁴² Ruth Roach Pierson, “The Politics of the Domestic Sphere,” in *Canadian Women’s Issues: Volume II: Bold Visions – Twenty Five Years of Women’s Activism in English Canada*, ed. Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers: 1995), 3.

⁴⁴³ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 166-180.

⁴⁴⁴ Judith Fingard, “Women’s Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women’s Activism,” in *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, ed. Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 25-26.

workplace problems than when acting individually.⁴⁴⁵ Consequently, women formed committees, which could be separate but affiliated with existing unions; both the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers in Canada (UE) and United Steel Workers of America (USWA) had women’s committees for local chapters, but such committees could also be organized within specific workplaces without union presence.⁴⁴⁶ Committees tackled issues plaguing working women, such as lack of child care, double days, and sexual harassment.⁴⁴⁷ The mutual support these committees offered was vital to the improvement of workplace conditions. One white-collar worker stated her committee helped cultivate: “a bond between working women, and they did support one another.”⁴⁴⁸ These committees could act like early conscious raising groups that encouraged action against discriminatory social attitudes, policy, and practice.

Following the War, more and more workplaces were unionized, and membership, including female membership in existing unions was increasing substantially.⁴⁴⁹ The largest unions at the time, which included the USWA and the UE, experienced a notable increase in female membership. By the mid-1950s, one quarter of UE members were female, and one third of these were married, many of them with children.⁴⁵⁰ By 1957, their numbers increased to half.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁵ In her cross examination of Westclox and General Electric employment practices from 1920-1960 regarding women’s employment and interviews with women regarding their experiences, Sangster finds that women who had the protection of the union behind them were able to launch more bold and formal protests to workplace grievances.

Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 168.

⁴⁴⁶ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, UE Local 524, Pamphlet File, ‘Calling All UE Girls,’ 1952; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, Kitty M [1947-1957], 7 August 1990; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, Beatrice G [1953-1957], 7 August 1991.

⁴⁴⁷ Brian T. Thorn, *From Left to Right: Maternalism and Women’s Political Activism in Post-War Canada*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2016), 106; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, Kitty M [1947-1957], 7 August 1990.

⁴⁴⁸ LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, Beatrice G, 7 August 1991

⁴⁴⁹ Julie Guard, “Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE,” *Labour / Le Travail*, 37 (Spring, 1996): 166.

⁴⁵⁰ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, “1955 Conference on the Problems of Working Women, Program”, 9; PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, “1957 Conference on the

Moreover, women’s participation in unions challenged middle-class gender norms, and promoted the emergence of assertive, class-conscious women fighting for their rights as workers and family contributors.⁴⁵²

Female union member sought improved rights in the workplace, and improved standing among male union members within the union as well. Female unionists were aware that their interests frequently differed from, and occasionally conflicted, with men’s interests.⁴⁵³ Consequently, male union members could ignore or outright squash attempts to improve women’s rights. In 1949, female unionists challenged UE district president, C.S. Jackson, for his regular belittling of female union members, his repeatedly expressed position that women were nothing more than nominal union members, and his regular condemnation of their usefulness in the union. In a local meeting, one female union member remarked that the male members failed to do anything, but give Jackson a “slap on the wrist” for failing to support fellow members.⁴⁵⁴ Similarly, the UE’s local 524 district 1950 report failed to include any of the issues brought forward by female unionists throughout the year, nor did it include any of the concerns brought forward from the 1949 women’s conference.⁴⁵⁵

Problems of Working Women, Responses to Questionnaires,” 15; UENA, “Publicity Department, Women, Miscellaneous Correspondence”, 20 June 1962.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Julie Guard, “Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE,” 167; Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 185.

⁴⁵³ Ann Porter and Julie Guard have both examined the complex relationship between women and men unionist regarding women’s rights and equality in their respective works regarding women’s union participation. See Julie Guard, “Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE,” 149-177; Ann Porter, “Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962,” 111-144.

⁴⁵⁴ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, 1949 Women’s Conference, Minutes and Reports, “Correspondence between Flo Farrance to Idele Wilson,” (26 June 1949), 3.

⁴⁵⁵ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, District Council Meeting, “Minutes July 16-17 1949 Meeting,” (July 1949), 2; District Council Meeting, “Minutes December 2-3 1949 Meeting,” (December 1949), 3.

Female unionists had to actively involve male unionists when advocating for women’s rights. Alice Kessler-Harris has argued that in the US, unionized women “simultaneously lived within oppressive systems and found ways to search for the elusive goal of equality... [taking] advantage of unique moments to make incremental gains in their positions.”⁴⁵⁶ To do so they wove gender equality into class unity and workers’ rights definitions, arguing that: “the struggle of injustice and inequality as they immediately affect women... cannot be regarded as being for the special benefit of women but must be understood for what it is — a struggle to strengthen the position of workers as a whole.”⁴⁵⁷ Canadian women followed the same blueprint.

Women pushed their own issues and concerns, and refused to uncritically accept the priorities dictated by men.⁴⁵⁸ In a 1954 UE conference, Evelyn Armstrong, a prominent voice for women’s issues in the union, encouraged women to voice their issues, reminding them that “too long we have been sitting back and letting men do our thinking.”⁴⁵⁹ Throughout the 1950s, female unionist fought for equal pay, seniority rights, maternity rights and leave (at the level of their workplace), clean washrooms, and protection against sexual harassment. As more female workers joined the unions, these issues were eventually taken up by male union members as well.⁴⁶⁰ Although male and female unionists typically understood the problem differently, they often endorsed the same principle. For example, male unionists supported equal pay because unequal pay was not only a form of employers’ abuse, but also because equal pay protected their

⁴⁵⁶ Alice Kessler-Harris, "Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Sears, Roebuck and Company: A Personal Account," 432-46, 436.

⁴⁵⁷ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, “District 5 Council Meeting 19-20 June 1954, transcript minutes,” (June 1954), 2-3, 7-8, 48-9.

⁴⁵⁸ Julie Guard, “Fair Play or Fair Pay? Gender Relations, Class Consciousness, and Union Solidarity in the Canadian UE,” 149-177; Ann Porter, “Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962,” 111-144.

⁴⁵⁹ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, 1954 Women’s Conference, Minutes and Reports, “Notes taken of proceedings – ‘step forward union girls’” (March 1954), 2.

⁴⁶⁰ Ruth Milkman, *On Gender, Labour, and Inequity*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 163.

own interests. If women were paid like men, employers had no incentive to hire them instead of male worker. In 1953, a male unionist explained that he supported equal pay “for a very selfish reason – to protect our own rates.”⁴⁶¹ By the end of the 1950s, male unionists with, few exceptions, condemned policies and practices that discriminated against their female colleagues, including pay discrimination, unfair job termination, and additional regulations to UI policy for married women. In 1955, the UE annual convention passed resolutions addressing specific women’s issues, denouncing Unemployment insurance discrimination against married women, calling for publically funded day care and nurseries, maternity leave, equal pay, and seniority rights irrespective of sex.⁴⁶² Eventually, they began supporting policy that would help women gain more secure footing in workplaces, including seniority rights, maternity leave, and day care policy.

Union members’ activity was limited to their workplaces and the unions to which they were members; they used collective bargaining, strikes, and labour committees to obtain change. They usually did not lobby the federal or provincial governments for legislative change like women’s organization members. However, female unionists and women’s organization members did collaborate to gain fundamental changes to women’s work place rights, as discussed later in this chapter.

Women’s organizations were primarily formed by middle-class women in white collar or professional positions. The largest women’s organizations in the post-war period were the National Council of Women (NCWC), the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional

⁴⁶¹ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, 1953 Annual Convention, “Transcript Minutes,” (March 1954), 97.

⁴⁶² PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, “1955 Conference on the Problems of Working Women, Program” (February 1956), 16.

Women (BPW)⁴⁶³, the Federation of Women Teachers Association of Ontario, the Women’s Institutes, and the YWCAs. The first two were particularly active in the post-war period. The NCWC was an umbrella group regrouping a range of local affiliates.⁴⁶⁴ The BPW similarly federated women in a number of businesses and professions. These professional groups typically included employees working in clinics, schools, offices, or child/welfare services, but occasionally included lawyers, physicians, or accountants.⁴⁶⁵ The national organizations were almost always a federation of local affiliates, which had branches in various cities and towns or regional associations.⁴⁶⁶ They sought to improve women’s rights, including women’s rights in the workplace. As they were not associated with specific workplaces, like unions were, they could not enact change in them, but they could obtain legislative changes that would improve woman workers’ lives in general.⁴⁶⁷ To do so, they worked with political parties, wrote to members of parliament or new outlets, and participated in committees or conferences to lobby for changes. Throughout the 1950s, they lobbied for and obtained a number of crucial changes to federal and provincial legislation that improved women’s rights in Canada, including the appointment of women to civil service commissions, the Senate, the Court of Referees (a quasi-judicial court that handled UI claims), the women’s right to serve on juries, and equal pay legislation.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶³ Membership to the BPW was more accessible than the name would suggest. Any woman who worked in business like a secretary for instance, could join.

⁴⁶⁴ For a description of the groups formation and early years see Veronica Strong Boag’s *A History of the National Council of Women, 1839-1929* (Ottawa: The National Museums of Canada, 1976).

⁴⁶⁵ Ontario Archives (OA), BPW Papers, MU 6319, box 5, “Annual Membership Report,” (04 April 1956),16.

⁴⁶⁶ Judith Fingard, “Women’s Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women’s Activism,” 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Ann Porter, *Gendered States : Women, Unemployment Insurance, and the Political Economy of the Welfare State in Canada, 1945-1997*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 55.

⁴⁶⁸ LAC, NCWC Papers, MG 28 125, vol 97, file 7, “Brief to PM St. Laurent,” (December 1953) 1; LAC, NCWC Papers, MG 28 vol. 93, file 9, “Milton F Gregg to Mrs. RJ Marshall,” (February 1953), 2; LAC, NCWC Papers, MG 28 vol. 97, file 11, “Resolutions, 1953-1954,” (16 January 1953), 4.

Although women’s organization and union members drew members from different social classes and occupational sectors, they could seek to alleviate the same problems for working women, like pay inequity or discriminatory hiring practices, but did so in different ways.⁴⁶⁹ Unionists used collective bargaining, petitions, appeals to labour boards, and occasionally strikes to obtain improved working conditions; on the other hand, women’s organizations lobbied politicians, raised public awareness, and participated in committees to obtain changes in attitudes and legislation regarding working women. Occasionally their approaches could conflict, but by and large their different approaches were more effective in broadening women’s rights than if they had worked alone. Women’s organization members and union members demonstrated a high level of political sophistication that contributed to the emergence of increasingly favorable social conditions for working women.

The following section of this chapter examines female union and women’s organization members’ activity in the post-war period to challenge discriminatory work place practices, government policy, and social attitudes. Married women faced discrimination on a number of levels, as women, as wives, and as mothers. Throughout the 1950s, married women challenged discrimination on each level, and obtained critical changes that would serve as a solid foundation for more aggressive activity in the 1960s.⁴⁷⁰

All women faced problems in the workforce, including ghettoization into women’s jobs, discrimination in terms of promotion and pay, sexual harassment, all sustained by a culture that deemed women, by nature less competent than men. Throughout the 1950s, women obtained key changes to policies that helped reduced some of this discrimination and inequity. Ontario’s 1951

⁴⁶⁹ Brian T. Thorn, *From Left to Right: Maternalism and Women’s Political Activism in Post-War Canada*, 112.

⁴⁷⁰ Judith Fingard, “Women’s Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women’s Activism,” 36.

Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act (FEFRA) became the first Canadian law requiring equal pay for equal work. The bill was proposed by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party when Leslie Frost’s Conservatives were in power.

Female unionists in both the USWA and the UE had pushed the discussion of pay equity in meetings from 1948 through the 1950s, and called for minimum wages for female employees.⁴⁷¹ Both male and female members supported pay equity to reduce the likelihood of employers hiring women instead of men.⁴⁷² Consequently, union members lobbied for equal pay in contract negotiations, and collective agreements increasingly included equal pay clauses.⁴⁷³ In 1950, USWA union leaders supported the inclusion of pay equity in the Ontario Federation of Labour’s legislative proposals to the Ontario Government.⁴⁷⁴ Although the conservative government adopted pay equity regardless of race or ethnicity, they failed to adopt pay equity regardless of gender.⁴⁷⁵ In reaction, USWA continued to lobby alongside the Canadian Congress of Labour and Ontario’s Federation of Labour for pay equity. Further, they obtained pay equity in a number of collective bargaining agreements.⁴⁷⁶

Women’s organizations also lobbied heavily for FEFRA when the CCF introduced the bill. Margaret Hyndman, a corporation tax lawyer and BPW member, sent letters entitled ‘Equal Pay for Equal Work’ on behalf of the BPW to urge women’s organizations to educate and promote

⁴⁷¹ LAC, USWA Archives, vol 1. File 28, “Resolutions Papers, - Sept and Oct. 1948,” (October 1948), 22.

⁴⁷² Ann Porter, “Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962,” 111-144; Shirley Tillotson, "Human Rights Law as Prism: Women's Organizations, Unions, and Ontario's Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act, 1951," *Canadian Historical Review*, 72 no. 4 (1991), 532-557; OA, RG 7, series V-1-D, “Company/ Union Agreements, Vol 2,” (14 Nov 1946), 3; OA, RG 7, series V-1-D, “Company/ Union Agreements, Vol 3,” (28 Oct 1947) 2-3.

⁴⁷³ OA, RG 7, series V-1-D, “Company/Union Agreements Vol 4,” (14 Nov 1949), 3.

⁴⁷⁴ OA, Leslie M. Frost Papers, RG 3, box 19, Labour Relations file 1950, “Legislative Proposals of the Ontario Federation of Labour, CCL” (9 March 1950), 16.

⁴⁷⁵ Ontario, *Legislature of Ontario Debates*, (30 March 1950), vol. 27, H-4.

⁴⁷⁶ OA, RG 7, series V-1-D, “Company/ Union Agreements, Vol 2,” (14 Nov 1946), 3; OA, RG 7, series V-1-D, “Company/ Union Agreements, Vol 3,” (28 Oct 1947) 2-3; OA, RG 7, series V-1-D, “Company/Union Agreements Vol 4,” (14 Nov 1949), 3.

anti-discrimination employment laws.⁴⁷⁷ Her lobbying gained traction among public commentators. In the spring of 1951, the *Globe and Mail*, *Financial Post*, and the *Ottawa Citizen* published various editorials regarding pay equity for women, expressing support for a policy addressing sex discrimination.⁴⁷⁸ The stances taken in these editorials echoed Hyndman’s letters to Frost, particularly the economic benefits of equal pay.⁴⁷⁹ She argued that Frost could no longer deny the necessity of women’s employment, and that failure to take measures to “attract housewives into paid work” would hamper economic expansion.⁴⁸⁰ Within weeks following the publication of these articles, the Frost government introduced FEFRA.

Although FEFRA only ensured equal pay for the same work, it led to a legal right to pay equity. Women’s groups did not stop their advocacy when the bill was enacted; they continued to challenge other types of discrimination that led to pay inequity. Female unionist warned that the law left loopholes for employers to justify different pays for minute differences in work. As USWA delegate, Jean Vautour, stated:

You could have a situation where for seven hours and fifty five minutes of an eight-hour day, a man and a woman worked beside each other on a machine, and turned out the same number of parts, and that sort of thing. But in the last five minutes or so, the man's job was to wheel away the truck load of finished parts, and the woman's job was to clean up the machine upon which they were working. [...] This would allow him to discriminate against the woman. Yet I am sure that any reasonable person would say they were doing comparable work. From the labor of each, the employer was making equal profit but he would be under no obligation to pay them equal wages, because of that loop-hole.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁷ MU 6353, box 1, file 2, “Margaret Hyndman to Women’s YCMA ‘Equal Pay for Equal Work Letter,’” (13 March 1949), 1.

⁴⁷⁸ *Financial Post*, (24 February 1951); *Globe and Mail*, (27 February 1951); *Ottawa Citizen*, (7 March 1951).

⁴⁷⁹ OA, BPW Archives, MG 28, I 55, vol. 7, “Equal Pay file, Memo to Premier Frost from BPW,” 5 Feb. 1951.

⁴⁸⁰ T Koby, ‘The Ladies, Bless ‘Em,” *Financial Post*, (24 February 1951); See also Ronald Williams, “Business has Women Trouble: Jobs Go Begging, Not Enough Girls To Go Round,” *Financial Post*, (3 December 1949).

⁴⁸¹ Ontario, House of Commons, *Debates*. (12 March 1951), vol 28, H-3.

Union and professional group members continued to fight for legislation that addressed the ways job segregation lowered women’s wages. According to Shirley Tillotson, FEFRA had a progressive educational effect, and served as a base for future efforts. She argued that the inclusion of pay equity among a human rights issue opened an opportunity for improved rights in the years that followed.⁴⁸² Collaborative efforts by unionists, women’s organizations, and political parties led to FEFRA’s success.⁴⁸³ By the end of the decade, eight provinces and the federal government passed comparable legislation.⁴⁸⁴

Married women faced even greater discrimination and inequity in the workforce than single women. The employers’ skepticism of married women’s commitment to the workforce justified promotion and pay discrimination. The cultural hostility towards working wives meant that married women were subject to greater employment restrictions. The federal government’s UI married women regulation (Regulation 5A) is a good example of the additional discrimination that married women face. Its challenge and elimination is also a good example of the way women fought this discrimination. As with FEFRA, unions worked alongside women’s organizations like the BPW and NCWC to end those discriminatory clauses in the UI regulations.⁴⁸⁵

Union and women’s organization members opposed Regulation 5A as early as 1949. In 1950, UE District 524 delegate Ivy Riley spoke to the Canadian Congress of Labour, requesting they

⁴⁸² Shirley Tillotson, "Human Rights Law as Prism: Women's Organizations, Unions, and Ontario's Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act, 1951," 533.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 527; Ann Porter, "Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962," 136.

⁴⁸⁴ Shirley Tillotson, "Human Rights Law as Prism: Women's Organizations, Unions, and Ontario's Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act, 1951," 533.

⁴⁸⁵ Ruth Roach Pierson, *They're Still Women After All*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 115; Ann Porter, "Women and Income Security in the Post-war Period: The Case of Unemployment," 113.

oppose “any attempt to impose special qualifications on pensioners and married women.”⁴⁸⁶ The following year, Riley’s district union leader, Joe Spence, reiterated the recommendation, stating Regulation 5A was “discrimination and restrictive, calculated to work an injustice on married women.”⁴⁸⁷ In March 1951, the UE Women’s Conference submitted their recommendations to UE leadership, and these leaders brought this recommendation before the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour (CCCL) and an Umpire (an impartial mediator of labour dispute).⁴⁸⁸ Concurrently, Ellen Fairclough, a parliamentary spokesperson for women’s organizations stood before the House of Commons and urged that “this discrimination against women be eliminated.”⁴⁸⁹ Complaints were brought to the Court of Referees by labour representatives insisting that the regulation be repealed.⁴⁹⁰ The UE brought forward individual cases throughout 1955 on behalf of women employees who had been denied UI, and once again urged the elimination of Regulation 5A.⁴⁹¹ Eventually, female unionists’ campaign gained momentum across different workplaces and labour boards, including the Canadian Labour Congress.⁴⁹²

Women’s organizations also advocated for the Regulation 5A’s removal, though as argued by Ann Porter, they were not as visible as female unionists.⁴⁹³ Nonetheless, the NCW and BPW lobbied for its removal requesting: “the UI Commission take [no more] action to protect the Unemployment Insurance Fund against unjust claims from married women than is taken with

⁴⁸⁶ LAC, CCL Files, *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention* (October 1949), 96,98.

⁴⁸⁷ LAC, CCL Files, *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Convention* (September 1950), 76.

⁴⁸⁸ *Labour Gazette*, May 1951, 711.

⁴⁸⁹ House of Commons, *Debates*, (18 June 1952), 3397; House of Commons *Debates*, (4 June 1952), 2913.

⁴⁹⁰ LAC, CCL Files MG 28 1103, vol. 239 file 239-11, “Minutes of the Employee’s Representatives on the Courts of Referees,” (March 1952), 5-7.

⁴⁹¹ House of Commons, *Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, Minutes and Evidence*, (26 May 1955), 262.

⁴⁹² *Trades and Labor Congress Journal*, (November 1954), 8; LAC, UIC Records, RG 50, vol. 54, “32nd meeting UIAC, July 1957, CLC Submission to the UIAC,” (July 1957), 3.

⁴⁹³ Ann Porter, “Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962,” 134.

any other category of claimant.”⁴⁹⁴ They argued that special qualifications should not apply to married women based on the presupposition that they had no intention of finding another job when laid off, yet claimed UI so they could buy vacuum cleaners or other luxuries.⁴⁹⁵ As in the case of FEFRA, women’s organizations sent a number of letters to the Minister of Labour and the Prime Minister requesting they eliminate the regulation.⁴⁹⁶ Finally in 1957, Regulation 5A was revoked. Labour Minister Michael Starr stated it was removed because it was unacceptable to continue discriminating against women because more and more wives worked.⁴⁹⁷ A memorandum summarizing UI benefits paid married women once the regulation was revoked showed that between 1957 and 1958 UI payments to married women had increased 80%.⁴⁹⁸ Though barriers for married women’s work still persisted, the removal of Regulation 5A in the Canadian unemployment insurance scheme was a critical milestone.

Finally, married women with children faced the greatest level of hostility and discrimination in the workforce. Not only were they subjected to the same discrimination as described above, they also lacked child care services and maternity leave, faced inflexible hours and extreme double days. Mother-specific problems like child care and maternity leave were the last problems addressed by government officials, unions, or women’s organizations. Consequently, no legislation was passed in the 1950s to alleviate these problems. Working mothers then had to

⁴⁹⁴ LAC, NCW Papers, MG28, 125, vol 96, file 1: “Annual Meeting, 1954 “Minutes, 61st Annual Meeting June 25-July 1954,” (25 July 1954), 4.

⁴⁹⁵ Presupposition being that women applied to UI not because they were unemployed but recently married and supported by husband so not wishing to return to workforce but get money to buy a stove or something.

⁴⁹⁶ LAC, NCW Papers MG28, 125, vol 103, file 7, “PM and Cabinet: Correspondence, 1956-1957,” (February 1957), np; LAC, BPW papers, MG 28 155, vol 12, “Report of Standing Committee on Legislation, 1950-1952,” (August 1953), 47; LAC BPW Papers, MG 128 “1955 Correspondence, BPW of Ontario, Ontario Provincial Conference, 30 September-2 October, 1955,” (November 1955), 32.

⁴⁹⁷ House of Commons *Debates*, (15 November 1957), 1711-2.

⁴⁹⁸ LAC, UIC Records, RG 50, vol. 54, “UI Commission to UIAC, 12 July 1960,” (July 1960), 3; LAC, UIC Records, RG 50, vol. 55, “Impact Benefit to Married Women,” (October 1959), 3.

find solutions to their daily problems on their own. The most critical problem was the lack of full-time child care options. Women struggled to find suitable care for their children, which limited their availability and could impede their reliability. Though there were some government funded child care services, most working mothers could not use them. Each government level made it difficult for women to access these services. Their tactics included: shifting responsibilities for daycare to other levels of government; using legislated standards to close centres rather than improve services; using high eligibility requirements to limit access; and raising the services’ cost so high parents were unable to use them.⁴⁹⁹

Gaining better access to child care services was critical for many working women. Women opposed those restrictions and sought improved child care services throughout the 1950s. Women’s organizations, including the NCW, Women’s Teachers Association, and the YWCA, protested the federal government’s day care service termination in 1946.⁵⁰⁰ They worked with Parent Associations in different cities to lobby municipal and provincial governments for continued government funding for child care throughout the post-war period. In 1951, Isabel Bevis, President of Toronto’s Day Nurseries and Day Care Parents Association, addressed the Provincial Committee on Public Welfare, on behalf of a larger deputation of working mothers (including members of the Congress of Canadian Women, The Toronto Council of International Union, Housewives Consumers’ Association, and UE members) demanding that they lower the eligibility requirements for day care services. They argued that all working mothers, by right, were equally deserving and should be considered equally eligible to access those services.⁵⁰¹ At

⁴⁹⁹ P. Shulz “Day care in Canada: 1860-1962” in *Good Daycare* ed. K Gallagher-Ross (Toronto: Women’s Educational Press, 1978), 150.

⁵⁰⁰ *Toronto Star*, (30 January, 1946); *Toronto Telegram*, (February 9, 1946).

⁵⁰¹ OA, Toronto City Council Minutes. “Committee on Public Welfare, Report No. 145, June 14, 1951,” 1546; Toronto Library, Schulz Collection, undated newspaper clipping.

the 1952 UE convention, the question of establishing day nurseries for married women was raised by female unionists; moreover they argued that there should not be eligibility requirements that limited access.⁵⁰² In 1955, the UE included in its annual resolutions a call for publically funded day care and nurseries, and for maternity leave at the female members’ recommendation from that year’s and preceding years’ annual women’s conference.⁵⁰³ In 1956, representatives of the NCW and Canadian Congress of Women spoke at the Canadian Conference on Social Work in Canada, requesting the federal government to provide greater funding for child care facilities and services.⁵⁰⁴ Unfortunately, these efforts did not result in any improvements to public child care services.

Although no federal or provincial public child care program was funded in the 1950s, women were able to benefit from locally improved child care. They were opened by private institutions or funded by “community chests”.⁵⁰⁵ More importantly, the development of a counter-discourse to the traditional perception of non-parental care meant there was a more solid base for future efforts. According to Susan Prentice, the failure to legislate improvements to child care services did not mark defeat, but instead introduced a ‘transformative demand’.⁵⁰⁶ In 1953, British Columbia’s Social Welfare Department acknowledged that the requests for day care from “children of mothers who did not *need* to work to supplement the family but who *want* to work

⁵⁰² PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, “1952 Conference on the Problems of Working Women, Program,” 24.

⁵⁰³ PITT ULS Special Collections and Archives, UENA, “1955 Conference on the Problems of Working Women, Program,” 16.

⁵⁰⁴ Canada. “Department of Labour. Canadian Conference on Social Work,” *Labour Gazette* (1956), 1127.

⁵⁰⁵ LAC, Department of Labour Press, RG 26 Vol. 1903 File 38-2-2 pt 1. “Draft of Material for Women’s Bureau section of the Minister’s current Information Book,” (14 December, 1959), 2.

⁵⁰⁶ Susan Prentice, “Workers, Mothers, Reds: Toronto’s Post-war Daycare Fight,” *Studies in Political Economy*, 30 (Fall 1989), 138.

are increasing.”⁵⁰⁷ Further, they questioned: “While everyone agrees it is important for mothers to stay at home and that their most important job is to care for their children, should disapproval be shown about a mother going to work if good care for her children can be provided and she prefers it that way?”⁵⁰⁸ Those in favour of daycare service as a right for working women, as absolute equality did not address the fundamental problem of married women’s continued responsibility to the home. Consequently, supporters argued that a “balance” through child care and maternity leave was required to achieve greater equality in the workforce.⁵⁰⁹

Women’s organizations, particularly the YWCA, campaigned for a greater understanding of working women.⁵¹⁰ In response, the government formed the Women’s Bureau in the Department of Labour to look into issues pertaining to women’s employment. Their first inquiry was into the need for special services, specifically day care and maternity leave, for working women. In 1955, they reported that there was a strong demand for more child care facilities, and recommended the expansion of state funded child care services.⁵¹¹ The British Columbia Department of Social Welfare stated in 1956: “If it [married women’s employment] is to become a permanent part of Canadian culture that married women with young children are needed as part of the labour force, then a good day-care programme must be worked out for the care of these children.”⁵¹² In the following decade, the number of child care centres would double and the federal government resumed funding services.

⁵⁰⁷ British Columbia, “Annual Report of the Social Welfare Branch, 1953,” *Emphasis added*.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid*.

⁵⁰⁹ Catherine Louise Briggs, “Fighting for Women’s Equality: The Federal’s Women’s Bureau, 1945 – 1967, an Example of Early State Feminism in Canada,” (Doctoral Thesis, University of Waterloo, 2001), 18.

⁵¹⁰ Ellen Buzek, “The Needs of Young Women Today,” *YMCA Quarterly*, (March 1951), 19; LAC, MG281198, Vol 47, File 47-31 “YMCA, Minutes of 1954 Conference – Ottawa,” (February 1954), 191.

⁵¹¹ LAC, Department of Labour Papers, RG 27, Vol. 1903, File #38-2-2, pt.1, “Summary of the activities of the Women’s Bureau,” (13 May 1955), 2.

⁵¹² British Columbia, *Social Welfare Branch Annual Report, 1956*, (March 1956), 2.

Women continuously challenged barriers or potential barriers posed by government and organizations throughout the 1950s. Moreover, they were not placated by token changes, and instead continued to call for greater equity in pay and rights. As Judith Fingard explains, “their results were usually incremental and seldom dramatic but they could be innovative.”⁵¹³ The reversal of state policies illustrated two important shifts: (1) women, through individual and collective activity, challenged the systemic discrimination they faced on a daily basis, which reflected a patriarchal mind set; (2) there was an increasing disconnection between these policies and the country’s labour needs, which could only be fulfilled by bringing more women in the labour force as during the war, but also between those policies and the economic needs of those women and their families. This discrepancy could no longer be ignored. The legislative changes that occurred during the 1950s were an important step forward. They were part of an incremental process that gained strength from an expanding number of female workers and their growing efforts to resolve the tensions between the prescriptions they encountered and their daily experiences.⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, the shift throughout the decade meant that there was a stronger base upon which a later generation of women could launch a more holus-bolus initiative on behalf of gender equality.

⁵¹³ Judith Fingard, “Women’s Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women’s Activism,” 36.

⁵¹⁴ Ann Porter, “Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962,” 143-144.

CHAPTER VII: *Conclusion*

*Women are taking their places in all fields of skill and endeavor,
and will continue to play an ever-increasing role
in determining the direction of change.*⁵¹⁵

Throughout the 1950s, married women entered the workforce in growing numbers, expanded their presence in a number of professional fields, and promoted individually and collectively gender consciousness.⁵¹⁶ But at the same time, they were encouraged by society to remain at home as mothers and housewives. Criticism was levelled against married women's work, which according to commentators led to a vast array of personal and social ills, ranging from family breakdown, male impotence, and juvenile delinquency.⁵¹⁷ Nonetheless, in spite of the barrage of prescriptions encouraging traditional gender norms, married women, especially middle-class ones, became permanent members of the Canadian labour force. They negotiated the difference between social norms and their daily lives by becoming increasingly vocal about their right to work, the reasons they were working, and the challenges they faced in trying to do so. Their efforts resulted in noteworthy improvements to their immediate daily situation, as well as positive outcomes in their broader struggles.⁵¹⁸ Ultimately, their activity in the immediate post-war period confounds the widely accept view that during this time women tolerated

⁵¹⁵ Marion Smith, *Busy Bee*, 4 no. 6A (November-December, 1961), 22.

⁵¹⁶ Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968), 2.

⁵¹⁷ J. D. Ketchum, "The Family: Changing Patterns in Industrial Society," in *Canadian Family Study 1957-1960* (Toronto: The Federation, 1961), 19; Samuel Laycock, "Psychological Factors in Marriage," *Prairie Messenger* 28, (January 1950), 12; J.G. Woodsworth, *Youth and Tomorrow: A Guide to Personal Development in the Early and Middle Teens* (Toronto: Canadian Home and Parent-Teacher Federation, 1956), 69.

⁵¹⁸ Judith Fingard, "Women's Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women's Activism," in *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in Post-1945 Halifax*, ed. Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 25-26.

discriminatory social attitudes and policies.⁵¹⁹ Instead, their activity formed a solid base upon which younger generations of women could build to obtain even greater rights and recognition in the workforce and society as a whole.

Young women entering the workforce in the late 1950s and 1960s greatly benefited from the experience and precedent set by those who had been in the workforce for years. According to Joan Sangster, one cannot underestimate the influence that these women had in raising gender consciousness among new employees, and their eventual participation in the later feminist movements in the 1960s and 1970s.⁵²⁰ Alice Kessler-Harris argues the most important legacy of the 1950s was incremental changes to women's work, which had long-term 'radical consequences' in the years to follow.⁵²¹ Their growing participation in the labour force, and their advocacy for their rights once there, made a significance difference to married women's social status in this period. In the years that followed, women's labour movements obtained greater changes due to the fundamental rights and social acceptance that had been fought for and won by their predecessors.

Accordingly, it is among the subsequent generation of daughters, raised by this post-war generation of working mothers, that those radical consequences are clearly evident. Daughters participating in the Second Wave Feminist movement in the mid-1960s and 1970s were not reacting their mothers' lack of participation in the workforce or resistance to discriminatory policy and practice, as has been suggestion by certain historians; instead were a continuing their

⁵¹⁹ Brian T. Thorn, *From Left to Right: Maternalism and Women's Political Activism in Post-War Canada*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2016), 106; Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Post-War Work Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 7.

⁵²⁰ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 228.

⁵²¹ Alice Kessler Harris, *A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 4-5.

struggle to a greater degree.⁵²² Mother-daughter interviews conducted by Joan Sangster reveal the generational link between 1950s working wives and the labour movements of the 1960s and 1970s.⁵²³ They also reveal the difference in perceptions of activism and feminism. She found that daughters described their mothers' work as 'pioneering', 'strong', and 'courageous', while mothers simply considered their work to be a necessity for their families.⁵²⁴ Although they described their work as important to them and their families, they did not describe it as particularly 'radical' or 'feminist'.⁵²⁵ Yet, Sangster concludes that both mothers' and daughters' considered married women's participation in the immediate post-war period had had a great influence on the daughters, and shaped their increasingly 'radical' feminist views.⁵²⁶ The daughters' decision to work outside the home, their occupational opportunities, and their ability to combine paid work with homemaking, depended more on family example than social norms.⁵²⁷

The 1950s were a watershed moment for women's ability of work, as a growing proportion of joined the labour force and their participation was increasingly accepted by policy makers and society at large. Individually and collectively women organized and negotiated the daily challenges of the workplace to ultimately gain incremental, yet noteworthy, improvements to their broader working rights. The importance of these women is frequently overlooked in the

⁵²² Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1993), 14; Joan Sangster, "Radical Ruptures: Feminism, Labor, and the Left in the Long Sixties in Canada," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no. 1 (Mar. 2010): 2; Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Post-War Work Canada*, 7.

⁵²³ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*: 301.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 301; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean F [1950-1959], 20 July 1991.

⁵²⁵ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 301

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 303; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Jean F [1950-1959], 20 July 1991.

⁵²⁷ Joan Sangster, *Earning Respect: the Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960*, 303.

historiography in favour of the more radical efforts of those who followed.⁵²⁸ It sets the efforts of 1950s working wives between two high points, or waves, of women's activism. However, instead of viewing the immediate post-war period as a trough, Joan Sangster has suggested to consider women's participation in the labour force and struggle for greater equality in the 20th century as 'streams' that were "ebbing and flowing in intensity, sometimes overlapping but embodying different – even oppositional actors, political ideas, and objectives."⁵²⁹

During the Second World War, the Canadian government promoted married women's employment as a way to support the war effort, and endorsed a narrative that women could work and remain devoted mothers and housewives.⁵³⁰ Although the Canadian Government intended this situation to be temporary, necessitated by Canada's war commitments, it had a profound effect on women and their aspirations for the post-war period. As the war ended, married women were eager to continue working for pay; however, the government sought to remove women, who were considered surplus, from the workforce to make room for returning soldiers. Additionally, government officials and social commentators alike encouraged traditional gender norms, specifically a male bread-winner family model, in which women were assuming domestic roles as housewives and mothers.

Yet, the transformed Canadian economy society following the Second World War opened the door for expanded roles for women, particularly married women, in the labour force. Counter-

⁵²⁸ Ann Porter, "Women and Income Security in the Post-War Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962," 143-144.; Ruth Roach Pierson, "The Politics of the Domestic Sphere," in *Canadian Women's Issues: Volume II: Bold Visions – Twenty Five Years of Women's Activism in English Canada*, ed. Ruth Roach Pierson and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers: 1995), 3; Pat and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and their Segregated Work*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1985), 50; Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market*, 13.

⁵²⁹ Joan Sangster, "Radical Ruptures: Feminism, Labor, and the Left in the Long Sixties in Canada," 2.

⁵³⁰ Carol Payne, "Made in Canada: Labour, Gender, and Class during the Second World War," in *The Official Picture: The National Film Board of Canada's Still Photography Division and the Image of Canada, 1941-1971* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2013), 91.

cyclical spending by the government and increased domestic and foreign demand for Canadian goods led to the growth expansion of the Canadian economy.⁵³¹ The number of working age men and single women were insufficient to meet labour demands, which meant married women could easily fill these openings in the labour force. Moreover, increased consumer spending strained family budgets, and couples found that a second income alleviated the pressures. Consequently, married women were willing to work so they could help support their families. Ultimately, the Second World War proved to be critical in reshaping post-war society in such a way that married women became a permanent fixture of the labour force.

Married women re-entered the workforce in substantial numbers in the post-war period. Prior to the war, only one in twenty-five married women worked; by 1960, one in five, and they accounted for half of the female labour force.⁵³² Married women's participation in the labour force had risen slowly since the turn of the century; however, the noteworthy increase of middle-class women entering the workforce was new in the post-war period.⁵³³ Patterns of married women's employment reflected their enduring domestic responsibilities and they often worked in a "two-phase" work pattern. Like their single counterparts, they were channeled into retail and clerical work, and were often hired as part-time, casual, or seasonal employees. Throughout the 1950s, married women were able to gain some vertical advancement, as they became managers or supervisors.⁵³⁴ By 1960 job ghettoization was weakening, and women had access to more

⁵³¹ Maurice Lamontagne, *Business Cycles in Canada: The Postwar Experience and Policy Directions*, (Toronto: James Lormier & Company, Publishers, 1984), 45-46.

⁵³² Joy Parr, "Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada," *International Labour and Working-Class History* 55, (Spring, 1999): 114.

⁵³³ Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, *Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, (A Labour Force Study in the 1961 Census Monograph Programme)*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), 34.

⁵³⁴ Noah Meltz, *Man Power in Canada: 1931 to 1961 – Historical Statistics of the Canadian Labour Force* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), Tables A.2 –A.3; Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Canadian Census*

occupations beyond clerical and retail work. However, the transitional patterns of their work meant married women's work was often undervalued, and their workplace challenges ignored.

Married women were driven to work by a combination of economic need and personal ambitions. Throughout the 1950s, many families relied on a second income to achieve even a basic standard of living.⁵³⁵ Moreover, many more families found that the second income provided for greater advantages for themselves and their children, even if they did not require it to survive.⁵³⁶ The number of women actually working out of economic necessity may have been inflated, as it was the only socially accepted reason married women could give for working.⁵³⁷ But although the majority of women cited economic necessity as the reason for their employment, women also worked for a number of personal reasons and became more vocal about them throughout the decade.⁵³⁸ The sense of identity and community gained from work outside of the often isolating suburbia was a strong incentive.⁵³⁹ Moreover, technological advances (like washers, vacuum cleaners, and electrical stoves/refrigerators) reduced the burden

Book, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1951), 89; Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Canadian Census Book 1961*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), 87; Jeff Keshen, Revisiting Canada's Civilian Women During World War II," *Histoire Sociale / Social History* 30, no. 60 (November 1997): 23-240.

⁵³⁵ J.R. Podoluk, *Census Monograph: Incomes of Canadians* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968): 13; Canada. Statistics Canada. *Census of Canada, Families: Statistics on Low Income* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1977): 93-774.

⁵³⁶ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 4.

⁵³⁷ Christina Cleary, "Why I'm Going Back to Work," *Star Weekly Magazine* (Dec. 17 1960): 12 - 14.

⁵³⁸ Canada. Department of Labour - Women's Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities* (Ottawa: Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, 1958), 59.

⁵³⁹ Veronica Strong-Boag, "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960," *Canadian Historical Review*, 72 no. 4: 782; See also Byrne Hope Sanders, "Unhappy Wives," *Chatelaine* (Apr. 1948): 2.

of housework for many women.⁵⁴⁰ Women who had worked hard to achieve a secondary or higher education were also reluctant to not use it in the labour force.⁵⁴¹

Married women who went to work during the post-war period did so for a variety of reasons, not all economic, and thus should not be homogenized into an undifferentiated mass. Further, “economic need” was no longer limited to acquiring the basic necessities of life. People who would have been very happy 50 years previously paying their rent, putting food on the table, and replacing their few pieces of clothing when they were no longer wearable now wanted to take part in the emerging consumption society.⁵⁴² They gave priority to durable consumer goods (like appliances, cars, radio and record players) and building their children’s human capital (keep them longer in school).⁵⁴³ Although post-war Canadians were not spendthrift, they still needed more money than most men earned to acquire those goods.⁵⁴⁴ Consequently, married women were simultaneously pushed into the workforce in order to contribute to their household budgets for these consumer goods, while being pulled into an economy that was expanding, in no small part because of the growing demand for consumer goods.

Middle-class women’s labour force participation was often discussed by social commentators. The federal government attempted to restrict their employment following the war

⁵⁴⁰ Eileen Morris, "Housework is a Part - time Job!" *Chatelaine* (Mar. 1960): 28 - 29, 71 - 74, 76; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Majory H [1957-1961], 2 April 1991; Canada. Department of Labour - Women’s Bureau, *Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Cities*, 59

⁵⁴¹ Frank J. Whittingham. *Special Labour Force Studies – Educational Attainment of the Canadian labour Force*, (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1972): 63; LAC, Jean Bruce Interviews, tape R-8543, interview with Shirley M. [1955 - 1961], 8 August 1991.

⁵⁴² Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 21.

⁵⁴³ Joy Parr, “Household Choices as Politics and Pleasure 1950s Canada,” *International Labour and Working-Class History* 55 (Spring, 1999): 112-113; Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 16.

⁵⁴⁴ Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-1960,” 782.

through a number of policies. However, as returning soldiers were re-integrated into the workforce, fears of high unemployment rates dissipated along with many of the reasons to prevent married women's labour force participation.⁵⁴⁵ Moreover, shortages in labour meant that the government's policies were no longer compatible with post-war realities. Soon the government policies restricting married women's labour were replaced by more tolerant ones. Nevertheless, married women were still encouraged to remain at home as mothers and wives by academics and professionals. They encouraged a stereotypical 'separate sphere' ideology to prevent family tensions that could disrupt marriage and parent relationships.⁵⁴⁶ Expert opinions were often reiterated in the popular press. Media attention was drawn to the new trend of working wives, and the desirability of their employment was often debated., a variety of positions were offered in Canadian periodicals throughout the 1950s, shaped by each periodical and authors' own set of ideas and perceptions.⁵⁴⁷ As a consequence, married women were subject to a number of prescriptions that rarely reflected their daily lives. Instead, the prescriptions became increasingly divorced from their realities, and the challenges of their employment were obscured.

Nevertheless, married women negotiated the discrepancies between prescriptions and reality in order to call greater attention to their right to work and their rights within the workplace. Individually and collectively women challenged discriminatory policy and practice to ultimately obtain incremental improvements to their status in the workplace. By either locally challenging

⁵⁴⁵ LAC RG 30, Vol 13105, file no. 480X2, Employment of Married Women, "Synopsis of Correspondence in Connection with Employment or non-Employment of Female Employees," no date; Canada. House of Commons, *Debates* (15 November 1957), 1711-2.

⁵⁴⁶ Jennifer Stephen, "Balancing Equality for the Post-War Woman: Demobilising Canada's Women Workers after World War Two," *Atlantis* 32, no. 1 (2007), 133; Canada. Department of Labour, "Married Women Workers: The Home Situation," in *Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. B.R. Blishen, F.E. Jones, K.D. Naegele, and J. Porter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960): 176.

⁵⁴⁷ Marie Ann Boutillier, "Ideology Surrounding Women's Work in Canada, 1931-1956" (McMaster University, 1977), 121.

unfair working conditions on an individual basis, or organizing in women's groups or unions to lobby for pay equity and other rights, married women were actively challenging the discriminatory policies and attitudes of the post-war period. Ultimately, their efforts were critical in forming a foundation which women of the next generation could use to push for even greater rights and equity.

The immediate post-war years were not a 'trough' between heightened periods of women's activity.⁵⁴⁸ Instead, they were a turning point for women's workforce participation in Canada. The women's labour movements and the 'Second Wave Feminism' movement of the 1960s and 1970s were critical in facilitating improvements to women's social, economic, and legal conditions that had been absent in the preceding decades.⁵⁴⁹ However, they were not reacting against the women of previous generation's complacency; instead they were continuing their activity to a greater degree. Thus, the study of women's, particularly married women's paid work in the 1950s is a useful analytical thread to link the 1950s to later decades of change in women's lives.

A crucial position of this thesis is that the examination of women's paid work must be two-fold: First, their experiences must be placed in the broader context of their non-waged work, their family lives, the dominant cultural definitions of femininity, and state policy; however, one must also understand how women perceived, experienced, and negotiated these elements. For the former only illuminates half of the story, the latter reveals the rest. More importantly, it can speak to incongruences between prescriptions frequently found in government or media sources, and the lived experiences or day to day realities uncovered in the women's interpretations of their lives.

⁵⁴⁸ Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market*, 14.

⁵⁴⁹ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Post-War Work Canada*, 7.

Although the ‘middle-class’ is a useful tool for analysis, it can be a homogenizing category. A second crucial conclusion of this thesis is that the post-war middle-class population was incredibly diverse. Married women in the middle class held a variety of views on the acceptability of married women’s employment. Chatelaine’s rich debates throughout the decade highlight the continued disagreement over married women’s work. Moreover, women entered the labour force for a variety of different reasons; some sought to help their families break into the middle class thanks to the second income; others sought to use the second income improve their families’ quality of life, and some – who comfortably fit into the middle class – sought work for other, non-economic, reasons, including finding a community, seeking intellectual stimulation, and gaining self-worth. Often their motivation was a combination of several of these reasons.

This thesis has been shaped by a recent historiographical trend that has sought to reintegrate women’s experiences, as expressed in interviews, memoirs, diaries, and questionnaires, into the historical narrative. Scholars, like Iacovetta, have adopted this approach to give women who are not discussed in the popular press, legislative policy, or union and business records a voice.⁵⁵⁰ This thesis has explored the experience of a limited group of women: white, middle-class, English speaking women largely living in Ontario. These women, for all their hardships and challenges, were in a relatively privileged population –their race and socio-economic class afforded them greater opportunities than women of colour or those in the lower class had access to.⁵⁵¹ Though this thesis focusses on a narrow category of women, it nonetheless

⁵⁵⁰ Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Post-War Work Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 21; Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Post-war Toronto* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 24-26.

⁵⁵¹ Marlene Epp and Franca Iacovetta, *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 34; Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Post-War Reconstruction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 108-123.

demonstrates the vast discrepancies that can exist between prescriptions and daily experiences. If these discrepancies were prevalent for white, English speaking, middle-class women, then one can imagine the immense difference for women being marginalized and silenced by these sources.

By contributing to a revision of the dominant narrative, this thesis has sought to offer broader understandings of women in the post-war labour force. By combining women's experiences as told by women with more traditional sources including legislation, popular press, and institutional (including unions, businesses, and departmental) records, it has found that the 1950s were a critical time for women's labour force participation, traditionally overlooked in the historiography. However, there are limits to such revisionism. Like the women of the 1960s building from foundations established in the post-war period, this type of revisionism is in debt to its predecessors of the field, their arguments, understandings, and interpretations; moreover, revisionist approaches hope that topics – like women's participation in the paid labour force – will continue to be examined and re-examined with vigor and diligence. Canadian women's history, like other historical fields, is an exercise in continual rethinking and revisiting of dominant narratives and historiographical certainties. As historians, we may instinctually imagine teleological approaches, where insight builds onto insight, crafting an ever-more perfect understanding of the past. Instead, the story of women's work experiences in Canada throughout the 1950s is neither simple nor linear; instead there existed a number of narratives and counter-narratives, and a cautious revisionism, altering – but not completely abandoning – an interpretive emphasis on the political conservatism and recommended domesticity of the era by leveraging sources from women interpreting their own opportunities and experiences in the work. By doing so, this research can illuminate and enrich the social implications from the Second World War,

Chapter VII: A Conclusion

family relations and dynamics in the post-war period, and the later development of women's labour movements that would mark the 1960s and 1970s with broader dimension, greater subtle, and a clearer understanding.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Mrs Jack Wright Photo Series, 1944

Figure 1 (a): “Mrs. Jack Wright and her sons Ralph and David eating breakfast at the table.”



Source: Library and Archives Canada (LAC), R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3854. “Mrs. Jack Wright and her sons Ralph and David eating breakfast at the table.” National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 1 (b): Mrs. Jack Wright and her two sons Ralph Wright and David Wright assist her with her shopping.



Source: Library and Archives Canada (LAC), R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3851. “Mrs. Jack Wright and her two sons Ralph Wright and David Wright assist her with her shopping.” National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 1 (c): Mrs. Jack Wright and her two sons Ralph and David visit with a neighbor in the front of their house.



Source: Library and Archives Canada (LAC), R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3846. “Mrs. Jack Wright and her two sons Ralph and David visit with a neighbour in the front of their house.” National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 1 (d): A Canadian mother, Mrs. Jack Wright says goodbye to her two sons Ralph Wright and David Wright whom she leaves at a Day Nursery while she works at a part-time job.



Source: Library and Archives Canada (LAC), R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3830. "A Canadian mother, Mrs. Jack Wright says goodbye to her two sons Ralph Wright and David Wright whom she leaves at a Day Nursery while she works at a part-time job." National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 1 (e): Mrs. Jack Wright boards a bus on her way to work at a munitions factory.



Source: Library and Archives Canada (LAC), R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3850. “Mrs. Jack Wright boards a bus on her way to work at a munitions factory.” National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 1 (f): Mrs. Jack Wright reads her two sons Ralph and David a bed-time story.



Source: Library and Archives Canada (LAC), R1196-14-7-E. Box RV4 165. Item No. WRM 3853. "Mrs. Jack Wright and her two sons Ralph Wright and David Wright assist her with her shopping." National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division. Photographer Unknown. Toronto, Ontario.

Appendix 2: Responses to National Selective Service Survey on Post-War Plans, 1943

Expectation	WRCNS**	CWAC	RCAF-WD
Withdraw from Employment	6%	17%	12%
Seek future Employment	81%	72%	77%
Uncertain of Plans	13%	11%	11%

Source: LAC. RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, “W. M. Taylor, Royal Canadian Air Force to Marion Graham,” March 29, 1946; LAC. RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, “D. I. Royal, Lt. Col. Staff Officer, CWAC to Graham,” March 18, 1946; LAC. RG 27, Vol. 744, file 12-14-16-12, “Adelaide Sinclair, Captain, WRCNS, Department of National Defence Naval Service to Graham,” March 23, 1946.

Appendix 3:

Table 3 (a) Labour Force Participation of Women, 1943 to 1951

Year	Total Labour Force	Total Participation Rate
1943	1,355,000	32.8
1944	1,387,000	33.1
1945	1,394,000	32.7
1946	1,089,000	25.0
1947	1,069,000	24.1
1948	1,074,000	23.8
1949	1,099,000	24.0
1950	1,077,000	24.2
1951	1,164,000	24.8

Source: KAH Buckley and MC Urquhart, *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillain, 1965), 62.

Table 3 (b) Labour Force Participation of Women by Province, 1950

<u>% of Women in the Labour Force</u>	
Province	1950
Newfoundland ¹	14.3
Prince Edward Island ²	N/D
Nova Scotia	14.7
New Brunswick	18.4
Quebec	28.8
Ontario	21.3
Manitoba	22.1
Saskatchewan	11.5
Alberta	13.7
British Columbia	11.6

Notes:

1. Newfoundland data collected from Vol. I of the Fifteenth Census of Newfoundland, 1949, published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.
2. PEI data was not included in the 1952/1953 Canada Yearbook

Source: Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. *Canada Year Book, 1952-1953* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1955), 655.

Appendix 4: Labour Force Participation of Married Women, 1941 – 1961

Year	Married	Single	Other	Married Women as a % of Total Women in Labour Force
1941	4.5	47.2	17.3	12.7
1951	11.2	58.3	19.3	30.0
1961	22.0	54.1	22.9	49.8

Source: Byron Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Micro Study* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970): 10.

Appendix 5: Women's Labour Force Participation, by Marital Status and Province, 1941 – 1961

Industry	<u>% Share</u>		Percentage Point Change
	1951	1961	
Total	100	100	
Agriculture	3.0	4.5	1.4
Construction	0.5	0.7	0.1
Education	8.3	9.3	1.0
Energy / Transportation / Communication	4.6	4.0	-0.6
Finance, insurance, and real estate	5.5	5.9	0.4
Fishing and trapping	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forestry	0.2	0.1	-0.1
Government	4.7	5.5	0.8
Health and welfare services	10.3	12.7	2.4
Manufacturing	23.6	17.3	-6.3
Mining	3.6	3.3	-0.3
Other services	3.2	4.1	0.9
Personal and recreational services	10.1	8.5	-1.6
Retail & Hospitality	24.7	24.6	-0.1
Unspecified	1.1	2.4	1.3

Source: Table D8-85 Work force, by industrial category and sex, census years, 1911 to 1971 (gainfully occupied 1911 to 1941, labour force 1951 to 1971) in *Notes to Accompany Tables of Working Population by Industry and Occupation Group*, R. Marvin McInnis, Queen's University.

Appendix 6: Percentage Share of Incomes of Families with and without Dual Incomes, 31 May 1961

Income Group	Dual Incomes	Single Incomes
< \$3,000	10.4	22.0
\$3,000-\$4,999	24.9	33.1
\$5,000-\$6,999	31.3	22.5
\$7,000-\$9,999	24.0	13.0
\$10,000	9.5	9.4

Source: Byron Spencer and Dennis Featherstone, *Married Female Labour Force Participation: A Micro Study* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970): 14.

Appendix 7: Labour Force Participation, by Family Income and Number of Children, 1961

<u>Age of Wife and Number of Children</u>	<u>Income of Husband</u>				
	<u>< \$2,999</u>	<u>\$ 3,000 - \$4,999</u>	<u>\$5,000 - \$6,999</u>	<u>\$7,000 - \$9,999</u>	<u>> \$10,000</u>
15 - 24 Years					
One or more children under 6	15.2	14.1	9.7	6.4	N/D
One or more children, none under 6	N/D	40.1	N.D	N/D	N/D
No Children	49.3	58.8	59.1	51.6	42.8
25 - 34 Years					
One or more children under 6	16.0	13.7	9.5	5.4	5
One or more children, none under 6	39.2	37.8	29.8	18.5	15.2
No Children	57.5	61	62.5	51.7	36.9
35 - 44 Years					
One or more children under 6	14.8	12.4	9.3	6	5.2
One or more children, none under 6	37.2	35.1	29.3	19.4	11.1
No Children	50.3	50.9	49.5	40.7	27.4
45 - 64 Years					
One or more children under 6	13.5	10	8.5	6.9	4.9
One or more children, none under 6	24.0	22.8	21.1	17.1	9.1
No Children	29.5	27.3	23.3	17	11.7

Notes:

"N/D" indicates data provided less than 50 observations.

In husband-wife families, living in urban, suburban, and rural non-farm homes, where husband is in the labour force.

Source: Sylvia Ostry, *The Female Worker in Canada* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968), 24.

Acronyms Used:

CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
CVT	Canadian Vocational Training
CWAC	Canadian Women's Army Corps
FEFRA	Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act
NHA	National Housing Act
NSS	National Selection Service
NSS – WD	National Selection Service – Women's Division
RCAF – WD	Royal Canadian Air Force – Women's Division
SPWPW	Sub-committee on Post-War Problems of Women
UE	United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers in Canada
UENA	United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers National Archives
UI	Unemployment Insurance
UIC	Unemployment Insurance Commission
PITT ULS	University of Pittsburgh University Library System
USWA	United Steel Workers of America
WIB	War-time Information Board
WRCNS	Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service

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