

**The Canadian Policy Response to the Crisis in Care:
Opportunities and Consequences for Women**

by

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Abstract

Using a socialist feminist perspective, this thesis critically assesses the conflict between capitalist production and social reproduction in Canada, and the crises in care generated by this conflict, both historically and up to contemporary times. Policy shifts and mobilization that occurred prior to and during the build up of the Keynesian welfare state, its dismantlement under neo-liberalism, and the subsequent inclusive liberal/social investment response are studied in-depth. Child and palliative/long-term care-related policies created, debated, and revised throughout these three periods are critically analyzed. This thesis concludes that care crises present not only ongoing struggles, but also a potential opportunity for women to challenge the legitimacy of the capitalist system to improve their own and their dependents' quality of life, and to advance the social justice agenda.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis analytically chronicles the conflict between capitalist production and social reproduction in Canada, and the crises in care generated by this conflict, both historically, and up to the present conjuncture. Women, as the primary providers of care or reproductive labour, most of which is unpaid or low paid, are disproportionately impacted by crises in care and the policies implemented to defuse these crises. Consequently, feminists have focused much of their activism on bringing attention to women's multiple care responsibilities and how this often unrecognized and typically under-valued care work may serve to undermine women's autonomy and equality. Feminists have not, however, thoroughly explored how workers' care needs may de-stabilize capitalism by exacerbating its contradictions, or how women's and other social justice groups might be able to exploit this vulnerability to bring about a more equitable mode(s) of production. After an in-depth study of both policy shifts and mobilization over three key periods – the Keynesian, neo-liberal, and inclusive liberal/social investment eras – this thesis concludes that care crises present not only ongoing struggles, but also a potential opportunity to challenge the legitimacy of the capitalist system to advance the social justice agenda.

In the current context, the tension between production and reproduction has been exacerbated to the point of crisis by policies implemented to enhance Canada's position in the global marketplace. Women, in their role as caregivers or "reproductive workers," are particularly affected by these policies and are increasingly unable to meet the reproductive demands placed on them. Trade liberalization has depressed wages and increased job insecurity, which has, in turn, reduced or eliminated the financial resources necessary to the performance of reproductive labour.¹ Supply-side policies, such as cuts

to income tax, have been made possible by cuts to the social services that have traditionally supported women in their reproductive role.² These services have been further reduced or restricted as a result of the decentralization of power to supra- and sub-national regimes underscoring the state restructuring process. Moreover, current social policies promoting attachment to the paid workforce exalt the “self-reliant” market citizen while ignoring and undermining the largely unpaid labour (and labourers) essential to his (or her) reproduction.

The Canadian state has taken steps to alleviate the strain on the reproductive labour network and better balance productive and reproductive demands by revising and creating various “care”-related policies, such as the National Child Benefit (NCB) and the Employment Insurance (EI) Compassionate Care benefit. On one hand, these policies may expose the vulnerability of capitalist production to the reproductive needs of the paid workforce. They therefore reveal a weakness that women’s equality-seeking and other social justice groups might be able to exploit to undermine the capitalist system and bring about revolutionary economic, social and political change. On the other hand, these policies could also confirm the impact of restructuring on the provision of care. Thus, such policies may reveal that the Canadian state is responding to the demand for greater support for social reproduction in a way that also advances and secures Canada’s competitiveness and productivity.

This thesis seeks to answer the following: Do care policies, which disproportionately impact women, reveal care as a problem for, and thus weakness of the capitalist system? Are these policies simply reflective of attempts by the Canadian state to restructure labour-capital relations to protect and promote Canada’s position in the globalized

political economy? I will argue that care is a potential, albeit somewhat contradictory approach available to women mobilizing against capitalism. Indeed, women's reproductive demands have already contributed, in part, to the development of policies dealing with child care (maternity and parental leave; the NCB; a national child care strategy) as well as the care of the terminally ill (EI Compassionate Care benefit). This thesis will focus on both of these policy areas, which deal with care requirements at the beginning and end of life, in order to present a comprehensive perspective on the status of social reproduction in Canada. These "care-" related policies reveal that the interests of capitalist production override the reproductive needs of the primary providers of this essential labour (women) as the state attempts to advance Canada's ability to compete globally. At the same time, however, these policies increase reproductive costs and labour, revealing an escalating conflict that women's equality-seeking and other social justice groups may eventually take advantage of to subvert the capitalist enterprise.

Perspective and Approach

This thesis focuses on the economic and social implications of the Canadian state's policy response to the current crisis of care. As mentioned above, this crisis is rooted in the fundamental conflict between capitalist production and social reproduction. The sole motivation of the capitalist system is to create profit, which is accomplished by exploiting workers and paying them wages that are less than the value of what they produce.³ Workers receive a wage that is equal to "the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of [the worker]" and "the worker's replacements, i.e., his children."⁴ This "subsistence" wage is neither fixed nor constant, but is socially determined and subject to on-going challenge by workers uniting to demand wage increases and

capitalists banding together to drive wages down.⁵ For the capitalist system to remain afloat, however, a balance must be struck between maintaining a minimum standard of living for workers and stabilizing an atmosphere conducive to capital accumulation. The current crisis in care is a reflection, in part, of the failure of the Canadian state, as mediator of this conflict, to maintain this balance and, by extension, ideal conditions for production and reproduction.

This thesis adopts a classic socialist feminist perspective in its emphasis on the social and economic value of women's domestic labour, specifically its vital role in reproducing the necessary conditions for capitalist production. Indeed, capitalism's dependence on domestic labour underscores the type of political action that has been taken by women⁶ seeking a more equitable division of labour and distribution of resources. There are, however, a number of limitations in using a classic socialist feminist approach, specifically in regard to how both "women" and the "state" tend to be conceptualized. Classic socialist feminism is vulnerable to the accusation that it reflects the concerns and priorities of white, middle-class women who have based their analysis of "women's" oppression on advanced industrial societies and have ignored the perspectives of non-white women.⁷ Moreover, there has been a tendency to simply concede that differences exist among women without acknowledging the ways in which white feminists are both the beneficiaries and perpetrators of the racism that many women see as the primary experience of their lives.⁸ Although it is informed by a political economy perspective, this thesis does not seek to perpetuate the classic socialist feminist inclination toward economic reductionism or economic determinism: economic injustice does not trump but instead intersects with racial and other types of injustice, and so a simple change in a

given society's mode of production will not bring an end to the multiple and diverse forms of oppression experienced by women.

While both sexism and racism are advantageous to capitalism because both act to divide the working class and provide a marginalized labour force, neither can be reduced, in current contexts, to the needs of capitalism.⁹ Sexism and racism, as well as ethnocentrism, ableism, and ageism predate capitalism, though none are ahistorical in nature, and thus each is likely to persist in its absence. In this way, then, feminists who are focused primarily on devising oppositional strategies to eradicate capitalism can make only a limited, though still important, contribution to substantively improving most women's economic standard of living. Once need replaces profit as the underlying motivation of production, the basis for a more equitable division of labour and distribution of resources will be established. Persistent sexism, racism, and other forms of marginalization, however, will continue to obstruct the actual realization of this reorganization, and thus relentless struggle is required to eradicate these complex and intersecting forms of oppression if substantive social justice is to be achieved.¹⁰

Another limitation of the classic socialist feminist perspective is its functionalist analysis regarding the state, which it sees as being able to act on behalf of particular groups (men and capitalists) in any simple way.¹¹ This is not to deny, as Brodie asserts, that "... the state can and does act instrumentally (too often, consistently) in the interests of some and not others."¹² However, Waylen argues: "... 'the state' itself can rarely, if ever, be seen as a homogeneous category. It is not a unitary structure but a differentiated set of institutions, agencies, and discourses, and the product of a particular historical and political conjuncture."¹³ The state thus represents a site of on-going struggle in which

various groups, including feminists and other social justice advocates, capitalists, trade unions, and educators, engage in making and contesting political claims.¹⁴ The dynamic nature of the state combined with its objective to mediate a myriad of competing and contradictory interests thus presents an opening for women to challenge the economic deprivation and exploitation they experience under capitalism, as well as the other forms of oppression, such as racism, heterosexism, and/or ableism, that undermine women's quality of life.

Before proceeding, it is important to first clarify the key terms and concepts that will be employed throughout the analysis. *Care, care work, domestic labour, reproduction, and social reproduction* will be used in reference to the largely unpaid labour involved in the daily and generational production of human life. The term *reproductive labour network* refers to all labour (paid and unpaid) and all public (state) policies and programs that aid in reproduction. The Canadian state's ever-evolving *reproductive strategy* refers to the ways in which the state structures its social, fiscal, immigration, and other policies and programs to meet the reproductive requirements of capitalist relations of production. There are three main aspects of social reproduction: biological reproduction (procreation and childbearing), reproduction of paid and unpaid labour power, and social practices connected to caring, socialization and the fulfillment of human needs.¹⁵ Each facet of reproduction is essential to capitalist production, and more importantly, to species survival.

There are three types of workers whose labour propels the capitalist machine. Since capitalist *production* entails the generation of capital returns, *productive* workers are those who create surplus value, part of which is turned into profit.¹⁶ *Non-* or *un-*

productive workers, such as civil servants, and the military or police, do not produce surplus value, but aid capitalists in making or appropriating profit.¹⁷ For the purposes of this analysis, this differentiation will be unobserved and all workers who create or facilitate the creation of surplus value in exchange for a wage will be referred to as the “productive” workforce. Finally, *reproductive* workers procreate and socialize the future labour force while maintaining or “regenerating” the current labour force, including themselves, on a daily basis.¹⁸ Reproductive workers are also responsible for providing on-going care to dependent non-workers. All three types of labour are essential to the functioning of the capitalist system, yet reproductive labour can be both waged and unwaged. Further, whereas men primarily engage in either productive or non-productive waged labour, women perform a disproportionate amount of unpaid reproductive labour in addition to their waged-work in the productive/non-productive sectors.

Though the Canadian liberal democratic state is a dynamic and multidimensional institution, it will be referred to as a *capitalist state* for the analytic purposes of this thesis. The role of the capitalist state is to establish a social and economic atmosphere that promotes maximum capital accumulation while mediating the conflict between production and reproduction.¹⁹ This thesis focuses exclusively on the capitalist dimension of the Canadian state and its evolution, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century when capitalism emerged as an important economic system in urban Canada.²⁰

This study critically examines three phases of the Canadian capitalist state, beginning with the solidification of the Keynesian welfare state following the Second World War through to neo-liberalism in the 1970s to the 1990s, up to the current era of inclusive liberalism or “social investment.” The distinct features and historical

development of each of these phases will be detailed in subsequent chapters. The Keynesian welfare state evolved out of the recognition of the need for increased state intervention in the economy in order to offset the instability and insecurity created under *laissez-faire* capitalism. The first decades of the twentieth century were marred by regular periods of recession and labour disruptions in Canada²¹ that challenged the legitimacy of continuing to follow the *laissez-faire* doctrine of allowing markets to self-regulate, free from state interference. The Keynesian welfare state, alternatively, would intervene in the economy by providing Canadians with a basic level of economic security via unemployment insurance, social assistance, and other social security measures in order to maintain system stability and neutralize social unrest. As capitalism continued to expand and evolve, however, the Keynesian mediation became less and less effective in defusing the irresolvable conflict between capitalist production and social reproduction.

The ascension of the neo-liberal phase of the Canadian capitalist state began in the 1970s and marked an attempted return to the utopian ideal of pre-Keynesian, *laissez-faire* capitalism. Over the course of more than two decades, the neo-liberal state restructured Keynesian social security policies, making them more restrictive and punitive, and thereby limiting state welfare to those “most in need.” The neo-liberal era marked a period of severe imbalance between capitalist production and social reproduction, as the focus on supply-side, trickle-down economics favoured the interests of the former at the expense of the latter. As assessed by Palmer:

For Canadian workers the years 1975-90 have been ones of permanent crisis. Barely a year has gone by that has not seen either the threat of recession and job loss or the debilitating consequences of spiralling inflation ... This is a bad and ugly period for labouring people and their organizations.²²

The retreat of the Canadian capitalist state from its reproductive responsibilities during the neo-liberal period thus fostered greater economic insecurity among both paid and unpaid workers.

By the late 1990s, the Canadian capitalist state shifted to a less extreme, more “inclusive” liberalism. Inclusive liberalism emphasizes “moderation and centrism as antidotes to the rough, tough ‘market fundamentalism’”²³ characterizing the neo-liberal period. Despite its proclamations of moderation, however, the inclusive liberal or social investment phase of the Canadian capitalist state has continued the neo-liberal trend of targeting public spending, “investing” only in those deemed likely to deliver “returns”, such as children.²⁴ In contrast to its Keynesian predecessor, the social investment state provides a “hand up, not a hand out” to those actively seeking paid employment.²⁵ All those unable to work, due to unpaid reproductive responsibilities, disability, illness, or age, remain marginalized in the distribution of benefits and/or the target of punitive employability policies. Since women form a large majority of these groups, in their capacity as both caregivers and dependent care receivers, the crisis in social reproduction resulting from this continued mismanagement of the production-reproduction conflict has a particularly gendered impact.

My methodology therefore incorporates gender and social reproduction as analytic categories as part of a comprehensive examination of the nature of the Keynesian, neo-liberal, and social investment phases of the Canadian capitalist state. My analysis begins at the Keynesian phase since this is when the Canadian capitalist state began to take a more definitive role in mediating the conflict between production and reproduction. Studying the Canadian capitalist state over three periods of transformation highlights

consistencies and inconsistencies in the strategies it employs when addressing social reproduction. This approach also reveals the ways in which the Canadian capitalist state deals with the demands of those responsible for and dependent on this labour. Understanding the state in this way aids in determining the viability of care as a strategy to be incorporated in the struggle for social justice.

My research method involved a content analysis of policy documents and related literature produced by the Canadian state and found on the websites of relevant government departments, such as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and its subsidiaries, including the Social Union and the National Child Benefit websites. I examined studies conducted by watchdog groups working within and on the periphery of the state, such as the National Welfare Council, Campaign 2000, the Health Council of Canada, the Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition, and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, which evaluated the social impact of different government policies. My method also included an analysis of a variety of secondary data sources, including journal articles and books, which scrutinized the capitalist dimension of the Canadian state and its care-related policies from feminist and mainstream perspectives.

Structure

The structure of this thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 2 summarizes feminist perspectives on women's role as reproductive workers in order to demonstrate the centrality of this labour to the effective functioning of the capitalist system. Chapter 2 also explores the historical development of the conflict between capitalist production and social reproduction, beginning with Canada's Industrial Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century up to the establishment of the Keynesian welfare state in the early twentieth

century. This chapter documents the reproduction-related instability underlying labour-capital relations in Canada, and how the tensions between employers' productive demands and workers' reproductive needs reached crisis proportions in the early twentieth century. This on-going conflict eventually forced major changes in the structure and operation of the Canadian capitalist enterprise, and women played an important role in this social transformation. Chapter 2 thus establishes the importance of women's reproductive labour to capitalism; it explores the history of conflict and reproduction-related instability characterizing capitalist relations of production in Canada; and it examines women's reproduction-related social activism and their contribution to the development of the Keynesian welfare state in Canada.

Chapter 3 analyzes the Keynesian phase of the Canadian capitalist state and the ways in which the reproductive needs of production were accommodated during this period. The Keynesian era fostered the development of the first "care-" related policies established to support women in their reproductive role. The universal Family Allowances Act (1944), the introduction of Unemployment Insurance (UI) maternity benefits (1971), the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) (1972), and the initial debates surrounding the establishment of a national child care program are analyzed in this chapter. Chapter 3 demonstrates that the Canadian capitalist state's Keynesian "care-" related policies were explicitly designed to reinforce capitalist relations of production and gender relations of reproduction. Care policies created in this era did not alleviate, but rather maintained, women's unpaid reproductive workload, despite the substantial increase in women's participation in the paid workforce during this period.

Chapter 4 summarizes the evolution of the current crisis in care with neo-liberal ascendancy in the 1970s. It outlines changes to existing care policies that occurred during this period of welfare state transformation, such as the replacement of universal Family Allowances with the targeted Child Tax Benefit (CTB) and the introduction of UI parental benefits. It also explores the continuing debate over establishing a national child care system. During its neo-liberal phase, the Canadian capitalist state restructured Keynesian care policies in ways that intensified reproductive costs and labour, thereby further undermining women's autonomy and equality. Moreover, the state created equally ineffective new policies focused on Canadians' employability rather than their reproduction. In the short-term, the neo-liberal experiment created an ideal climate in which to advance Canada's competitiveness and productivity in the globalized political economy. In the long-term, however, the neo-liberal approach to social reproduction laid the foundation for the present crisis in care.

Chapter 5 details the rise of the inclusive liberal, or social investment, phase of the Canadian capitalist state in the late 1990s as a response to the unrest instigated by the privatization agenda promoted under neo-liberalism. It examines the social investment approach to the care crisis, highlighting the new promises and priorities of the Canadian capitalist state with respect to mediating the tension between production and reproduction. Chapter 5 also focuses on the specific reproductive policies created, revised, and proposed in the social investment period: the consolidation of the NCB program; the development of two competing visions for a national child care strategy; and the introduction of the EI Compassionate Care benefit. These policies are then critically assessed in this chapter. Chapter 5 reveals that the Canadian capitalist state's

recent approach to social reproduction perpetuates and exacerbates the existing, and growing, imbalance between productive and reproductive demands.

The concluding chapter summarizes the research findings and assesses the implications of the analysis in the context of feminist agency.

CHAPTER 2
Capitalism in Canada:
A History of Reproduction-Related Instability and Activism

In this chapter, the centrality of reproduction to production will be examined, as will Canada's history of reproduction-related instability and activism. The opportunities presented by and consequences resulting from women's disproportionate responsibility for the unpaid reproductive labour fuelling capitalist production, particularly in the context of women's equality and autonomy, will also be explored. The analysis articulated herein shows that women in all their diversity have a history of actively mobilizing to make demands on the Canadian state in order to raise their standard of living and enhance the welfare of their families and communities. The remaining chapters in this analysis will explore particular instances of this reproduction-related activism over three periods of state transformation in response to the reproduction-related instability generated, in part, through the Canadian state's "production" policies. The barriers women's equality-seeking groups must overcome to continue this tradition in the contemporary context and further advance the equality agenda will be the subject of the concluding chapter.

The Centrality of Reproduction to Production

It is the production and reproduction of the capitalist's most indispensable means of production: the worker – Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1*.¹

In *Capital*, Marx focused on the relations characterizing capitalist production, briefly noting, as the above quotation highlights, the centrality of reproductive labour to the effective functioning of the capitalist system. In the late 1960s, radical and Marxist feminists engaged in an exploration of the importance of women's reproductive labour to capitalism, sparking greater debates. Writing in 1969, Benston argued: "In sheer quantity,

household labour, including child care, constitutes a huge amount of socially necessary production ... [women's] unpaid labour in the home is necessary if the entire system is to function."² This sentiment was echoed two years later by Warrior in her assertion: "Women are the source of all labour in that they are the producers of all labourers."³ Though the ensuing domestic labour debate in the following years centred on determining the value of this labour in Marxist terms, all those who participated in this debate agreed: "...there can be no doubt that domestic labour has been a socially necessary labour throughout history and continues to be so under capitalism."⁴

Though the large amount of unpaid reproductive labour performed by women is very profitable to capitalists, its payment, even at minimum wage scales, would require a massive redistribution of wealth.⁵ Internationally, the estimated cost of remunerating women for their unpaid reproductive labour accounted for \$11-trillion out of a total of \$16-trillion according to a 1995 United Nations report.⁶ In Canada, women continue to be responsible for approximately two-thirds of all unpaid reproductive labour, which is valued at \$285-billion, or 41 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.⁷ These figures show the potentially devastating impact that responsibility for the costs of social reproduction could have on the capitalist system. They also therefore demonstrate the volatile nature of capitalism as a system that functions through the unpaid exploitation of half the world's population.

Minimizing the costs of reproduction is crucial to the survival of the capitalist system. Yet, some would argue, capitalism is gender-blind in that it does not matter who performs this labour, as long as the reproductive needs of the system are met.⁸ Others, as will be shown, disagree with this assessment and contend that capitalism is, at its core, a

form of male dominance.⁹ This thesis subscribes to the former perspective that capitalism is gender-blind: the fact that it is women and not men who predominate as reproductive workers, and that men benefit from this asymmetrical distribution of labour, is of little consequence to capitalists (qua capitalists). It is a reality that was also minimized by early participants in the domestic labour debate. Writing in 1974, Seccombe declared: "... in *Capital* ... Marx laid out a framework within which domestic labour clearly fits."¹⁰

However, Hartmann counters:

... the categories of Marxist analysis, "class", "reserve army of labour", "wage labourer", do not explain why particular people fill particular places. They give no clues about why *women* are subordinate to *men* inside and outside the family and why it is not the other way around. *Marxist categories, like capital itself, are sex-blind*. The categories of Marxism cannot tell us who will fill the "empty places."¹¹

Over a decade later, Seccombe acknowledged that the "fit was not so clear cut",¹² and redirected his analysis, like other feminists writing at the time and since, toward the role of patriarchy in securing the reproductive needs of the capitalist system.

Patriarchy and the Reproduction of Capital

The maintenance and reproduction of the working class remains a necessary condition for the reproduction of capital. But the capitalist may safely leave this to the worker's drives for self-preservation and propagation – Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume I*.¹³

Though Marx rightly asserts the necessity of reproductive processes to the perpetuation of the capitalist system itself, he incorrectly assumes that capitalists can rely on workers' natural instincts for survival to ensure this essential labour is done. A central role of the capitalist state is to facilitate the reproduction of the working class, which it accomplishes primarily by reinforcing pre-existing patriarchal relations of reproduction.

The patriarchal organization of social reproduction is not specific to the wage-labour system promoted under capitalism: patriarchy predates capitalism, and so its role in coordinating reproductive processes is independent from (but not irrelevant to) capitalist relations of production. Under capitalism, patriarchal relations of reproduction are facilitated in large part by a gender division of labour that shoulders women with responsibility for the unpaid care and domestic tasks critical to the functioning of the capitalist system. In addition to their unpaid reproductive labour in the home, economic circumstances, especially in recent times, have required many women to engage in paid employment, saddling the majority of women with a “double day” of paid and unpaid labour.¹⁴ The gender division of labour equates men’s work (paid, productive) as valuable and women’s work (unpaid/low-paid, reproductive) as valueless,¹⁵ which positions women as subordinate to men in both the family and labour market. The inferior position of women and the undervaluing of their domestic labour legitimizes their exploitation as unpaid reproductive workers in the home and as low-paid, “flexible” labourers in the secondary workforce. According to Laxer: “Those in the secondary workforce move in and out of it as jobs are created and lost, and often subsist on part-time incomes when they would prefer full-time work.”¹⁶ In the contemporary context, women are increasingly engaged in this type of “insecure,” “irregular,” non-standard employment, which ranges from self-employment to temporary work to part-time and part-year work.¹⁷

The gender division of labour defines unpaid reproductive labour as the natural domain of women. However, not all women are equal under this division of labour. Indeed, throughout history, the division of reproductive labour between women, both within nations and globally, has allowed affluent women to free themselves from their

unpaid reproductive duties by employing their less privileged counterparts to do their domestic work for them.¹⁸ The division of reproductive labour thus creates hierarchy, and therefore inequality, among women based on differences in class, race, ethnicity, and citizenship.¹⁹ Ultimately, however, it is men who remain the main beneficiaries of this division of reproductive labour among women. As Ehrenreich and Hochschild contend: "... strictly speaking, the presence of immigrant nannies does not enable affluent women to enter the workforce; it enables affluent *men* to continue avoiding the second shift."²⁰

While both capitalists of both sexes and men clearly benefit from maintaining the gender division of labour, the exact nature of the complementary and, at times, contradictory relationship between capitalism and patriarchy is subject to debate. Though this thesis accepts the aforementioned assertion that capitalism is gender-blind, some feminists contend that capitalism is a form of male dominance rather than its own separate system with its own distinctive ideological and material origins. Johnson challenges this conceptualization, however, and argues:

... capitalism need not be inherently patriarchal. The fact that we currently live in a very gendered capitalist society is due to the fact that men of various classes mobilized to ensure that preexisting patriarchal conditions continued to exist and interact with capitalist relations.²¹

This is not to suggest that the "dual-systems" of capitalism and patriarchy co-exist harmoniously to maintain female subordination and capitalist and male dominance.²² While dual-systems theorists have cited the "family wage" as evidence of the "partnership" between capitalists and working-class men,²³ studies based on the history of capitalist employment relations in Britain, for example, provide sufficient evidence to dispute these broad theoretical assertions of male capitalist-worker collaboration.²⁴ The family wage – which, in theory, would provide men, as the primary earners or

“breadwinners” in the family, with sufficient income to maintain a dependent wife and children – had to be fought for by workers in Western industrialized nations, with varying degrees of success, rather than being a forgone conclusion.²⁵ For example, in Canada the family wage was always more of an idealized conception than a historical reality.²⁶ Male capitalists conceded to the “family wage” (that is, to paying men higher wages than women but not necessarily enough to keep wives and children out of paid work) not as capitalists per se but as men who, according to Johnson: “... wished to sustain existing conceptions of masculinity, for example, by paying men more and women less, or sex-segregating the work force.”²⁷ The family wage, then, cannot be attributed to any logic inherent in capitalist relations but to the patriarchal allegiances between male capitalists and male workers.²⁸

In Canada, the division between market fundamentalist and neo-conservative visions of the family exemplifies one manifestation of this friction between capitalism and patriarchy in the contemporary context. For market fundamentalists, the family is defined less in terms of who it is (heterosexual, homosexual, two-parent, lone-parent) and more in terms of what it does with respect to absorbing the increasing costs of social reproduction that result from privatization.²⁹ According to Cossman, the market fundamentalist model of the family “... is only concerned that families continue to take care of their own”³⁰ and not rely on public support in times of financial need. Neo-conservatives, alternatively, advocate a return to conditions that support the traditional male-breadwinner/female-homemaker model of the family, even though few Canadian families can afford to live on the income of a single wage earner.³¹ While the neo-conservative vision of the family is unlikely to prevail, Cossman argues: “... its normative claims continue to cause problems

for the [market fundamentalist] vision of the family, in unanticipated and uncontrollable ways.”³² The relationship between patriarchy and capitalism is therefore characterized by tension that at times manifests in conflict. Even though patriarchy organizes reproduction in a way that supports capitalist production, this complementary relationship is often undermined by capitalism’s volatile nature.

Capitalism in Canada: Reproduction-Related Instability in the “Laissez-Faire” Era

Laissez-faire capitalism has been more of an ideal than a historical reality in Canada, where “nation-building and active state involvement in the economy have gone hand in hand”³³ and the state has “always had a hand in economic endeavours.”³⁴ Canada’s First National Policy (its original economic development strategy) aimed to integrate the new country economically in the decades following its political creation, contributing to successful western Canadian settlement, east-west transportation and communication flows, and an industrial base in Ontario and Québec.³⁵ In addition to these infrastructural endeavours, the state’s role in helping to establish and maintain the capitalist economy in Canada also included the on-going mediation of labour-capital relations.

The level and regularity of state intervention in labour-capital relations over the course of capitalism’s history in Canada underscores the instability inherent to this particular mode of production. As capitalism advanced and evolved throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the conflict between productive and reproductive demands manifested in an increase in labour militancy. As previously mentioned, strike activity was on the rise in the first decades of the twentieth century. These labour disruptions were often based, in part, on workers’ attempts to secure or retain a measure of autonomy at the workplace.³⁶ However, almost all strikes in

the late nineteenth and early twentieth century turned on the wage,³⁷ which, when combined with women's unpaid labour in the home, constituted workers' primary, if not sole, means of reproduction and survival.

The amount of a "subsistence" wage is not left solely to the discretion or whim of managers and employers; rather, it is shaped by social expectations and debate, and is therefore socially determined as opposed to unilaterally imposed.³⁸ This is reflected in early conflicts between labour (and other social movements) and capital (and the state) over wage levels in Canada. According to Palmer: "Studies of real incomes, job security, working-class housing, and health standards in the urban centres of Montréal, Toronto, and Vancouver in the years 1900-21 establish the existence of a labour force struggling unsuccessfully to keep pace with rampant inflation."³⁹ Even though some sectors of the working-class were making small material advances, there was a widespread perception that capital was accumulating more, both in power and in dollars.⁴⁰ The hostility generated toward capitalists by this perception was also eventually directed at the interventionist Canadian state, which was seen as working to secure the interests of capital at the expense of labour.

In 1906, for example, leaders of the Lethbridge, Alberta strike condemned both the Liberal and Conservative parties as "merely committees of the capitalist class," refusing the intervention of state agents at "any price."⁴¹ Unfortunately this assessment was not too far off the mark since the progressive, interventionist, "impartial" state more often worked to ends that fulfilled capital's needs and aspirations.⁴² Palmer argues:

[The] procedural commitment to "conciliation" was but the velvet glove over the mailed fist. Capital and the state did not hesitate to take repressive action against workers ... during the opening decades of the twentieth century, military

intervention in class struggles was on the rise. Well over two-thirds of the total number of militia involvements in strike situations after Confederation took place in the 1895-1914 period ... “Whatever [William Lyon Mackenzie] King’s impenetrable doctrines of conciliation amounted to,” observes Ian MacKay, “they barely concealed the crucial new fact that, in defense of capitalism, the state was prepared to kill.”⁴³

The violence and repression displayed by the Canadian state on behalf of capitalists and in the name of “community stability”⁴⁴ during the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919⁴⁵ exemplifies the state’s longstanding commitment to maintaining capitalist relations of production.

Despite this commitment, however, the state, as the official representative of all Canadians, also had to address the concerns of other, non-capitalist elements of society during the First World War and in its aftermath in order to maintain its legitimacy.

According to Heron and Siemiatycki:

The combination of war-induced moral fervour, strong inducements to subordinate private to public concerns, and popular outrage at the unsavoury practices of business and the state tore loose many groups of Canadians from their traditional social and ideological moorings and opened wide-ranging, intense debate about ‘reconstruction’ in post-war society. Numerous social movements presented their own agendas and competing visions, most of them projecting little confidence in the existing political and economic institutions.⁴⁶

These early social movements, which consisted of trade unions, religious groups, farmers, veterans, intellectuals, and women’s organizations, played an important role in creating the political and discursive space for their own and future generations’ challenges to the status quo.⁴⁷ These groups joined the growing chorus of discontent over the erosion of incomes, way of life, and general standard of living of most Canadians,⁴⁸

and helped shape, through cooperation or coercion, the Canadian state's response to these social problems.

White, English-speaking, middle-class women reformers in particular, guided by the principles of maternal feminism, were at the forefront of social movements pressuring the capitalist state to alleviate the growing reproductive burden characteristic of advanced capitalism. Writing in the Canadian context, Kealey notes that reformers organizing between 1880 and 1920 often did so "in the name of women and children", calling forth "their unique capabilities as women and especially mothers."⁴⁹ In the process of transforming motherhood from private responsibility to public policy, women organizing in this era expanded the realm "of what was considered proper for women, to include ... the fields of temperance, child welfare, urban reform, city government, public health, child and female labour and suffrage."⁵⁰ These privileged women became politicized through their philanthropy and emerged as reformers, identifying structural rather than individual deficiencies as causes for poverty.⁵¹ This politicization process, in turn, fuelled their determination to contribute to the reformation of the capitalist state in ways to better meet the reproductive requirements of those most marginalized. It would be another two decades, however – one of unprecedented economic boom and the other of unprecedented economic bust – before the concerns of women's and other social movements would begin to be more substantively addressed by the Canadian state.

The Welfare State: A Response to Reproduction-Related Instability

By the twentieth century, the demand for a family wage in Western industrialized nations had given way to demands for a "social wage," or in other words, a state-organized system for socializing the costs of reproduction commonly referred to as the *welfare*

state.⁵² Women's movements, in many, but not all⁵³ capitalist states, were "instrumental in the development of the modern welfare state."⁵⁴ As previously mentioned, North American women organizing prior to the establishment of the welfare state during the late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century "focused on shaping one particular area of state policy: maternal and child welfare."⁵⁵ Koven and Michel contend:

It was this area, closely linked to the traditional female sphere, that women first claimed new roles for themselves. Using political discourses and strategies that we have called 'maternalist', they transformed motherhood from women's primary *private* responsibility into *public* policy.⁵⁶

Women organizing during the pre-welfare state period called upon their private, socially prescribed role as mothers (reproductive workers) to gain legitimacy, and thus some degree of authority in the public, political realm. Their efforts contributed, in part, to the eventual establishment of the welfare state, which they hoped would reflect their maternalistic values and take better care of its citizens, especially those most vulnerable, like women and children.

In most Western industrialized nations, the welfare state, in its initial, Keynesian phase, emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War as "an emergency response to the Great Depression and fear of major economic postwar dislocation."⁵⁷ Touted as "either functional to modernization or as a by-product of it,"⁵⁸ the welfare state was mandated to reconcile the widespread deprivation and insecurity, and thus political instability, that had flourished under *laissez-faire* rule. The continuation of the capitalist state became contingent on it becoming a "welfare" state that would intervene to reduce the excessiveness of social (class) inequalities intensified by the free market. As stated by Fudge and Cossman: "the welfare state provided a buffer against capital's relentless drive to accumulate by adjusting living standards to the benefit of working people."⁵⁹

Basically defined, the welfare state is a state-type in which “public authorities garner resources and assume responsibility for organizing their distribution.”⁶⁰ This redistribution of resources is motivated by the welfare state’s mandate to modify “the play of social or market forces in order to achieve greater equality.”⁶¹ The Canadian welfare state was premised on “the assumptions that governments had a positive role to play in alleviating some of the worst effects of the inequities of the free market and operating as a buffer for some of its most vulnerable citizens.”⁶² These directives would be accomplished through the redistributive aspect of the welfare state encompassing publicly (state) supported social services and income support programs based on a combination of need and universal entitlement.⁶³ At its most basic level, the welfare state can be understood as providing income and resources to individuals and families.⁶⁴ However, at a more fundamental level the overall objectives of the welfare state involve “those policies, programs, and legislation that redistribute status, rights, and life opportunities.”⁶⁵

The welfare state symbolized the recognition of the state’s need to not only *organize*, but also *subsidize* and *socialize* the costs of reproduction if the advanced capitalist system were to continue. However, rather than seeking an end to the exploitation of women as an unpaid reproductive workforce, the welfare state institutionalized the gender division of labour as key to its reproductive strategy. This resulted in the establishment of a “two-tier” system of welfare provisions⁶⁶ dividing “deserving” (male, productive worker) from “undeserving” (female, reproductive worker) citizens and non-citizens. As the majority of social-insurance claimants, men’s relationship with the welfare state has been one of entitlement since they “receive benefits through the insurance system to which they have

‘contributed’ out of their earnings.”⁶⁷ In contrast, women, as the majority of social assistance claimants,⁶⁸ are stigmatized as “unworthy” since they are perceived as not having “worked” for their “welfare.”⁶⁹ Women’s unpaid reproductive labour, which makes possible men’s “independence”⁷⁰ as well as capitalist production, is ignored and devalued thus making women’s reliance on welfare provisions seem pathological.⁷¹ This stigmatization is often inescapable since the type of paid labour women have traditionally engaged in to become more autonomous usually receives a “dependent’s” wage to supplement that of the male breadwinner,⁷² whether he exists or not. The result of this “employment society”⁷³ is “an occupationally based welfare state in which women’s labour is systematically undervalued and women receive lower benefits for their labour.”⁷⁴

Despite the severe impediments imposed by the institutionalization of women’s subordination, the welfare state has, nonetheless, in many ways, provided women with the economic and political resources to mobilize in the pursuit of substantive social justice. These gains have been facilitated in part through the extension of the rights of “social” citizenship that underscore the ideological foundations of the welfare state. As outlined by T.H. Marshall, the rights associated with twentieth century social citizenship evolved as a logical extension of the civil and political rights characterizing citizenship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, respectively.⁷⁵ Civil citizenship encompassed the rights necessary for individual freedom, and political citizenship ensured the right to participate in the exercise of political power.⁷⁶ Social rights made the concept of citizenship more complete by pledging a subsistence level of economic welfare and security.⁷⁷ Social citizenship promised “the right to share to the full in the social heritage

and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.”⁷⁸ Social services such as education and health care, and income security programs such as U/EI and Old Age Security (OAS) would function to protect and ensure the rights of social citizenship.

Marshall premised his analysis of the evolution of citizenship in the context of social (economic) class in post-war Britain, and excluded from his examination any significant analysis of gender, and no analysis of race, ethnicity, ability, age, or sexuality. As such, many feminists⁷⁹ have identified Marshall’s inattention to diversity and his emphasis on the “universality” of citizenship as key limitations of his perspective. One central critique of Marshall’s conception of citizenship is its focus on the citizen-worker, who, at the time of writing and since, is presumed to be male. Sarvasy argues: “Although he does not analyze a citizen-mother option, Marshall assumes a two-tiered notion of social citizenship activities: the male citizen-worker and the second-class female citizen-mother, who depends on her working man for her access to social entitlements.”⁸⁰ Marshall ignored the place and value of women’s unpaid reproductive labour while stressing the importance of putting “one’s heart into one’s job and [to] work hard” as central to the (paid) work aspect of citizenship.⁸¹ As such, Marshall failed to acknowledge the reality that women have shown the devotion and “heart” required to be citizens through their unpaid reproductive labour, and that these efforts have actually freed men to fulfill their obligations as “citizen-workers.”

In critiquing Marshall’s timeframe of the evolution of the male-centred model of citizenship, Sarvasy notes: “There was no one pattern to the historical achievement of women’s citizenship rights ... at the beginning of the twentieth century [privileged

women reformers] found themselves pressing for the civil right of employment, the political right to vote, and the social rights to income supplements for their children and to employment protections.”⁸² Women’s advances in social rights prior to the achievement of complete civil and political rights placed “social rights at the defining centre of women’s citizenship.”⁸³ The provision of the services in place to advance and secure the social rights of citizenship has therefore been crucial to women’s equality and autonomy.⁸⁴

Women have been able to legitimize their claims for greater access to the benefits of full citizenship by employing the social-rights discourse espoused by the welfare state. For example, women have advanced the civil and political elements of their citizenship through gender equality and anti-discrimination campaigns and lobbying. Women have also gained greater economic autonomy through their increased participation in the paid labour force, and by extension, the labour movement, as well as through social welfare programs. Indeed, as the following section will show, even though the Canadian welfare state has helped to facilitate the exploitation of women as an unpaid reproductive workforce, it has, at the same time, provided the resources via social citizenship to fuel women’s reproduction-related activism.⁸⁵

Reproduction-Related Activism: Women and the Canadian Welfare State

When the critical balance between production and reproduction is disrupted as often as it is under capitalism, it is women who must take on a greater workload to ensure reproductive demands are met. As such, it is women’s standard of living, their autonomy and equality that suffers when capitalists, the state, and individual men refuse responsibility for the increasing costs and labour involved in reproduction. As

reproductive workers, women are often the first to experience the deprivation inflicted by the capitalist push toward the complete commodification of labour. It is not surprising then to find women at the forefront of social movements pressuring the capitalist state to alleviate the growing reproductive burden characteristic of advanced capitalism. Throughout Canadian history, women in all their diversity have actively pursued a better standard of living for themselves and their dependents by making demands on the Canadian welfare state, with varying degrees of success, for greater recognition of and support for their unpaid reproductive efforts.

White, English, middle-class women, as already discussed, focused their reproduction-related activism on pressing for the development of the welfare state. Their less privileged counterparts, in contrast, employed different strategies to make demands on the state for greater support for social welfare. For example, in certain trades,⁸⁶ white working-class women's reproduction-related activism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century paralleled that of their male counterparts: once unionized, they engaged in strike activity to protest starvation wages and to increase job security.⁸⁷ In addition to joining the growing demand for women's suffrage, these women attempted to organize previously unorganized women workers and demanded equal pay for equal work. Women continue to play a central role in the labour movement, both as union members and leaders. In fact, many of the gains women have made in advancing their equality and autonomy have been as workers within and as feminists in coalition with the Canadian labour movement.

African- and Caribbean-Canadian working-class women, in contrast, were largely excluded from the early union movement in Canada due to their overrepresentation in

isolated occupations such as domestic service.⁸⁸ In addition to their concentration in the types of employment that inhibited collective action, Black working-class women also faced racial discrimination, which limited their legal wage-earning opportunities to domestic service, taking in laundry, or sewing.⁸⁹ Though excluded from the labour movement, Black working-class women found other ways to secure their reproductive needs in an overtly racist Canadian society. According to Carty, in order to surmount the obstacles posed by the state's continued use of racism as an organizing principle within the social, economic, and political life in Canada:

... Blacks developed survival skills that made their communities virtually self-sufficient and set up their own organizations: the many abolitionist societies in different towns and provinces, women's support groups such as Mothers Unions, which started in the church, and the African Baptist Association of Nova Scotia, founded in 1854. (Further), there were many qualified teachers, most of them women, in the Black community. Thus, when the children were not allowed in government schools, these women started their own schools so Black children would not be denied formal education.⁹⁰

In contemporary times, Black women have continued this tradition of energetic community activism by pursuing community empowerment as a means of enhancing community welfare.⁹¹ One group of Black single mothers – the Participatory Action Research group – has engaged the state by demanding changes to education to benefit Black students, and by presenting a series of health conferences focused on misconceptions about Black women's health.⁹² These examples provide only a mere glimpse into the three-hundred-year legacy of African and Caribbean-Canadian women's on-going resistance to the repressive Canadian state, and their continued mobilization to ensure their communities have access to the welfare support and services necessary to their subsistence.

Québec women also have a distinctive history of reproduction-related activism, one that has often been infused with nationalist considerations. Indeed, the slogan “No women’s liberation without Québec liberation. No Québec liberation without women’s liberation” is at the heart of Québec feminism.⁹³ Like their English Canadian counterparts, women in Québec mobilized for the right to vote in the early twentieth century, although they were not granted this right until 1940.⁹⁴ In addition to mobilizing for the franchise, women in Québec focused their early efforts, particularly in the 1960s, on obtaining subsidies for projects to benefit women.⁹⁵ Between 1963 and 1990, Québec feminists’ activism was stimulated and nurtured by the powerful nationalist movement that swept the province,⁹⁶ and since that time, they have participated in constitutional talks, national referendums, and have increased the number of Québec women in Parliament. All of these achievements assist Québec women in their efforts to secure the reproductive needs of the Québécois in an Anglo-dominated and -centric society.

Like Québec women, Aboriginal women’s reproduction-related activism is related to the nationalist goal of re-asserting Aboriginal peoples’ right to understand their roles according to their own cultures and political systems, and not according to the value system imposed by the colonial Canadian state.⁹⁷ Aboriginal women, who were not enfranchised until 1960,⁹⁸ have made strides towards this goal by resisting state attempts to assimilate indigenous peoples through the residential school system, as well as through other legislated attempts at cultural genocide, such as the varying “Indian” acts.⁹⁹ Aboriginal women do not look to the Canadian state to change their lives, but instead seek to be free to exist politically and culturally¹⁰⁰ as key to enhancing their

communities' welfare and ensuring the survival of Aboriginal peoples and their traditional way of life.

Early immigration policy made it virtually impossible for Chinese, Japanese, and Indian women to immigrate to Canada during the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁰¹ However, as more women from Asia arrived in Canada, particularly since the 1950s, Asian-Canadian women have become very active in their resistance to the racist and ethnocentric Canadian state. These women have established and maintained autonomous groups "aimed at securing equality and social justice for their constituents by asserting their right to social services from the state."¹⁰² Asian-Canadian women thus have a history of employing the resources provided by the welfare state to protect and promote their autonomy and equality, and to secure the conditions crucial to their families' and communities' subsistence.

The common organizing principle among all of these women, then, despite their differences in race, class, and culture, has centred on securing the political, economic, and social resources necessary to their own, their families', and their communities' survival. Whether or not some or all of these women will be able to continue their tradition of reproduction-related activism to successfully challenge reproduction-related instability in contemporary times will be explored in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Capitalism in Canada: A History of Reproduction-Related Instability and Activism

The minority that benefit from capitalism regard it as an autonomous and omnipotent mode of production that is the most efficient, and therefore the only way to organize the economy. In reality, capitalism is an increasingly volatile and inherently contradictory system that has been plagued throughout its history by crises that can only be alleviated

through state intervention in and mediation of capitalist relations of production. Capitalism is far from being an independent, invincible and proficient system for organizing production since it fails to balance and, in fact, intensifies the reproductive needs of, as Marx declared, its “most indispensable means of production: the worker.” By being paid less than the value of what they produce and, in the case of most reproductive workers, by not being paid at all, workers generate profit for capitalists but only subsistence wages for themselves. This situation breeds perpetual hostility, conflict, and deprivation, among some more than others, to which there is no resolution if the capitalist system is to be maintained. As such, the capitalist enterprise, like its workforce, remains in a constant yet varying state of vulnerability.

Capitalism relies on a highly exploitative, and therefore unstable, social mode of reproduction. Women are the key workers in this mode of reproduction and thus provide the core support for the maintenance of the capitalist system at the expense of their equality and autonomy. However, women have not been idle victims and have actively resisted their exploitation under capitalism. For centuries, with or without assistance from the state, women in all their diversity have been organizing to secure the political, economic, and social resources necessary to their own, their families’, and their communities’ survival. Whether on their own, overlapping, or in formal coalition with labour, cultural, farm, seniors’, poverty, religious, and various social justice groups, women have a history of mobilizing to enforce the Canadian state’s social (reproductive) obligations to its citizenry. As such, women in all their diversity possess the potential to seize the opportunity presented by the current, escalating crisis in social reproduction and devise an oppositional strategy to challenge the capitalist enterprise.

In the following three chapters, reproduction-related instability during the Keynesian, neo-liberal, and social investment periods, and the “care-” related policies that developed (or did not develop) in response, will be explored. Women’s role in the development of these reproductive initiatives, and the impact of these policies on women’s standard of living, will be examined. In the next chapter, the Keynesian phase of the Canadian capitalist state will be critically assessed. Throughout the Keynesian era, the Canadian capitalist state responded to women’s demands for public support for their reproductive efforts. However, it did so in ways that prioritized the needs of capitalist production over those of social reproduction. The consequences of this mediative approach during the remainder of the Keynesian period and into the neo-liberal and social investment phases of the Canadian capitalist state are the focus in the remaining chapters of this analysis.

CHAPTER 3

The Keynesian Phase of the Canadian Capitalist State: The Short-term Mediation of a Long-standing Conflict

In this chapter, the evolution of the Keynesian welfare state in Canada will be explored. During this period, the Canadian capitalist state institutionalized the male-breadwinner/female-homemaker model of the family, making women's unpaid care work in the family the cornerstone of its reproductive strategy. Indeed, as the following analysis will show, the success of each of the "care-" related policies enacted during the Keynesian period – family allowances, UI maternity benefits, child care provisions under the Canada Assistance Plan, and the Child Care Expense Deduction – would be contingent on women continuing in their role as unpaid reproductive workers. The consequences of this division of labour for women with respect to their equality and autonomy will be examined. While each of these policies evolved, in part, in response to popular reproductive demands, they were tailored to minimize the costs of production, thereby providing an effective mediation of the production-reproduction conflict, at least for the short term. By the end of the Keynesian period, however, the changing demands of capitalist production prompted the Canadian state to modify its approach to social reproduction and further intensify the demands on women's unpaid labour. The short- and long-term consequences of this modification will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Evolution of the Keynesian Welfare State in Canada: Mediating the Production-Reproduction Conflict

The Great Depression in the 1930s was a profound period of crisis that shook capitalism to its roots, generating such social dislocation that it quickly developed into a political crisis for capitalist nations.¹ The Depression undermined the faith of the Western

industrialized world in the merits of *laissez-faire* capitalism, instilling the general fear that capitalism would drift back into deep economic crisis² unless the state adopted a more formal, interventionist role in economic affairs. As assessed by McBride and Shields: “Even supporters of the capitalist system believed that, ‘without state intervention and regulation in the economy, the market simply would not survive.’”³ Consequently, the classical *laissez-faire* doctrine of minimal state intervention would be (temporarily) laid to rest⁴ as the principles of Keynesianism began to be integrated, to varying degrees and in varying ways, into the national policies of most Western countries.

Keynesianism is based on the ideas of British economist John Maynard Keynes, who argued against the classical belief that capitalism is a self-regulating system and advocated a “managed capitalism” in which the state would play an interventionist role.⁵ Of course, the nature and extent of this intervention would vary from nation to nation as Keynes’ ideas were used selectively or distorted by policymakers.⁶ For Keynes, securing full-employment primarily through demand-side management and a closed economy⁷ was the solution to the economic, political, and social crises brought about by the unregulated *laissez-faire* system in the Depression era. The Keynesian mediation would keep income in the hands of consumers:

... through either employment or state welfare benefits and income supplements, thereby sustaining consumer demand, and in turn, economic production. During times or recession and high unemployment governments could use their monetary policy to fight unemployment and their taxing and spending power to offset the loss of private income. In more prosperous times, governments could reduce their activity and accumulate a surplus that could be used when the economic cycle turned downward.⁸

The Keynesian mediation would defuse the political and social ramifications associated with the *laissez-faire* system by advocating that the state do more to socialize the risk of economic insecurity and guarantee the reproductive needs of the working population.

In Canada, the state has traditionally played an interventionist role in economic endeavours, and so what came to be overturned in the Keynesian period was the state's *laissez-faire* approach to social policy.⁹ This is not to say, however, that the Canadian capitalist state played no role in the provision of social welfare prior to this point. Indeed, as early as the late nineteenth century, the Canadian capitalist state had widened its involvement in social welfare through the regulation of school attendance, public health, hours of work, and conditions of work place (particularly for women and children) and the treatment of children.¹⁰

By the early twentieth century, the provinces had also begun to take on a greater role in social welfare. For example, in 1908, Québec introduced the first, albeit non-compulsory, workers' compensation act to become law in North America.¹¹ By 1914, Ontario put in place the compulsory Workmen's Compensation Act, making it the first state social insurance scheme established in Canada.¹² Ontario's Workmen's Compensation Act of 1914 served as a model across Canada, and in 1930, all other industrialized provinces adopted similar legislation.¹³ In addition to workers' compensation, mothers' allowances were introduced in five provinces between 1916 and 1920 in response to pressure from women's organizations criticizing the destitution of families without income, particularly fatherless families.¹⁴ Finally, in 1927, the Old Age Assistance Act – Canada's original national, non-contributory, means-tested public

pension program for the poor – was established and constituted the first instance of federal-provincial cost-sharing.¹⁵

These early “welfare” policies were targeted towards certain groups of poor Canadians, such as families made dependent by the First World War, and thus represented very limited concessions to the demands of labour and the female-dominated social reform movement. It is important to note that the provinces, and not the federal government, were taking the lead in the provision of social welfare/reproduction at this stage of the evolution of Canada’s welfare state. This was not unusual given that social welfare was designated as a provincial, and not a federal, responsibility under the British North America Act.¹⁶ By the Second World War, however, a combination of factors prompted the federal government to increase its responsibility for social reproduction, transforming the patchwork of provincial and federal welfare *programs* into a national welfare *state*.

This shift in and expansion of federal responsibility for social welfare reflected the completion of the transition from the First to the Second National Policy,¹⁷ which was provoked by, as mentioned above, a number of social, economic, and political challenges. According to Bradford:

...variations in economic performance and prospects across regions became the basis for political protest and policy challenge beginning in the 1920s ... when the Great Depression hit Canada in the 1930s it only confirmed, albeit in the starkest and most dramatic fashion, the obvious fact that the First National Policy had run its course. New economic and social policies involving a fundamental restructuring of Canadian capitalism and federalism were now demanded.¹⁸

Despite this demand for change, the 1930s proved not to be a decade of policy innovation or experimentation.¹⁹ By the 1940s, however, things had changed. To begin, the working

class enjoyed a substantial increase in its economic and political bargaining power: the demands of Second World War-time production made the threat of labour stoppages more effective while the growth in popularity of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) forced the ruling Liberal party to renew its interest in social welfare.²⁰ In the end, this increased power of the working class combined with the outstanding issues of regional unrest and the popular fear of another crisis in capitalism to bring about the development of Canada's Second National Policy.

While the First National Policy was focused on economic *integration* and nation building,²¹ the Second National Policy was concerned with economic *stabilization*,²² of which provision for social welfare would be key. Social welfare, which had previously been targeted towards the poor, would now become a right of Canadian citizenship.²³ The implementation of a particular, Canadian version of Keynesianism at the national level would facilitate these new, social rights of citizenship. Bradford outlines the commitments in social policy made by the federal government during the early years of the Keynesian era:

In 1940, [the federal government] acquired responsibility from the provinces for unemployment insurance through a constitutional amendment. In 1941, new tax rental arrangements were implemented to provide the federal state with the fiscal weight to play a significant role in national income stabilization and redistribution. In 1944 and 1945, this potential was expressed in various social assistance initiatives, the most prominent of which was universal family allowances.²⁴

These policy innovations reflected the gradual implementation of the social rights of citizenship as part of the basic framework of the Second National Policy. According to McBride and Shields, this framework rested upon four pillars:

First, the state respected the key interests of capital: investment decision-making power was left in the hands of private enterprise. In exchange the state made three major concessions to labour that, together, constitute the post-war welfare state. It made commitments to pursue policies ensuring high, stable levels of employment and incomes. For individuals unable to participate fully in the labour market, the state would provide assistance, thus sanctioning the various aspects of the social welfare state. Last, the state made an “explicit commitment ... to recognize and support the democratic rights of trade unions to bargain collectively to improve wages and living standards of their members and, in some instances, to participate directly in the determination of public policies.”²⁵

By 1950, the core features of the Second National Policy were in place, including economic management (not planning) framed by Keynesian techniques for fine-tuning the private economy, and social welfare programs providing a degree of social and regional redistribution.²⁶ In the mid-1960s, near the end of the Keynesian period of welfare state growth, this initial complement of social welfare programs would be greatly expanded to include national programs in pensions, social assistance, and health care.²⁷

Although the balance of class power had shifted slightly in labour’s favour during the Keynesian era, the Canadian capitalist state devised ways to neutralize these gains in the structure of labour legislation and social welfare programs to the benefit of capital. While new labour legislation guaranteed the right to organize and bargain collectively, it also contained provisions for “compulsory conciliation and mediation before strikes could occur, banned strikes during the duration of collective agreements, and placed a number of other restrictions on the way unions could operate.”²⁸ Not only did this approach severely curtail labour’s right to strike,²⁹ but it also established, on a larger scale, the boundaries within which class warfare could be “safely” played out, allowing for the continued, uninterrupted operation of the capitalist system.³⁰

With respect to the structure of social welfare programs, the Canadian capitalist state recognized the need to secure a decent and comparable standard of living across the country to neutralize the threat of instability posed by regional hostilities and an empowered working class. Rather than shouldering capital with a reasonable portion of these reproductive costs, the state increased its spending on social welfare and looked to the family to absorb any remaining costs the state could not or would not provide for. Indeed, the family, and within the family, women, as those primarily responsible for the daily and generational reproduction of the working class, would be central to the success of the Canadian capitalist state's reproductive strategy during the Keynesian era.

Rather than assuming that women would continue in their traditional, unpaid reproductive role in the family, the Canadian capitalist state took deliberate steps to ensure this gender division of labour remained intact. The state structured its reproductive policies using the family wage model, which assumed men were the primary breadwinners and women were dependants in the home, even though, in reality, many families depended on the income earned by women.³¹ According to Porter: "Despite all this, the ideology of the period strongly portrayed the male-breadwinner family as both the norm and the desired family arrangement, and this ideology dominated when policy was being shaped."³² This approach to social policy simultaneously exploited mothers as an unpaid reproductive workforce at the same time as rewarding them with "money in their own name"³³ (mothers'/family allowances) for their gender-designated service. As assessed by Brodie:

The welfare state readily transferred money from single working women who did not fit this dominant cultural model to women who did, that is, to mothers. In a very real sense, then, welfare policy was less directed at women as a social category than

through mothers in order to reinforce a particular family form and the postwar organization of the labour force and the economy.³⁴

The federal government enacted a variety of policies to reduce women's – especially married women's – attachment to the labour force,³⁵ as part of this reinforcement strategy. To begin, the state ended Canada's first and only national child care program that it had established to enable women to fulfill their "reserve army of labour" role during the war. It also renewed civil service regulations preventing married women from working for the federal government, as well as the Veterans' Preference Clause, which gave civil service employment first to wounded war veterans, then to able-bodied war veterans, and finally to widows of veterans.³⁶ In addition to these restrictions, the state changed income tax regulations in a way that deterred married women from participating in paid employment.³⁷ In assessing the impact of these welfare state policies, Porter asserts:

The postwar regime was based on a particular type of family-market-state nexus, one that involved women moving back into the home and leaving relatively highly paid and highly skilled wartime manufacturing jobs to take part-time and insecure jobs in the poorly paid manufacturing and service sectors. In sum, women were being marginalized in the economy and placed in a position of economic dependence in the family.³⁸

The "care-" related policies that emerged during the Keynesian period thus reflected attempts by the state to reinforce the family wage model, even if that required explicit discrimination against women to maintain them as an unpaid reproductive workforce. This practice is most apparent when studying UI policy, particularly the struggle to gain maternity benefits, as well as when examining the deliberations over establishing a universal child care system. Though the Family Allowances Act was the least controversial policy to emerge during the Keynesian era, it was still premised on the

implicit assumption that the maintenance of the family wage model was key to ensuring the reproduction of the current and future labour supply. The perpetuation of women's economic dependence and inequality has thus been fundamental to the state's reproductive strategy and this is reflected in the "care-" related policies enacted during the Keynesian phase of the Canadian capitalist state. In the remaining sections of this chapter, the impetus behind, and nature and impact of, each of these three reproductive policies will be explored in greater detail.

Family Allowances: Social Wage or Wage Subsidy?

The idea of family allowances had been around long before the balance of power between labour and capital had been fundamentally reconfigured by the events of the Great Depression and the Second World War. In fact, the first official interest in family allowances was shown in the House of Commons as early as 1929.³⁹ Popular concern about declining birthrates (among the preferred stock of white, English, Protestant Canadians), particularly at a time when population size was linked to national prosperity, prompted the federal government to refer the question of granting family allowances to the Standing Committee on Industrial and International Relations.⁴⁰ The Committee heard from five individuals, two of whom – Jesuit Father, Léon Lebel and social worker, Charlotte Whitton – articulated the dominant views, respectively, supporting and opposing a family allowances program.

It is important to note that from the outset, discussions about family allowances in Canada were closely related to the issue of wage levels.⁴¹ While Lebel and Whitton agreed that wage levels were inadequate, they disagreed on the question of whether family allowances would be an effective, or even an appropriate, solution to this problem.

For Lebel, the inadequacy of wage levels in the late 1920s not only lowered the birthrate in Canada, but also forced the exodus of Canadian citizens to the United States, where wage levels were higher and the standard of living better.⁴² Family allowances could address both of these problems, and, more importantly, Lebel believed, such a program could serve as a collective acknowledgement of the valuable reproductive contribution made by families. According to Kitchen, Lebel's most significant point on the issue of granting family allowances:

... was his perception of parenthood as a social service for the country. He compared the service of parenthood with the service the King, politicians and judges provided. The payment of family allowances would help parents by providing them with some financial assistance to meet their material obligations of parenthood.⁴³

For Lebel, childrearing was a service that benefited society as a whole,⁴⁴ and family allowances would serve as recognition of this valuable contribution.

While Whitton had been convinced by Lebel's arguments that family allowances could stimulate the birthrate, she ardently opposed the initiative over fears of the negative impact such a program might have on already inadequate wage levels.⁴⁵ The majority of trade unions shared the concerns voiced by Whitton, who argued: "Family allowances are an admission by the State that the wages within its areas are not and cannot be made sufficient to support the average family according to minimum standards of health and decency."⁴⁶ For Whitton, family allowances would proclaim to the world that in Canada, a decent standard of living could not be achieved through the market wage alone and was only possible through state intervention in the form of this wage subsidy program.⁴⁷

Although the debate over family allowances ended with the advent of the Great Depression, the federal government would again, by the end of the decade, revisit the possibility of implementing this initiative.⁴⁸ Throughout the Second World War, a

number of factors combined to induce the federal government to not only reconsider the idea of family allowances, but also to finally act and establish such a program. According to Jean, there were four major goals that prompted the passage of the Family Allowances Act in 1944. First, as already discussed, there was the immediate political objective of extinguishing the threat posed by the CCF.⁴⁹ The reigning Liberals felt that by launching the family allowances program just before the elections, the government could send money to 1.4-million households, thus proving that it too, like the CCF, was committed to avoiding the return of harsh prewar economic conditions.⁵⁰

A second goal of family allowances was to stimulate the postwar economy: the government assumed that family allowances would promote consumption, fuelling a sustained demand for goods, which would, in turn, stabilize the national economy and prevent national revenue from dropping.⁵¹ From the state's perspective, family allowances would provide a social wage to buttress the market wage, thereby solving the problem of inadequate wages (a benefit to labour), at the same time as maintaining these low salaries (to the advantage of capital).⁵² While most Canadian unions invoked the arguments voiced by Whitton to oppose family allowances, the state countered with the contention that allowances could provide workers with the material base for greater negotiating power.⁵³

The final two goals of the family allowances initiative focused on fortifying the family as the production unit for the reproduction of human capital (children) and reinforcing women's role as the unpaid labourers fuelling this machine. As assessed by Jean:

The program addressed families as agents of social reproduction who had to be maintained and encouraged, in part to ensure defence and an adequate labour force.

Social surveys conducted during the Depression and medical examinations of soldiers during the war had awakened the authorities to the poor physical condition of young people. In 1942 the armed forces had rejected 28 percent of volunteers and conscripts because of their physical unsuitability. Two years later, the proportion had risen to 52 percent. The government expressed its concern clearly: Canada's three and a half million children were the most important component of the country's future wealth.⁵⁴

The family, according to the 1944 Speech from the Throne, was the foundation of national life, and children within it were entitled to a minimum of welfare.⁵⁵ The state therefore had a responsibility to help when the economic system it supported, and on which families depended for their survival, threatened to undermine families' standard of living.⁵⁶

Family allowances helped families by "helping" married women to move out of the paid workforce and back into the home to fulfill their unpaid domestic duties as wives and mothers. The federal government implemented a series of measures to force married women, who, by 1944, comprised thirty-five per cent of the female labour force,⁵⁷ back to their primary, "natural" reproductive role in the family. While most of these measures, as already discussed, were both punitive and discriminatory, the state packaged family allowances as a "long overdue tribute to the mothers of Canada."⁵⁸ Jean contends: "Mothering was represented as a full-time occupation, a message consistent with the government's desire to return married women workers to their homes after the war."⁵⁹ This full-time occupation would only be compensated through a nominal "tribute" however, and not a salary proportionate to the actual labour and costs expended by women through their reproductive efforts.

Despite the low income provided through family allowances, those campaigning on behalf of the supposed beneficiaries of the initiative – that is, mothers – welcomed the program's implementation. Though they did not lobby for this social policy,⁶⁰ family allowances appeared to meet the demands of feminists and reformers for formal recognition of the value of women's unpaid domestic labour to the national economy.⁶¹ Once the program was in place, many of these women's groups turned their attention toward ensuring that family allowance cheques would be issued in the name of the mother.⁶² This had the unintended consequence, at least from the government's point of view, of slightly increasing the economic power and autonomy of mothers both in poor and better-off families.⁶³ Despite these very limited gains, family allowances did little to advance women's liberation. In fact, the Canadian capitalist state introduced family allowances to reinforce the view that reproductive costs and labour were a private responsibility, rightfully borne alone by women in the family. In this way, then, family allowances reinforced women's economic dependence and legitimized their exploitation as unpaid reproductive workers.

While family allowances were likened to government subsidies to private enterprises,⁶⁴ the token amount of this universal social welfare benefit could scarcely be compared to the corporate welfare enjoyed by industry during this and subsequent phases of the Canadian capitalist state. Monthly family allowance payments constituted about eight per cent of the average industrial wage, and were viewed by the general public as a "baby bonus" rather than an income support benefit.⁶⁵ Jean contends:

Family allowances did not ... succeed in realizing the greater socio-economic promises pronounced at the time of their enactment. Equality of economic

opportunities for children, a minimum of welfare for young Canadians and an end to poverty remained dreams.⁶⁶

The fact that women's labour force participation dramatically increased in the decades following the program's introduction indicates that family allowances, combined with the husband's "breadwinner" wage, were insufficient in meeting the reproductive needs of workers and their dependents. Although women, children, and families were not receiving any significant assistance from family allowances, capitalists enjoyed some benefit, at least in the initial years of the program. Family allowances helped maintain an atmosphere conducive to capital accumulation by providing a basis for developing a competitive postwar economy.⁶⁷ As rationalized in 1943 government finance files:

Children's allowances are likely to protect Canada's ability to compete with other countries in world markets. In the long run, minimum wages and average wages are likely to be pushed higher in the absence of family allowances than they would be if this supplementary equalizing measure were in effect.⁶⁸

The maintenance of substandard wages combined with wage subsidy programs like the Family Allowances Act functioned to protect and promote Canada's position in the postwar world market. However, the fact that economic autonomy based on the salary of the father remained unattainable for many⁶⁹ meant that family allowances served as an interim compromise as opposed to a permanent solution to the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system. As such, on-going mediation and intervention on the part of the state remained critical to capitalism's continuation in Canada.

In the next section, the struggle for UI maternity benefits will be explored. While the state was eventually forced to concede to women's demands for maternity benefits, it minimized this reproductive cost of production for capitalists by limiting women's access to these new benefits. As will be shown, UI maternity benefits allowed for the continued

legitimization of women's double day of paid and unpaid work by reinforcing the view that the costs and labour involved in reproducing children as the future workforce are an individual, and not a collective, responsibility.

The Struggle for UI Maternity Benefits

Almost a decade prior to the establishment of the Family Allowances Act, the state had begun to respond to the growing demand for income security by developing the Employment and Social Insurance Act in 1935. In 1938, the Unemployment Insurance Bill replaced this original legislation, and by 1940, when responsibility for unemployment insurance was taken over by the federal government, this particular income security policy was revised yet again and became the Unemployment Insurance Act. The official purpose of the 1940 legislation was "to promote the economic and social security of Canadians by supporting workers from the time they leave one job until they get another."⁷⁰ In this way, UI would aid in maintaining social order and promoting political and economic stability. According to Dingleline:

UI was to be insurance against unemployment and not health or sickness insurance. UI was seen as a limited measure not purporting to get at the root of unemployment or to prevent it ... The insurance benefit was to be a person's right established by past contributions. It was not to be greater than normal weekly earnings but the standard of living of the wage earner was to be protected.⁷¹

As a social right, UI benefits would ensure a minimum of economic welfare for those with major attachment to the paid labour force, who, through no fault of their own, were "temporarily" out of work. In addition to promoting social welfare, UI also served a more covert purpose in that it provided a significant source of revenue to subsidize the Second World War-effort.⁷²

The male-breadwinner/female-homemaker ideology has permeated UI legislation since its inception and has had a detrimental impact on women's – especially married women's – ability to make claims for UI benefits. UI policy was premised on the view that men were primary earners who worked out of necessity, while women were secondary earners who "chose" paid employment to supplement the wages of their male breadwinner, whether he existed or not. It was assumed that single women would work only until they married, and that once married any paid labour force participation would be for "pin money"⁷³ as opposed to necessary income. As such, UI promoted the breadwinner status of a select, male-dominated group of workers by protecting their economic and social security, leaving those types of employment in which women dominated excluded from coverage. Domestic service in a private home, professional nursing, teaching, employment in the provincial and federal public service, and casual employment were all exempt from coverage in the 1940 Act,⁷⁴ and were and are all fields dominated by women.

Women, it was presumed, did not share the same need for income replacement as their male-breadwinning counterparts, and so their claims to UI benefits were both restricted and considered suspect throughout the first few decades of the program. These barriers to women's UI entitlement reinforced the notion that women's paid labour force participation was temporary, made out of choice and not necessity, and that it was secondary to their primary role in the home as unpaid reproductive workers. According to Porter:

In the immediate postwar period, from approximately 1945 to 1960, both UI provisions and the way in which they were administered were often explicitly discriminatory, and were based on the assumption that women's primary role was in

the home ... the UI program often denied women, especially married women, an independent source of income and reinforced their dependence on the family and on the male breadwinner.⁷⁵

For the first several years of its existence, the UI program bolstered the state's reproductive strategy of discouraging women's attachment to the paid labour force as a means of securing them as unpaid reproductive workers in the family unit. A major contradiction of the postwar period, however, was that economic and material conditions undermined the ability of most Canadians in one-earner, male-breadwinner families to buy new consumer goods or even, by the 1960s, to maintain family living standards.⁷⁶ Consequently, family income had to be supplemented by state income support programs such as family allowances and UI, as well as by the increased employment of women, including married women.⁷⁷ Between 1951 and 1961 the labour force participation of married women doubled from 11 to 22 per cent, representing a fivefold increase since 1941, when married women's participation rate was approximately 4 per cent.⁷⁸ In fact, by the early 1960s, more married women than single women were employed, and women constituted 30 per cent of the total workforce.⁷⁹ Women's income had therefore become critical to the survival of the majority of families in Canada in the postwar period.

As women's workforce participation grew, it became increasingly difficult to justify the various forms of discrimination enforced against women workers through the UI system.⁸⁰ This is particularly true in the case of maternity benefits. Throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s, pregnant women workers were explicitly disqualified from receiving regular UI benefits for six weeks before and six weeks after the expected date of their confinement because they were regarded as being "not available for work."⁸¹ The prevailing view at this time was that women should withdraw into the private sphere of

the home, remaining out of sight, during pregnancy and childrearing.⁸² Disqualifying pregnant women from receiving regular UI benefits not only reflected this view, but also reinforced the belief that reproduction, and not production, was women's primary responsibility. These ideological barriers did not stop women who had lost their jobs or were laid off due to pregnancy from making claims for UI benefits, and, as the reality of dual-earner families began to be accepted, succeeding in these applications for income support.⁸³

Unlike family allowances, the demand for maternity benefits originated with individual, pregnant women workers. Although individual trade unions and locals provided critical support to unemployed pregnant women for equality of treatment within the UI program, throughout the 1950s, the labour movement as a whole remained ambivalent to married women in the workforce and pregnant women's entitlement to UI.⁸⁴ Moreover, the major women's groups, which were composed mainly of white, middle-class women who did not work for pay outside the home, did not see the need for a maternity program⁸⁵ and therefore did not offer support to pregnant women workers making claims for UI benefits. While neither labour nor women's organizations campaigned for pregnant women workers' right to maternity benefits during the 1950s, by the end of this decade, as women's workforce participation came to be accepted, both groups were beginning to actively pursue equal rights for women workers.⁸⁶ This increasing acceptance of women's attachment to the paid labour force extended to UI adjudicators, who, by 1960, altered their approach to pregnant women workers, resulting in women gaining greater equality of treatment within the UI program and greater access to income security benefits.⁸⁷ Women would have to wait until the end of the decade,

however, before the provision of benefits particular to maternity began to be more seriously considered by the state.

The first official recommendation that maternity (and sickness) benefits be offered through the UI program did not appear until 1968.⁸⁸ At this time, the state-commissioned *Report on the Study for Updating the Unemployment Insurance Programme* proposed that UI should deal generally with the problem of work interruption, and that pregnant or sick workers should not be disentitled when they were most in need of financial assistance.⁸⁹ According to Phipps: “By 1968, the labour force participation rates among young mothers had already started to increase, so that it was no longer regarded as exceptional for a young woman to have an *interruption* in her paid work around the time of childbirth rather than a permanent *withdrawal*.”⁹⁰ The reality that women would remain a part of the paid workforce regardless of the “interruption” of pregnancy was therefore slowly beginning to be accepted by the state.

The switch in perception about pregnant women’s availability for work reflected the Canadian capitalist state’s realization that women not only needed to earn an income to support their families, but that the economy needed women’s productive labour. The Women’s Bureau of the Labour Department concluded women of childbearing age were entering the labour force in such high numbers “not only because they want to or must work, but because there is a high demand for them.”⁹¹ The call to add maternity benefits as part of UI to answer this demand was thus repeated in the 1970 White Paper on Unemployment Insurance as well as by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.⁹² In 1971, this pressure from within the state, and externally from the labour

movement and the emerging second-wave women's movement, at last resulted in an amendment to include women's right to maternity benefits in the UI Act.⁹³

Although women had already struggled for thirty years to establish their need for and right to UI maternity benefits, the battle to actually access to these new benefits had only just begun. UI maternity benefits represented a concession to the reproductive needs of only those women with "major attachment" to the paid labour force. To be eligible for 15 weeks of paid benefits amounting to two-thirds of past wages up to a ceiling, women had to have 20 weeks of insured employment as opposed to the eight required for regular benefits.⁹⁴ Phipps outlines the particular barriers limiting pregnant women workers' access to UI maternity benefits under the 1971 legislation:

The 20-week eligibility requirement made it more difficult for women to obtain maternity benefits than regular benefits ... [and] is consistent with the long history of concern that new mothers could abuse the UI system ... In addition to satisfying the minimum work requirement, maternity benefits claimants had to prove that they had been employed for at least 10 weeks prior to conception (the so-called Magic Ten rule). This was another "safeguard" against the possibility that a young woman who did not have paid work at the time she discovered her pregnancy might decide to take a job in order to become eligible for maternity benefits. This indicates the persistence of the old tension between wanting to protect pregnant women and worrying that they might misuse the system.⁹⁵

It would be ten years before the "Magic Ten" rule would be eliminated on the grounds that this "would help achieve the goal of protecting women against income loss due to maternity."⁹⁶ The decision to eliminate the Magic Ten rule was also, at least in part, a response to public pressure following the Supreme Court's ruling in the case of *Bliss v. Canada* that "discrimination on the basis of pregnancy is not discrimination on the basis of sex."⁹⁷ Not surprisingly, women's groups, many of whom had worked to help

bring the case forward, reacted strongly against the *Bliss* decision.⁹⁸ According to Dobrowolsky: "The consensus was that this was an unjust legal decision that affected all working women. The *Bliss* case provided the incentive for many women's organizations to seek change not only in terms of socio-economic policy but also in terms of stronger constitutional guarantees."⁹⁹ Indeed, this pressure from women's groups, as well as the labour movement, did much to increase public pressure for changes both in maternity legislation and in the equality clauses of the proposed new Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹⁰⁰ Women eventually achieved important victories with respect to maternity legislation,¹⁰¹ however recent figures suggest that only 58 per cent of new mothers receive UI maternity benefits.¹⁰² Moreover, since these women tend to work at a higher wage in full-time, unionized, public sector employment,¹⁰³ UI maternity benefits reinforce class divisions between women as the remaining 42 per cent of ineligible mothers receive no commensurate reproductive subsidy.

UI maternity benefits constituted the Canadian capitalist state's response to internal and popular pressure to acknowledge and protect the rights of women workers and, more importantly, to the changing reproductive demands of the capitalist system. Women's participation in the paid workforce had become critical to the productive economy, yet women's reproductive needs during the pregnancy and maternity period threatened to undermine their continued labour force attachment. Maternity benefits offered through UI emerged as a compromise between the demand for women's productive labour and the reproductive requirements of pregnant workers prior to and following childbirth. The fact that maternity benefits would be provided through the UI system meant that this would be a very cost-effective compromise for capitalists. Employers, through UI premiums,

would only have to contribute to the reproductive needs of the minority of women workers actually eligible to collect UI. The maternity needs of female workers ineligible for UI, as well as those of women with no attachment to the paid labour force, would remain a private and individual responsibility. UI maternity benefits therefore left unchallenged the gender division of labour that shoulders women, whether engaged in paid work or not, with the economic and physical burden of reproducing the future labour supply.

UI maternity benefits undermine women's equality and autonomy by perpetuating the notion that women alone are responsible for the reproductive labour required during the pregnancy and maternity period. Although women's paid labour force participation has increased out of need and demand, men of all classes, capitalists, and the state have refused to significantly increase their reproductive contributions to relieve women of their dual role. From the perspective of the Canadian capitalist state, the payment of UI maternity benefits is a cost-effective means of mediating productive and reproductive demands that does little to disrupt the gender division of labour key to the state's reproductive strategy. UI maternity benefits do nothing to substantively redistribute the costs and other responsibilities involved in reproducing children as the future labour supply. As such, they represent yet another "care-" related policy that functions as a short-term and increasingly inadequate concession in the on-going conflict between production and reproduction.

In the next section, the initial debate over whether to establish a national child care program to support women's increased participation in the paid workforce will be examined. Whereas UI maternity benefits were an acceptable compromise that left the

gender division of labour intact and reinforced women's private responsibility for the costs involved in child care, a national child care program would have acknowledged the collective duty to ensure children's reproduction. Rather than accepting this inherently costly responsibility, the Canadian capitalist state adopted a two-tier approach to child care: welfare-type benefits for low-income families and a tax deduction for middle- and higher-income families. The fact that demands for a national child care program persisted throughout the remainder of the Keynesian period, and into the neo-liberal and social investment phases of the Canadian capitalist state, underscores the inadequacy of these early initiatives.

Universal versus Two-Tier: Keynesian Child Care Policies

Married women's paid workforce participation, as previously discussed, had dramatically increased in the postwar period. As such, the call for some form of public child care provision was taken up by arguably all members of the social welfare community, including conservatives, beginning as early as the 1950s.¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that the demand for child care was shaped by social workers prior to the emergence of the second-wave women's movement,¹⁰⁵ and that it was premised not on advancing and securing women's equality and autonomy, but on preserving the male-breadwinner family. The Canadian Welfare Council argued that good child care promoted family unity by keeping children with their families and out of foster homes and orphanages, and by helping overburdened and inexperienced mothers cope with their child-rearing responsibilities.¹⁰⁶ Mahon asserts: "... these arguments could readily be heard within the wider universe of political discourse because they left the nuclear family unchallenged: child care was not a threat to, but rather a way to save, the male-headed family."¹⁰⁷

In addition to protecting the sanctity of the male-breadwinner family, child care would also assist the “deserving” poor in a period marked by a resurgence of class politics in the form of a wave of wildcat strikes and an ensuing struggle by public sector workers for collective bargaining rights.¹⁰⁸ The mid-1960s were therefore rife with class and general social unrest, and the state responded by introducing the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) of which child care would be a part. Through CAP, the federal government aimed to guarantee that all Canadians, no matter where they lived, would have equivalent social rights by providing a financial inducement to all provinces to develop the capacity to support locally administered social services, including child care.¹⁰⁹ Child care provisions under CAP were targeted, as opposed to universal, and provided for the reproductive needs of low-income male-breadwinners whose families were deemed too large in relation to their wages.¹¹⁰ Federal child care provisions assisted only those in “need,” perpetuating the notion that child-rearing is a private and individual, as opposed to a collective, responsibility. The state would provide a measure of support to maintain the nuclear family, and women’s inferior position in it, as the production unit for the reproduction of labour power, but it would not consider the collective benefits of establishing a universal child care program.

According to Mahon and Phillips:

... a high quality, accessible, and affordable child care system would provide an important measure of support for both dual-earner and lone-parent families. This would make the decision to have children easier and thus could help improve the demographic profile. At the same time, a national program aimed at providing affordable, high quality child care, would create decent jobs, requiring postsecondary skills and commanding commensurate wages.¹¹¹

A universal child care program would also advance women's autonomy and equality by making this essential reproductive labour a collective responsibility and not a private burden to be borne by women alone in the family. This feminist understanding of the importance of child care was integral to the 1970 report produced by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (RCSW), which advocated the creation of a universal child care program to establish women's equality with men.¹¹² The report acknowledged the demands of women who defined child care as the ramp to worker-citizenship and those who wanted to balance their roles as worker-carer-citizens.¹¹³ The RCSW proposed that a universal child care program should be made available to "all families who need and wish to use it"¹¹⁴ as a way to answer these demands.

The Royal Commission's call for a national child care policy was not met, however,¹¹⁵ as the state, which was beginning its transition to neo-liberalism, opted for more cost-efficient alternatives in a decade increasingly marred by both fiscal and national unity crises. One such alternative was the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED), implemented in 1972. Although the RCSW preferred the establishment of a national child care program, it recommended that if the state was determined to offset the costs of child care through the tax system, a tax credit rather than a tax deduction would be the best option.¹¹⁶ According to Harder:

The RCSW argued that offsetting child care expenses through a tax deduction meant that higher income earners would receive a greater benefit than lower income earners. Because of this effect, the vast majority of working women would receive only a modest benefit from a child care expense deduction because of their generally low wages. And indeed, this effort to limit the size of the benefit was a key rationale in the federal government's decision to use the deduction design in addressing child care.¹¹⁷

The low amount of the CCED, and the fact that those claiming the deduction had to produce receipts for generally non-receipted child care services,¹¹⁸ did little to help families meet the reproductive costs of child care. In this way, then, the CCED helped the state contain public expenditures on social reproduction at the same time as reinforcing the state's reproductive strategy of maintaining these costs as a private, family responsibility.

Canada's child care policy in the final years of the Keynesian period thus consisted of the CCED, which mainly benefited higher income earners and targeted subsidies offered through CAP. Under this two-tiered approach to child care, middle- and upper-income families were expected to seek market, and not public, solutions to their child care needs, thus allowing them to retain the "choice" in how much to "invest" in their children's care.¹¹⁹ Lower-income families, in contrast, relied on restricted needs-tested subsidies offered through CAP.

The failure of these policies to meet the child care needs of all families, be they one-earner, dual-earner, or lone-parent, is reflected in what has become a "never-ending story"¹²⁰ of the struggle to establish a comprehensive child care program. According to Mahon:

... the story is never-ending because, on the one hand, there is a stubborn and persistent need for good-quality child care linked to the high labour force participation of mothers ... On the other hand, there are barriers that continue to block the development of a high quality, publicly funded child care system.¹²¹

Notable among these barriers is the classic liberal bias of Canada's broader welfare edifice,¹²² which encourages market-based, individualistic solutions that require some form of attachment to the paid labour force. For example, one has to earn an income in order to pay tax if he or she is to benefit from the Child Care Expense Deduction; one has

to engage in paid employment long enough to qualify for UI maternity benefits; and one has to first have a low income, and thus a “need”, to receive subsidized, as opposed to free, child care. In other words, one has to be working in a paid capacity to perpetuate the capitalist machine to be considered “deserving” and entitled to mediocre reproductive state subsidies. Other barriers, including the on-going crisis in Canadian federalism,¹²³ would continue to impede the establishment of a national child care program throughout the remainder of the Keynesian era, with the emergence of the neo-liberal phase of the capitalist state making this goal that much more difficult to achieve.

Canadian Keynesianism: An Effective Mediation of the Production-Reproduction Conflict?

Women, as those primarily responsible for reproductive labour, identified and articulated the need for the “care-” related policies developed during the Keynesian period, and they participated in, and often spearheaded, the various forms of mobilization involved in pressing for greater support for and recognition of care work. In the end, however, it was the Canadian capitalist state that ultimately structured these reproductive initiatives. Consequently, any advantage women enjoyed, as the supposed beneficiaries of Keynesian “care” policies, was secondary to the overall goal of balancing productive and reproductive demands to the advantage of capitalism. Though family allowances seemed to recognize the value of women’s unpaid reproductive labour, providing women, or rather mothers, with money in their own name, this wage-subsidy program was fundamentally premised on protecting and promoting capitalist relations of production. Moreover, the fact that family allowances were issued to mothers, as opposed to fathers or even children themselves, reinforced the notion that women alone are responsible for the labour required to reproduce the current and future workforce. Family allowances,

like other “care” policies in the Keynesian and later phases of the capitalist state, helped to solidify the gender division of labour, and women’s inferior position in it, as key to the Canadian capitalist state’s reproductive strategy.

It is clear how family allowances, UI maternity benefits, the Child Care Expense Deduction, and child care subsidies offered under CAP benefit the short-term interests of the capitalist system. Workers, and not capitalists, provide the majority of funding for these “care-” related policies through the taxation of their wages and mandatory contributions to the UI fund. The inadequacy of these policies is reflected in the fact that their effectiveness is contingent on the continued exploitation of women as unpaid reproductive labourers in the family unit. In the absence of the current gender division of labour, these policies would quickly fail at their intended goal of mediating the inherent contradiction between capitalist production and social reproduction. That being said, these policies did function as a short-term and limited concession that contained social unrest and allowed for the continued operation of the capitalist system during the Keynesian period.

In the long-term, however, these policies fail to adequately address the reproductive needs of the working population, particularly those of women who must perform a double day of both paid and unpaid labour to perpetuate the capitalist system. Keynesian “care-” related policies maintained or increased, rather than alleviated, women’s already excessive workload, compromising women’s quality of life and undermining their “productivity” in both the paid and unpaid spheres. The fact that women have been able to meet the productive and reproductive demands placed on them does not mean that their continued exploitation is a sustainable solution to the conflict between production and

reproduction. The failure of the capitalist state to recognize and adequately address the limited capacity of all workers, both paid and unpaid, to maintain a high labour output over the better part of a lifetime underscores the inherent, and potentially exploitable, weakness of capitalism. Moreover, the fact that these policies, or some form of them, persisted through the neo-liberal period of welfare state retrenchment underscores the need to provide some level of on-going reproductive compensation if capitalism is to persevere.

In the next chapter, the transition from Keynesianism to neo-liberalism will be examined. During this period, the Canadian capitalist state cut back or eliminated already inadequate Keynesian “care-” related policies at the same time as implementing new, production-related policies that intensified demands on women’s unpaid reproductive labour and undercut women’s market income. The neo-liberal era thus shouldered women with an increasingly unsustainable burden, thereby fostering the crisis in care currently challenging the Canadian capitalist state. The long-term consequences and opportunities of this crisis, both for women and for capitalism, will be explored in the remaining chapters of this analysis.

CHAPTER 4
The Neo-Liberal Phase of the Canadian Capitalist State:
From Mediation to Crisis

This chapter explores the circumstances surrounding the decline of the Keynesian phase of the Canadian capitalist state and the ascent of neo-liberalism as Canada's Third National Policy. The impact of neo-liberal initiatives, particularly the focus on debt reduction, the two free trade agreements, UI reform, and the Canada Health and Social Transfer, will be examined. Each of these neo-liberal ventures signalled the Canadian capitalist state's retreat from its responsibility for social reproduction, and, as a consequence, its increasing reliance on women continuing in their role as unpaid reproductive workers. This chapter analyzes the impact of the restructuring and retrenchment of Keynesian era policies, specifically UI and family allowances, and the decision not to pursue a national child care strategy, all of which furthered the Canadian capitalist state's withdrawal from its reproductive obligations. The consequences of the neo-liberal agenda in relation to women's unpaid reproductive workload, as well as the negative impact of neo-liberal policies on women's autonomy and equality, will be analyzed.

The state's strategy of withdrawing support for reproduction in order to advance the interests of production during the neo-liberal period spawned the crisis in social reproduction now challenging the Canadian capitalist enterprise. Thus, this chapter not only details the evolution of the neo-liberal phase of the Canadian capitalist state, but it also, more importantly, outlines the evolution of the current crisis in care that was cultivated throughout this period. Neo-liberalism, then, as the model of governance most explicitly dedicated to advancing and protecting the interests of capitalist production created the circumstances that now threaten to undermine the capitalist enterprise as a

whole. The long-term consequences of this neo-liberal debacle, and present attempts by the Canadian capitalist state to re-establish the critical balance between production and reproduction, will be explored in the following chapter.

Paradigm Shift: From Keynesianism to Neo-Liberalism

In the decade following the Second World War, the Canadian economy was characterized by unprecedented growth and employment. By the mid-1950s, however, investment, growth, and employment all declined for a duration that suggested underlying structural problems unlikely to be corrected or solved through Keynesian budgetary techniques.¹ The apparent inability of Keynesianism to explain or address these structural deficiencies reopened debate throughout the remainder of the 1950s and into the early 1960s about national economic goals, the appropriate role of the state, and the range of policy tools available for influencing development.² As assessed by Bradford:

If circumstances and events in the late 1950s and early 1960s unsettled the postwar consensus, then the 1970s delivered a series of fundamental blows to the thought and practice of the Second National Policy. External shocks to the Canadian postwar framework came from American investment regulations, the supply and pricing strategies of a world oil cartel, and from low-cost industrial competitors in the developing world. The overall result was an unprecedented combination of domestic inflation and unemployment that defied the logic of the most basic Keynesian trade-off. Finding the right mix of structural policies to restore productivity and growth in the Canadian economy became the central issue in the search for a successor to the Second National Policy.³

Keynesianism was not only unable to account at a theoretical level for the simultaneously high levels of inflation and unemployment, referred to as “stagflation,” but also, more to the point, it seemed to have no policy solution for these problems.⁴ Thus, from the early 1960s until the early 1980s, two distinct successor strategies

emerged,⁵ both of which, by the 1970s, had distinctively neo-liberal elements. Of these two post-Keynesian paradigms, one, sometimes partially endorsed by the Liberal Party,⁶ was nationalist in outlook and interventionist in strategy while the other, promoted by the Progressive Conservatives, was continentalist in outlook and market-centred in strategy.⁷

The Liberals attempted to implement the nationalist-interventionist industrial strategy, with the National Energy Policy adopted in 1980 as its core,⁸ as Canada's Third National Policy. However, according to McBride, this new, third national policy failed for two reasons: "First, it was dependent upon the fortunes of the international commodities market. To sustain the strategy and support energy megaprojects, oil prices had to keep rising; but they dropped. Second, the initiative ran into major ideological opposition from U.S. and Canadian business."⁹ The collapse of the Liberal's new national policy opened the door to the Progressive Conservative Party's continentalist and market-centred industrial strategy.¹⁰ More explicitly guided by the principles of neo-liberalism, the Conservative party identified the state as the major cause of the economic crises of the period and proposed free-market solutions as the cure.¹¹ So persuasive were these arguments, which were further bolstered by the discourse of conservative governments in the United States and Britain, that neo-liberalism took hold at the national level as the dominant governing strategy of the period. In the next section, the nature and substance of the neo-liberal paradigm as Canada's Third National Policy will be outlined.

The Neo-Liberal Retrenchment of the Keynesian Welfare State

McBride and Shields assert that:

In Canada, piecemeal movement towards a neo-liberal policy agenda was first evident in the mid-1970s, but it was only in 1984, with the landslide victory of the federal Progressive Conservative Party led by Brian Mulroney, that a systematic

shift in this direction occurred at the national level. Despite an election platform indication that a change of course was planned, the Liberal government elected in 1993 under Jean Chrétien has been firmly neo-liberal in its policies.¹²

Neo-liberalism, in many respects, is the ideological antithesis to Keynesianism. As such, an analysis of its guiding principles is essential to understanding the revolutionary nature of the neo-liberal paradigm and its implications with respect to social reproduction.

Neo-liberalism is explicitly pro-business, and, in contrast to its Keynesian predecessor, it seeks to establish an open economy by acting on the supply-side, substantially reducing government expenditures, and subordinating social to economic policy.¹³ While neo-liberalism accepts the need for mediation of the production-reproduction conflict, it does not endorse the state subsidization of social reproduction practiced during the Keynesian period. Instead, it encourages citizens to engage in paid employment in order to become self-sufficient and provide for their own reproductive needs. Under neo-liberalism, any form of “dependency,” especially dependency on the state, is scorned; achieving “self-reliance” and “self-sufficiency” through paid employment, alternatively, is held in high esteem in neo-liberal discourse.¹⁴ Rather than directly subsidizing social reproduction, then, the neo-liberal state promotes attachment to the paid workforce through employment-related, or “employability,” policies as a means of fulfilling its reproductive obligations to its citizenry.

Although it is ardently opposed to state support for social reproduction, the neo-liberal approach does advocate for the continued subsidization of capitalist production. It offers “business tax cuts and reductions in state regulation aimed at reducing costs of production, more tax credits to those with means to stimulate reinvestment, and negative inducements to those outside the labour force to enter it.”¹⁵ Such inducements include

reducing or eliminating alleged disincentives to work such as welfare and unemployment benefits, since, according to the neo-liberal rationale, unemployment is a personal choice rather than a systematic imposition.¹⁶ Indeed, decisions not to work are encouraged by the existence of social benefits and unemployment insurance,¹⁷ and so the retrenchment, if not complete removal, of these disincentives is central to the neo-liberal state's mandate.

Despite its emphasis on a minimalist state presence, neo-liberalism allows for the continued operation of a welfare system since "modern capitalism needs the welfare state to underwrite infrastructural costs, absorb surplus labour, and generally maintain social harmony."¹⁸ However, this system need not be universal in scope, but rather targeted toward benefiting those "most in need." The neo-liberal focus on targeted and not universal social benefits reflects the belief that governments seduce people into becoming dependent clients by creating an extensive welfare state.¹⁹ According to this reasoning: "... supplying welfare payments creates welfare claims; unemployment insurance induces unemployment; financial aid to single mothers prompts single women to have children; and subsidizing medical care manufactures more sickness."²⁰ While it is accepted that some measure of welfare must be provided, neo-liberalism holds that the nation's well-being can be indirectly assured by maximizing economic progress and therefore overall wealth.²¹ The neo-liberal state therefore takes an indirect approach to social reproduction, relying on blind faith that a truly free market will generate enough wealth to benefit all that are willing (and able) to engage in paid employment and become self-reliant.

In Canada, the capitalist state's adoption of the neo-liberal paradigm signalled a fundamental change in its approach to mediating the competing demands of capital and labour. As assessed by McKeen and Porter: "... the shift towards neoliberalism itself entailed (and, indeed, had as one of its objectives) a shift in power away from labour and other subordinate groups and a strengthening of the power of capital."²² The three broad strands of neo-liberal macroeconomic policy – anti-inflationary monetary policies, trade liberalization, and debt reduction²³ – facilitated this prioritization of capitalist interests over the reproductive needs of workers and their dependents. As Fudge and Cossman observe, the net effect of these policies "was to undermine working people's economic position and standard of living by lowering wages and shifting more of the costs of reproduction onto them."²⁴ The components and strategies of privatization²⁵ enabled the neo-liberal state to accomplish this shift, leaving the majority of women, within families as well as the voluntary sector, primarily responsible for a greater part of the burden of caring for people.²⁶ Privatization required a new division of responsibility between the state, the family, the community, and the market for individual and social welfare.²⁷

Under neo-liberalism, the Canadian state sought to remove itself from the reproductive equation, leaving citizens with the "choice" to either purchase market solutions or share the increasing costs and labour necessary to their subsistence within the family. It facilitated this retreat by identifying government spending as a significant contributor to the economic crises of the period, arguing, "we can't afford" the "expensive" social programs long supported by Canadians.²⁸ Cohen argues: "A debt certainly existed, but the impression created that excessive spending on redistributive programs was its cause was clearly false. Also false is the conviction that the country is

in a desperate state because of the debt crisis.”²⁹ Successive governments throughout the remainder of the neo-liberal period successfully convinced all political parties and governments throughout Canada that “the debt crisis requires that Canadians begin to live within our means.”³⁰ Under neo-liberalism, “living within our means” entails the retrenchment or elimination of the social programs that subsidize women in their unpaid reproductive role and allow for the continuation of the capitalist enterprise.

The Canadian capitalist state’s single-minded focus on debt reduction meant a retreat by the state from its reproductive responsibilities at a time when other neo-liberal policies reduced or removed the resources necessary to workers’ subsistence. Throughout this retrenchment period, Canada entered into trade agreements – the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1988 and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 – that undermined many women’s ability to fulfill their unpaid reproductive obligations. The negative impact of trade liberalization on women, particularly women of colour, who are concentrated in insecure, low-skill sectors,³¹ did not go unchallenged by feminist critics of the FTA and NAFTA. According to MacDonald, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) came out against free trade years in advance of the initial agreement, and based its opposition on the following four points:

... first, the costs of free trade would be borne disproportionately by the most disadvantaged in the labour force, namely women; second, in the manufacturing sector women were most likely to lose their jobs because of their concentration in vulnerable industries; third, women’s prospects for employment are fewer than men’s, given their more restricted access to training and other programs; and fourth, free trade in services would displace Canadian labour and threaten public service jobs³² [which comprise a significant source of women’s employment.]³³

NAC played a key role from 1985 through the 1988 election mobilizing opposition to free trade.³⁴ It helped to found and participated in coalitions uniting a broad spectrum of popular-sector associations that included women's, labour, Aboriginal, farm, cultural, seniors', poverty, and religious groups.³⁵ In 1987, NAC and many other groups came together under the name the Pro-Canada Network, a nation-wide coalition that unified the popular-sector organizations fighting against the FTA.³⁶ Despite this popular opposition, the FTA was eventually signed in 1988 after the Conservatives won another majority in a bitterly fought election.³⁷ However, the fight over free trade had not yet ended: the women's movement rejoined the debate on trade liberalization in the early 1990s with the negotiation of NAFTA.³⁸ In addition to reiterating the gender issues raised in the FTA debate, women expressed concerns about labour standards and the erosion of the democratic rights of women and other political minorities as unelected, international institutions were allotted more control over national policy decisions.³⁹ Once again, however, this popular opposition was overruled, and NAFTA was signed by the Liberal government in 1994.

Trade liberalization was one of the first, and certainly not the last, neo-liberal policy to be challenged by the mainstream women's movement, labour, and other popular-sector organizations concerned with maintaining and improving Canadians' standard of living. In the same year NAFTA was signed, the Liberal government launched the Social Security Review (SSR) to reform, within a two-year period, Canada's social security infrastructure.⁴⁰ A broad range of programs were slated for redesign, including UI, welfare, training, funding for post-secondary education, childcare and child benefits.⁴¹ Although the SSR was billed as an opportunity for the average Canadian to help shape

the future of social policy, the public's input was circumscribed by the limits of the review agenda, which failed to include immigration, health, housing and pensions.⁴² Nonetheless, NAC and a number of other women's equality-seeking groups pushed the parameters of the debate by encouraging the state to incorporate a gender-sensitive perspective in the SSR as a way of promoting women's equality.⁴³ Despite these demands, Jennissen concludes, "Not only did the SSR fail to include the advancement of women's equality in its basic principles, it did not add gender sensitivity to its discussion documents."⁴⁴ The Canadian capitalist state opted not to advance women's equality through the SSR because this would have contradicted the neo-liberal need to increase women's unpaid reproductive workload and maintain women's position as a flexible, low-wage, insecure workforce.

The proposed SSR reforms were sidelined, however, until after the 1995 Budget, which exacted the most far-reaching restructuring of the Keynesian social security system, and symbolized the peak of the neo-liberal experiment in Canada. UI reform was a key priority in the Budget since, according to the neo-liberal dogma, the UI system tended to "impede labour market efficiency" and "reduce mobility incentives"⁴⁵ all while promoting a general disincentive to engage in paid employment. While the retrenchment of the UI system had been on-going since the mid-1970s as part of the "piecemeal" movement toward neo-liberalism in Canada, the 1995 Budget implemented the most fundamental changes to the program to date. The Budget included a UI funding reduction of ten per cent and a change in the program's name to "Employment" Insurance (EI) to reflect the emphasis on reinforcing the value of paid work.⁴⁶ These reforms enabled the continued use of EI as part of a low-wage economic strategy "designed to meet the

competitive needs of employers (by decreasing premiums and by increasing the flexibility of the labour market).”⁴⁷ As assessed by Dobrowolsky: “Qualifying conditions became stricter, periods of benefit were shortened, and ineligibility grew in a context where unemployment rates were high, causing hardship in general, but particularly harming non-standard and part-time workers, most of whom were women.”⁴⁸ The retrenchment of the EI system thus contributed to a more severe imbalance between productive and reproductive demands while further undermining women’s autonomy and equality, and more to the point, women’s ability to fulfill their unpaid reproductive obligations.

The EI reform initiated in the mid-1990s rendered many women ineligible to collect benefits at a time when another neo-liberal policy cancelled or severely cutback the social programs subsidizing women in their unpaid reproductive role. The introduction of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in the 1995 Budget “... meant the end of CAP, and with it the end of a national statement of entitlement based on need.”⁴⁹ Under CAP, the federal government was obliged to meet, dollar-for-dollar, all provincial expenditures on social assistance, post-secondary education, and health care, thus providing a “fiscal carrot” for the provinces to elaborate and expand the social safety net.⁵⁰ The CHST, on the other hand, provided a substantially reduced, single block fund for these three program areas, and since there was no requirement that the money even be spent on these programs,⁵¹ many provinces opted to use the grant to reduce their debts. Bashevkin contends:

Under the CHST, provinces and territories were no longer obliged to offer social assistance and services to all people in economic need, nor would mandatory appeals processes exist for those denied support, nor were work requirements prohibited as a

condition for receiving social assistance ... Sub-national governments could, as part of their own policy reforms, determine their own welfare eligibility criteria, require mandatory participation in workfare programs, and impose very narrow terms of recourse or appeal for people denied benefits.⁵²

The decentralization of power to the provinces and territories thus materialized in the reduction and restriction of the services subsidizing social reproduction, thereby intensifying the demand on women's unpaid reproductive labour, which, as a consequence, further compromised women's standard of living.

The decrease in income brought about by trade liberalization along with an increasingly threadbare social safety net made people that much more reliant on the family to meet their reproductive needs. This switch from dependency on the state to dependency on the family for individual welfare constituted an important victory in the neo-liberal campaign to minimize the state's role in subsidizing social reproduction. However, the Canadian capitalist state would have to further support and fortify the family as an institution for this shift in responsibility to succeed over the long-term. It attempted to do this by promoting neo-conservative ideas⁵³ advocating a return to the patriarchal values and practices exalting the traditional, nuclear family⁵⁴ and women's role within it as unpaid reproductive workers. The strengths and weaknesses of this approach, both generally and in the context of the specific reproductive policies implemented during the neo-liberal period, will be the subject of the remaining sections in this chapter.

The Neo-Liberal Reproductive Strategy

Neo-liberalism is comprised of two, at times conflicting, ideological halves – market fundamentalism and neo-conservatism.⁵⁵ During the first half of the neo-liberal period, under the Conservative government, the neo-conservative variant dominated. During the

latter half, under the Liberal government, market fundamentalism reigned supreme. As discussed in Chapter 2, market fundamentalists are more concerned with what the family does as opposed to who it is, whereas neo-conservatives privilege the male-breadwinner/female-homemaker family arrangement above all others. McBride and Shields elaborate further on this distinction:

In its neo-conservative variant, economic liberalism is combined with social traditionalism and expresses concern for, and plays upon, the popular values of morality, the work ethic, law and order, the preservation of the family and church, and the denunciation of feminism, homosexuality, sexual permissiveness, and drugs. Clearly other variants of neo-liberalism do not share these social values and restrict their emphasis to economic individualism, the superiority of the market when compared to the public sector and so forth. However, a consequence of all forms of neo-liberalism, and in the view of neo-conservatives a desirable consequence, is an assault on feminism – pushing women back into traditional roles in the family.⁵⁶

While market fundamentalists do not subscribe to neo-conservative social values *per se*, they do recognize that a strong family is necessary to ensure that individuals do not become dependent upon the state.⁵⁷ Market fundamentalists understand that, in the past, the family (for the most part, its female members) provided a considerable amount of health care, welfare, and education to individuals. During the Keynesian period of welfare state-expansion, however, the Canadian state had misguidedly undermined the family's traditional function by taking over greater responsibility for social reproduction.⁵⁸ For market fundamentalists, this wrong can only be made right if the family (read women) reclaims its responsibility for the care and welfare of its members, thereby allowing market forces, and not the state, to determine workers' (and their dependents') standard of living.

The neo-liberal policy solution to the problem of the supposed high rates of dependency fostered by the Keynesian welfare state accommodates both its market fundamentalist and neo-conservative elements:

If social services are removed from the public sector, private individuals will have to perform them. Someone must care for the children, the handicapped, and the elderly when no profit-making business can be made of them. Women are being urged to 'return to the home.' The new right argument is that they never wanted to leave it; they did so only because the high taxes levied to pay for social services obliged them to find paid employment.⁵⁹

Privatization allows neo-conservatives to advance their particular social agenda of forcing women back to their rightful, subordinate place in the patriarchal household. This arrangement allows for the maximization of women as an unpaid reproductive workforce, which, in turn, facilitates the retrenchment of the extensive welfare state that is so eschewed by market fundamentalists. At its core, then, neo-liberalism explicitly advocates for the continued domination and subjugation of women as those traditionally responsible for providing the unpaid reproductive labour fuelling capitalism.

The problem with this approach, however, is that it does not account for the reality that the majority of families cannot survive on a single income alone, particularly when the impacts of neo-liberal "production" policies are considered. By the early 1990s, neo-liberal restructuring had undercut men's and women's income by not only increasing the unemployment rate for both sexes but also by accelerating the "feminization of the workforce."⁶⁰ As defined by Bakker: "Feminization of work refers to both the notable rise in female-labour force participation and the transformation or feminization of many jobs traditionally held by men."⁶¹ Since the FTA, more women have joined the paid workforce, including those with young children, although their jobs have been more

likely to be part-time and insecure.⁶² In fact by the early 1990s, women constituted almost half of the Canadian labour force and 71 per cent of part-time workers.⁶³

This kind of feminization of the labour force does not mean that the position of most women has improved; instead, it means that the position of some men has deteriorated, becoming more like that of women.⁶⁴ The demand for a “flexible” and “competitive” labour force stimulated the growth of female-dominated, part-time, low-paid, insecure employment at the same time as reducing the number of full-time, well-paid, secure jobs, traditionally held by men.⁶⁵ Because men are more likely than women to have full-time jobs, more of them lost full-time work as a result of neo-liberal restructuring and were left with no other option but to take up part-time employment alongside women.⁶⁶ As Armstrong summarizes: “In short, more men and even more women found only-part-time work and the majority of both sexes did so ‘involuntarily.’”⁶⁷

In other words, while many men and women wanted and looked for full-time work, they were left with no other option but to take on one or more part-time jobs in order to make ends meet. Neo-liberal restructuring made it more difficult for men, however, to find extra work, given that growth in part-time work occurred in female- and not male-dominated occupations.⁶⁸ At the same time, this restructuring increased the need for women to take on more than one job, given that many women were able to find only part-time work.⁶⁹ Although more men than usual found themselves under- or unemployed as a consequence of neo-liberal production policies, this has not translated into a more equitable gender division of reproductive labour. Women’s responsibility for the increasing amount of unpaid labour required for social reproduction has been maintained, yet women have also had to increase their participation in paid employment, in the

absence of access to a breadwinner's income, to meet these reproductive demands. While more resources might enable women to accommodate this increased workload, neo-liberal policies have decreased or eliminated the state subsidies and market incomes (via trade liberalization) supporting women in this role. In the simplest of terms, then, the neo-liberal state wants and expects women to do more with less.

By the late 1990s, the impossibility of this situation could no longer be ignored; up until that time, however, the Canadian capitalist state pressed forward with its reproductive strategy of fortifying the nuclear family and promoting employability. With respect to the former, it implemented a number of policies to reinforce the family, including the restructuring and creation of benefits that mainly used family and not individual income to determine entitlement to reproductive subsidies. This treatment of the family as an income-pooling unit had a particularly gendered impact in that it assumed that all family members are equally well off and that all would share in the reproductive benefits⁷⁰ afforded by the retrenched income security system. While this may be the reality in many families, structuring entitlements this way did nothing to ensure women's access to this essential income⁷¹ as other neo-liberal policies reduced women's resources while increasing the costs and labour necessary to reproduction.

Regarding its promotion of employability, the Canadian capitalist state phased out the principle of universality by making the receipt of reproductive subsidies contingent on attachment to the paid workforce. This emphasis on selectivity was inspired by the concept of a "guaranteed annual income" (GAI), which would provide "selective social security for the least advantaged, while maximizing the recipient's market dependence."⁷² According to its proponents: "To be effective, the GAI's offset must be low enough to

create work incentives, while the guarantee level must not be high enough to enable the recipient to support himself or herself.”⁷³ In other words, the GAI is designed to persuade individuals to earn a living in the marketplace by making alternative sources of livelihood distinctly less desirable.⁷⁴ The fundamental problem with this emphasis on employability is that it ignores the many legitimate circumstances preventing individuals from engaging in paid employment, such as, in the case of single mothers on social assistance, the lack of affordable, accessible, quality child care. In this way, then, employability policies have a distinctly gendered impact in that they ignore the reality that women continue to earn less than men and that women need state reproductive subsidies and services in addition to their wages to fulfill their unpaid care responsibilities in the family.

Generally speaking, only those with attachment to both the paid workforce and the nuclear family would reap the limited reproductive subsidies offered by the Canadian capitalist state. In the next section, the specific reproductive policies implemented, or passed over, by the state will be examined. In the short term, the neo-liberal approach to social reproduction might have made Canada appear to be more competitive by cutting the reproductive costs of production. However, over the long-term, the failure of the Canadian capitalist state to effectively mediate the conflict between production and reproduction during its neo-liberal phase resulted in an increase in poverty and inequality for already marginalized groups, including poor women and minorities, and their families.⁷⁵ Women, as those workers most crucial to the effective functioning of the capitalist system, were therefore burdened with, what was for many, an increasingly unsustainable and unaffordable workload during the neo-liberal period that would be maintained up to and including the present climate of social investment.

From Universal Family Allowances to the Targeted CTB

As early as 1968, the Family Allowances program had become the target of government cutbacks as the Canadian state attempted to adapt to the changing economic climate by reducing public expenditures. In a briefing note prepared by the department of National Health and Welfare it was advised "the social security structure ... should be improved by emphasizing selective rather than universal measures."⁷⁶ In particular, family allowances "should be modernized so as to provide greater income support for those children who really need it."⁷⁷ By 1972, in response to public concern about growing poverty in Canada, the Liberal government attempted to replace universality with selectivity by implementing a system of family allowances related to family income.⁷⁸ As assessed by Guest: "The proposal would have paid maximum benefits to the poorest 36% of families, partial benefits to 34% and no benefits to 30% of families."⁷⁹ From its beginning in 1970, the plan had raised a storm of protest among people, many not far above the poverty line, who were concerned about losing this small, but necessary, reproductive subsidy.⁸⁰ Moreover, both the Conservatives and the New Democratic Party vehemently condemned the proposal as an attack on universality, as middle and high-income groups expressed their antagonism towards selectivity.⁸¹

Following the election of 1972, the now minority Liberal government dropped its targeted plan and introduced a new Family Allowances Act which incorporated selectivity with universality by declaring family allowances taxable.⁸² By 1978, the Liberal government, re-elected with majority status, was able to further this retrenchment of the Family Allowances program through the introduction of the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The CTC was inspired by a recommendation made in the 1970 report of the

Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. A total of 454 briefs were submitted to the commission from individual and organized women, many of which raised issues about women's employment and the provision of care for young children.⁸³ In addition to recommending a universal child care program to support women's entry into the paid workforce, the report also proposed the introduction of a taxable cash allowance to acknowledge the concerns of women who wanted to balance their paid work with care of their own children.⁸⁴ Eight years later, Monique Bégin, the Royal Commission's executive secretary, who was now the minister of Health and Welfare, reconsidered this recommendation and identified tax credits as a way to introduce such an allowance.⁸⁵

By the summer of 1978, the Liberal government had announced its intention to substantially reduce government expenditures, and chose to use the introduction of the CTC to neutralize any popular unrest this action would generate.⁸⁶ Timpson contends that the CTC "was targeted at those families with children whose income was below the national average and introduced to divert public attention away from the significant cuts being made in family allowances and other social programs."⁸⁷ The program cuts included a reduction in the monthly family allowance payment from \$28 to \$20, with the savings realized from this reduction (approximately \$690 million annually) channelled into the CTC.⁸⁸ According to Haddow: "The overall impact of the cuts and of the new credit was 'revenue-neutral' – that is, in the family benefits area, the government was neither spending more money nor saving any."⁸⁹ This revenue-neutral approach might be explained by the state's desire to avoid any further popular upset, and consequent political conflict, over the retrenchment of social benefits at this point in time.

The CTC was originally intended as a *supplement to* family allowances, but subsequent reforms placed this policy within a neo-liberal framework as a *substitute for* this Keynesian initiative.⁹⁰ By 1985, the focus on debt and deficit reduction led the recently-elected, and more overtly neo-liberal, Conservative government to announce a four-year plan to restructure family benefits.⁹¹ Beginning in 1986, family allowances would be only partially indexed to the cost of living.⁹² The CTC would be increased for three successive years, from 1986 to 1988, to \$549 per annum, and, beginning in 1989, it would then be partially indexed in the same manner as family allowances.⁹³ At the same time, the number of families who could qualify for the CTC was narrowed when the income ceiling was dropped from \$26,330 to \$23,500.⁹⁴

By 1993, the targeted CTC and reduced universal family allowances were replaced by the Child Tax Benefit (CTB) and the Working Income Supplement (WIS).⁹⁵ The termination of the family allowance brought to an end the last social welfare program based on the principle of universality⁹⁶ and, as such, an end to the Keynesian notion of social welfare as a right of Canadian citizenship. Under neo-liberalism, social welfare would be a “reward,” and not an entitlement, “earned” by participating in the paid labour force. Workers’ reproductive needs would be addressed through a restructured and targeted income security system consisting of tax benefits/deductions, UI, and other policies promoting the “employability” of all “market citizens.” In this way, the neo-liberal income security system provided nominal reproductive support to waged workers only, ignoring the reproductive needs and labour of unpaid workers, the majority of whom are women, and their dependents.

As an employment-related child care policy, the CTB was “the largest and best known of the redistributive tax credits,”⁹⁷ providing a tax-free and income-tested cash benefit of \$85 per month per child to low-wage earners. Maximum benefits would gradually be reduced as family income exceeded a set maximum (in 1992 this ceiling was set at \$25,921, when average family income was \$38, 565).⁹⁸ Middle- and high-income earners as well as those with no attachment to the paid labour force were not eligible for the CTB and therefore had to seek “private” solutions to their child care needs through either the market or family. In this way, the CTB encouraged low-wage workers to retain their substandard paid employment in order to access the marginal, yet necessary, income provided through this particular reproductive policy. This benefited the capitalist need to maintain the productivity levels of an ever-expanding “feminized” low-wage, part-time, insecure, flexible workforce at minimal cost since the funds for the CTB derive from workers’ income tax contributions. The CTB represented the token acknowledgement of workers’ reproductive need for child care, but only in the context of how this need might undermine worker productivity. As such, the CTB failed to adequately alleviate the growing reproductive burden imposed by other neo-liberal policies for low-income recipients as well as those disentitled from claiming the benefit.

The CTB epitomized the limit of neo-liberal child care policy, as both the Conservative government and its Liberal successor sidelined the establishment of a national child care program in favour of using “fiscal restraint” and securing “national unity.”⁹⁹ In the next section, the debates surrounding the establishment of a national child care program, and the subsequent decisions of successive governments not to address these reproductive demands will be examined. The choice not to provide direct support

for child care services contributed to the reproduction-related instability now challenging the Canadian capitalist state. The long-term consequences of this inaction will be discussed in the following chapter.

The Shelving of a National Child Care Strategy

As discussed in the previous chapter, the first official recommendation to establish a national child care program was articulated in the 1970 report produced by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. While the Canadian state chose not to follow this recommendation, it did implement policies to expand targeted, community-based child care programs. In 1970, the Liberal government introduced the Local Initiatives Project (LIP), which provided significant support for the expansion of non-profit child care centres in many provinces.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, the federal government also introduced a plan under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion that allowed the development of child care programs in rural areas to target socially and economically disadvantaged families.¹⁰¹ According to Scherer: “The development of child care programs through these projects was viewed particularly as an opportunity for job creation and service provision to an at-risk population rather than as a service for all children, families, and communities.”¹⁰²

While these two initiatives were, in keeping with Canadian tradition, more about enabling certain groups of parents to engage in paid employment than recognizing the intrinsic value of quality child care to society, they served the important function of rallying a more fortified and cohesive child care movement. Indeed, when the federal funding for LIP projects was withdrawn in 1973, protests over the withdrawal of funding served as a basis for the growing child advocacy movement.¹⁰³ By the mid-1970s, the

popular demand for child care for *all* families had accelerated and, increasingly, children from families across the social and economic spectrum attended existing child care programs.¹⁰⁴ This increasing demand added further fuel to the growing national child advocacy movement, which consisted mainly of child care advocates, the mainstream women's movement (as embodied by NAC), and trade unionists.¹⁰⁵ By the mid-1980s, this coalition had articulated a specific set of demands directed at the federal government for a publicly funded, non-profit, comprehensive, high quality system of child care services available to all families regardless of income.¹⁰⁶ These demands set the agenda for a political and policy debate about child care that would continue throughout the remainder of the neo-liberal period¹⁰⁷ and into the current era of social investment.

Toward the end of its term of office in the mid-1980s, the Liberal government, bowing to this popular pressure, appointed a royal commission to examine equality in employment and a task force to look at child care.¹⁰⁸ In 1984, the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment was appointed to study the barriers to women, disabled persons, and Aboriginals in employment. With respect to women's equal access to the workforce, it recommended the passage of a national child care act to fund high quality child care for all families and to guarantee consistent national standards.¹⁰⁹ The same year, right before the 1984 election that led to the Liberal government's defeat, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women announced the formation of Canada's first national committee established to study child care, the Task Force on Child Care.¹¹⁰

The Task Force recommended some dramatic child care proposals for a generous, massive, and generally well-thought-out service for Canadian families.¹¹¹ It laid out a series of recommendations to move in stages towards a universal and comprehensive

child care and parental-leave system by 2001, the estimated cost of which would be \$6-billion annually.¹¹² The proposed costs were more than the newly elected Conservative government could stomach, but the Task Force suggested ways of financing well within the reach of the state.¹¹³ It singled out the multitude of regressive tax exemptions, tax deductions, and tax credits that mainly benefited high-income earners, and, as Lind and Prentice show, the Task Force got even more specific:

It mentioned such things as the recently lowered corporate income tax rate, a move that in 1979 alone had cost the federal government a full \$1 billion. Then there was the recent Tory tax exemption on \$500,000 in capital gains over a lifetime, and the tax deductions for investment in retirement savings plans and in corporate oil and gas drilling funds. Were these the sorts of things the government wanted to put ahead of “the care of our children and the future of our citizenry?”¹¹⁴

In short, the answer would be “yes”, these were the sorts of things the Canadian capitalist state wanted to put ahead of the reproduction of children as the future labour supply and the general standard of living of Canadian families.

Even before the Task Force reported its findings, however, the Conservatives had begun their own, parallel investigation in the form of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care.¹¹⁵ An independent review of all 975 briefs submitted to the Special Committee revealed that the people who had addressed the Special Committee were clear about what they wanted:

They overwhelmingly believed the effects of child care on children and families to be beneficial. They wanted child care to be universally accessible. They agreed that parents should pay some fees for child care. They wanted a comprehensive child care system as opposed to using public funds to encourage parents to stay at home. And they opposed giving public support to profit-making commercial child care.¹¹⁶

Yet, even though a full seventy-seven per cent opposed commercial, profit-making child care, the Conservatives eventually came out in support of a for-profit system, citing the lack of consensus among Canadians about how best to address the child care issue.¹¹⁷

Although the committee made thirty-nine recommendations, its members did not agree on the need for child care nor on the role of government in providing such services.¹¹⁸ Despite this disagreement among committee members, by 1988, the Conservatives chose to finally act on its committee's recommendations and proposed the Child Care Act (Bill C-144). As assessed by MacIvor:

The strategy was not a new national government program. Instead it was a package of existing tax measures with some additional funding to create and operate new child-care spaces. The funding was seriously inadequate: it was targeted to create 200,000 new spaces over seven years, when the actual present need is over a million spaces.¹¹⁹

Not surprisingly, the bill was met with adamant opposition from child care advocates,¹²⁰ and when the Conservatives called an election in 1988, Bill C-144 died on the order table in the Senate, and was not re-introduced once the Conservatives were returned to power.¹²¹ In 1992, the Conservative government announced that there would be no national child care program.¹²²

Although the Conservatives had lost interest in child care, the public had not; recognizing that child care was a potentially winning issue with Canadian voters,¹²³ the Liberal party included a child care plan as part of their 1993 election platform. The Liberals promised \$720-million for a federal-provincial shared-cost program that would expand existing child care in Canada by as much as 150,000 new spaces over three years.¹²⁴ Originally, the Liberal plan was designed as a "top up" to fit within the CAP system, rather than the development of national program.¹²⁵ By 1995, however, a number

of self-imposed fiscal and policy constraints prevented the fulfillment of the Liberal child care proposal.¹²⁶

The introduction of the CHST in the 1995 Budget effectively ended the limited federal funding for child care already in place under CAP as well as any possibility of establishing a truly national child care program in Canada. As discussed earlier, CAP, which had previously provided approximately \$300-million of federal child care funds to the provinces and territories,¹²⁷ was abolished and replaced with the CHST, under which no funds were specifically earmarked for child care. Moreover, no additional child care funding was designated in the 1995 Budget (nor in subsequent ones) to compensate for the elimination of the funding provided through CAP.¹²⁸ The large cuts to federal transfer payments to the provinces and territories via the CHST reduced the fiscal capacity of the provinces and territories to match federal funds for a future shared-cost program.¹²⁹ As a consequence, the provinces and territories signalled that they would not be able to participate in any new shared-cost initiatives with the federal government, including a national child care system. By 1996, the federal government, lacking cooperation from the provinces and territories, and more importantly, the political will to pursue the child care issue, abandoned the development of a national child care program.¹³⁰

The failure of successive governments to do more than speak about the persistent and growing need for child care reflected the desire to maintain the neo-liberal privatization of social reproduction that occurred during this era. The Canadian capitalist state wanted less, and not more, responsibility for reproductive costs, and so it makes sense that the state would refuse to take any concrete action toward the establishment of an inherently costly national child care system. Social reproduction, especially child care, would rightly

remain the almost exclusive responsibility of families, and within families, of women. Neo-liberal employability policies like the CTB would encourage disadvantaged families to stay employed in order to finance their own reproduction, but the state would not contribute any more public money to subsidize workers' and their families' care needs.

While the state was able to retreat from its reproductive responsibilities by eliminating universal family allowances and abandoning a national child care program, a court decision in 1990 – *Schachter v. Canada et al.* – forced the Canadian state to expand the social security system it was determined to dismantle. In the next section, the circumstances that resulted in the expansion of the UI system to include parental benefits for adoptive parents and biological fathers will be examined. Although the extension of parental leave to fathers in particular would be a victory for formal gender equality, the state's decision to stop funding the UI program and further reduce benefits signalled the its continued withdrawal from its reproductive obligations.

The Struggle for UI Parental Benefits

Three years prior to the first reduction in family allowances and the establishment of the CTC, the Canadian capitalist state had begun to target the UI system for downsizing. Porter asserts that: "A series of amendments between 1975 and 1978 marked the beginning of a period of retrenchment within the UI program ... These amendments reflected a shift away from the view that unemployment could arise through market failures, toward a supply-side analysis focusing on individual behaviour and attitudes to work."¹³¹ By 1984, the in-coming Conservative government made the further retrenchment of the UI system key to its overall goal of advancing Canada's international competitiveness and productivity. According to MacDonald:

The UI programme was under continual review since the early 1980s, with the following recurring goals: to reduce UI dependency (by targeting frequent users such as seasonal workers, fishers and workers in high unemployment regions); to increase the work incentive (by tying benefits more closely to work effort); to increase “active” measures to promote labour market adjustment; to target UI more closely to people in need.¹³²

To accomplish these goals, the Conservatives used the supply-side analysis of unemployment to justify the further restructuring of the UI system, which was seen to be creating disincentives to work, and hindering labour market flexibility and worker mobility. The neo-liberal approach, alternatively, would focus on minimizing production costs so as to attract industry, which would, in turn, lead to the creation of more jobs, thereby solving the problem of unemployment.

Despite early promises to review and reform the UI program, by the end of the Conservative government’s first term, few concrete changes had been made.¹³³ This lack of action was due to deep social and political divisions over the proposed restructuring, mainly between the business community and labour, women’s groups, and other forces of the “popular sector.”¹³⁴ Upon re-election in 1988, however, the Conservatives were in a much stronger position to undertake sweeping social policy restructuring, and UI reform began shortly thereafter.¹³⁵ By the late 1980s, then, the Canadian capitalist state was in an ideal position to further retreat from its reproductive responsibilities, thus making the implementation of new social benefits or the extension of existing ones a far more remote possibility.

While eligible female workers had been entitled to UI maternity benefits since the 1970s, neither adoptive parents nor biological fathers had gained the right to parental leave until the 1980s. In 1984, adoptive parents became eligible for up to fifteen weeks of

benefits, and in 1987, paternity benefits were finally made available to biological fathers, but only in special circumstances.¹³⁶ The discriminatory aspect of the proviso “special circumstances” resulted in a Charter challenge in 1990 by a biological father, Shalom Schachter. In *Schachter v. Canada et al.*, Schachter applied for a declaration that benefits should be payable under the UI Act to natural fathers on the same basis as benefits are payable to adoptive parents.¹³⁷ The Federal Court of Canada agreed and held that the failure of the UI Act to provide benefits to natural parents similar to those of adoptive parents was an inequality that amounted to discrimination contrary to section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹³⁸ Thus, just as the Conservative government was about to embark on a full-scale retrenchment of the UI system, it would be forced to expand the program to include the right of biological fathers to parental benefits.

By 1990, the Canadian capitalist state fulfilled its Charter obligations and introduced amendments to the UI Act that provided for ten weeks of parental leave to both adoptive parents and biological fathers, this time without special conditions for the latter. However, this extension of benefits to biological fathers came at a price for adoptive parents, whose entitlement was reduced from fifteen to ten weeks. Indeed, the state would offset this court-imposed expansion of the UI system by cutting overall UI benefits to pay for parental benefits and withdrawing from UI financing, leaving the program to be fully funded by employer and employee contributions. In keeping with its goal of debt reduction and less government, the Canadian capitalist state used the 1990 amendments to the UI program as an opportunity to further reduce its reproductive costs, while retaining administrative control over the revenue generated by the program.

Just as the 1990 amendments allowed the further retreat by the state from its reproductive responsibilities, UI restructuring also reduced capitalists' "costs of production." In addition to the amendment to extend UI parental benefits to natural fathers, other changes to the UI program included an increased qualifying period and a shorter duration of benefits. This meant that fewer workers would be eligible to collect what amounted to lower benefits due to the restriction of the benefits period. In this way, capitalists were able to further minimize production costs (UI premiums) incurred through their workers' unemployment. The retrenchment of the UI system thus benefited the short-term interests of production by providing a good business climate where production costs would be kept to a minimum by a non-interventionist, neo-liberal state.

In the long term, however, the reduction or removal of UI benefits meant that those who needed this income support the most did not get it, which, in turn, increased poverty¹³⁹ and, as a consequence, widespread social unrest. According to Porter: "Testimony from different regions of the country echoed concern about the implications of the changes for poor regions of the country, for low-income workers, for seasonal and part-time workers, for immigrants, and for natives, as well as for women, many of whom were already having difficulty meeting the existing entrance requirement."¹⁴⁰ It was argued that women would be especially hard hit given the large numbers employed in part-time, short-term employment, their higher rates of unemployment, and the fact that women are the most vulnerable to layoffs resulting from trade liberalization.¹⁴¹ As women's unpaid reproductive labour increased during the neo-liberal period, the income provided through social programs like UI either decreased or vanished, thereby making it exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, for families to meet their subsistence needs.

This resulted in an intensification of poverty in the early 1990s and consequent political instability that instigated the transition from the neo-liberal to social investment state by the end of the decade.

Despite the myriad shortcomings of UI reform during the neo-liberal period, UI parental benefits were an important victory in advancing formal gender equality (as sameness not difference) in Canada in that they symbolized the recognition of fathers' "equal role and responsibility with respect to the care of their newborn children."¹⁴² Current provisions entitle mothers or fathers to thirty-five weeks of benefit at fifty-five per cent of average insured earnings up to a maximum amount of \$413 per week. Claimants must have worked 600 hours over the last 52 weeks to qualify for parental benefits. While the duration of benefits has substantially improved from ten to thirty-five weeks since the introduction of parental benefits, payment levels continue to be inadequate, especially for women who, on average, receive considerably less than the maximum,¹⁴³ if they qualify at all.

UI parental benefits are a labour-market and not a care policy. As assessed by Evans and Pupo:

The policy does not help to define workers as family members nor family members as workers. For those who cannot afford reduced wages or alternate forms of paid care, it does nothing at all. It may be a perk, then, for those who have the resources or means to undertake child care themselves.¹⁴⁴

UI parental benefits therefore help to maintain valued workers, that is, workers with significant attachment to the paid labour force, while excluding those most vulnerable to poverty and in need of reproductive subsidies, for example, single mothers. Moreover, the existence of UI parental benefits actually puts pressure on (mainly) women to take the extra time off work,¹⁴⁵ underlining the symbolic, as opposed to enforceable, nature of

fathers' reproductive obligations to their children. UI parental benefits have not alleviated reproductive costs for all parents, nor have they lessened the persistent and growing demand for greater state subsidization of social reproduction manifesting in the current era of social investment.

Neo-Liberalism in Canada: From Mediation to Crisis

The neo-liberal era fostered changes to (U/EI maternity/parental benefits) or completely eliminated (family allowances) already inadequate Keynesian “care” policies that intensified rather than alleviated the costs and labour necessary to social reproduction. Moreover, the state created equally ineffective new policies (the CTB) concerned more with allowing workers to keep their low-wage, sub-standard jobs than providing sufficient funds to subsidize workers' and their families' subsistence needs. In the short term, the state's focus on reducing its debt by significantly reducing its spending on social programs created an ideal climate in which to advance Canada's competitiveness and productivity in the globalized political economy. In the long term, however, the Canadian capitalist state laid the foundation for the current crisis in reproduction by skewing its policies too far in favour of the interests of production and focusing on promoting workers' employability as opposed to securing their survival needs. In so doing, the state jeopardized long-term capitalist interests by creating a situation in which poverty levels and, as a consequence, social unrest, continued to rise. The ensuing transition from neo- to “inclusive” liberalism thus signified an attempt to re-balance conflicting productive and reproductive demands to defuse these threats to production.

Women, in their capacity as unpaid reproductive workers, were central to the success of the neo-liberal experiment in Canada, yet women had the most to lose, with respect to

their equality and autonomy, under this new, third national policy. Not surprisingly, women's equality-seeking groups led the charge against neo-liberal policies that threatened to further undermine women's standard of living and increase the level of material inequality in Canada. These women, and in the case of UI parental benefits, men, were able to use the equality discourse enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with some success, to press their demands for child care, and to legitimize and voice their opposition to trade liberalization and the retrenchment of the social security system. Under the current, inclusive liberal or "social investment" phase of the Canadian capitalist state, however, the equality discourse has been replaced with the discourse of "inclusion," leaving women's and other equality-seeking groups without their traditional oppositional platform. The potential of women to challenge material inequality in the social investment period without the equality discourse will be assessed in the concluding chapter of this analysis.

In the next chapter, the social investment phase of the Canadian capitalist state will be explored. The state is currently seeking to strike a better balance between protecting and promoting Canada's competitiveness and productivity, and being more attentive to reproductive demands than it was during the neo-liberal period. Social investment care-related policies will be critically assessed to determine the likelihood of re-establishing this critical balance between capitalist production and social reproduction.

CHAPTER 5
The Social Investment Phase of the Canadian Capitalist State:
Crisis Solved?

This chapter examines the Canadian capitalist state's transition from neo- to inclusive liberalism, and the "care-" related policies proposed, reformed, and implemented during this current, "social investment" phase. The impetus behind and effectiveness of the National Child Benefit (NCB) will be assessed, as will the conflicting approaches underlying recent debates surrounding the design of a national child care system. In addition to child care, this chapter evaluates the Canadian capitalist state's policy response to the increasing demand for compensation for informal caregivers of sick or dying adults and children. The evolution of the recently introduced EI Compassionate Care benefit (CCB) and its impact (or lack thereof) on addressing the reproductive needs of informal caregivers and their terminally-ill family members will be the focus.

The findings of this final part of the analysis indicate that none of these policies help women in any substantive way, as those primarily responsible for informal child care and long-term and palliative care, to balance these reproductive demands against those of their paid work. This has, in turn, undermined women's productivity in both their paid employment and unpaid caregiving, at the same time as reinforcing women's inequality and dependency, and the on-going devaluation of their reproductive efforts. By not supporting women in their role as Canada's unpaid reproductive workforce, and, in fact, by increasing the demands on women's paid and unpaid labour, the Canadian capitalist state is not only further depreciating women's quality of life, and the lives of their dependents, it is also, more to the point, undermining Canada's ability to compete globally. The short- and long-term economic consequences of this continued mismanagement of the production-reproduction, and the barriers women's and other

equality-seeking groups must overcome to challenge the state's continued neglect of care, will be the subject of the concluding chapter of this analysis.

From Neo- to Inclusive Liberalism: The Social Investment State

After two decades of state restructuring and retrenchment, the neo-liberal utopian ambition of a generalized, self-regulating market had materialized as a dystopia beset by widespread poverty and inequality, and as a consequence, political instability. According to MacGregor: "The economic advantages [of neo-liberalism] were hard to demonstrate, growth rates remained the same as before, and the social costs began to mount with children and other vulnerable groups being particularly hard-hit."¹ Neo-liberalism produced a heightened sense of insecurity and social polarization that weakened social solidarity over time,² and as a consequence, threatened to destabilize the capitalist system. As such, global capitalist associations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank began to explore ways to rebuild social cohesion within countries undergoing structural adjustment.³ It was in this climate that the "Third Way,"⁴ "inclusive liberal,"⁵ "new paternalist,"⁶ or "social investment"⁷ discourse began to take hold at the national level in Canada.

In explaining the decline of neo-liberal governments, Giddens contends that the electorate in Western industrialized nations had:

... recoiled from neo-liberal policies, which suggest it is up to individuals to fend for themselves in a world marked by high levels of technological change and insecurity. The return of left of centre parties to government in so many countries sends a clear signal that people don't want to be left unprotected in the face of the global marketplace.⁸

Although by 1997 the Canadian electorate had "recoiled" from the "second way" market fundamentalism of the neo-liberal era, the newly re-elected Liberal government had not

altogether abandoned the merits of neo-liberalism. Indeed, the Liberal government would continue to promote the key features of the Third National Policy, but would adopt a less extreme, more “inclusive” liberalism. This new, inclusive liberal, or social investment, approach signalled the Canadian capitalist state’s attempt to re-balance and better mediate the production-reproduction conflict that it had allowed to reach crisis proportions during the neo-liberal period.

Roelvink and Craig outline some of the key elements of the Third Way or inclusive liberal approach:

Inclusive, or Third Way, liberalism should be understood as an attempt to re-establish the legitimacy of markets in relation to the social (and vice versa), by considering and activating a number of quasisocial aspects of market orientation. The holding together of market and social aspects is perhaps most obvious in Third Way rhetoric. It was, and is, littered with apparent social economic juxtapositions explicitly harmonizing market with social relations; for example, social capital, social entrepreneur, social investment. In similar terms, Third Way keywords (e.g. participation, partnership, community) commonly engender not just inclusive aspects but notions of responsibility and accountability.⁹

The harmonizing of market with social relations is a central goal of the social investment state, which is touted as an effective compromise between the two extremes of left social democracy – as embodied by Keynesianism – and right neo-liberalism.¹⁰ According to Dobrowolsky: “Unlike the passive neo-liberal state, the social investment state is more active. It spends, but in contradistinction to the welfare state, the social investment state’s spending is costed, calculated, and highly strategic.”¹¹ The social investment state promotes investment in human and social capital, including spending on education, health, communities, and the voluntary sector, to encourage the development of autonomous, responsible, and active citizens.¹² Whereas under Keynesianism, the state

sought to protect people *from the market*, social investment state-spending is intended to facilitate the integration of people *into the market*, thus making it an investment that will pay off and reap future rewards.¹³ The social investment state, then, is concerned with maintaining an “active” and “productive” citizenry while enhancing their capacity to adapt to the ever-evolving, highly flexible, and thus inherently insecure, global labour market.

The social investment state distinguishes between good and bad investments, and targets its spending toward where it is “needed” and where it will pay off the most.¹⁴ As assessed by Dobrowolsky: “Because they are future citizens, workers and consumers, children are depicted as sound investments in this new state’s calculus. In its rationale, spending on children now can help to improve a nation’s long-term productive potential.”¹⁵ Though investments in youth, and especially adults, are considered less cost-effective, certain disadvantaged members in both groups continue to be included among targeted populations deemed at “risk” for social exclusion.¹⁶ As Jenson and Saint-Martin observe: “The reasons for targeting spending at the margins of society are found in notions of social justice, to be sure, but also in the fear that these marginal populations are a threat to social cohesion, that is, to the enterprise as a whole.”¹⁷ “Investment” to counterbalance “social” ills inflicted by the free market¹⁸ is therefore a definitive feature of the state’s mediation strategy as it attempts to neutralize the threat to capitalist production posed by social exclusion.

During the neo-liberal era, the delicate balance between production and reproduction was severely disrupted, leaving those most in need in a situation of social exclusion and, as a consequence, in a position of growing opposition toward the capitalist system and

state. The social investment state emerged in recognition of the need to restore this critical balance in order to offset the threat posed by social exclusion to the capitalist enterprise as a whole. However, since the contradictions generated within unfettered capitalist economies continue to go unchallenged in the era of social investment,¹⁹ the state's ability to maintain social stability remains impaired. This impairment is further exacerbated through neo-liberal elements of the social investment discourse that continue to attribute economic and social disadvantages to individual, and not systemic, deficiencies. Thus, while the social investment state is mandated to rectify the gross imbalance between productive and reproductive demands instigated under neo-liberalism, its strict adherence to some of the more exclusionary aspects of the neo-liberal mantra impedes its ability to do so.

For example, whereas under Keynesianism, risk of economic insecurity was socialized through universal benefits and income security programs, under the social investment state "citizens only have rights to the extent that they fulfil their obligations."²⁰ The social investment state's emphasis on enabling citizens to maintain their autonomy (employment), and rewarding those who do with rights (substandard reproductive subsidies) ignores the inevitable inability of all to be always "productive." The ubiquitous hazards of life combined with an increasingly insecure labour market threaten to make even the most independent members of society dependent, thus demonstrating the need to accept a shared responsibility for the reality of risk.²¹ However, by making the receipt of reproductive benefits or services contingent on ongoing engagement in paid employment, the subsistence needs of unpaid workers, the majority of whom are women, as well as those unable to work continue to be ignored. In

this way, the poverty and inequality that the social investment state is mandated to alleviate is allowed to persist and, more importantly, so is the social instability that threatens to undermine the capitalist enterprise.

For the social investment state, increasing people's employability serves the dual function of enabling citizens to meet their own subsistence needs while providing an educated, skilled workforce to "stimulate demand, increase employment, and bring about prosperity."²² In other words, social reproduction is addressed in a narrow and indirect way that accommodates the demands of global capitalist production, without any sufficient acknowledgement of the actual subsistence requirements of workers and their families. In this way, any reproductive assistance enjoyed is a mere consequence, as opposed to objective, of the social investment state's emphasis on employability. By fighting *against* social exclusion instead of *for* social equality,²³ and thus by not addressing reproduction for reproduction's sake, the social investment state allows for the perpetuation of the poverty and inequality that endanger social cohesion.

High rates of inequality, low wages, poor jobs, or temporary deprivation are not a serious problem in and of themselves according to the social investment rationale; however the anti-social behaviour these problems cultivate remains of paramount concern.²⁴ Thus, while support for social reproduction is not being valued as an "investment,"²⁵ the state has not altogether abandoned its mediator function. Like its Keynesian and neo-liberal predecessors, the social investment state exploits the gender division of labour that burdens women with a disproportionate amount of unpaid reproductive labour in order to maintain system stability. However, it differs from its Keynesian antecedent by employing an enabling and regulating, as opposed to providing,

approach²⁶ to social reproduction. Moreover, while the social investment state continues the neo-liberal tradition of addressing reproductive needs through employability policies, it does not appear to resort to the wholesale downloading of its reproductive responsibilities onto the market and family.²⁷ Rather, the social investment state emphasizes the use of “partnerships” with private sphere non-profit and voluntary organizations in which women predominate, to fulfill its reproductive obligations. Women, then, remain vital to the social investment state’s reproductive strategy as: “... the economic domain continues to dominate that on which it depends: the feminine arena and subject.”²⁸

The social investment state’s emphasis on partnerships that depend on women increasing their unpaid workload underscores a central weakness in its approach to social reproduction. As Roelvink and Craig observe: “...women and their partners are caught in an ever-expanding augmentation of the familiar double burden wherein both parents work, and women still do most of the physical and emotional housework; now, this latter extends to a whole new array of community and wider social responsibilities.”²⁹ The social investment state therefore depends on women to perform at minimum a triple day of domestic, paid, and voluntary labour to maintain the balance between productive and reproductive demands. This approach to social reproduction ignores that privatization during the neo-liberal era burdened women with more unpaid care work and that this meant less time and energy for voluntary work outside the home.³⁰ Moreover, the neo-liberal retrenchment and restructuring of increasingly essential social services work in which the majority of employees are women has meant that fewer workers do more work with fewer resources.³¹ This has resulted in many women performing a septuple day of

paid social service work, unpaid overtime, formal volunteer work, unpaid policy and service building work, informal, unpaid social service work, union activism, and unpaid domestic work in the family.³² As Dobrowolsky concludes: “This puts a strain on a critical source of volunteer labour and undercuts the very same third sector upon which the social investment state pins its hopes.”³³

The assumption that women will perform at minimum a triple, and in some cases, a septuple, day of mostly unpaid, and in many cases, low wage, labour puts an immense strain on an already weakened reproductive labour network. However, whereas during the Keynesian and neo-liberal phases, women were able to use the equality discourse to challenge this division of labour and demand greater state support for their unpaid reproductive efforts, in the current, social investment phase, the discourse of equality has been de-legitimized and replaced with one emphasizing “inclusion.”³⁴ This new discourse implies that marginalized groups have simply been “left out,” not through any systematic discrimination or exploitation, but through the individual choice not to engage in paid employment and reap the benefits of new “social investments.” In other words, women are no longer “unequal” but are simply “excluded,” and can therefore be easily “included” in the distribution of social benefits if they maintain their attachment to the labour force and learn to better balance their paid and unpaid responsibilities.

The Canadian capitalist state’s concern with preventing social exclusion instead of promoting social equality has massive implications for women’s and other social justice groups who have traditionally mobilized to advance the equality agenda. In the Keynesian and neo-liberal periods, demands for a national child care program, UI maternity leave, and the CTC originated with the women’s community and were pursued

using the equality discourse. This discourse was also intrinsic to the success of fathers' fight for equal access to UI parental benefits. In the social investment period, however, the equality discourse is strikingly absent from the debate over and development of "care-" related policies. Moreover, a gender analysis of the implications of these policies has not been solicited or incorporated, and women's equality-seeking and other social justice groups have been excluded from the policy-making process. Consequently, the National Child Benefit, the Compassionate Care Benefit, and the proposed Early Learning and Child Care agreements and the Choice in Child Care Allowance are completely unconcerned with women, whose unpaid labour remains crucial to the success of each of these initiatives, or with advancing the equality agenda.

Promoting gender equality has therefore not been a driving force behind the policies created in this period; rather, the emphasis is now on the "child" and on addressing "children's" developmental *needs* (as opposed to their *equality*, or the equality of women, who continue to be primarily responsible for child care.) This focus on the child, and the marginalization of women and their demands for equality, is particularly prominent in the current discourse on poverty. Beginning in the neo-liberal period, the Canadian capitalist state turned its attention toward addressing the issue of "child poverty." According to McKeen: "The policies announced focused on developmental issues related to *children*. These initiatives ... focused on health development during pre- and post-natal periods, infancy, and early childhood, as opposed to the real problem of the high unemployment and low wages of the children's *parents*."³⁵ In other words, children were and are poor because their primary caregivers, their mothers, are poor. This reality continues to go unrecognized in the Canadian state's discourse on poverty, however.

Indeed, the neo-liberal period intensified what has been termed the “feminization of poverty.” Although women have *always* been poor in greater proportions than men, it is the continuing and disproportionate nature of their poverty that is of such striking concern.³⁶ Between 1990 and 2000, during the height of the neo-liberal period and the beginning of the social investment era, the level of women’s poverty grew, with the poverty rate for immigrant women in particular increasing dramatically.³⁷ Responsibility for unpaid care, low social assistance benefits, low wages, occupational segregation, and the growth of non-standard, part-time work are the main reasons why women are poor relative to men.³⁸ Single mothers and single women over 65 represent the poorest groups of women.³⁹ Moreover, Aboriginal women and Black women are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be single mothers,⁴⁰ which means that poverty is not only feminized, but it is also racialized. Ending women’s poverty is therefore crucial to ending “child poverty.” Policies that are motivated to eradicate child poverty that do not address or consider women’s poverty can only be classified as either insincere or uninformed. Either way, these attempts to end child poverty will not succeed, and demands for greater support for social reproduction will not subside.

From an equality perspective, then, the new era of social investment appears to have done very little to substantively advance women’s standard of living thus far, or to combat the feminization of poverty or child poverty. Since reproductive policies in this period are attentive to the productive demands of global capitalism and not to the subsistence needs of women and their families, they are inadequate at meeting their intended goal, and thus underscore a potentially exploitable chink in the capitalist armour. In the remaining sections of this chapter, the nature and substance of social

investment “care-” related policies will be analyzed, as will the economic and gender implications of these initiatives.

The National Child Benefit

The impetus behind the National Child Benefit can be traced as far back as the early 1990s. In 1993 the extent of poverty in Canada had increased substantially and 21 per cent of children were living in families with incomes below the Statistics Canada low-income cut-offs.⁴¹ Social welfare and child advocacy organizations, women’s groups, community groups, unions, business organizations, policy institutes, and the general public expressed concern about the high level of child poverty and pressed for government action on this issue.⁴² However, it was only after the introduction of the CHST in the 1995 federal Budget that any concerted efforts were made toward developing a comprehensive policy response to child poverty.

The CHST helped to advance Canada’s global competitiveness by facilitating the elimination of the federal deficit and allowing for the balancing of subsequent federal budgets. However, these fiscal gains at the federal level imposed substantial costs at the provincial and territorial levels. Federal cuts to social programs, the off-loading of federal program responsibilities, and the reduction of transfer payments created serious fiscal problems for provincial and territorial governments.⁴³ The provinces and territories were saddled with greater responsibility for the administrative and financial costs associated with social reproduction, but were left with substantially fewer resources to fulfill this duty. This “fiscal imbalance” was made worse as demand for social assistance increased as low-income families found themselves economically better off on welfare than in low-wage employment. To combat this increased reliance on welfare benefits, and the fiscal

imbalance in general, the provinces and territories took matters into their own hands. The Premiers agreed to assert leadership on national issues affecting areas of provincial/territorial responsibility, and gave effect to this initiative by creating the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform.⁴⁴

Among other social policy initiatives, the 1995 *Report of the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal* proposed that consideration be given to the possible creation of a national child benefit program.⁴⁵ The concept behind this initiative was first presented by the Caledon Institute for Social Policy in a discussion paper submitted in the 1994 Social Security Review (SSR). In addition to women's and other popular sector organizations, social policy institutes like Caledon had been pressing for government action on child poverty and had gone one step further to propose options for a national approach to addressing this issue.⁴⁶ Despite the Review's demise in 1995, Caledon elaborated on its SSR proposal for an integrated federal-provincial child benefit option in the influential paper *One Way to Fight Child Poverty*.⁴⁷ As summarized by Warriner:

The Caledon paper outlined a detailed, costed design for a federal-provincial child benefit system with a single integrated benefit to all low-income families with children, *regardless of their source of income*. The proposed child benefit would assist parents on welfare to take up employment and to remain in the labour force because they would receive a significant low-income supplement. Essentially, this was the basic design for the subsequent development of the National Child Benefit.⁴⁸

The Caledon proposal focused on addressing child poverty by promoting parent employability rather than gender equality. In fact, the use of the gender-neutral term "parents" masked the reality that it was single mothers, for the most part, who were on welfare, and unable to remain in the low-wage workforce due to their child care responsibilities. A national child benefit would help incorporate these women into the

androcentric model of employment, thereby reinforcing the value of paid work at the same time as continuing to marginalize and denigrate the important, unpaid reproductive contribution these women were making in their capacity as mothers.⁴⁹ Both of these goals would advance the Canadian capitalist state's productive and reproductive strategies.

Although the child benefit proposal was only one of many potential initiatives considered in the Ministerial Council's Report, it gained prominence in intergovernmental discussions due to its high degree of public approval and support.⁵⁰ In addition to the political capital both levels of government stood to gain, a national child benefit program could also help alleviate the fiscal imbalance that was causing so much discontent among the provinces and territories. Responsibility for the costs of child care, as opposed to a low-wage economy and lack of affordable, quality child care spaces, was identified by both levels of government as the key impediment preventing *welfare* poor from advancing to the level of *working* poor. A targeted national child benefit program would:

... allow federal and provincial governments to coordinate resources to assist low income families, reduce welfare dependency and move family income security away from the welfare approach and toward a more advanced and efficient approach, and support labour market involvement by parents, while increasing transfers to the working poor.⁵¹

In other words, a national child benefit program would enable (not guarantee) parents' (women's) paid workforce attachment, which would, it was thought, reduce the number of families on welfare, and by extension, provincial/territorial expenditures on social assistance.

While reducing the incidence of child poverty was the declared priority of this initiative, both levels of government also promoted the "secondary" fiscal benefits a

national child benefit program could generate. Such a program, it was argued, would promote attachment to the paid workforce, resulting in fewer families having to rely on social assistance.⁵² Additionally, a national child benefit program would reduce overlap and duplication of federal and provincial/territorial programs,⁵³ which would, as a consequence, further reduce social (reproductive) spending for both levels of government. The proposed national child benefit program would therefore reinforce the low-wage economy at the same time as further limiting state intervention in (socio-) economic affairs. Both of these objectives, it was thought, would promote Canada's competitiveness.

Maintaining a low-wage economy while minimizing federal and provincial/territorial spending makes Canada an attractive nation in which to do business, and therefore these are key priorities of the Canadian capitalist state. Although a national child benefit program might not substantially increase the incomes of disadvantaged families, at least the parents (mothers) of Canada's poor children would be off public assistance and engaged in low-paid employment. While in the short-term this might serve capitalist interests, such an initiative does nothing to address a key cause of child (and women's) poverty, – the lack of regular, well-paid, full-time employment as well as accessible, affordable, quality child care spaces – and so the problem is allowed to persist. The fact remains that up until recently it has been more cost-effective for women to provide their own child care while collecting social assistance than to work in the low-wage economy for comparable income but no access to quality, affordable child care. A "child" benefit that promotes mothers' employability might reduce social assistance expenditures, but it

will do nothing to support women and children to stay out of poverty nor will it create desperately needed regulated child care spaces.

Despite these realities, the federal and provincial/territorial governments pressed on with their “solution” to the problem of child poverty. By the 1997 election, after two years of intergovernmental negotiation, and in response to intense lobbying by child and social welfare advocates, the Canadian capitalist state at last acted on the national child benefit initiative. Reflecting the shift from neo-liberalism to the social investment discourse, the Liberals promised to “cancel planned cuts to health, welfare and post-secondary education” and redirect new spending towards children, especially children at “risk.”⁵⁴ The National Children’s Agenda (NCA) emerged as a top priority for federal and provincial governments⁵⁵ who “agreed in January 1997 to work together to develop the [NCA], a comprehensive strategy to improve the well-being of Canada’s children.”⁵⁶

The NCA consists of four priority initiatives: the National Child Benefit (NCB); Learning Readiness Indicators; Expanding Aboriginal Head-Start (to on-reserve First Nations children); and Centres of Excellence for Children’s Well-Being. While the latter three initiatives represent investments in children’s training as future citizen-workers, the NCB is intended to “help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty” and “support parents as they move into the labour market.”⁵⁷ In other words, the NCB has been implemented to subsidize the low-wage labour market required by global capitalism by making the receipt of meagre, yet essential, reproductive benefits contingent on parents’ (mothers’) attachment to the paid workforce. With this rationale, the working poor become less of a threat to social cohesion (capitalist production) than they would if

completely destitute, with the added dividend being the further state subsidization of the training of children as a future, skilled labour supply.

The NCB consists of a basic benefit identical to the old CTB, renamed the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), and the National Child Benefit supplement (NCBS) for lower income families (formerly the WIS).⁵⁸ The CCTB is a non-taxable monthly payment to the parent who is the primary caregiver of the child, with the amount of the payment reduced and eventually eliminated as net annual *family*⁵⁹ income exceeds a set maximum. In the 2005 taxation year, this ceiling was set at \$35,595 for families with between one and three children.⁶⁰ The amount of the basic CCTB benefit is \$102.33 per month for each child under the age of 18, an additional \$7.16 per month for the third and each additional child, and a further \$20.25 per month for each child under the age of seven.⁶¹ Families with a net family income of less than \$21,480 are eligible for the NCBS.⁶² The monthly amounts for the NCBS are: \$143.50 for the first child, \$125.16 for the second child, and \$118.33 for each additional child.⁶³

As a social policy, the NCB is deficient in a number of ways. The most obvious defect is the insufficient income it provides those families most in need of income support, such as single mothers and their children. According to the Canadian state, the NCB “is designed to recognize the cost of raising children and to help low-income families meet their children’s needs.”⁶⁴ However, this “recognition” evaporates when the actual cost of a regulated child care space is compared to the amount of the CCTB, with or without the NCBS. The median annual cost of a regulated child care space, depending on the province/territory and the age of the child, is \$5,000 to \$12,000.⁶⁵ The annual amount of the CCTB for one child under the age of seven in a family with a net income

less than \$35,595 is \$1,470.96, which covers only 12 to 29 per cent of regulated child care costs. For a child under seven in a “low-income” family eligible for the NCBS, the annual amount of the CCTB/NCBS is \$3,192.96, or 27 to 64 per cent of the costs of a regulated child care space. These examples represent maximum amounts, and so families with higher incomes and/or children over the age of seven receive even less financial support for their child care costs. The NCB provides little assistance in paying for a regulated child care space, of which there are few, and so it does little to either recognize or alleviate the financial and other costs associated with child care.

In the past, the NCB might have made it more affordable for women to stay on social assistance to provide their own child care than to find paid employment and take their chances in an insecure child care market. However, welfare incomes in the provinces and territories have been on the decline in recent years. In 2004, typical welfare incomes in Canada were thousands of dollars below the poverty line.⁶⁶ In fact, the 2004 drops in support sent many provincial and territorial benefits down to their lowest levels since the 1980s.⁶⁷ The financial outlook for families who have no other option but to stay on social assistance is diminished further when provincial/territorial claw-backs of the NCBS are considered. Many provinces and territories regard the NCBS as income and are therefore entitled to reduce social assistance payments by this amount. The provinces and territories can then “re-invest” these newly-available funds in complementary programs targeted at benefits and services for low-income families with children.⁶⁸ Given the flexibility the provinces/territories have been granted with respect to re-investment, these funds could be spent on the creation of desperately needed child care spaces, or they could be spent on promoting parent employability through employment and training

programs. There is no condition or guarantee that re-investment funds will be used to directly subsidize the care costs of economically marginalized families. Indeed, it has been widely noted that provinces and territories use the claw-back option as a cost recovery mechanism, either to keep welfare rates at bay or to fund other programs.⁶⁹

The Canadian state prides itself on the “success” of the NCB as an income-support program that targets assistance most to low-income families,⁷⁰ and, within this group, to working-deserving as opposed to welfare-undeserving families. The claw-back of the NCBS means that many of Canada’s poorest families do not benefit from this supplement, and are indeed worse off⁷¹ when below-poverty welfare incomes are considered. Lone-parent families, the vast majority of which are headed by women, are hardest hit by the claw-back.⁷² In Alberta alone, where the basic CCTB benefit for children under seven is \$93.66⁷³ and welfare incomes for lone-parent families are the lowest in Canada, these families fare even worse. For example, in 2004, a single mother of one child under seven living in Alberta received a welfare income of \$12,151⁷⁴ and a CCTB amounting to \$1,123.92 annually. Since single mothers collecting social assistance require an additional \$10,700 to simply reach the poverty line in Alberta,⁷⁵ the CCTB can only be regarded as a negligible benefit for these families. Most importantly, however, is that the poverty, and corresponding social exclusion, experienced by children living with these “unworthy” parents continues to go unchecked and unchallenged by the Canadian state.

Nevertheless, just as child poverty persists, so does the activism of popular organizations that initially demanded government action on this issue in the 1990s. Campaign 2000, an umbrella organization created in 1991, consists of 90 national,

community, and provincial partners that include women's, Aboriginal, child advocacy, religious, health, and poverty groups, as well as unions, school boards and food banks.⁷⁶ This organization, representing a diversity of perspectives, formed in response to the lack of government progress in addressing child poverty.⁷⁷ Fifteen years since its creation, Campaign 2000 continues to hold the Canadian state to task on the persistence of child poverty. This unrelenting pressure is reflected in the organization's *2005 Report on Child Poverty in Canada*, which provides a conflicting assessment of the state of child poverty when compared to the government's appraisal of its efforts.

According to Campaign 2000's report, as of 2005, 1.2 million children in Canada continue to live in poverty.⁷⁸ In contrast, the Government of Canada's *The National Child Benefit Progress Report: 2004*, relying on data from 2002, boasts that only 839,500 children are living in low-income families, down from 1.3 million in 1996.⁷⁹ Why the Canadian state used three-year-old data in their evaluation might be explained by the fact that progress in driving child poverty levels down has been stagnant since 2001⁸⁰ and, in fact, almost as many children are poor now as in 1996. As assessed by Campaign 2000:

Economic growth and social investments combined to drive down child poverty from 1996 through 2001. By 2001, however, progress stalled.

Even as prosperous times continued, 1,201,000 children, or nearly one in six of Canada's children, remained in poverty. Despite continued job growth, rising employment and strong job creation, child poverty remains stuck at 17.6%. We are not even back to where we were in 1989.⁸¹

If almost 20 per cent of children in Canada continue to live in poverty, even while receiving the NCB, who, if anyone, is really benefiting from this initiative?

The answer to this question can be deduced when examining provincial/territorial and federal statistics on annual expenditures on social assistance. From 1997-98, when

the NCB was introduced, to 2002-03 federal and provincial/territorial social assistance expenditures were reduced between 10 and 35 per cent, with the provincial/territorial reductions averaging at 24 per cent.⁸² Federal expenditures reduced 14 per cent during this same period. These savings may or may not be attributable, all or in part, to the NCB in general and the NCBS claw-back in particular. However, whether coincidental or not, since the introduction of the NCB, the provinces and territories have had some of the federal financing previously slashed by the introduction of the CHST repaid through the back-door with this “child poverty” program. The NCB seems to have addressed, then, to a limited degree, the fiscal imbalance that has caused so much conflict between the provincial/territorial and federal governments. Child (and mothers’) poverty, however, has been left relatively untouched by this “social investment.”

As a targeted social investment, the NCB might be considered good *economic* policy in that it promotes parent employability in a low-wage economy and allows both levels of government to reduce social assistance expenditures. As a *social* policy, however, the NCB fails to address a real and growing need for increased subsidization of the costs of social reproduction in families most at risk for social exclusion. With almost one-fifth of Canada’s children, and future workforce, currently living in poverty, the long-term economic value of such an initiative is virtually non-existent. Not only will these “at risk” children be denied the basic necessities key to realizing their full potential as citizens and workers, their sense of social exclusion will most likely stay with them into adulthood. While the social exclusion of 20 per cent of Canada’s children might not be considered a threat to economic stability in the short term, once these children become adults the long-term impact could have serious social, and by extension, economic consequences. In this

context, then, the NCB does nothing to advance and secure Canada's future competitiveness, and in fact threatens the social cohesion key to the stability of the Canadian capitalist enterprise.

Parents, especially mothers, either need full-time, regular, well-paid, and secure employment and/or sufficient income support from the state via social benefits in order to ensure their own and their children's reproduction. Adequate, and not below-poverty, income provided by the state, the market, or a combination of the two is crucial to maximizing the productivity levels of the current paid and unpaid workforce. Reliable, affordable, accessible, and quality regulated child care is also key to guaranteeing a skilled and productive future generation of workers, and remains central to advancing women workers' equality and autonomy. Both of these goals have social and economic benefits in the short and long term – decent jobs/social benefits and decent child care combat social exclusion while increasing Canada's current and future competitiveness. On one hand, the Canadian state's decision to focus on promoting employability as part of the solution to child poverty is not, in and of itself, a problematic approach. On the other hand, promoting workforce attachment in a low-wage economy with no access to child care is a problem. Moreover, providing support only to those with attachment to the paid workforce perpetuates the valorization of men's traditional sphere – paid employment – and denigrates the valuable economic and social contribution women make through their unpaid care work.⁸³

In the next section, the recent debates surrounding the establishment of a national child care strategy will be critically assessed. It is important to reassert that in contrast to the initiatives proposed in the Keynesian and neo-liberal periods, neither of the child care

plans recently proposed appear to be motivated to promote women's equality nor is there any clear evidence that a gender-impact assessment of these strategies has been integrated by the state. In fact, "women," "gender" and "equality" are not mentioned at all in either of the proposals; instead, the focus is on supporting "children" and "families." The implications of excluding women's perspectives from the child care policy-making process, specifically in the context of stabilizing the production-reproduction conflict and promoting Canada's competitiveness, will be explored.

A National Early Learning and Child Care Strategy

After almost a decade in operation, the National Children's Agenda (NCA), and the NCB in particular, has done little to improve the well-being of Canada's children, yet the inadequacy of this initiative only recently emerged as a concern for the Canadian capitalist state. Persistent child poverty and low quality children's services are beginning to erode Canada's status internationally. In October 2004, the OECD released a report detailing the countless deficiencies that characterize the services constituting Canada's "investment" in its children. According to the OECD's findings, child education and care in Canada consists of "... a patchwork of uneconomic, fragmented services, within which a small 'child care' sector is seen as a labour market support, often without a focussed child development and education role."⁸⁴ The state's continued neglect of children's developmental needs has become a threat to Canada's ability to remain competitive with other OECD countries. While Canada has been implementing the NCA, its international counterparts have been progressing toward publicly managed, universal child development services focused on promoting social cohesion.⁸⁵ To remain competitive, then, the Canadian capitalist state has had to return its attention to developing a national

child education and care strategy that will re-establish Canada's status as a progressive, productive, and democratic nation.

From a purely economic standpoint a comprehensive, high quality system of child education and care available to all families who wish to use it regardless of income, would enhance Canada's competitiveness by maximizing current and future worker productivity. Reliable, affordable, quality child care enables women, who currently represent about half the paid workforce and the majority unpaid caregivers, to achieve a balance between employment and family. Helping women achieve a better work-life, or rather "work-work," balance is "a key strategy for increased productivity, enhanced creativity, global competitiveness, family security, and civic vitality."⁸⁶ Child care also enables women to avoid extended absences from the workforce, which erode skills in a variety of ways and result in future reductions in earning (and spending) power.⁸⁷ A quality child education and care program would therefore improve the economic position of women with paid labour force attachment, further advancing their autonomy and equality.

Cleveland and Krashinsky assess the economic benefits a national child education and care program would have for children:

The benefits to children come in their greater social, language, cognitive and other forms of development, which lead, among other things, to improved school performance and decreased likelihood of dropping out of school. These effects in school lead to increased incomes, greater probability of employment, better health and more job satisfaction. For society, this translates into increased productivity, higher generation of tax revenues, decreased social assistance and health costs, and improved citizenship.⁸⁸

A child care program focused on child development would contribute to the maintenance of long-term economic stability. Studies on the physiological importance of early learning and child care show that there are critical periods when a young child requires appropriate stimulation for optimum brain development.⁸⁹ According to the authors of one of study:

Children who receive inadequate or disruptive stimulation will be more likely to develop learning, behavioural or emotional problems in later stages of life (including an increased incidence of juvenile delinquency and crime for males). There is also increasing evidence that many of the risks for health problems later in life (e.g. high blood pressure, Type II diabetes, some mental health problems) are set by the conditions of early life from conception to age five.⁹⁰

A high quality child education and care program would help combat these inequalities of outcomes and opportunities, which are a costly economic deadweight in terms of lost productivity, foregone tax revenue, reduced consumer spending and higher expenditures on income assistance, social services and health care.⁹¹

The benefits associated with a national child education and care initiative have not been overlooked by the Canadian capitalist state. In the last two years, the federal government has articulated two competing visions over the design of a national child care strategy. Prior to their defeat in the 2006 Federal Election, the Liberal minority government signed bilateral child care agreements-in-principle with all ten provinces worth \$5-billion over a five-year period. The newly elected minority Conservative government scrapped these deals, by-passed provincial-territorial negotiations and unilaterally imposed its “Choice in Child Care Allowance,” worth only \$1.6-billion. Since both proposals are grossly under-funded – a “modest” \$10-billion, or one per cent of the GDP, was recommended as a “minimum”⁹² – it is clear from the outset that state is

unwilling to provide the necessary financing to support social reproduction via a comprehensive, high quality system of child education and care.

Neither the Liberal nor the Conservative child care program proposals come close to being an adequate response to international, economic, and popular demands for a publicly-funded national child education and care program. In fact, the Conservative Choice in Child Care Allowance does not even constitute a program; it is, in effect, a taxable child benefit⁹³ worth less *before* tax than the meagre income provided through the non-taxable NCB. The better financed, yet still grossly under-funded, Liberal Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) agreements with the provinces fare only slightly better, yet are vague with respect to ensuring that the QUAD (Quality, Universally Inclusive, Accessible, Developmental) principles they supposedly rest on are enforced. As the following analysis will show, neither proposal is child-centred nor reproduction-centred, and so each initiative on its own, or even a combination of the two, fails to ensure that the care needs of the current and future workforce will be met.

At face value, the Liberal ELCC agreements appear to be a comprehensive *first step* toward a national child care system. Upon closer inspection, however, the Liberal proposal cannot be considered a truly “national” child education and care program due to the provision of “flexibility” each agreement contains. Each province has the “flexibility to determine its priorities within this initiative,”⁹⁴ thereby giving the provinces complete control over the structure, delivery, monitoring, and regulation of their respective systems. Even though each agreement identifies the QUAD principles as helping to shape a “shared” vision of a “national” ELCC system, the flexibility provision alone can easily undermine each of these guiding values.

On the surface, a *quality, universally inclusive, accessible, and developmental* early learning and child care program appears to be a comprehensive, albeit long overdue, response to the demands made by women's equality-seeking groups, labour, and child care advocates during the Keynesian and neo-liberal periods. When further scrutinized, however, it becomes clear that these principles carry very different connotations in their application in the ELCC agreements. For example, "universally inclusive" does not mean that early learning and child care services will be available to all families, whether rich or poor, who need and wish to use them. Rather, this principle ensures that early learning and child care programs will be "open and responsive, without discrimination, to young children, including children with special needs, Aboriginal children, and children with various cultural and linguistic circumstances."⁹⁵ This principle is therefore more concerned with respecting and valuing diversity⁹⁶ among certain children rather than promoting equality in early learning and care for *all* children living in Canada.

With respect to quality, each province can choose to invest ELCC funds in either non-profit or for-profit/commercial child care, or a combination of the two. Only two ELCC agreements (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) explicitly support non-profit child care, while four agreements (British Columbia, Alberta, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick) support a combination of non-profit and commercial provision of child care. The remaining four ELCC agreements (Ontario, Québec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia) do not specify a preference for either private or public delivery. Currently, all provinces/territories permit for-profit child care facilities to be licensed, and most have made them eligible for varying degrees for public funds.⁹⁷ Across Canada, the proportion of for-profit care ranges from a high of 73 per cent in Newfoundland and

Labrador to a low of zero per cent in Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.⁹⁸

Whether child care is non-profit or commercial has an impact on the quality of this service. While there are some poor quality non-profit child care centres and some good quality commercial centres, on average, for-profit centres are disproportionately represented among the lower-quality centres and non-profits are disproportionately represented among the better-quality centres.⁹⁹ Non-profit centres tend to have better ratios of children to staff than for-profit centres; lead teachers in non-profit classrooms tend to have more training and experience, and earn wages that average 25 per cent higher than staff wages in commercial centres; and non-profit programs serve a wider age of children (in particular, more infants) and more children from diverse economic backgrounds.¹⁰⁰ Not only does commercial child care score lower on every index, for-profit centres are also more likely to close, making them considerably less stable than non-profit centres.¹⁰¹ This instability raises further concerns in regard to quality from the perspective of stability for children and their employed mothers, community stability, and accountability for public funds.¹⁰² Clearly, non-profit child care is, on average, of superior quality to commercial child care. Nevertheless, the fact that all but two of the provinces have opted (or left the door open) for a not-necessarily-balanced combination of non-profit and commercial child care raises questions about the federal and provincial commitment to the shared principle of quality.

There are a number of economic benefits in allowing the commercial provision of child care for both the for-profit child care industry as well as for the federal and provincial governments. While there is money to be made by capitalists and money to be

saved by the capitalist state, there is no guarantee that needed care will be provided, and more importantly, that the care that is provided will be allowed to be regulated and monitored for quality control. For instance, under U.S. interpretations of the North American Free Trade Agreement, for-profit child care would not qualify as a social service established for a “public purpose,” thereby limiting the Canadian state’s ability to impose and enforce any regulations on the commercial child care sector “more burdensome than necessary.”¹⁰³ International, and not Canadian, trade rules protect the commercial child care industry’s right to maximize profit regardless of women’s, and society’s, need for quality early learning and child care.

The savings accrued by the federal and provincial governments are directly tied to their “inability” to enforce a regulatory regime in the for-profit child care sector. The regulation of the child care sector, whether non-profit or commercial, puts a strain on federal and provincial coffers. Policing and enforcing minimum standards is costly and diverts funds from more proactive quality improvements,¹⁰⁴ which is why some of the provinces opt not to enforce their own, already existing regulations. Alberta, in particular, has shown a well-established pattern of non-compliance in ensuring that its for-profit child care sector is providing care of acceptable quality. Prentice contends that:

A 1994 review by the Office of the Ombudsman determined that 737 complaints were laid the previous year against child care facilities. During this period, about two-thirds of Alberta’s child care spaces were for-profit. The Ombudsman reported that a number of child care centres had accumulated “substantial numbers” of non-compliance reports, sometimes in excess of 200, and yet continued to operate. It provided the example of one centre, which in the space of four years and ten months had to be visited 87 times by inspection and enforcement officials, and accumulated 276 incidents of non-compliance, all the while continuing to operate.¹⁰⁵

The type and regulation (or lack thereof) of child care can therefore have a substantial impact on quality. Low quality and/or unregulated child care can, in turn, undermine the other shared principles of QUAD, namely those surrounding accessibility and child development.

The Liberal ELCC agreements offer more structure to, and perhaps allow an expansion of, the existing “patchwork” of child education and care services available in Canada. They do not, however, constitute a genuine or sufficient commitment to ensuring that the reproductive needs of all of Canada’s children and their mothers are met. Indeed, this lack of commitment is definitively stated in the ELCC agreements under the section on funding: “Parliament of Canada approval is required before federal funding is available and may be disbursed.”¹⁰⁶ This means that as governments and priorities change, as they recently have, funding for child education and care could easily be sacrificed. Indeed, the new Conservative government has cut Liberal-proposed child care funding by almost 80 per cent since coming to power! Child education and care must be regarded as a public investment on par with investments in health care and education since each of these areas promotes Canada’s competitiveness and productivity, while combating inequality and maintaining economic stability. Just as spending on health care and education continues to be a priority for both levels of government, so should spending on child education and care.

In fact, the funding formula proposed in the ELCC agreements indirectly ensures more funding for health care, education, and/or any other initiative the provinces choose to invest in, whether related to the care and developmental needs of children or not. The provinces already receive money for child education and care through the no-strings-

attached Canada Social Transfer (CST) (in 2004 the CHST was divided into the Canada Health Transfer and the Canada Social Transfer). The ELCC funding promised in these bilateral agreements frees up the CST for spending in other areas that could be completely unrelated to children's social reproduction. For example, from 2005 to 2010, under the Canada-Manitoba ELCC agreement, the province would receive \$233.6-million in federal funding, with only \$176-million earmarked specifically for child education and care (75 per cent of total funds). This 25-75/CST-ELCC funding arrangement is included in each of the Liberal ELCC agreements. In this way, then, the federal investment in child education and care can be higher than what the province actually invests in this essential service. Moreover, the province decides what should and should not be funded, which perpetuates the "patchwork" nature of child education and care systems in Canada. As a consequence, not all children and parents living in Canada are treated equally and some will receive better or worse care depending on the province in which they live.

Not unlike the NCB, then, the ELCC agreements represent another "back door" policy that siphons some of the money previously removed by the CHST back into provincial coffers (via the CST), thereby alleviating intergovernmental conflict over the fiscal imbalance. While the provincial and federal governments, as well as the commercial child care sector, are guaranteed to benefit from the Liberal proposal, it is unclear as to whether Canada's children and their employed mothers will receive any substantive benefits. Moreover, the failure of the Liberal ELCC agreements to guarantee that the reproductive needs of the current and future workforce are met will do nothing to ensure Canada's competitiveness and productivity in the long-term.

Despite its inadequacy, the Liberal proposal is the closest the Canadian capitalist state has ever come to establishing a “national” child education and care strategy. However, whether the Liberal proposal, or some version of it, will ever come to fruition is not known. The new Conservative minority government has not honoured the ELCC agreements, and has instead implemented a much less expensive and less interventionist “Choice in Child Care Allowance.” Conservative opposition to the Liberal proposal is perhaps not surprising given the party’s more neo- than inclusive liberal leanings. The Conservatives oppose a public child care system, because it is, by definition, monitored by public servants, and neo-liberals eschew government bureaucracy.¹⁰⁷ The fact that, under the Liberal proposal, both the non-profit and commercial child care sectors would be eligible for public financing mandates the expansion of the bureaucracy, which the Conservative government ardently opposes. The “Choice in Child Care Allowance,” alternatively, would not necessarily require the creation of a new bureaucracy for its administration, but could be included under the auspices of the already existing NCB infrastructure.

The Choice in Child Care Allowance reflects the Conservative government’s adoption of a more watered down version of Liberal-style social investment as opposed to a complete return to the classic neo-liberalism practiced by both parties in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Conservative child care allowance is a “social investment” in that the government is spending, albeit in a very limited way, in areas deemed likely to deliver the return of enhancing Canada’s productivity and competitiveness. All families in Canada with children under the age of six, regardless of their income, are entitled to this benefit. In contrast to the Liberal ELCC agreements, then, the Conservative proposal

can be considered a “universal” (although marginal) social benefit in the traditional sense of the word, not unlike the family allowances program initiated in the Keynesian period. The difference between these two initiatives, however, is that the Conservative child care allowance combines universality with selectivity by targeting families with pre-school age children. The allowance constitutes a response to economic pressure to invest in early child education and care that avoids establishing an actual child care system. Keynesian family allowances, in contrast, were paid well into children’s teenage years, up to the age of 16, and were intended, in part, to recognize and underwrite the costs of raising children. The Conservatives current focus on “children” and not “youth” resonates with the social investment rhetoric of spending only in those areas where it will pay off the most, as opposed to reinforcing the Keynesian notion of social welfare, including early learning and child care, as a right of Canadian citizenship.

The Conservative proposal is not premised on the QUAD principles, and is instead focused on expanding the private delivery of child education and care via the family (read women), and through “partnerships” with industry and the voluntary sector. The Conservative proposal includes a \$1,200 annual allowance for each child under six, to be taxable in the hands of the spouse with the lower income, and \$250-million in tax credits to employers and non-profit groups who create child care spaces.¹⁰⁸ The intended, though far from guaranteed, outcome of these partnerships is the creation of 125,000 new child care spaces over five years.¹⁰⁹ Child care advocates opposing the Conservative plan point out that a similar scheme of tax breaks offered by provincial governments in Ontario and New Brunswick drew little response from the business community.¹¹⁰ In fact, numerous employer organizations, such as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, have

said tax incentives likely will not be enough to convince companies to set up prohibitively costly child care centres in the workplace, particularly when 75 per cent of businesses in Canada have fewer than five workers.¹¹¹ Thus, while parents may have a child care allowance, there is great uncertainty as to whether there will be any child care spaces available for purchase under the Conservative plan.

Another central, and perhaps obvious, shortcoming of the Conservative proposal is the insufficient income, and therefore insufficient “choice”, it provides families in need of reliable, affordable, quality child care. As stated earlier, the annual cost of a child care space ranges from \$5,000 to \$12,000, which means that before tax, the \$1,200 allowance would cover only ten to 25 per cent of child care costs. Because the \$1,200 allowance constitutes taxable income, its true value would be considerably less when reductions in federal and provincial/territorial income-tested benefits and increases in taxes are factored in.¹¹² For example, a single mother earning the low income of \$30,000 would receive an allowance worth only \$607,¹¹³ or about half of the Conservative allowance. A dual-income family earning the same annual salary would receive the substantially lower amount of \$460.¹¹⁴ The one-earner family, in comparison, would see the most benefit from the allowance and would receive \$673.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, as income levels increase, so does the amount of the allowance, which means that families earning \$100,000, particularly one-earner families, collect a more generous allowance. One-earner, two-earner, and lone-parent families earning \$100,000 would collect \$1,032, \$778, and \$655 respectively.¹¹⁶

The Conservative child benefit therefore favours a particular type of family (one-earner) and a particular income bracket (higher income). This focus on supporting one-

earner families reflects the neo-conservative desire to reduce readily accessible child care services as a means of forcing women back into traditional relationships of dependence with husbands/men.¹¹⁷ This would, in turn, reduce women's dependency on the state (for support services as well as training and employment) and free them up for a myriad of voluntary positions that provide alternatives to government supported services, such as child and eldercare.¹¹⁸ The success of the Conservative's reproductive strategy is therefore contingent on a return to the traditional male-breadwinner/female-homemaker family that characterized reproductive strategies during the Keynesian period. Since the low-wage economy demands that the majority of Canadian families earn two incomes in order to stay out of poverty, the Conservative proposal can only be assessed as being completely out of touch with reality.

The Conservative Choice in Child Care Allowance provides insufficient support for women's unpaid care work in the family, and it does nothing to ensure the creation of the quality child care spaces that would enable women's full employment. More than two-thirds of Canadian women in the workforce have a child under age six,¹¹⁹ and are therefore in desperate need for child care they can both afford and depend on if they are to balance their paid work and unpaid child care responsibilities. Many of these women will have to leave their paid employment to care for their children unless more child care spaces are created.¹²⁰ This is already happening in Alberta and British Columbia, where women are pulling out of the labour force in record numbers, in part as a consequence of unaffordable and/or unavailable day care services.¹²¹ Forcing women to leave paid employment because they cannot afford child care directly undermines women's equality and autonomy, and reinforces patriarchal relations of reproduction. It is clear, then, that

there is no real “choice” in child care under the Conservative plan when there are no child care spaces to choose from, leaving some women with no option but to return to the home to provide their own child care.

Moreover, the Conservative proposal does nothing to advance and secure Canada’s long-term competitiveness and productivity because it does nothing to enhance early learning and care services for children, the future workforce. The Conservative proposal does offer some benefits, but not to the children and women who need this support the most. As assessed by Battle:

Because the proposed Child Care Allowance would be taxable (in the hands of the lower income parent or the single parent), the provinces and territories would enjoy some revenue gains for two reasons. First, their expenditures on income-tested refundable credits and child benefits would decline. Second, they would collect more income tax and, in the case of Ontario and Alberta, more health premiums. In effect, the proposed Child Care Allowance would amount to a no-strings-attached transfer to the provinces and territories ... The federal government also would see some savings for the same reasons.¹²²

In this way, then, the Conservative proposal, like the Liberal plan, indirectly siphons funds back to the provinces/territories, albeit it in an extremely limited amount and certainly not enough to alleviate the fiscal imbalance.

A comprehensive, high quality system of child education and care that is available to all families who wish to use it is vitally important to the future health and stability of the Canadian economy and society in general. Reliable, affordable, quality child care is key to ensuring that the productivity levels of parents currently engaged in paid employment remain competitive. A publicly regulated and subsidized child care system would also serve as a collective acknowledgement of the value of women’s reproductive labour to society, which would, in turn advance gender equality. However, the Canadian capitalist

state continues to prioritize the short-term demands of production (that is, minimal taxation and social spending) over the short- and long-term reproductive needs of workers and their families. It is ironic that the long-term impact of this misguided approach threatens to undermine the competitiveness and productivity the Canadian capitalist state is mandated to advance and protect.

It is not just children and parents, however, who are suffering from the state's mismanagement of the production-reproduction conflict. In addition, the growth of other dependent populations, namely those requiring long-term and palliative care, puts further strain on the reproductive resources of the Canadian capitalist state. The state is naturally looking to women, who already predominate among those providing this type of care,¹²³ to continue in this role and contain state reproductive expenditures. Rather than providing a direct allowance or salary to these women as recognition of the value of their care work and compensation for their lost earnings, the Canadian capitalist state has opted to provide job protection to only those caregivers who are EI-eligible. Since only a minority of women who provide unpaid long-term and palliative care are eligible for EI, the majority of informal caregivers are excluded from entitlement to this "compassionate" leave benefit. In the next section, the implications of this policy, in the context of gender equality and maintaining Canada's competitiveness, will be analyzed.

The EI Compassionate Care Benefit

While child care has remained a central reproductive concern throughout the Keynesian, neo-liberal, and social investment periods, care for the terminally ill only recently began to be addressed by the Canadian capitalist state. Since the early to mid-1990s the governments of OECD countries have been confronting a long-term and palliative care

crisis that has seen government expenditures on health care and other social supports skyrocket. Technological advances have meant that people are living longer – by 2040 the share of older persons in the population will average 25.6 per cent over 30 countries, and 24.6 per cent in Canada (up from 12.5 per cent in 2000).¹²⁴ Promoting home care as an alternative to more costly institutional care, and providing greater support to informal, unpaid caregivers, the majority of whom are women, has been a key element of many capitalist nations' reproductive strategies. These countries offer informal caregivers a combination of direct benefits (including cash allowances as well as respite services) and indirect benefits (including pension and/or tax credits, and care leave from paid employment).¹²⁵ Canada, however, has been a long-term-and-palliative-care laggard in comparison, and continues to offer only indirect benefits, namely tax credits and the recently introduced EI Compassionate Care benefit (CCB).

According to a report commissioned by Health Canada, as of 2002, almost one million individuals across Canada were providing care to a family member suffering from a physical or mental disability, or who was chronically ill or frail.¹²⁶ The majority of these caregivers (77 per cent) were women, and almost half of these women were engaged in either full- or part-time employment.¹²⁷ The employment situation of many of these women had been affected by their caregiving responsibilities: some had to quit their job or take early retirement, and many had to change their role at work or their work schedule.¹²⁸ Many women stated that their emotional and physical, as well as financial, health had suffered as a consequence of having to balance their paid work and their informal care work.¹²⁹ Most found that their unpaid caregiving had been disruptive to their paid work, and were finding it difficult to balance their employment and caregiving

responsibilities.¹³⁰ In 2004, the Canadian capitalist state implemented a program – the Compassionate Care Benefit – intended to assist informal caregivers with balancing these paid and unpaid work responsibilities.

The origins of the CCB can be traced to 1994 when a series of court decisions in Canada established the right of persons to make some decisions regarding their own medical treatment with respect to end-of-life care.¹³¹ Public debates on the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia prompted the Canadian Medical Association to publish a series of five papers “to present a physician perspective on these issues to patients, other health professionals, public policy officials and academics.”¹³² This combination of popular debate and lobbying prompted the Senate of Canada to investigate the quality and substance of end-of-life care in the country. In 1995 the Special Senate Committee on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide released its report – *Of Life and Death – Final Report* – in which it briefly mentioned the need for support for informal caregivers.¹³³ Discovering that little progress had been made on its 1995 recommendations, in 2000 the Senate produced a follow-up progress report – *Quality End-of-Life Care: The Right of Every Canadian*. In this report, the Senate recommended that the federal government assert leadership in developing a national end-of-life care strategy, and once again identified support for informal family caregivers as an essential part this strategy.¹³⁴

From 2000 on, a broad cross-section of stakeholders – including health, caregiver, seniors’, women’s, labour, child advocacy, business, voluntary and religious organizations – have consistently lobbied for a comprehensive policy response to this issue. Much of this lobbying effort has taken the form of submissions to two government commissions mandated to make recommendations on the future sustainability of

Canada's public health care system. In 2002, reports from the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (The Romanow Report) and the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (The Kirby Report) made specific recommendations regarding support for informal family caregivers. The Romanow Report made the following recommendation: "Human Resources Development Canada, in conjunction with Health Canada should be directed to develop proposals to provide direct support to informal caregivers to allow them to spend time away from work to provide necessary home care assistance at critical times."¹³⁵ The Kirby Report went one step further and made the following, more specific recommendation that: "The federal government examine the feasibility of allowing Employment Insurance benefits to be provided for a period of six weeks to employed Canadians who choose to take leave to provide palliative care services to a dying relative at home."¹³⁶

It is important to note that both the Romanow and Kirby recommendations are focused on enabling informal caregivers (women) to maintain their paid workforce attachment; acknowledging the intrinsic value of this essential work and elevating the status and standard of living of those who provide it – that is, women – is not a stated or implied objective of either report, or, more to the point, of the state that commissioned these studies. Neither report recommends providing payment for care work, which is estimated to save the public system over \$5-billion per year, even though informal caregivers are performing an amount of labour equivalent to that of over 276,000 full-time employees.¹³⁷ Instead, compassionate leave is presented as an appropriate and cost-effective policy that helps *employed* caregivers balance their work-work responsibilities at the same time as containing state health care expenditures. Caregivers without paid

workforce attachment, in contrast, have no access to a commensurate reproductive subsidy for their unpaid efforts.

On January 6, 2004, the federal government acted on the Romanow and Kirby recommendations and announced the CCB would be available to informal family caregivers eligible to collect EI. As asserted by then-Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD), Joe Volpe: “The Government of Canada believes that Canadians should not have to choose between their job and caring for their family during a serious medical crisis. The Compassionate Care benefit will allow eligible Canadians to deal with these serious family issues.”¹³⁸ A total of eight weeks of leave (six with pay) is available to those EI-eligible workers who must be absent from work to provide care or support to a child, parent, spouse or common-law partner who is seriously, and possibly terminally, ill.¹³⁹ To collect the benefit, a medical certificate from a physician is required that indicates “that the ill family member has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks (six months) and that the ill family member requires the care or support of one or more family members.”¹⁴⁰ In practice, compassionate care benefits are not awarded unless a physician attests that the odds are against the family member’s recovery.¹⁴¹

The CCB is a very narrowly focused labour market policy intended to provide income support and job protection to informal family caregivers with significant attachment to the paid workforce. It is not designed to ensure that all caregivers have sufficient resources, training, and support to perform the caring function, and it is not concerned in any way with the needs of the person receiving care. Because the CCB is

embedded in the EI program a significant number of informal caregivers will not have access to this limited support. As assessed by the Health Council of Canada:

This ineligible group includes the unemployed, ... self-employed, ... and part-time, temporary, contract or seasonal employees with insufficient working hours to qualify for the benefit. A long-standing criticism of the program is that it fails to alleviate the economic stress of women who constitute a large majority of caregivers, and who disproportionately fall within the above groups. This criticism is at least partially confirmed by the post implementation statistic indicating that the vast majority of Compassionate Care Benefit claimants are women (71 per cent).¹⁴²

There are no other supports in place, save tax benefits, for the majority of women providing informal long-term and palliative care that are not eligible for the CCB. Their reproductive needs, as well as those of their dependents, continue to be ignored, undermining the equality and autonomy of individuals on both sides of the caring relationship.

Another key criticism of the CCB is the length of the benefits period. According to the Health Council of Canada, stakeholders and critics consistently observe that the benefit period is too short, and that it does not sufficiently recognize the unpredictability of the dying process.¹⁴³ Stakeholders and critics alike argue that a longer benefit period of 16 weeks (including a two-week waiting period) to be taken within a 26-week period would be a more reasonable time frame.¹⁴⁴ The Canadian capitalist state has not yet acknowledged this criticism, however, or made any efforts to change this aspect of the policy.

A third central shortcoming of the CCB is its restrictions on the types of family members eligible to receive the benefit. Those responsible for caring for their siblings or extended family members, whether eligible to collect EI or not, are excluded from this

benefit. Friends and neighbours who provide informal care are also ineligible for the CCB. In 2005, the federal government announced it would broaden access to the CCB by easing restrictions on the types of family members eligible and by addressing the prohibition against non-family members.¹⁴⁵ These changes have yet to be formalized however.¹⁴⁶

Another deficiency of the program is that the small minority of informal caregivers who are eligible for the CCB are unaware of the program's existence. This lack of awareness has been attributed to the federal government's failure to implement a clear social marketing strategy to target the public and the health care community on a widespread basis.¹⁴⁷ While the government projected there would be 270,000 eligible applicants for compassionate care benefits every year, only 3,175 Canadians applied for the benefit in the first six months of the program, and of these, 20 per cent were denied benefits.¹⁴⁸ The Canadian state has not acted on recommendations that it organize a public education program in cooperation with the provinces/territories and the hospice palliative care community to raise public awareness about the CCB.¹⁴⁹

The CCB is therefore a very exclusive policy that is restricted to a small number of informal caregivers consisting of immediate family members who not only must be eligible for EI but who must also have been informed about the existence of this policy. This select group of caregivers are entitled to only 55 per cent of their regular earnings for six weeks out of the eight-week period that they are allowed to be on leave from work to care for a dying child or other relative. This is the extent of the Canadian capitalist state's support for informal caregivers, the majority of whom are not even eligible for this benefit and may not substantially benefit from care-related tax credits. Women, in their

capacity as informal caregivers, thus remain without any substantive financial or social support from the Canadian capitalist state to assist them in meeting their own care needs or the needs of their sick or dying dependents. Neither of these outcomes does much to promote the social cohesion key to the long-term stability and competitiveness of the Canadian capitalist enterprise.

The fact that women and their dependents are not enjoying any real benefit from the CCB raises questions regarding its purpose(s). The Canadian capitalist state has chosen to focus its support on accommodating a better work-life balance for informal caregivers via compassionate leave as opposed to developing a comprehensive, and inevitably costly, support system for quality end-of-life care. This focus on compassionate leave, and not care per se, reflects the state's continued emphasis on reinforcing the value of paid work, or promoting employability, to enable citizens (read women) to meet their own reproductive needs. Care is not important or valuable in and of itself; the barrier unpaid caregiving presents to the health and productivity levels of a minority of valued workers is of paramount concern to capitalists and the state however.

Indeed, the decision to provide compassionate leave might be explained by the substantial financial costs both the capitalist state and employers incur when women who combine paid employment with unpaid caregiving suffer from role overload and caregiver strain. As previously mentioned, women who provide informal long-term or palliative care in addition to their paid work suffer physically, emotionally, and financially. High levels of work-life, or rather, in women's case, work-work conflict, have a negative impact on employers' bottom line and increase demands on Canada's health care system, resulting in billions of dollars in lost productivity and employer and

state health care expenditures.¹⁵⁰ A 2004 report commissioned by the Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that if high levels of role overload and caregiver strain could be eliminated, it would reduce health care costs by a third.¹⁵¹ It could be that the CCB is intended to help alleviate these costs.

Whatever intentions the Canadian capitalist state may have had, the CCB is so ineffective as a labour market policy it is unlikely that the state or employers will see any real short- or long-term benefits from this initiative. Canada's global competitiveness hinges on whether its workers, especially its women workers, receive adequate support from the state and/or employers to achieve a healthy balance between their paid employment and unpaid caregiving. A happy, healthy workforce is a productive workforce, and a well cared for population is a stable population. Productivity and stability, in turn, protect and promote Canada's position in the globalized political economy. The CCB does not facilitate or support this necessary work-life/-work balance, and in fact "... adds up to a program that, by almost any standard, has been an abject failure."¹⁵² The CCB will not alleviate the growing unpaid reproductive burden imposed on women as the state and capitalists continue their retreat from responsibility for the costs of social reproduction. As a consequence, Canada's long-term economic prospects remain insecure. The CCB is therefore another wasted "social investment" that serves neither the female worker-caregiver nor the capitalist.

Inclusive Liberalism in Canada: Crisis Solved?

After almost a decade of "inclusive" liberalism, the Canadian capitalist state has yet to begin to substantively rectify the widespread deprivation and social unrest it helped facilitate during its neo-liberal phase. "Social investments" in children, such as the NCB

and the two proposed national child care plans, are focused on alleviating the fiscal imbalance, promoting parent (mother's) employability, and re-instituting the traditional nuclear family. Each of these objectives constitute indirect, and therefore insufficient, support for social reproduction. Targeting the fiscal imbalance through the back door of "social" policies provides needed resources to the provinces/territories to support reproduction, all while maintaining the appearance of federal fiscal austerity. Promoting parent (mothers') employability encourages families (women) to be self-reliant so the state does not have to provide greater public resources to subsidize reproductive costs. Finally, rewarding one-earner families promotes a return to the now-antiquated reproductive strategy used during the Keynesian period whereby women provide unpaid reproductive labour within families and communities, effectively privatizing reproductive costs.

Child "care-" related policies in the social investment period provide no direct or substantive support for social reproduction. These policies, whether proposed or already implemented, do nothing to directly reduce child (and women's) poverty; support a healthy work-life balance for women providing informal child and/or long-term or palliative care; or ensure quality early learning and care for children as the future workforce. The short- and long-term economic impact of this negligence is a less productive, less competitive, unstable economy and society. The social impact is the further denigration of women's unpaid, yet invaluable, reproductive contributions, and the perpetuation of gender inequality.

"Social investments" in supports for end-of-life care – that is, the CCB – are designed to provide job protection and income support to informal caregivers, the

majority of whom are women. While care receivers do not, in and of themselves, constitute a “good” investment, the skilled women workers who moonlight as their unpaid caregivers do. Not investing in supports for these women worker-caregivers results in increased state and employer expenditures on health care as well as billions of dollars in lost productivity. The CCB, however, as a highly inaccessible and restrictive policy that provides minimal income support over a brief period, provides little if any assistance to women seeking a better work-work balance. Consequently, role overload and caregiver strain continue to undermine these women’s productivity and compromise the quality of informal end-of-life care. Both of these outcomes can create and perpetuate feelings of social exclusion.

It is evident that the Canadian capitalist state has done little to improve the quality of life of those most at “risk” for social exclusion: children and their poor and low-to-middle income parents, and the terminally ill and their informal caregivers. Women, because of their disproportionate responsibility for unpaid reproductive labour, constitute a large part of this excluded group and have realized few improvements to their standard of living during the social investment period. The Canadian capitalist state has therefore failed to re-establish and maintain the social cohesion necessary to ensure Canada’s current and future productivity and global competitiveness. In other words, the Canadian capitalist state is failing to manage the critical balance between capitalist production and social reproduction, leaving an inherently insecure mode of production that much more vulnerable to popular challenge.

If it is to survive, the capitalist enterprise as a whole must become more attentive to effectively compensating for the insecurity inherent to the global free market system. If it

continues on its current course, the demand for healthy, skilled, productive workers will eventually be greater than the actual supply, and capitalist production will inevitably suffer if not completely halt. The future of the Canadian capitalist enterprise is thus becoming more and more uncertain, yet even though the state is aware of this impending crisis and is actively responding to it, its reproductive strategy has done more to ensure rather than prevent capitalism's demise. The failure of the Canadian capitalist state to mediate production and reproduction may present an opportunity, then, to those pursuing substantive social justice on behalf of women, children, and other marginalized groups who suffer the most from the deprivation inflicted under capitalism.

In the next chapter, this analysis will conclude with an evaluation of the way the Canadian capitalist state has conceptualized care over three periods of transformation. The barriers women's equality-seeking groups must overcome if they are to challenge this conceptualization and improve women's standard of living will be examined. Finally, these concluding remarks will propose the undertaking of additional studies on reproduction-related instability that extend this study beyond the Canadian context and identify ways to incorporate the ideas articulated herein into a successful oppositional strategy.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In a Darwinian sense, any society can be evaluated by its success in reproducing itself. Successful communities reproduce and flourish; unsuccessful ones fall by the wayside.¹

The success of the Canadian community rests on its ability to reproduce itself. Capitalism, as a fundamentally oppressive and unstable mode of production, obstructs Canada's reproductive potential. Throughout its history, the Canadian capitalist state has consistently chosen to mediate this conflict by exploiting the gender division of labour that assigns responsibility for reproductive labour, most of which is unpaid, to women, at the expense of women's autonomy and equality. Care, and those responsible for its provision (women), has not been regarded by the state as an important or valuable social and economic activity worthy of the same level of valorization accorded to paid work. Rather, care has been presented as an unfortunate but necessary cost of doing business, a cost, it should be noted, that has been minimized for capitalists and offloaded by the Canadian capitalist state onto individuals and the family at almost every possible turn. Instead of developing policies that recognize collective responsibility for care, the Canadian capitalist state has implemented a reproductive strategy that "works" only if women, as the majority of unpaid caregivers, continue in this role. This unbalanced approach to mediating an inherently volatile system raises questions about the future sustainability of the Canadian community.

Women have actively resisted this designation by making demands on the Canadian capitalist state for increased public subsidization and support of social reproduction. These demands, diluted and altered by the needs of industry, contributed to the establishment of the Keynesian welfare state in the early twentieth century, and a series

of “care-” related policies thereafter. However, women continued to shoulder a disproportionate share of unpaid reproductive labour during this period, and therefore continued to be in a position of political, economic, and social disadvantage. From the neo-liberal period up to and including the current era of social investment, the Canadian capitalist state has been retreating from its reproductive responsibilities and allowing and enabling capitalists to do the same. This has increased the reproductive burden on women, who represent a substantial part of the paid workforce as well as the unpaid voluntary sector that also subsidizes social reproduction. Consequently, women, who provide the majority of the unpaid labour needed to fuel the capitalist machine and reproduce the Canadian community, are increasingly at risk for role overload and caregiver strain. Both of these conditions threaten to incapacitate the unpaid reproductive workforce critical to the Canadian capitalist state’s mediation strategy, as well as a substantial part of the paid workforce vital to capitalist production.

The Canadian capitalist enterprise is therefore very unstable, and “care-” related policies implemented and altered over three periods of state transformation have done little to neutralize this instability. Throughout these periods of change, the production-reproduction conflict has gone from crisis to mediation under Keynesianism and back to crisis under neo-liberalism. In the current context of social investment, this crisis continues to go unchecked and unchallenged by the Canadian capitalist state, which, even though it has co-opted the language of care in its various “care-” related policies, has yet to “walk the talk” and begin to effectively address the reproductive needs of the collective. The Keynesian period fostered the most state support for social reproduction compared to the neo-liberal and social investment phases of the Canadian capitalist state.

However, this support hinged on the institutionalization of the male-breadwinner/female-homemaker family model, which ensured that women would continue to subsidize reproduction through their unpaid labour. The neo-liberal era facilitated the large-scale retreat of the Canadian capitalist state from its reproductive responsibilities, thereby increasing women's reproductive workload at the same time as removing the public supports in place to sustain women in this role. The ensuing crisis in reproduction would only begin to be addressed, however, in this current, social investment phase of the Canadian capitalist state.

While the state has increased its subsidization of social reproduction in the social investment period, it has done so by re-investing only part of the financing that was removed by the CHST in the neo-liberal era. Indeed, the Canadian capitalist state's "investment" does not come close to matching the insufficient funding provided during its most generous, Keynesian phase. Under the recently elected, more classic neo-liberal Conservative government, it is even less likely that Keynesian-level financing will be reinstated any time in the near future. This shift to a more classic form of neo-liberalism reflects the persistence of the view that the reproductive costs of production must be contained if Canada is to remain competitive in the globalized political economy. As capitalism advances, however, the costs of social reproduction increase, placing the Canadian capitalist state, whether neo- or inclusive liberal, in the unenviable, yet unavoidable, position of having to limit spending on, at the same time as enhancing support for, social reproduction. The inability of the Canadian capitalist state to strike an effective balance between these contradictory demands, as evidenced by its inadequate

“care-”related policies, highlights a vulnerability that might be taken advantage of by those pursuing substantive social justice.

This review of the history of the production-reproduction conflict in Canada has demonstrated that capitalism is an inherently weak system that requires numerous supports from numerous sources if it is to persevere. Because it is a fundamentally volatile mode of production, the opportunity to antagonize and undermine capitalism will always exist. However, just because instability is inevitable does not mean that an effective, collective resistance will develop and seize this opportunity. The current, and growing, crisis in care can be a critical juncture to bring about revolutionary change, but only if women’s and other social justice groups choose to make it a critical juncture. The following overview outlines the challenges women’s equality-seeking groups and other popular sector associations are confronting as they attempt to enforce the Canadian capitalist state’s reproductive obligations to its citizenry, and, in the process, challenge global capitalism.

From Crisis to Action: Mobilizing for Care

Since the neo-liberal period, those advocating on women’s behalf have been denied a voice in the policy-making process and have seen their funding substantially reduced by the Canadian capitalist state and their legitimacy as political actors challenged. Up to this point, the women’s movement, which encompasses many movements,² was considered a legitimate lobby group that was entitled to consultation in the policy-making process.³ Indeed, during the first round of constitutional talks that led to the Constitutional Act of 1982, leading women’s movement representatives lobbied for and achieved the inclusion of equality rights and anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution’s Charter of

Rights and Freedoms.⁴ As discussed in previous chapters, the perspectives of women's equality-seeking groups on "women's issues" such as the status of women and child care were often solicited, or at least welcomed, by the Canadian state. By the late 1980s, however, as neo-liberalism became firmly entrenched at the state level, the legitimacy of collective action by women's equality-seeking groups and other social justice organizations would be subject to increasing attacks.⁵

Once the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and other women's organizations challenged the neo-liberal, so-called "Tory Agenda" and campaigned against the Free Trade Agreement and the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Constitutional Accords, the relationship between the women's movement and the state soured. According to Brodie:

Organized groups such as NAC were forced to shift their public presence from a recognized lobby group with special access to federal decision-makers to part of a broad-based coalition, which was fundamentally opposed to the new development strategy and the emerging state form. This shift was not without immediate political consequences ... NAC was accused of being part of a self-interested coalition of special interests groups which "threatened Canadian consensus," indeed, "were enemies of Canada."⁶

The labelling of feminist organizations as "special interests" implies that the women's movement has a singular or "special" focus, which, in turn, calls into question these women's democratic, or representational, credentials.⁷ Under neo-liberalism (as well as inclusive liberalism), responsibility has been placed on the individual to diagnose the cause and solution for his or her own problems,⁸ be it occupational segregation based on gender or race, poverty, unemployment, low-wage work, or lack of affordable, high quality, regulated child care spaces. As assessed by Smith: "The individual

consumer/client/citizen has become the privileged political actor”⁹ at the expense of social movements pursuing a better standard of living for all Canadians, especially those most marginalized.

The women’s, Aboriginal, and gay/lesbian/bi-sexual/transgender movements have been labelled special interests, while groups like the National Taxpayers Association or the National Citizens’ Coalition, which reinforce the “privileged position of business,” are regarded as legitimate and democratic representatives of the common good.¹⁰ According to Dobrowolsky: “‘Special interest’ terminology has been used to delegitimize the women’s movement’s representational claims. Indeed, the ‘special interest’ label has been invoked to undermine the activism of women.”¹¹ However, she continues:

Feminists espouse multiple goals for social, political, economic and cultural transformation. They mobilize on the basis of collective identities that include gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, language, age and ability, among others. Women’s groups also work alongside and, at times, in coalition with other social movements to challenge oppressive practices and bring about change. As a result, the women’s movement has to be adaptive and flexible. These facts and realities belie claims of a singular focus or a narrow interest.¹²

Women, whether in support of equality (NAC) or against it (R.E.A.L (Realistic Equal Active for Life) Women), comprise over 50 per cent of the population, and are therefore clearly not, on the basis of numbers alone, a “special interest.”

Despite this reality, the means and methods of influence for “special interest” groups and social movements have been altered in ways that have heightened the legitimacy of business groups while undermining certain social movements, such as the women’s movement.¹³ Smith contends: “The core political institutions of the Canadian state are in the midst of their own restructuring process, one that will make a less democratic Canada.

It will be more difficult than ever for social movements and groups that represent the diverse interests of Canadians to make their voices heard.”¹⁴ The Canadian capitalist state has actively worked to make it more difficult for the women’s movement to be heard by dismantling the “women’s state” in order to silence its critics. NAC’s funding has been cut by two-thirds, the federal Women’s Program had its funding reduced by 40 per cent when it was consolidated with Status of Women Canada, and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was shut down completely.

In addition to these attacks on the women’s state, the Canadian capitalist state also appears to have completely eliminated the use of the equality discourse when holding public consultations on proposed policies and in actual policy development. Without the equality discourse, women’s equality-seeking groups must find new ways to challenge the redefinition, or reassertion, of men’s and women’s social rights and responsibilities that is currently taking place in the social investment period. Whereas women’s citizenship is being recombined to reflect their mother/worker/volunteer obligations, men’s citizenship obligations remain primarily connected to their participation in paid employment. In other words, men are allowed to retain their Keynesian designation as citizen-worker in the social investment period as there is no explicit emphasis on their duties as citizen-fathers/-volunteers. Finding ways to mobilize against this continuing inequality without the equality discourse will be a difficult, but crucial, barrier for the women’s movement in Canada to overcome.

Despite the Canadian capitalist state’s attempts to de-legitimize, bankrupt, and ostracize the women’s movement, NAC, and women’s equality-seeking groups who depend on funding from the Women’s Program, continue to operate through private

donations. These funding issues have necessitated a focus on fundraising, however, and this has translated into less time for advocacy and service delivery.¹⁵ These financial and political barriers aside, women's equality-seeking groups have not relented in their determination to challenge women's exploitation and oppression under capitalism. Indeed, a number of broad-based and dynamic coalitions have formed among women, and between women's groups, human rights organizations, and other social justice groups, that are mobilizing enforce the Canadian state's reproductive responsibilities. While many of these oppositional coalitions are not "feminist" per se, women are strongly represented in positions of leadership and form a large part of the membership of these groups. Women are therefore leading the charge against the Canadian capitalist enterprise.

For example, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), in coalition with women's, labour and social justice groups, "and Canadians from all walks of life,"¹⁶ has launched the pan-Canadian "Code Blue for Child Care" campaign. Code Blue has mobilized to implement and build upon the Liberal ELCC agreements, and to pressure for income support policies for families that are separate from, as opposed to being a substitute for, high quality early learning and child care programs.¹⁷ Code Blue is mandated to "work with provincial/territorial governments; with Parliamentarians in all regions; with local governments; with coalition partners, with families and with the child care community to save the fledgling child care system."¹⁸ In addition to circulating petitions and lobbying provincial/territorial and federal representatives, coalition partners have held town hall meetings to raise awareness about the child care issue at the grassroots level.¹⁹ The CCAAC has also commissioned a poll to gauge public support for

bringing back the Liberal ELCC agreements, the results of which show that 50 per cent of Canadians prefer the national child care program proposed by the former Liberal government (compared to 35 per cent for the Conservative allowance).²⁰

While these efforts are important, what is most significant about the Code Blue campaign is the interest and support it appears to have garnered in the mainstream media. According to Smith: "Each advocacy group putting forward its message and every group of protestors that wants to hold a demonstration must fight against media depictions of groups and movements as advocates for special interests or as troublemakers disrupting traffic."²¹ In this instance, however, the mainstream media is not presenting the child care movement as a "special interest"; instead, the media is, for the most part, providing ample opportunity for coalitions like Code Blue to remind the Canadian capitalist state of its reproductive obligations to Canada's children and their parents. It may be that because Code Blue is a pan-Canadian coalition movement comprised of a number of very diverse popular sector groups and organizations, the media does not perceive it as a "special interest," and therefore does not treat it or portray it as such.

The Canadian capitalist state has therefore not succeeded in silencing its detractors, despite all of its efforts, and the global capitalist order is being actively challenged in Canada. Moreover, it is a broad-cross section of popular sector organizations that are coming together to mobilize against the state, including feminists, labour, Aboriginal groups, seniors, child advocates, caregiver associations, religious groups, health care advocates, and anti-poverty groups. These organizations are focused on publicizing the negative social and economic impact of the Canadian capitalist state's policies, particularly on women, who are over-represented among those most marginalized. The

analysis articulated herein highlights one area of unresolved and growing conflict confronting the Canadian capitalist state, and the capitalist system, – that is, care – that might be seized upon by one or more of these coalitions to advance the social justice agenda. These groups need to mobilize around the issue of care, applying the findings of this analysis in policy and public debates in order to win popular support for the greater social, economic, and political valuation of reproductive labour and those primarily responsible for its provision, that is, women.

One form this mobilization might take is a nation-wide “care movement” comprised of paid and unpaid caregivers, feminists, child and anti-poverty advocates, health care professionals, Aboriginal groups, labour organizations, seniors’ groups, religious associations, and other social justice groups. This care movement could focus on promoting the intrinsic social value of care from a diversity of perspectives, highlighting the incompatibility between the demands of global capitalism on one hand and the need and desire for a decent and comparable standard of living for all Canadians on the other. It is precisely this revaluing of social reproduction – economically, socially, and politically – that could bring about capitalism’s demise.

It is likely that resistance to this revaluing process would incorporate the rhetoric used to justify the retrenchment of social programs during the neo-liberal period and the insufficient reinvestment in these initiatives in the current era of social investment: capitalists will take their business elsewhere and leave the nation in ruin unless the Canadian state can minimize the reproductive costs of production for capitalists and make Canada more “business friendly.” A care movement could stress that even if these claims are true (which is debatable) the social costs of capitalism are already too high –

widespread poverty and inequality is not an acceptable price to pay to increase Canada's competitiveness. An alternative mode of production must be sought out to reassert the balance between the interdependent processes of production and reproduction, and to improve all Canadians' quality of life. A care movement could stress that a high standard of living for the majority, and not a high profit margin for the minority that benefit from capitalism, is the only bottom line that counts in the distribution of the nation's resources.

There is no denying that women are exploited and oppressed under capitalism. However, it also cannot be denied that capitalism needs women to continue to provide unpaid reproductive labour if it is to carry on. In other words, women do not need capitalism but capitalism does need women, and this is, ironically, where a substantial part of women's oppositional potential lies. Finding ways to tap into this power and exploit the vulnerability of the Canadian capitalist enterprise should become a top priority for those advocating on behalf of women and other marginalized groups. The possibility of mobilizing around the issue of care at the global level, in coalition with women's equality-seeking groups and other social justice organizations, must also be considered. All capitalist states, be they liberal, social, or corporate democracies, are confronting the challenges posed by globalization, and all have chosen to mediate the conflict between production and reproduction in different ways. It is for women to decide, as the primary providers of reproductive labour, whether these strategies succeed or fail, and whether the global capitalist order continues or not. Mobilizing to advance the recognition of the intrinsic value of care, both to species survival as well as to the survival of global capitalism, and to demand greater support for this essential labour, is in no way the only means by which to advance a particular feminist or social justice agenda. It is, however,

one action that women, in all their diversity, might be able to advance to effect revolutionary social, economic, and political change.

Notes

Chapter 1

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² See Lisa Philipps, "Tax Law and Social Reproduction: The Gender of Fiscal Policy in an Age of Privatization," Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, ed. Brenda Cossman and Judy Fudge (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 41-85.

³ Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," Capital and Class 8 (1979): 7.

⁴ Karl Marx, Capital: Volume 1 (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976) 274-75.

⁵ Frederick Engels, "Introduction," Wage Labour and Capital, Karl Marx. (New York: International Publishers, 1973) 8.

⁶ Valerie Bryson, Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1992) 238.

⁷ Bryson 254.

⁸ Bryson 254.

⁹ Bryson 255-56.

¹⁰ See bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (Boston: South End Press, 1984).

¹¹ Georgina Waylen, "Gender, Feminism and the State: An Overview," Gender, Politics and the State, ed. Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen (London & New York: Routledge, 1998) 5.

¹² Janine Brodie, "Canadian Women, Changing State Forms, and Public Policy," Women and Canadian Public Policy, ed. Janine Brodie (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company Canada, Ltd., 1996) 13.

¹³ Waylen 7.

¹⁴ Nancy Fraser, "Struggle Over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late-Capitalist Political Culture," Women and the Welfare State, ed. Linda Gordon (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990) 199, 211.

¹⁵ Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill, "Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction," Power, Production, and Social Reproduction, ed. Isabella Bakker and Stephen Gill (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 3-4.

¹⁶ See Marx, Capital.

¹⁷ See Karl Marx, The Grundrisse (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

¹⁸ Bakker and Gill 3-4.

¹⁹ Murray Knuttila and Wendee Kubik, State Theories: Classical, Global and Feminist Perspectives (Halifax: Fernwood, 2000) 124.

²⁰ Cecilia M. Benoit, Women, Work and Social Rights: Canada in Historical and Comparative Perspective (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 2000) 28.

²¹ According to Laurel Sefton MacDowell and Ian Radforth, there were years of sharp depression in the first decades of the twentieth century, notably 1907 and 1913-15 (Canadian Working Class History, ed. Laurel Sefton MacDowell and Ian Radforth, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2000) 262). See Desmond Morton, Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement, 4th ed. (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998) 77-90 for a chronicling of the labour disruptions that occurred during this period.

²² Bryan D. Palmer, Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991, 2nd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992) 405.

²³ Sylvia Bashevkin, Welfare Hot Buttons: Women, Work, and Social Policy Reform (Toronto & London: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 8.

²⁴ See Alexandra Dobrowolsky, "Rhetoric Versus Reality: The Figure of the Child and New Labour's Strategic 'Social Investment State,'" Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review 69 (2002): 43-73.

²⁵ See Bashevkin.

Chapter 2

¹ Marx, Capital 718.

² Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," Woman in a Man-Made World: A Socioeconomic Handbook, ed. Nona Glazer and Helen Youngelson Waehrer, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1977) 218, 225.

³ Betsy Warrior, "Housework: Slavery or Labor of Love?," Radical Feminism, ed. Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, and Anita Rapone (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973) 212.

⁴ Wally Secombe, "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism," New Left Review 83 (1974): 10. Also see Jean Gardiner, "Women's Domestic Labour," Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, ed. Zillah Eisenstein (New York & London: Monthly Review Press, 1979) 173-89; Margaret Coulson, et al., "'The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism' – a Critique," New Left Review 89 (1975) 59-71; Jean Gardiner, et al., "Women's Domestic Labour," Inside the Household: From Labour to Care, ed. Susan Himmelweit (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire & London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000) 25-40; Susan Himmelweit and Simon Mohun, "Domestic Labour and Capital," Cambridge Journal of Economics 1.1 (1977) 15-31.

⁵ Benston 224.

⁶ United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report 1995 (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 97.

⁷ William Chandler, "The Value of Housework in Canada, 1992" Canadian Economic Observer, Apr. 1994, ctd. in Kathryn Bezanson, Meg Luxton, and Katherine Side, "Editorial," Atlantis, 28.2 (2004) 2.

⁸ See Hartmann, Jane Humphries, "The Sexual Division of Labor and Social Control: An Interpretation," Review of Radical Political Economics 23.3&4 (1991) 269-96 and Carol Johnson, "Does Capitalism Really Need Patriarchy? Some Old Issues Reconsidered," Women's Studies International Forum 19.3 (1996) 193-202.

⁹ Carole Pateman, The Sexual Contract (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), qtd. in Johnson 195.

¹⁰ Secombe, "The Housewife" 4.

¹¹ Hartmann 8.

¹² Wally Secombe, "Reflections on the Domestic Labour Debate and Prospects for Marxist-Feminist Synthesis," The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism, and Nationalism, ed. Roberta Hamilton and Michele Barrett (Montréal: Book Centre Inc., 1986) 194.

¹³ Marx, Capital 718.

¹⁴ See Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, Inc., 1994) for a comprehensive analysis of women's "double day."

¹⁵ See Marilyn Waring, Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth, 2nd ed. (Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

¹⁶ James Laxer, The Undeclared War: Class Conflict in the Age of Cyber Capitalism (Toronto: Penguin, 1998) 181.

¹⁷ Leah Vosko, "Irregular Workers, New Voluntary Social Exiles: Women and U.I. Reform," Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, ed. Jane Pulkingham and Gordon Ternowetsky (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996) 260.

¹⁸ See Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada, ed. Abigail B. Bakan and Daiva Stasiulis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) for historical and contemporary accounts of this aspect of the division of reproductive labour between women in Canada.

¹⁹ In addition to class, race, ethnicity and citizenship, other key divisions among women include age, ability, and sexuality.

²⁰ Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Introduction," Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy, ed. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003) 9.

²¹ Johnson 199.

²² See Hartmann as an example of a dual-systems theorist.

²³ See Hartmann.

²⁴ See Jane Humphries, "'The Most Free from Objection...': The Sexual Division of Labor and Women in 19th Century England," Journal of Economic History 47.4 (1987) 929-95 and Humphries "The Sexual Division of Labor." Also see Johnson.

²⁵ Johnson 198.

²⁶ Palmer 99.

²⁷ Johnson 199.

²⁸ Johnson 199.

²⁹ Brenda Cossman, "Family Feuds: Neo-Liberal and Neo-Conservative Visions of the Reprivatization Project," Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, ed. Brenda Cossman and Judy Fudge (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 212.

³⁰ Cossman 213.

³¹ Cossman 213.

³² Cossman 213.

³³ Stephen McBride and John Shields, Dismantling a Nation: Canada and the New World Order (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1993) 38.

³⁴ Palmer 121.

³⁵ Neil Bradford, Commissioning Ideas: Canadian National Policy Innovation in Comparative Perspective (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1998) 4-5.

³⁶ Palmer 171. Gregory S. Kealey's overview of printers' use of labour disruptions in their fight for an eight-hour workday provides one example of workers' struggle for autonomy in the workplace, (Workers and Canadian History (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 225-227).

³⁷ Palmer 171. Also see Morton, Working People 77-90 for a more detailed account of the wage-related labour disruptions that occurred in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Canada.

³⁸ Jill Rubery, "Wages and the Labour Market," British Journal of Industrial Relations 35.3 September (1997) 358.

³⁹ Palmer 164. Also see Morton, Working People 102.

⁴⁰ Palmer 167.

⁴¹ Palmer 175.

⁴² Palmer 163.

⁴³ Palmer 163.

⁴⁴ Dating as far back as 1872, the state identified unions as potentially dangerous threats to community stability (Palmer 111.) The real threat to community stability, however, was the exploitative practices of the capitalist class and the unrest this exploitation generated among workers, who, in many cases, were barely able to make ends meet.

⁴⁵ See David Jay Bercuson, Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations, and the General Strike (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), for a more detailed account of the repressive, and at times, lethal, tactics employed by the Canadian state to mediate labour-capital relations.

⁴⁶ Craig Heron and Myer Siemiatycki, "The Great War, the State, and Working-Class Canada," The Workers' Revolt in Canada 1917-1925, ed. Craig Heron (Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 17.

⁴⁷ Miriam Smith, A Civil Society? Collective Actors in Canadian Political Life (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005) 57.

⁴⁸ Heron and Siemiatycki 17.

⁴⁹ Linda Kealey, "Introduction," A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada 1880s-1920s, ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1979) 2.

⁵⁰ Kealey 2.

⁵¹ Kealey 2.

⁵² Jane Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992) 40.

⁵³ According to Seth Koven and Sonya Michel women's movements in Australia and Sweden had little to do with welfare-state development, "Introduction: 'Mother Worlds,'" Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York & London: Routledge, 1993) 7.

⁵⁴ Thelma McCormack, Politics and the Hidden Injuries of Gender: Feminism and the Making of the Welfare State (Ottawa: CRIAW, 1991) 1. Also see Caroline Andrew, "Women and the Welfare State," Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique, 17.4 December (1984) 667-83 for the role women played in establishing the welfare state in Canada.

⁵⁵ Koven and Michel 2.

⁵⁶ Koven and Michel 2.

⁵⁷ McCormack 38.

⁵⁸ Mary Daly and Katherine Rake, Gender and The Welfare State: Care, Work and Welfare in Europe and the USA (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003) 24.

⁵⁹ Judy Fudge and Brenda Cossman, "Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism," Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, ed. Brenda Cossman and Judy Fudge (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 11.

⁶⁰ Daly and Rake 14.

⁶¹ Julia S. O'Connor, et al., States, Markets, Families: Gender, Liberalism and Social Policy in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 12.

⁶² Patricia M. Evans and Gerda R. Wekerle, "The Shifting Terrain of Women's Welfare: Theory, Discourse, and Activism," Women and the Canadian Welfare State: Challenges and Change, ed. Patricia M. Evans and Gerda R. Wekerle (Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 5.

⁶³ Evans and Wekerle 3. Also see McCormack 2.

⁶⁴ Daly and Rake 14.

⁶⁵ Evans and Wekerle 3.

⁶⁶ Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State," The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 188.

⁶⁷ Pateman, "The Patriarchal" 188.

⁶⁸ Pateman, "The Patriarchal" 188.

⁶⁹ See Bashevkin.

⁷⁰ Linda Gordon, "The New Feminist Scholarship on the Welfare State," Women, the State, and Welfare, ed. Linda Gordon (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990) 14.

⁷¹ See Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, "A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Keyword in the US Welfare State," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 19.2 (1994) 309-36.

⁷² Pateman, "The Patriarchal" 190.

⁷³ Pateman, "The Patriarchal" 184.

⁷⁴ Fudge and Cossman 8.

⁷⁵ T. H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," States and Societies, ed. David Held et al. (Oxford: The Open University, 1983) 249.

⁷⁶ Marshall 249.

⁷⁷ Marshall 249.

⁷⁸ Marshall 249.

⁷⁹ See Pateman, "The Patriarchal," Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail B. Bakan, "Negotiating Citizenship: The Case of Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada," Feminist Review 57 (1997) 113-39, Wendy Sarvasy, "Social Citizenship from a Feminist Perspective," Hypatia 12.4 (1997) 54-73, Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," Feminist Review 57 (1997) 4-27.

⁸⁰ Sarvasy 57.

⁸¹ Sarvasy 57.

⁸² Sarvasy 61.

⁸³ Sarvasy 61.

⁸⁴ Barbara Cameron and Lena Gonas, "Women's Response to Economic and Political Integration in Canada and Sweden," Women's Organizing and Public Policy in Canada and Sweden, ed. Linda Briskin and Mona Eliasson (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999) 81.

⁸⁵ See Evans and Wekerle.

⁸⁶ Although the large majority of employed women worked either in total isolation or in workplaces with few other workers, thus inhibiting collective action, women factory workers were unionized and did engage in strike activity in order to secure the means of their reproduction (wages and job security) (Julie White, Sisters and Solidarity: Women and Unions in Canada (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc., 1993) 6, 35.

⁸⁷ White, Sisters in Solidarity 31-32.

⁸⁸ See Suzanne Morton, "Separate Spheres in a Separate World: African-Nova Scotian Women in Late-19th-Century Halifax County," Canadian Women: A Reader, ed. Wendy Mitchinson, et al. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1996) 172-94.

⁸⁹ See Morton, "Separate Spheres."

⁹⁰ Linda Carty, "African Canadian Women and the State: 'Labour only, please,'" "We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up": Essays in African Canadian Women's History, coordinator, Peggy Bristow (Toronto, Buffalo, & London: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 200.

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⁹³ Micheline Dumont, "The Origins of the Women's Movement in Québec," Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States, ed. Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992) 76.

⁹⁴ Micheline Dumont, et al., Quebec Women: A History, translated by Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987) 263.

⁹⁵ Dumont, "The Origins" 85, 80.

⁹⁶ Dumont, "The Origins" 89.

⁹⁷ Mary-Ellen Turpel-Lafond, "Patriarchy and Paternalism: The Legacy of the Canadian State for First Nations Women," Women and the Canadian State, ed. Caroline Andrew and Sanda Rodgers (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) 73.

⁹⁸ Alison Prentice, et al., Canadian Women: A History (Canada: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996) 235.

⁹⁹ See Kim Anderson, A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2000).

¹⁰⁰ Turpel-Lafond 77.

¹⁰¹ Vijay Agnew, Resisting Discrimination: Women From Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean and The Women's Movement in Canada (Toronto, Buffalo, & London: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 28.

¹⁰² Agnew 134.

Chapter 3

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² Stephen McBride and John Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition to Corporate Rule in Canada, 2nd ed. (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997) 36.

³ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 36.

⁴ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 35.

⁵ See John Maynard Keynes, "The End of Laissez-Faire," Essays in Persuasion (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963) and John Maynard Keynes, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (London: Macmillan, 1936).

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⁹ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: Canada 9.

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- ²⁸ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 45.
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- ³⁴ Janine Brodie, Politics on the Margins: Restructuring and the Canadian Women's Movement (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1995) 40.
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⁴¹ Kitchen 222.

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⁴³ Kitchen 228.

⁴⁴ Kitchen 225.

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⁴⁶ Charlotte Whitton before the Select Standing Committee, Report, qtd. in Kitchen 230.

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- ⁶⁵ Kitchen 237.
- ⁶⁶ Jean 426.
- ⁶⁷ Ursel 195.
- ⁶⁸ Finance Files, 101-53-144 14 Jun. 1943 ctd. in Ursel 195.
- ⁶⁹ Jean 426.
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¹⁰⁹ Mahon 597.

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¹²² Mahon 583.

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⁴ Stephen McBride, Paradigm Shift: Globalization and the Canadian State (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2001) 43.

⁵ Bradford 7; McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 43.

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⁷ Bradford 7.

⁸ McBride 44.

⁹ McBride 44.

¹⁰ McBride 45.

¹¹ McBride 43-44.

¹² McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 22.

¹³ Jessop 175.

¹⁴ See Bashevkin.

¹⁵ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 27-28.

¹⁶ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 28. Also see Isabella Bakker, "Introduction: The Gendered Foundations of Restructuring in Canada," Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada, ed. Isabella Bakker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 4.

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¹⁸ John Myles, "Decline or Impasse? The Current State of the Welfare State," Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review, 26 (1988) 74, 76.

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²¹ Anthony Giddens, The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998) 13.

²² Wendy McKeen and Ann Porter, "Politics and Transformation: Welfare State Restructuring in Canada," Changing Canada: Political Economy as Transformation, ed. Wallace Clement and Leah F. Vosko (Montréal, Kingston, London & Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003) 124.

²³ Fudge and Cossman 13.

²⁴ Fudge and Cossman 14.

²⁵ Fudge and Cossman outline the components and strategies of privatization. The components of privatization include *reregulation* (shifts some public responsibilities to the private sphere while diligently protecting and intensifying the role of the state to regulate in other areas) and *decentralization* (involves the new division of power between the federal government and the provinces which has undermined the notion of universal social citizenship) (p. 20). These two key components, in turn, involve a range of related strategies that aim to institutionalize a shift in power relations. The strategies of privatization are as follows: *Reprivatization* refers to processes whereby once public goods and services are being reconstituted as private, that is, as more appropriately located in the private spheres of market, family, and/or charity (p. 20); *Commodification* refers to the process whereby once public goods and services are being reconstituted as market goods and services (p. 21); *Familialization* refers to the process whereby once public goods and services are being reconstituted as naturally located within the realm of the family (p. 21); *Individualization* refers to the process whereby a broad range of social issues is being reconstituted, both with respect to causes and solutions, in highly individualized terms (p. 21); *Delegation* refers to the process whereby decision-making authority is shifted from visible to invisible public agents and from public to private agents, involving the devolution of decision-making power towards less accountable agents and to less transparent decision-making processes (p. 22); *Depoliticization* refers to the process whereby a range of issues, goods, and services are removed from political contestation (p. 22).

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²⁷ Fudge and Cossman 18.

²⁸ Marjorie Griffin Cohen, "From Welfare State to Vampire Capitalism," Women and the Canadian Welfare State: Challenges and Change, ed. Patricia M. Evans and Gerda R. Wekerle (Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 33.

²⁹ Cohen 35.

³⁰ Cohen 35.

³¹ Macdonald 46.

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³³ Evans and Wekerle 6.

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- ³⁵ Cameron and Gonas 64.
- ³⁶ Cameron and Gonas 64.
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- ⁴⁰ Therese Jennissen, "The Federal Social Security Review: A Gender-Sensitive Critique," Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, ed. Jane Pulkingham and Gordon Ternowetsky (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996) 240.
- ⁴¹ MacDonald, "Economic" 2009.
- ⁴² Jennissen 240.
- ⁴³ Jennissen 240.
- ⁴⁴ Jennissen 249.
- ⁴⁵ Jim Stanford, "Discipline, Insecurity and Productivity: The Economics Behind Labour Market 'Flexibility,'" Remaking Canadian Social Policy: Social Security in the Late 1990s, ed. Jane Pulkingham and Gordon Ternowetsky (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1996) 131.
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- ⁴⁸ Alexandra Dobrowolsky, "The Chrétien Liberal Legacy and Women: Changing Policy Priorities with Little Cause for Celebration," Review of Constitutional Studies/Revue d'études constitutionnelles, 9.1 & 2 (2004) 177.
- ⁴⁹ MacDonald, "Restructuring" 76.
- ⁵⁰ Brodie, "The Great Undoing" 104.
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- ⁵² Bashevkin 82-83.
- ⁵³ See Cossman.
- ⁵⁴ McKeen 72.

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- ⁵⁵ Giddens, "The Third Way" 15.
- ⁵⁶ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 31.
- ⁵⁷ McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 31.
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- ⁵⁹ Patricia Marchak, The Integrated Circus: The New Right and the Restructuring of Global Markets (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), qtd. in McBride and Shields, Dismantling a Nation: The Transition 31.
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- ⁶¹ Isabella Bakker, "Introduction: The Gendered Foundations of Restructuring in Canada," Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada, ed. Isabella Bakker (Toronto, Buffalo, & London: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 13.
- ⁶² Pat Armstrong, "The Feminization of the Labour Force: Harmonizing Down in the Global Economy," Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada, ed. Isabella Bakker (Toronto, Buffalo, & London: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 29-30.
- ⁶³ Armstrong 32.
- ⁶⁴ Armstrong 30.
- ⁶⁵ See Armstrong.
- ⁶⁶ Armstrong 32-33.
- ⁶⁷ Armstrong 33.
- ⁶⁸ Armstrong 48.
- ⁶⁹ Armstrong 48.
- ⁷⁰ Martha MacDonald, "Gender and Social Security Policy: Pitfalls and Possibilities," Feminist Economics, 4.1 (1998) 3-4. Also see MacDonald, "Restructuring."
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⁷⁵ McKeen and Porter 116. See the Canadian Council on Social Development, Highlights: The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty 2000, 19 July 2000, 24 July 2006 < <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2000/fbpov00/hl.htm>> for statistics measuring the increase in poverty during the neo-liberal period among many already marginalized groups.

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⁸⁰ Haddow 100.

⁸¹ Haddow 100-101.

⁸² Guest.

⁸³ Timpson 26, 32.

⁸⁴ Timpson 51.

⁸⁵ Haddow 151.

⁸⁶ Haddow 151.

⁸⁷ Timpson 65.

⁸⁸ Haddow 152.

⁸⁹ Haddow 152.

⁹⁰ Mahon and Phillips 200 (original italics).

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- ¹³¹ Porter 163.
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¹⁴⁴ Evans and Pupo 416.

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Chapter 5

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⁶ See MacGregor.

⁷ See Giddens, "The Third Way."

⁸ Anthony Giddens, "Introduction," The Global Third Way Debate, ed. Anthony Giddens (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) 2.

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¹¹ Dobrowolsky, "Rhetoric Versus Reality" 44.

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¹⁴ Jenson and Saint-Martin 84.

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- ¹⁵ Dobrowolsky, "Rhetoric Versus Reality" 44.
- ¹⁶ Jenson and Saint-Martin 92.
- ¹⁷ Jenson and Saint-Martin 87.
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- ¹⁹ MacGregor 95.
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- ²⁷ White, "Social Policy and Solidarity" 70.
- ²⁸ Roelvink and Craig 104, 124.
- ²⁹ Roelvink and Craig 118.
- ³⁰ Dobrowolsky, "The Chrétien Liberal Legacy" 197.
- ³¹ Donna Baines, "Seven Kinds of Work – Only One Paid: Raced, Gendered and Restructured Work in Social Services," Atlantis, 28.2 (2004) 21.
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Architecture for Europe?": Lessons for Canada, 2002, 24 July 2006 <<http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2002/europe.pdf>> 2). For many, social inclusion means the eradication of poverty, which is seen as a practical social policy objective (Canadian Council on Social Development, "A New Welfare Architecture" 2). The Canadian state, however, is using the discourse on inclusion in a very narrow way to promote attachment to the paid workforce as a catchall solution to "social exclusion." Systemic barriers to "inclusion," such as classism, sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism, etc., are marginalized or excluded in the state's discourse on inclusion, and are therefore left intact and unchallenged by the Canadian state.

³⁵ McKeen 22.

³⁶ Patricia M. Evans, "Gender, Poverty, and Women's Caring," Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare, ed. Carol T. Baines, Patricia M. Evans, and Sheila M. Neysmith, 2nd ed. (Toronto, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 50.

³⁷ National Anti-Poverty Organization, The Face of Poverty in Canada 2.

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³⁹ Evans 54.

⁴⁰ Evans 54.

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⁴³ Warriner 8

⁴⁴ Warriner 8.

⁴⁵ Warriner 9.

⁴⁶ Warriner 7.

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⁵⁵ Mahon and Phillips 205.

⁵⁶ Canada, Public Works and Government Services, "National Children's Agenda: Background Information on the National Children's Agenda, Announced in the Speech from the Throne, September 23, 1997," 1998, 30 Jun. 2006 <http://socialunion.gc.ca/nca/nca1_e.html>.

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⁵⁸ MacDonald, "Restructuring" 81; Claire F. L. Young, Women, Tax and Social Programs: The Gendered Impact of Funding Social Programs Through the Tax System (Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 2000) 33.

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⁶¹ Canada, Revenue Agency 12.

⁶² Canada, Revenue Agency 13.

⁶³ Canada, Revenue Agency 13.

⁶⁴ Canada, "National Child Benefit Progress Report: 2000 – Chapter 3: The Federal Component of the National Child Benefit," 30 Jun. 2006 <<http://www.nationalchildbenefit.ca/ncb/NCB-progress2000/3.html>>.

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⁶⁷ Canada, National Council of Welfare, "Fix Welfare" 1.

⁶⁸ Warriner 13.

⁶⁹ Armine Yalnizyan, Canada's Commitment to Equality: A Gender Analysis of the Last Ten Federal Budgets (1995-2004) (Ottawa: Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), 2005) 82.

⁷⁰ Yalnizyan 81.

⁷¹ Yalnizyan 81.

⁷² Yalnizyan 81.

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