

IS LEISURE WORKING? THE STATE AND THE GENDERED REGULATION OF
WORKING TIME AND LEISURE IN CANADA, 1950- 2006

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Abstract

Is Leisure Working? The State and the Gendered Regulation of Working Time and Leisure in Canada, 1950-2006

This dissertation examines the intersection of gender, employment law and public health policies through an analysis of the federal government's efforts to regulate the work/leisure relationship. The study asks how and why, despite over 50 years of state interventions to regulate leisure and healthy lifestyle, concerns about 'work-life balance' have surfaced in labour policy arenas in recent years.

The study builds a feminist political economy framework for understanding changes in policy developments over time. I use the concepts of *social reproduction* and *time- and work-discipline* as lenses with which to probe the relationship between the changing temporal dimensions of paid and unpaid work and efforts to manage the new realities of the labour market through the institutions of the state. The dissertation considers how the changes in the gendered organization of social reproduction, the nature and regulation of employment, and the power of organized labour to advocate on behalf of workers have influenced the types of policies used to manage the work/life interface.

The empirical dimension of this study traces the emergence of a framework for regulating social reproduction through state-led management of the work/life relationship. Following the evolution of such frameworks through federal policy debates, policy papers and program materials, I trace the continuities and changes in dominant leisure discourses and policy mechanisms through four phases of federal policy development: early fitness policies (pre-1960); ParticipACTION (1960 to early 1970s); employee fitness experiments (mid-1970s to 1990); and the Work/Life Balance Strategy (1990s to mid-2000s).

The central argument put forward in this dissertation is that the gender-neutral and individualized framework for regulating the healthy reproduction of workers, developed in Canadian law and policy since the 1950s, has produced highly gendered outcomes through its failure to address the changing dynamics of work and family life. By continuing to uphold the notion of a worker 'unencumbered' by familial and household responsibilities, 'new' work-life balance policies exacerbate the tensions between paid and unpaid work and contribute to the ongoing marginalization of women in the labour market.

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Excavating Policy Foundations: Understanding State Regulation of the Work/Leisure Relationship in Canada

'Work-life balance' has become an increasingly important area of Canadian labour policy in recent decades. While the broad nature of the term has allowed it to become a 'catch-all' phrase for a variety of issues in contemporary labour markets, work-life balance is almost always associated with two related matters: struggles over control of one's time and the outcome of this negotiation on the health of an individual worker, and often their family and the community at large. Distilled to its most basic elements, work-life balance seems less a 'new' issue, but rather an extension or contemporary manifestation of a longstanding concern about the nature of 'working' time under capitalism.¹

While many core issues involved in work/life balance debates, such as the regulation of working hours, can be traced back several decades, policymakers have recently taken notice of changing work/life boundaries and have begun the work needed to address this area of labour policy. The primary manner in which the work/life relationship has been addressed in state arenas, since the early 2000s, is through the adoption of information-based policy instruments – a practice commonly referred to as *exhortation*.² Exhortation as a "policy technique or mechanism" involves the

¹ In this study, I understand working time as including both activities performed by workers in the 'productive' economy as well as time spent performing the unpaid work necessary to reproduce those workers. Occasionally, throughout the study, I use "working time" as a shorthand for time spent in paid employment, but this is only done when examining the

² Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc, "Introduction: Policy Instrument Choice and Evaluation," *Carrots, Sticks & Sermons: Policy Instruments & Their Evaluation*, ed. Marie-Louise

dissemination of information “to directly or indirectly affect the behaviour of those involved in the production, consumption and distribution of different kinds of goods and services in society.”³ Such strategies frequently involve encouraging individuals to “engage in fewer vices and otherwise behave responsibly.”⁴ This study aims to understand the roots of this principal mode of managing the work/life relationship in the contemporary period. It does so by examining the historical underpinnings of different policies regulating work and leisure, asking how and why particular gendered and classed understandings of the work/life relationship emerge in policy choices and changes in policy strategies over the latter half of the twentieth century.

I trace successive attempts by federal policymakers, at times with the cooperation of provincial governments, to address the health of working Canadians through distinct national policies designed to regulate work and leisure over four overlapping periods since WWII. Specifically, the study analyses a variety of ‘fitness’ promotion activities designed to encourage healthy lifestyle at ‘leisure.’ These include: early fitness policies (pre-1960); ParticipACTION (1960 to early 1970s); employee fitness experiments (mid-1970s to 1990); and the Work/Life Balance Strategy (1990s to mid-2000s). I consider the historical development of these policies against the backdrop of a broad range of employment statutes (both federal and provincial) aimed at shaping the temporal

Bemelmans-Vidéc, Ray C. Rist, and Evert Vedung (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010) 11.

³ Michael Howlett, *Designing Public Policies: Principles and Instruments* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011) 114.

⁴ Ibid.

character of paid work for the majority of working Canadians, as well as the emergence of publicly funded health care. By examining how a particular mix of regulatory instruments was employed in each of these four periods and at whom these policies were directed, the study aims to show how the state's approach to managing social reproduction through working time and leisure has evolved, at times in response to changing social and economic contexts, the power of the labour movement to advocate on behalf of workers, and the gendered organization of paid and unpaid work.

My central argument is that, over the course of the twentieth century, the management of working time and leisure in state arenas has shifted gradually from a dual-track set of policies focused on promoting individual healthy leisure-time choices as a complement to an expanding legal regime regulating working time, largely for male breadwinners and supported by women's unpaid labour in the home, to an integrated regime designed to address the changing and yet still gendered organization of paid and unpaid work through the self-regulation of working time and healthy lifestyle, supported by firm-based work/life balance strategies and the consumption of lifestyle commodities. Although the rhetoric of 'individual choice' is paramount in new work/life policies and 'one size fits all' options are rejected, the changing temporal nature of work, the continuity of the standard employment relationship as a vehicle for program delivery, and the ongoing failure by policymakers to address questions specific to the gendered organization of unpaid work, contribute to a persistent lack of control by workers in regulating the timing of their own lives.

A central strand of this argument is that gender ideologies⁵— especially ideologies of domesticity – are central to understanding the historical evolution of the management of the work/leisure relationship in policies over time. Such ideologies support the gendered organization of paid and unpaid work and such arrangements have, over the course of the postwar period, contributed to a narrow understanding among policymakers of the social dimensions of working time and leisure time. This study uses gender as a lens⁶ through which to understand contemporary changes in the temporal organization of work, and to challenge some of key concepts at the core of the work-life balance debate – such as work, working time, and control over time – ultimately evaluating the ability of different policy approaches to promote a meaningful reorganization of the distribution of paid and unpaid work in Canadian society. The organization of paid and unpaid work continues to have profound implications for the promotion of gender equity in employment.

Over the latter half of the twentieth century, the gender-neutral, highly

⁵ By ideology I mean the processes by which dominant ‘systems of ideas’ organize and inform actual social and political practices, including the emergence of gendered norms and assumptions among dominant and subordinate groups.

⁶ For a relevant discussion of the use of the gender lens, see Kathleen Gerson, “Understanding Work and Family Through a Gender Lens,” *Community, Work and Family* 7.2 (2004): 164-167. Gerson identifies four advantages of adopting a gender lens: it forces researchers to confront gender stereotypes; it allows researchers to see gender as an institution rather than an individual characteristic; it allows researchers to consider the relationship between changing social conditions and emergent tensions and conflicts surrounding unpaid work; and it highlights the wider social context in which ‘private’ household decisions are made. On gender and labour markets see: Diane Elson, “Labor Markets as Gendered Institutions: Equality, Efficiency and Empowerment Issues.” *World Development* 27.3 (1999): 611-627.

individualized, and largely de-regulated framework for managing the healthy reproduction of workers, developed in the fields of Canadian law and policy that I scrutinize, has produced gendered outcomes through its failure to address meaningfully the changing dynamics of work and family life for large numbers of workers. Information-based policies promoting work-life balance, by continuing to uphold the notion of a worker 'unencumbered' by familial and household responsibilities, exacerbate, in particular, women's experiences of paid and unpaid work and contribute to women's ongoing marginalization in the labour market.

Understanding the working day – from value theory to time- and work-discipline

The theoretical position from which I explore the regulation of working time both incorporates and departs from a Marxian understanding of the role of labour power in reproducing and sustaining capitalism as a mode of production. In *Capital: Volume One*, significant attention is devoted to the temporal character of the labour process (what we commonly think of as paid work) and the relationships embedded within this process that determine the particular degree and character of exploitation in the labour market. Marx's writing on value begins from the premise that the 'working day,' or the time during which a worker sells his or her labour power in exchange for money (wages), has two basic components: necessary labour time and surplus labour time. When there is an exchange of money for labour power, a portion of the labour power is said to produce value in amounts sufficient to ensure the reproduction of the means of subsistence, or the maintenance of a worker's own reproductive capacities. Thus it is assumed that the wage

relationship itself will address what is needed by the worker to maintain a healthy body fit for work, while providing time and space for additional individual and community development outside the place of employment. It is also assumed that the worker is “free” to control the direction of such activities. A second portion of the time in which labour power is expended is considered surplus labour time, which is appropriated by the capitalist.⁷ The proportions in which these two components arise in the sale of labour power in a particular labour market is both variable and fluid, but the basic antagonism between the capitalist’s drive for surplus value extraction, and the workers’ needs and desires to maintain a decent standard of living, remains present.⁸ While the capitalist “maintains his rights as a purchaser when he tries to make the working day as long as possible” or intensifies the pace of work to “make two working days out of one,” the “peculiar nature of the commodity sold implies a limit to its consumption by the purchaser, and the worker maintains his right as a seller when he wishes to reduce the working day to a particular normal length.”⁹ In essence, “in the history of capitalist production, the establishment of a norm for the working day presents itself as a struggle over the limits of that day, a struggle between collective capital, i.e. the class of capitalists, and collective labour, i.e. the working class.”¹⁰

⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume One* (New York: Random House, 1976) 325.

⁸ Marx, 341.

⁹ Marx, 342.

¹⁰ Marx, 344.

While the variable nature of labour power gives it a unique status among all commodities involved in the labour process and the production of goods for the market, Marx acknowledges important physical and moral limits to surplus value extraction over the course of a working day, whether time for rest and proper nourishment, or for the intellectual and spiritual development of the worker.¹¹ This latter dimension of time is what we typically think of as ‘leisure’; leisure time is neither time spent working at a task for which one is paid, nor time spent in activities that immediately address the individual reproduction of a worker. Yet in early works of political economy, a distinction is not made between different uses of time outside of the place of paid employment – only that all time outside of paid work is technically ‘free’ for the individual worker to pursue their own physical and spiritual reproduction and that the length of time in which this worker can pursue such goals are at odds with the needs of those for whom they serve. Because the reproduction of labour takes place during this ‘free’ time outside of the place of employment, capital is presented with an important dilemma: on the one hand, the drive for accumulation through surplus value extraction means that the health of workers is of little concern to those to whom they are employed; on the other hand, the cumulative effects of the exploitation that occurs on a daily basis may erode the health of workers so much so that “premature exhaustion and death” threatens the availability of labour power over time.¹² This contradiction emerges in other areas of the employment relationship as

¹¹ Marx, 341-2.

¹² Marx, 376.

well. For example, in the drive for accumulation, employers sometimes make choices that compromise the physical safety of workers. Capital, for the most part, takes little “account of the health and length of life of the worker, unless society forces it to do so.”¹³

In Canada, the state plays a crucial role in managing the stresses and tensions associated with the labour process. My understanding of the ‘the state’ emphasizes how different institutions of the state apparatus, in practice, aim to support the valorization of capital and, by extension, the reproduction of class relations. I recognize that the specific ways in which state institutions reinforce the economic order vary across historical periods and in different international, national and regional contexts, yet I also contend that, taken as a whole, the primary orientation of state practices is to maintain social and economic stability without upsetting the dominant capitalist mode of production. In this sense, even though discussions about leisure can cut across multiple policy areas, discussions are shaped by an underlying capitalist logic that reinforces the need for social reproduction in highly gendered ways. Many state policies tacitly support a traditional gendered division of labour in which men earn and women care because this arrangement, it is assumed, will help manage some of the tensions associated with the reproduction of workers under capitalism, both on a daily and intergenerational basis. As this study aims to demonstrate, policies will sometimes incorporate gender ideologies of domesticity that perpetuate the notion of a ‘natural’ gender division of labour - ideas that conveniently service of the needs of economic production.

¹³ Marx, 381.

However, the *political* nature of state process also means that the relationship between states and markets can give rise to contradictory state practices at different historical moments. At times, spaces emerge for different social groups, especially those with the capacity to upset the balance of power in society, to make claims on the state and effect responses that serve the needs of the working classes. This study seeks to examine the ways in which successive federal governments have tried to mediate class conflict and the contradictions of capitalism in order to maintain a healthy working population. Particularly in the early twentieth century and the decade following the end of WWII, provincial and federal governments adopted a system of employment standards partly to regulate a variety of issues that could impact directly the health and security of workers: for example, daily and weekly hours of work; weekly and annual periods of rest; minimum wages, leaves for personal care and care of family members; and the termination of employment contracts. In doing so, the state forged certain norms and expectations, which persist today as an 'ideal' arrangement, about what constitutes a 'normal' balance between 'work' and 'leisure' on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. Through a variety of initiatives aimed at regulating the behaviour of individuals 'at leisure', the state also actively attempted to shape the 'healthy' reproduction of the working population on a daily basis. The former strategy places legal limits on the working time demands that employers can make of their employees, while the latter encourages employees to use their leisure time in ways that keep them healthy and active, thus ensuring they remain productive in the labour force over time. This was not the only method by which the health of workers was regulated. Over the course of the twentieth

century, health and safety standards and a system of social insurance to compensate for workers injured on the job also took shape, illustrating the state's ability to respond to the demands of workers for healthier working conditions.¹⁴ In this way, for much of the immediate post-WWII period, the state made some attempt to manage the interests of employers and their workers, ensuring a trade-off between adequate leisure time and a healthy population fit for work.

These choices reflect responses to different interests at various points in time, pointing to the open or fluid character of the policy process as a space where "different social actors struggle to represent themselves and their projects through the creation and transformation of institutions and public policies."¹⁵ Still, over time, and especially in a neoliberal context, policymaking itself has become an act of power, where policies continue to "reflect the structural relations of power in the society from which they emerge" even as they act as "points of leverage and resources for groups attempting to transform these structural relations."¹⁶

In tracing the expansion of law and policies designed to regulate healthy lifestyle, my analysis modifies the framework provided by value theory by exploring the social and cultural dimensions of Marx's analysis of working time and particularly the ways in

¹⁴ Eric Tucker, *Administering Danger in the Workplace: The Law and Politics of Occupational Health and Safety in Ontario, 1850-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

¹⁵ Peter Graefe, "Political Economy and Canadian Public Policy," *Critical Policy Studies: Contemporary Canadian Approaches*, ed. Michael Orsini and Miriam Smith (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

which states mediate class struggles over working conditions. I do this in two ways: first, I draw upon the insights of E.P. Thompson, who writes about *time- and work-discipline* as a site of class struggle – or as revealing a series of social and cultural relationships that can be analyzed historically to produce insights about how the nature of work is shaped both by capitalist interests and by workers themselves; second, I examine the feminist intervention into value theory initiated by the domestic labour debates in an attempt to show how institutions such as the household affect dynamics in the labour market and how women’s unpaid work contributes to the social reproduction of labour power over time. I then proceed to review more recent literature examining the how state policies manage the social reproduction of labour. Here, too, my emphasis is on understanding how states, households and the labour market interact and how gender is central to these processes. My objective is to retain an analysis of the centrality of conflicts over time for understanding exploitation under capitalism, while integrating the insights of feminist political economy scholarship.

In “Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism,” Marxist historian E.P. Thompson closely examines the ‘social’ aspects of struggles over working time, arguing that transitions to capitalism are as much a matter for sociological inquiry as for economic study. Thus, while Thompson uses the concept of *class* to explore changes in the nature of work under industrial capitalism, he argues that inattention to the negotiation of “systems of power, property-relations, religious institutions, etc.” in the

wider cultural context “flattens phenomena and trivializes analysis.”¹⁷ Working from this central proposition, Thompson proceeds to sketch the manner in which the social organization of time evolved alongside the growth of industrial capitalism in England. Whereas ‘pre-capitalist’ working norms were largely task-oriented, blurring work and life activities, the advent of industrial capitalism brought with it the rise of timed labour, where time became less something passed, but rather spent. The commodification of time and labour produced a disconnect between an employer’s time and one’s ‘own’ time, which demanded a “greater synchronization of labour and a great exactitude in time routines.”¹⁸ Such processes resulted not only in the disciplining of workers’ time use in paid work, but also at ‘leisure’ in the community at large. As a key site of negotiation, workers began to fight “not against time, but about it.”¹⁹ In mature capitalist economies, time is increasingly and routinely “consumed, marketed, put to use,” where the idea that “it is offensive for the labour force to merely pass the time” is a defining feature of social and cultural life.²⁰ In this study, I use these notions of *time-discipline* and *work-discipline* to explore the expansion and transformation of working time, leisure and healthy lifestyle policies, particularly as they evolve alongside the growth of capitalism in the Canadian

¹⁷ E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past and Present* 38 (December 1967): 80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Thompson, 84.

²⁰ Thompson, 90-1. It is important to note that Thompson’s workers are in a struggle to define the conditions of working life, and as such a discussion of resistance and accommodation is weaved through the analysis.

context. Working from the basic premise that time- and work-discipline pose an ongoing area of tension between workers and their employers, this lens helps illuminate the ways in which the ideological dimensions of such conflicts play out in state arenas and shape social norms and expectations about what constitutes a normal working life and healthy leisure time practices.

Yet my analysis seeks to broaden the boundaries of Thompson's notions of time- and work-discipline to explore the *gendered* character of debates about leisure and healthy lifestyle. By *gendered* I mean the "inequalities, divisions, and differences socially constructed around assumed distinctions between female and male" that lie at the centre of efforts to regulate work.²¹ These distinctions hold important implications, especially among women, for the manner in which social life and social relationships are organized and reproduced at individual, familial, workplace and community levels. The basic Marxian framework exploring antagonisms between labour and capital in the production process is limited in its explanatory power with respect to gender because until recently, much of women's work was performed outside the formal market economy. This omission is significant because without specific attention to the gendered nature of production, the subsistence of workers is more or less assumed, rather than analyzed in its own right to reveal women's unpaid contributions to economic production. Thus, contemporary policy discussions about how the production process under capitalism contributes to the declining physical and mental health of workers –

²¹ Joan Acker, "Gender, Capitalism and Globalization," *Critical Sociology* (2004): 20.

encompassed for example in debates about work-life balance, job stress, and sedentary work – cannot be fully understood without looking at the organization of social life outside of the workplace. This study seeks to correct the gendered nature²² of traditional political economy frameworks that limit inquiry to processes occurring within the market economy. Adopting a feminist political economy framework that seeks to understand the centrality of gender to larger socio-economic processes, this research aims to contribute to scholarship exposing the gender-blindness of mainstream political economic theory and practice, and the perpetuation of women’s inequality over time. I aim to further an analysis of how women’s paid and unpaid labour contributes to the social and economic marginalization of certain groups of workers,²³ while paying close attention to the “interrelationships between gender, race and ethnicity in shaping women’s relationship to capitalism.”²⁴

Feminist political economy takes on the working day – domestic labour and social reproduction

Feminist political economy, and the Marxist-feminist encounter in particular, has a long lineage in Canadian scholarship, as many have sought to modify the basic

²² Wally Secombe uses the term “narrow economism” to describe the male-centredness of political economy frameworks that see economic production as occurring solely in the production of goods and services and not people. Wally Secombe, *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe* (New York: Verso, 1992) 10; Antonella Picchio, “The Reproduction of the Social Structure: Wages as a Reflection of Socially Embedded Production and Reproduction Processes,” *The Dynamics of Wage Reflection in New Europe*, ed. Linda Clarke, Peter de Gijel, and Jorn Janssen (London: Kluwer, 1998) 195.

²³ Leah F. Vosko, “The Past (and Futures) of Feminist Political Economy in Canada: Reviving the Debate,” *Studies in Political Economy* 68 (Summer 2002): 57.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

framework of value theory to theorize the position of women under capitalism. One of the earliest contributors to this project, Margaret Benston, understood women as a class of producers who held primary responsibility for the creation of use-values through household work. Although women comprised a reserve army of labour, entering the labour market only intermittently, most of women's energy was directed towards the maintenance of the family unit. Benston argued that this work is essential for the reproduction of the social system, yet undervalued because it is outside of the formal market economy.²⁵ Others, seeking to maintain a structural understanding of women's exploitation, linked domestic work more directly to capitalist accumulation, arguing that as producers of the commodity labour-power, women's labour is in fact *productive labour*.²⁶

In "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism," Wally Seccombe challenged the use of the term productive labour in analyzing domestic work. In a strictly Marxian sense, the productive labourer is one who engages directly in the production of surplus value. For Seccombe, domestic labour does not meet the criteria of productive labour because it is not conducted *in direct relation* with capital (that is, it is not wage labour) and, further, it does not produce surplus value as "it does not create more value

²⁵ Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review* 21 (September 1969): 33.

²⁶ See for example, Mariarosa Della Costa and Selma James, ed., *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (Bristol: Falling Water Press Ltd., 1972); Selma James, "Sex, Race, and Working Class Power," *Race Today* (January 1974): 12-15; Peggy Morton, "Women's Work is Never Done," in *Women Unite* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1972): 46-68.

than it itself possesses.”²⁷ Although not *governed* by the law of value, Seccombe contends that household processes nevertheless play a central role at the level of the mode of production²⁸ by providing the labour necessary to reproduce labour power on a daily and generational basis.²⁹ Standing between the commodity market and the labour market, the family unit mediates processes of production and consumption through the wage form. Domestic labour is the necessary yet privatized process by which commodities purchased with wages are converted into *regenerated* labour power. For Seccombe, value is produced insofar as a housewife’s labour “becomes part of the congealed mass of past labour embodied in labour power.”³⁰

Seccombe’s work significantly shaped the contours of the ‘domestic labour debates’ and subsequent feminist theorizing on household dynamics. Yet in focusing on the contribution of domestic labour to the production of labour power, he overlooked perhaps the most important dimension of women’s work experience: if women could be said to occupy “a role” under capitalism, it would certainly be one that included both domestic *and paid labour*. Many housewives also worked for pay. Feminist political economy scholarship subsequently incorporated this insight, and some scholars stepped

²⁷ Wally Seccombe, “The Housewife and her Labour Under Capitalism,” *New Left Review* 83 (1974): 11.

²⁸ In doing so, Seccombe collapses the base/superstructure distinction, seeing the family in both material and ideological terms: “The social activity of the family reproduces specific aspects of labour power and the relations of production, and it is in this sense that the nuclear family is a dual-faceted institution having functional aspects of both base and superstructure.” 16.

²⁹ Seccombe, 14.

³⁰ Seccombe, 9.

away from questions concerning women's contribution of domestic labour to the reproduction of labour power. For example, Coulson et al. argued that, to fully understand the particular gender dynamics of capitalism, it is essential to break the tendency³¹ to see women and housewives as wholly synonymous.³² While many women do fulfill the needs of capitalist reproduction through household labour, they also occupy a "dual and contradictory" role through their participation in domestic and waged labour. This, they argue, "generates the specific dynamic of their oppression."³³ Similarly, Maxine Molyneux questioned the project of using value theory because it suggests that capitalism has an a priori reliance on domestic labour, pointing out that domestic labour is at all times subject to historical and cultural variation. Like Coulson et al, Molyneux argued that seeing domestic labour in purely functional terms erases important differences *and changes* in its organization across particular periods and places, and obscures its potential contradictions for capital. Moreover, the focus on value at a high level of abstraction conceals important questions concerning gender ideology – that is, "why it is generally women who do this work."³⁴ Armstrong and Armstrong effectively critique the notion of a value trade off in Seccombe's work, pointing out that flexibility

³¹ As seen in the work of Benston, Della Costa and James, and Seccombe.

³² Margaret Coulson, Branka Magas and Hilary Wainwright, "The Housewife and Her Labour Under Capitalism – A Critique," *New Left Review* 89 (1975): 60.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Maxine Molyneux, "Beyond the Domestic Labour Debate," *New Left Review* 116 (1979): 12. See also, Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," *Women Class and the Feminist Imagination: A Socialist Feminist Reader* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990): 74-113.

and elasticity in household processes does not imply a straightforward substitution of domestic labour for goods and services purchased with wages. Rather, domestic work is left undone, done less frequently, or not done well.³⁵ There are clear limits to the flexibility of domestic labour, particularly around issues of childcare, and it remains crucial to understand how and in what ways household ‘choices’ are constrained and “structured by capitalism itself.”³⁶

Building on the feminist political economy tradition, this study employs the concept of *social reproduction* to situate the gendered regulation of working time within changing cultural, political, historical and economic contexts. I draw on this concept to understand the material and gendered nature of the working day, while avoiding the structural-functionalist analyses that characterized the approaches taken by early contributors to the domestic labour debates. Broadly, the term refers to a specific set of processes operating at the level of the mode of production and as a lens with which to understand how the reproduction of labour is central to the overall functioning of the economy. This conception draws on the work of Antonella Picchio, who defines social reproduction as “a material and cultural process that relates to bodies (food, clothing and housing), individual and collective identities and social relationships.”³⁷ For Picchio, social reproduction is a process by which the subsistence needs of the labouring

³⁵ Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, “Beyond Sexless Class and Classless Sex: Towards Feminist Marxism,” *Studies in Political Economy* 10 (1983) 24.

³⁶ Armstrong and Armstrong, 26.

³⁷ Picchio, 196.

population are met, and as such “it reflects historical forms of access to resources, gender division of labour, class power relationships, habits, tastes, and social conventions.”³⁸

Social reproduction captures the tensions between “paid and unpaid work that maintains households and workers,” understanding this work as “interdependent processes of production and consumption that in combination generate the household’s livelihood.”³⁹

A political economy approach that neglects or marginalizes an examination of social reproduction, particularly its centrality to struggles over wages and working conditions, such as working time standards and other employment benefits including leisure time provisions, misses the gendered tensions between the profit maximizing interests of capital and the struggle by workers to secure a decent standard of living over the life course.

Competing understandings of the capitalist economic system have addressed, to varying degrees, the place of social reproduction within wider production processes. Whereas Marx’s writings on value stressed the centrality of wages to a workers’ ability to maintain a basic standard of living, later neoclassical analyses typically regarded labour in a static, apolitical, ahistorical manner – quite simply as systematic price-quantity relation.⁴⁰ As Picchio explains, this latter approach ignored key complexities in

³⁸ Picchio, 197.

³⁹ Meg Luxton, “Feminist Political Economy in Canada and the Politics of Social Reproduction,” *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-Liberalism*, ed. Kate Bezanson and Meg Luxton (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2006) 37.

⁴⁰ Antonella Picchio, *Social Reproduction: The Political Economy of the Labour Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 4.

the labour market: “markets are idealized as automata with no institutional texture; the ‘human factor’ in the labour market is treated as sand, endangering the otherwise smooth and virtuous functioning of market competition and its quantitative adjustment mechanisms.”⁴¹ In more recent neoliberal economic theory, the orthodox notion that the standard of living is the private responsibility of the individual worker has gained prominence. Where poverty is acknowledged, it is dealt with only in terms of specific policy options, never as a structural feature of the mode of production.⁴² Thus conflicts between profit and subsistence under capitalism are obscured, and the “‘perverse’ and dialectical relationship between the production of commodities and the reproduction of the labouring population” is ignored.⁴³

In sum, the theoretical and methodological framework employed herein aims to expand male-centred frameworks for understanding the relationship between the temporal dimensions of the modern labour process and reproduction of healthy workers. This study explores the treatment of working time and leisure in Canadian law and policy, with emphasis on understanding how conflicts between the ways production is organized and social reproduction is carried out are addressed. Tensions around working time emerge not only through experiences of paid work, but also in the ways in which individuals, households and communities negotiate the tensions between paid and unpaid work. Yet efforts to regulate healthy lifestyle through the institutions of the state do not

⁴¹ Picchio, “The Reproduction of the Social Structure,” 198.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

acknowledge the realities of this *work-work conflict*. Key changes in the nature of employment and efforts to restructure social and labour market policies in ways that correspond closely with the doctrines of economic neoliberalism in recent decades have exacerbated these conflicts over social reproduction in industrialized economies, and it is often women who are forced to negotiate the demands of paid and unpaid labour in a context of greater insecurity.

Managing social reproduction through policymaking

The introduction of questions of historical specificity into the domestic labour debates, even if only in a preliminary way, raised important questions about the role of the state in managing social reproduction. Beginning in the 1980s, feminist political economy scholarship gradually abandoned the project of developing abstract theories of domestic labour. Although still interested, in a broad sense, in questions of causality, much of the research undertaken in recent decades has sought to understand how developments at the level of the social formation have altered tensions and contradictions around work under capitalism.⁴⁴ Jane Jenson has effectively summarized the importance of remaining attentive to the variability of the approaches adopted by states to support the maintenance of "a healthy and disciplined work force."⁴⁵ She argues:

Capitalist states, with the extension of industrial capitalism, began to take on some responsibility for the reproduction of a waged labour force. At times this intervention involved constraining individual capitalists who defined their interests more narrowly

⁴⁴ Vosko, 63-5.

⁴⁵ Jane Jenson, "Gender and Reproduction or Babies and the State," *Studies in Political Economy* 20 (1986): 14.

and in the short term, and who worked their labour to death ... [C]apitalist states frequently compelled capital to inhibit its tendencies toward unduly rapacious behaviour, in the interests of guaranteeing the continued existence of the current generation and the appearance of the next. Historically, both cross generational and daily reproduction of the labour force have been concerns of capitalist states confronted with the effects of industrial capitalism in full flower. Nevertheless, it is not possible to predict a priori anything about the specific policies by which this is accomplished.⁴⁶

Among industrialized economies, variation exists with respect to approaches taken to mitigating the effects of capitalism on the health of workers and to regulating daily and generational processes of social reproduction.

Studies examining the political economy of the labour market in Canada reveal much about the nature of the regulation of social reproduction through law and policy. The legal regulation of the employment relationship represents one of the earliest strategies to improve the health and wellness of individuals.⁴⁷ Minimum employment standards and industrial relations legislation emerged as a response to the collective struggle by workers to address poor working conditions and exploitation in an industrializing Canadian economy.⁴⁸ These efforts reflected both the interdependent relationship between states and labour markets and what Mark Thomas has called “relations of conflict and contradiction” that characterized much of the historical

⁴⁶ Jenson, 15-6.

⁴⁷ Judy Fudge and Leah Vosko, “Gender Paradoxes and the Rise of Contingent Work: Towards a Transformative Political Economy of the Labour Market,” *Changing Canada: Political Economy as Transformation*, ed. Wallace Clement and Leah F. Vosko (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003): 185-186.

⁴⁸ Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, “Pluralism or Fragmentation? The Twentieth Century Employment Law Regime in Canada,” *Labour/Le Travail* 46 (Fall 2000): *in passim*.

development of employment standards legislation.⁴⁹ In Canada, a number of provincial statutes aimed at governing the conduct of employers by establishing minimum employment standards emerged at the end of the 19th century. Responding to the demands of workers, state regulation of the employment relationship focused first on issues of working time, health and safety, and minimum wages.⁵⁰ Throughout the course of the twentieth century, a system of industrial relations gradually developed alongside piecemeal minimum standards. The decriminalization of trade union activity and new provisions for freedom of association tended to formalize and legalize the process of collective bargaining with the goal of creating a climate of industrial ‘harmony’ in the post WWII-period.⁵¹ Supplementary provisions, such as unemployment insurance, workers’ compensation and various pension schemes, further entrenched the state’s role in contributing to the welfare and general well-being of its working citizens.

Twentieth century policy interventions in the labour market incorporated commonly held beliefs about the appropriate level of labour force participation by women and men. The earliest forms of regulation attempted to protect women and

⁴⁹ Mark Thomas, *Regulating Flexibility: The Political Economy of Employment Standards* (Toronto: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009) 7.

⁵⁰ Thomas, Chapter 2. See also Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985) and Jane Ursel, *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 years of State Intervention in the Family* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1992).

⁵¹ Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers’ Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001) 10-15. It is important to note that not all workers benefitted equally from the new system of labour relations, so for many, the continuation of employment standards represented the only means of protection from employer exploitation in the labour market.

children from the most harmful elements of work, and, at the same time, served to secure employment opportunities for men.⁵² By the middle of the 20th century, evolving employment standards and new provisions for collective bargaining no longer focused solely on the well being of the individual worker. Newly established protections for employees assumed that wages and benefits extended to male workers would be used to support a dependent wife and children. In fact, trade unionists themselves adopted the language of a ‘family wage’ in order to demand better compensation for their work. Assumptions about the gendered division of labour were also built into the design of complementary labour market policies, which were accessible initially only to working men.⁵³ Feminist scholars have pointed to the ways in which a male breadwinner/female caregiver model was supported by policymakers in an ongoing attempt to manage the competing requirements of economic production and the maintenance of a healthy population.⁵⁴ The term *gender contract* denotes the normative operation of a gendered division of paid and unpaid labour in institutional settings such as the household.⁵⁵ When

⁵² Leah F. Vosko, *Managing the Margins: Gender, Citizenship and the International Regulation of Precarious Employment* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010) 27-8.

⁵³ See for example: Ann Porter, *Gendered States: Women, Unemployment Insurance, and the Political Economy of the Welfare State in Canada, 1945-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Barbara Neis, “From ‘Shipped Girls’ to ‘Brides of the State’: The Transition from Familial to Social Patriarchy in the Newfoundland Fishing Industry,” *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, 16.2 (1993): 185-202.

⁵⁴ Judy Fudge and Leah Vosko, *in passim*.

⁵⁵ Leah Vosko, “Rethinking Feminization: Gendered Precariousness in the Canadian Labour Market and the Crisis in Social Reproduction.” Lecture. Toronto: Robarts Canada Research Chairholders Series, 11 April 2002. See also Judy Fudge, “The New Dual-Earner Gender Contract: Work-life Balance or Working-time Flexibility?,” *Labour Law, Work and Family*:

personal circumstances render such 'normal' avenues of distribution untenable, alternative forms of assistance could provide for individuals and families, such as social assistance programs, monthly supplements or allowances for the unemployed, seniors, widows, single mothers, orphans, the disabled, injured workers, veterans, and sometimes those in industries subject to variability due to season or the health of crops, such as in farming, grain production or fishing.⁵⁶ In Canada, such schemes, often accompanied by an underlying moralism, were bolstered during the postwar period of welfare state expansion.⁵⁷ Feminist scholarship has highlighted how women's 'marginal' status in the labour market meant they sometimes had to choose between dependency on a male breadwinner and/or dependency on the state. Yet the realities of women's participation in the labour force did not correspond to dominant ideologies of domesticity. During periods of economic demand for additional labour, or when a single 'breadwinning' income proved insufficient to the maintenance of the family unit, or where the desire for new experiences outside of housework and childrearing arose, women sometimes entered

Critical and Comparative Perspectives, ed. Joanne Conaghan and Kerry Rittich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 261-287.

⁵⁶ Joan Acker, "Class, Gender, and the Relations of Distribution," *Signs* 13.3 (1988), 489-90. See also *Social Security in Canada*. Government of Canada: Ministry of Health and Welfare, Policy and Program Development and Coordination Branch, 1974.

⁵⁷ See, for example: Wendy McKeen, *Money in Their Own Name: The Feminist Voice in Poverty Debate in Canada, 1970-1995* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Margaret Little, *'No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit': The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Marjorie Griffith Cohen and Jane Pulkingham, "Introduction: Going Too Far? Feminist Public Policy in Canada," *Public Policy for Women: The State, Income Security, and Labour Market Issues*, ed. Marjorie Griffith Cohen and Jane Pulkingham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

the labour force and sought paid employment. The continuity of strong normative assumptions about the gender contract meant that women's labour force participation was regarded in law and policy as temporary and merely supplementary to that of an assumed male breadwinner. Women rarely achieved the same status, in terms of employment protections and benefits, as their male counterparts, even when performing equally 'productive' work.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s, women's increasing labour force participation began to erode the stability of the postwar gender contract as the normative basis for organizing social reproduction. These tensions had several outcomes. The liberal- and socialist- factions within the second wave feminist movement demanded equity in the sphere of employment through policies such as equal pay, equal opportunity in hiring and promotions, as well as access to unemployment insurance and pensions.⁵⁸ Here, women's groups used formal state channels, though often with mixed success, in providing for the right of women to be fully participating members of the labour force through policies designed to help women achieve formal gender parity with men in the labour market.⁵⁹ But as gains were made with respect to equality in employment, it was increasingly the case that an additional set of policies to address the changing gender contract around caregiving would need to be implemented. Maternity provisions at the

⁵⁸ Judy Fudge and Patricia McDermott, ed., *Just wages: A Feminist Assessment of Pay Equity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

⁵⁹ See Porter, Annis May Timson, *Driven Apart: Women's Employment Equality and Child Care in Canadian Public Policy* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001); Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, "Lessons from Pay Equity," *Studies in Political Economy* 32 (Spring 1990): 29-54.

national and provincial level, although introduced early in the twentieth century to address concerns about maternal and child health, took on a different tenor in the postwar period.⁶⁰ By the 1970s, all provinces and territories had implemented statutory entitlements for maternity leave and the federal government had introduced a maternity benefits scheme to provide income replacement to new mothers. Yet the program was by no means universal, and policymakers routinely ignored demands for a more generous system of parental leave and a national childcare program.⁶¹

Efforts to support women's equality in paid and unpaid work were slowed by a series of recessions that began in the early 1970s, which altered significantly the culture of domestic policymaking. The rise of neoliberalism as a dominant economic paradigm, and the call for greater coordination between national priorities and international monetary policies, had significant effects on Canadian labour market, both in terms of the nature of production and the scope of policies designed to protect the health and welfare of workers.⁶² The shift from a 'Fordist' to 'flexible' production model was generally regarded as a 'necessary' strategy to maintain productive capacity. Actions by

⁶⁰Shelley Phipps, "Working for Working Parents: The Evolution of Maternity and Parental Benefits in Canada," *Choices* (Ottawa: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2006): 9-10; Monica Townson, *A National System of Fully-Paid Parental Leave for Canada: Policy Choices, Costs and Funding Mechanisms*. Ottawa: Women's Bureau, Labour Canada, 1983.

⁶¹ See for example Sonya Michel and Rianne Mahon, ed., *Child Care Policy at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁶² Janine Brodie, *Politics on the Margins: Restructuring and the Canadian Women's Movement* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1995); Isabella Bakker, ed., *The Strategic Silence: Gender and Economic Policy* (New York: Zed Books, 1994); Isabella Bakker, ed., *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

firms to reduce labour costs, such as eroding wages and benefits, contracting out work, hiring workers on a temporary basis, and/or outsourcing work to low-wage regions, all radically altered postwar employment norms around working time and leisure. While policies had historically oscillated between protecting workers and protecting the interests of business, by the 1970s they had decidedly swung in favour of capital. The dismantling of the postwar social compact between labour and capital resulted in a context in which workers and workers' organizations held far less power than in previous decades.⁶³ Since that time, neoliberal ideologies have infiltrated policies and policymaking practices, such as through those designed to reduce barriers to foreign investment, loosen economic and labour regulations, privatize crown corporations and government agencies, offload responsibility for social welfare to lower levels of government and families, as well as reduce and casualize the workforce in the federal public sector.⁶⁴

The turn in social policy developments from active management of the health of workers and families⁶⁵ halted many of the gains of the second wave feminist movement. The resulting re-privatization of social reproduction has reinforced a traditional gendered

⁶³ Leo Panitch and Donald Schwartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms* (Toronto: Garamond, 2003) 183.

⁶⁴ Daniel Drache and Méric S. Gertler, ed. *The Era of New Global Competition: State Policy and Market Power* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Gary Teeple and Stephen McBride, ed. *Relations of Global Power: Neoliberal Order and Disorder* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

⁶⁵ See for example, Carol T. Baines, Patricia M. Evans and Sheila M. Neysmith, ed. *Women's Caring: Feminist Perspectives on Social Welfare* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998).

division of labour and has contributed to women's continuing peripheral status in the labour market. Atypical employment arrangements have become a de facto solution to the problem of combining work and care, where employers' need for 'flexibility' in the workforce has come to be conflated with 'flexible' working time arrangements to support caregiving.⁶⁶ Since the 1970s, many women have opted for 'flex'-hours and part-time employment in an effort to continue the unpaid work necessary for social reproduction, despite the economic penalties and lack of career advancement associated with these arrangements.⁶⁷ For others, fulfilling the demands of full-time employment and caregiving in combination with contemporary work cultures where long hours are often the norm in certain sectors, has given rise to new 'work-life balance' concerns. Thus in recent decades, efforts to regulate social reproduction through working time and leisure provisions have become tangled with a range of other social issues and policies. Yet the call to develop a more comprehensive parental leave scheme, a national childcare strategy, or another initiative that would help redistribute unpaid work between men and women, remain largely ignored at the federal level.

This dissertation aims to contribute to feminist scholarship examining the

⁶⁶ Fudge, 279.

⁶⁷ David Broad, "The Illusion of Choice: Economic Restructuring, Flexibility and Security: Employment Standards for Part-Time Workers," *Saskatchewan Law Review* 67 (2004): 556; Christopher Higgins, Linda Duxbury, and Karen Lea Johnson, "Part-time Work for Women: Does it Really Help Balance Work and Family?" *Human Resource Management* 39.1 (2000): 17-32. On working time and economic restructuring see "Vivian Shalla, "Shifting Temporalities: Economic Restructuring at the Politics of Working Time," *Work in Tumultuous Times: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Vivian Shalla and Wallace Clement (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007) 226-261.

management of social reproduction through state policies, with an emphasis on work, leisure, and work-life balance.⁶⁸ The approach I develop in this study probes the idea of ‘balance’ itself as it is used to stabilize the some of the tensions between paid and unpaid work within the specific organization of capitalism in Canada. While some important scholarship has developed different ways of exploring dominant work-life balance discourses, I explore specifically how various policies have regulated time and work-discipline at different historical moments, and how these have been shaped by dominant gender and class ideologies, as well as local political struggles.

Analytical Approach

Recent research citing the importance of *work-life balance* has tended to suggest that it is possible and desirable for individual workers to achieve optimal health and harmony between competing life demands through individual lifestyle choices, irrespective of changes in the labour market or the organization of paid and unpaid work. By contrast to studies that understand work-life balance as largely an individual matter, or a potential conflict that must be negotiated between workers and their employers, I probe the social and systemic nature of work-work conflict. I examine the changing contributions of public policies to mediating the tensions facing working Canadians and

⁶⁸ It also seeks to add to critical literature on work-life balance in Canada that remains thin. Some important exceptions include: Michelle Brady, “Absences and Silences in the Production of Work-Life Balance Policies in Canada,” *Studies in Political Economy* 81 (2008): 99-127; Martha MacDonald, Shelley Phipps, and Lynn Lethbridge, “Taking Its Toll: The Influence of Paid and Unpaid Work on Women’s Well-Being,” *Feminist Economics* 11.1 (2005): 63-94; Diane-Gabrielle Tremblay, “Quebec Policies for Work-Family Balance: A Model for Canada?” *Public Policy for Women: The State, Income Security, and Labour Market Issues*, ed. Marjorie Griffith Cohen and Jane Pulkingham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

the ability of new policies to help workers make meaningful choices about the direction of their working lives. The study explores three distinct but inter-related questions. First, how have working time and leisure policies been used as a strategy for managing social reproduction? Second, how have broader economic ideologies shaped the policy environment and the choice of mechanisms used to undertake the regulation of working time and leisure at provincial and national levels? Third, how do gender ideologies inform the scope and character of policies adopted, and what are the implications of such policy choices for women today? Collectively, these research questions aim to explore the historical development of policies aimed at regulating work and well-being by probing the assumptions about time- and work-discipline and the gendered organization of paid and unpaid work which underlie the *types of questions* about the healthy reproduction of workers that are asked in policy arenas, as well as the *actions* taken by governments. I simultaneously explore the relationship between the gendered organization social reproduction in Canada and social programs aimed at improving the health and welfare of the working population. I therefore trace some of the key themes found in the recent work-life balance literature. Specifically, I examine the relationship between work-life balance and leisure activity and healthy lifestyle, the changing nature and organization of paid and unpaid work, and the promotion of self-help and other individualized strategies to cope with work-work conflict.

The empirical dimension of this work traces the emergence of a gendered framework for 'leisure/lifestyle' regulation through an examination of four eras: early federal legislation on physical fitness and sport (1950s-1960s); ParticipACTION (1970s);

employee fitness experiments (1980s-1990s); and HRSDC's Work/Life Balance Strategy (2000s). My analysis of these federal programs probes the continuities and changes in the state's management of the tensions between labour and capital at different historical moments, especially in view of dominant economic ideologies shaping the broader policy environment and changes to federal and provincial working time standards. In building a feminist political economy framework, my research is concerned with bringing gender to the fore, despite its absence, by showing how it has implicitly informed the scope and character of leisure policy as successive programs have attempted to fasten the regulation of healthy lifestyle to the standard employment relationship by enlisting different actors in program delivery. By foregrounding gender dynamics that are often obscured through traditional analyses of labour power, labour policy and labour markets, the study aims to expand our understanding of the relationships between the changing temporal dimensions of work, efforts to manage the new realities of the labour market through the institutions of the state, and the ways in which the approaches adopted affect both the health and the daily and intergenerational reproduction of workers over time.

Policies regulating sport, fitness and health

This study is concerned fundamentally with examining the ways in which successive federal governments have used the regulation of leisure as a way to facilitate the healthy reproduction of workers. As such, I seek to unearth an area of public policy that has

received little attention by political scientists and political economists in particular.⁶⁹

While sports and fitness policies may, at first glance, appear to have little to do with employment standards, my analysis aims to show how early leisure policies emerged in tandem with the standardization of working time and how such policies provided the basic framework for regulating the work/life relationship over the 20th century.

The notion that leisure could be used to support better health outcomes and to buttress the ill effects of the growth of industrial capitalism led policymakers to employ a range of measures in its practices of regulation. The practices I examine in this study include the creation of an arms-lengths sports promotion agency, the use of partnerships with employers, and the promotion of healthy lifestyle practices. In examining changing notions and priorities related to fitness policy, I have thus remained attentive to trends and developments in the field of public health policy. While this study does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of the history of public health in Canada, I do consider developments that bear significance on the growth of fitness policies. In doing so, the research is sensitive to the fact that health discourses are, as Ann Robertson explains, “always attached to other interests and agendas – professional, economic political, cultural, ideological – ...they also function as repositories and mirrors of our ideas and beliefs about human nature and the nature of reality, as well as about the kind of society

⁶⁹ An important exception is Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

we can imagine creating and how best to achieve it.”⁷⁰ It is therefore not coincidental that the individualization of fitness and work/life balance is tied to the emergence of a dominant public health paradigm that understands wealth creation “as a precursor to producing good health,” while overlooking the “social forces that produce and reproduce poverty and inequality.”⁷¹ These distinct perspectives on health care inform both the choice of policy instrument used to regulate fitness through leisure, and the overall objectives attached to various policies. Paradoxically, as the rhetoric of individual choice embedded in the leisure discourse has grown stronger and more prominent over the course of the twentieth century certain macro level changes have made self management of the work/leisure interface more difficult. Despite the expansion of niche markets for goods and services designed to facilitate healthy lifestyle, changes in the nature of working time, important shifts in the gendered organization of social reproduction, and declining power of organized labour to advocate on behalf of working people have placed new constraints on individuals and households.

This study explores these themes through an in-depth examination of four federal policies and/or programs. The first is a series of Acts regulating fitness that emerged halfway through the 20th century. These Acts established the federal government’s commitment to regulating fitness through leisure. The second is the ParticipACTION

⁷⁰ Ann Robertson “Shifting discourses on health in Canada: from health promotion to population health.” *Health Promotion International* 13.2 1998: 155 (155-166).

⁷¹ Michael Orsini “Discourses in Distress: From ‘Health Promotion’ to ‘Population Health’ to ‘You are Responsible for Your Own Health,’ *Critical Policy Studies: Contemporary Canadian Approaches*, ed. Michael Orsini and Miriam Smith (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) 354.

program - a collaborative community-based health promotion program initiated by the federal Department of Health and Welfare in 1969 in cooperation with the provincial governments, sports programs, employers, unions, and the women's movement. Tracing the development of this program, which was aimed at encouraging Canadians to become more physically active in their daily lives, I examine key changes to programming during its over 30 year history between 1969-2001. A key focus of my analysis is the program's increasing use of private sector co-operation and related shifts in the targets of intervention over time. The data collection for this research was undertaken in 2007 at the ParticipACTION Archives at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. There, I consulted all text-based program materials available at the Archives as well as all available media clippings, including print, radio and television advertisements. I also found it useful to consult digital materials available on the ParticipACTION Archives Online. While in Saskatoon, I conducted interviews (see Appendix A) with former members of the ParticipACTION Executive Board. I contextualize the program by placing its historical development within the context of policy conferences, taskforces, and other policy documents produced by the federal Department of Health and Welfare between 1960 and 2006.

I proceed to examine how sport and fitness policies were used as a platform by the federal government to promote healthy lifestyle in the workplace. Through an examination of policy debates in the field of sport and fitness, and the subsequent promotion of worker wellness programming through employee fitness experiments, I

show how fitness programming moved from a community-centred activity to one narrowly focused the health of firms and the production of healthy bodies fit for work.

Lastly, I examine Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Work/Life Balance Strategy. By contrast to ParticipACTION's explicit emphasis on individual, community and collective health and welfare, the aim of the Work/Life Balance Strategy is the promotion of individual self-help strategies, aided through increased consumption of lifestyle commodities, and explicit calls for human resource initiatives such as voluntary firm-based family-friendly programs, flexible scheduling and worker wellness programs. I attempt to situate the choice of policy mechanism advanced by the Work/Life Balance Strategy in historical context by linking the progression of certain ideas from ParticipACTION to Work/Life Balance in policy discourse. The primary data for this case study are policy papers distributed by Health Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and associated studies undertaken by consultants.

Taken together, my analysis of these programs reveals that much of the work-life balance discourse, although prompted in part by the long-hours culture and the increasingly anachronistic role of employment standards governing working hours, has borrowed heavily from earlier health-promotion schemes – such as ParticipACTION – to devise strategies to produce healthy workers. In so doing, efforts to promote work-life balance have tended to individualize problems related to conflicts over time in such a way as to hold individuals responsible for their own health, albeit with some prodding of firms to take steps to implement human resources programs to look after their employees. Moreover, the shift from a commitment to statutory protections for

workers and families to a purely informative or promotion-based strategy encouraging individuals and firms to undertake voluntary initiatives is linked to the rise of neoliberal policymaking practices, which hold that privatized solutions⁷² (whether through the individual purchase of lifestyle commodities, local do-it-yourself strategies, or corporate social responsibility in human resource management) are the most effective and efficient route to the production of a healthy population. The main strategy used by policymakers to ‘sell’ this idea to the private sector has been that steps taken to promote healthy lifestyle at work will ultimately be beneficial to firms who will profit from happy healthy workers through reduced absenteeism and employee turnover (i.e. work-discipline), both of which are costly to firms. In a sense, the regulation of work and leisure time has moved from a strategy focused on selling fitness at leisure to workers on behalf of employers, to a strategy aimed at selling the idea of leisure to employers in exchange for the prospect of fitness. Yet neither strategy has effectively addressed the work-work conflict – the root tension between paid work and unpaid work – at the centre of the work-life balance issue.

The legal regulation of working time and leisure

This study attempts to integrate the historical development of working time policies with an analysis of fitness policies in an attempt to understand further the gendered regulation of social reproduction. Working time standards, although significant to the development of the working time regime in the postwar period, give us only a

⁷² That is, solutions that the federal government does not pay for or pays only minimally for.

partial understanding of the state's role in regulating leisure. Increasingly, policy debates on the subject of healthy working time are no longer focused on the regulation of work through statutes, but rather on discussions of work-life balance and the ability of individuals to self manage both their work and health. One of the central arguments put forward herein is that the trends and developments within these two policy areas (working time standards and leisure regulation) be analyzed together to illustrate how policies have tried to regulate the relationship between work and health. Consistent with Leslie Pal's contention that "policies rarely tackle single problems," but rather "deal with clusters of entangled problems that have many contradictory solutions," I seek to expand our understanding of what constitutes the working time regime by incorporating a range of complementary policies intended to regulate leisure time use.

I examine the growth and transformation of working time and leisure time protections, as they have been extended to workers through federal and provincial/territorial employment standards legislation. Since most workers protected by minimum employment standards are covered under provincial legislation, I have chosen to look broadly at developments across Canada, rather than analyze only those provisions extended to federal workers. The aim is to sketch general trends in such legislation, particularly as changes relate to broader policy developments occurring elsewhere in labour policy, although many detailed changes are indeed noted throughout the study. The specific provisions under examination include hours of work provisions on a daily and weekly basis (including maximum hours, overtime premiums, and minimum daily and weekly rest periods) and entitlements to paid time off work (including general or

statutory holidays and paid vacations). Some attention is also paid to provisions for unpaid leaves, although more consideration is given to legislation fixing maximum hours and minimum vacation time since the key objective is to trace the normative dimensions of working time and leisure provisions.

Bernstein et al. note that regulatory regimes are not monolithic but consist of many sub-regimes divided by jurisdiction and by subject.⁷³ My research on working time and leisure time regulation through employment standards legislation and public health policies aims to provide a comprehensive account of the development of such provisions across numerous jurisdictions. Canada has been described as a quasi-federal system, with many points of overlap between different jurisdictions.⁷⁴ Even though Canada's first employment standards were initiated at the provincial level, by the mid-1960s federal labour standards had become a pacesetter in most areas in setting new standards for a modern workforce. More recently, debates about the effectiveness of employment standards legislation have emerged at the federal policy level (and these are central to the argument developed in Chapter Four). My discussion of the regulation of leisure activities, however, is for the most part limited to federal initiatives. This chosen focus reflects my primary objective, which is to illustrate how discourses on lifestyle and

⁷³ Stephanie Bernstein et al., "Precarious Employment and the Law's Flaws: Identifying Regulatory Failure and Securing Effective Protection for Workers," *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada*, ed. Leah F. Vosko (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2006) 206.

⁷⁴ Gregory J. Inwood, "Federalism, Globalization and the (Anti-) Social Union," *Restructuring and Resistance: Canadian Public Policy in an Age of Global Capitalism*, ed. Mike Burke, Colin Moores, and John Shields (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000) 127.

leisure posited a normative framework for policy development at the federal level that was intended to produce specific outcomes at different sites (the firm, the household, and the individual, for example). More importantly, my main concern is to understand how these ‘leisure’ policies contributed to the regulation of social reproduction, and this would not be possible without an analysis of welfare state development. As Barbara Cameron has explained, in the postwar period, the federal state was directly responsible for brokering the interests between capital and organized labour and important assumptions about social reproduction were built into this compromise.⁷⁵ Although my focus is to explore the relationship between federal level ‘leisure’ policies and social reproduction, this does not preclude the merit of further study on the ways in which ideas about leisure were taken up at the provincial level.

Three key sources provide the data for this analysis. The first source is the *Labour Gazette*, a monthly report of the federal Department of Labour. This publication provides detailed updates on the adoption of minimum employment standards in all Canadian labour jurisdictions prior to 1978, the year in which the report ceased publication. I consulted all monthly publications between 1950 and 1978. The *Labour Gazette* also contains a number of articles on trends in Canadian workplaces and in industrial relations. These articles are used to sketch the general discourse on work and leisure at different historical moments. To continue to track changes to employment

⁷⁵ Barbara Cameron, “Social Reproduction and Canadian Federalism,” *Social Reproduction: Feminist Political Economy Challenges Neo-Liberalism*, ed. Kate Bezanson and Meg Luxton (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2006): 45-74.

standards legislation after 1978, I studied annual editions of the *Canadian Master Labour Guide*, a comprehensive compilation of employment law across all Canadian jurisdictions, between 1979 and 2006. Lastly, I surveyed a number of Task Force reports commissioned by governments since WWII to examine the issues surrounding protections at employment.

In attempting to trace the emergence of the Canadian working time regime by examining the adoption of hours of work and vacations legislation over the course of the twentieth century, in some chapters, I examine actions taken to mediate the tension between the push by workers and their unions to further reduce working time and the call from employers for greater flexibility in working time arrangements. Although my research traces the genesis of standards over the early twentieth century, employment standards were not consolidated until after WWII as part of the social compact and dominant economic ideologies of the time. My aim is to document post WWII developments, though I do, in Chapter One, discuss some important precursors to postwar policies. In Chapters Three and Four, my discussion of the evolving working time regime shifts somewhat to examine how new ways of working – especially the growth of ‘nonstandard’ work – began to undermine the (always emphasized) idea of ‘standard’ hours.⁷⁶ I discuss how the growing segmentation of the labour market was

⁷⁶ Leah Vosko has described some of the elements of this normative form of employment as it developed in the Canadian context. It assumed a “lifelong, continuous, full employment relationship where the worker has one employer and normally works on the employer’s premises or under his or her direct supervisions. ... Its essential elements came to include an indeterminate employment contract, adequate social benefits that complete the social wage, the existence of a single employer, reasonable hours and full-time, full-year employment, frequently but not

reflected in the polarization of working time, where certain jobs and sectors became associated with a long-hours culture and others with underemployment and precariousness. Particular attention is paid to the shift to flexible working time and the ways in which these arrangements have been marketed to working women a practical way to combine work and care.

Women's employment, unpaid work and the working time regime

This dissertation initiates a third line of inquiry aimed at examining how assumptions about the gendered division of labour underlie efforts to regulate work and leisure. Integrating the insights of feminist political economists, I attempt to show how an analysis of the state's interventions in regulating work and health – whether through working time or fitness policies – cannot be understood fully without attention to the changing gendered division of paid and unpaid work since the 1950s. I examine how policies that, on their surface may seem gender-neutral, produce gendered outcomes (ie. reinforce leisure and healthy lifestyle for male breadwinners) when understood in the context of increased rates of labour force participation among women, the persistence of gender ideology that views household and reproductive tasks as an inherently female domain, the rise of flexible work-time schedules aimed primarily at serving the needs of working women, and related trends towards the feminization of employment⁷⁷ that have given rise to particular forms of gendered precarious employment. Each chapter

necessarily, in a unionized sector.” See *Temporary Work: The Gendered Rise of a Precarious Employment Relationship* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) 15; 24.

⁷⁷ Vosko, “Rethinking Feminization.”

highlights how policy choices implicitly assume a male breadwinner/female caregiver gender contract and shows how Canada's working time regime has been based upon a model of employment that is male-centred. Policies regulating working time and leisure have assumed that workers are 'unencumbered' by familial and household responsibilities, and are silent about the situation of single-parent households. Given that the economic and social contexts in which leisure is promoted have changed quite dramatically in recent decades, I seek to explore how and in what ways the regulation and promotion of healthy lifestyle for workers has shifted or remained static over time – and what these changes tell us about the shifting organization of political and economic power its implications for gender equality in Canada.

Chapter Outline

Studying the evolution of a gendered framework for regulating healthy lifestyle since WWII calls for a detailed examination of the strategies used by successive federal governments for managing working time and leisure. To this end, the remainder of this study is divided into four chapters, each of which examines a set of federal policy debates in an effort to uncover continuities and changes in dominant attitudes about the work/leisure relationship through the lens of policy choices used to regulate leisure and healthy lifestyle. The objective to reveal the various methods of promoting time- and work-discipline that have drawn upon and subsequently reproduce and reinforce gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work. Examining the interconnections between these two areas – leisure policies and social reproduction – demonstrates how the ongoing concern among policymakers for the health and well-being of the Canadian

population has focused largely on regulating the daily practices of paid employees, a practice that is reaching its limits in new approaches to work-life balance.

Chapter 1 traces the historical evolution of a Canadian working time regime by tracing efforts to regulate working time and leisure prior to 1968. The central argument of this chapter is that the 'fitness' policies that emerged mid-century were shaped largely by developments in working time legislation and that such policies should be understood as a key feature of this regime. The chapter opens with a brief sketch of the earliest provincial and federal employment standards in Canada, showing how various governments responded to the demands of organized labour for better working conditions by setting maximum daily, weekly, and annual hours at paid work. I review policy debates surrounding the passage of the nation's earliest legislation regulating "fitness", and examine the relationship between the mass expansion of leisure time and the creation of policies promoting fitness, recreation and sport as a means to shape 'private' leisure time activity. Despite the gender-neutral discourse that framed early fitness debates, the use of the employment relationship as a vehicle to maintain work-discipline through physical activity were gendered insofar as they laid the foundation for working time and leisure regulations based on a male norm - implicitly targeting men.

Chapter 2 continues to trace the evolution of federal sports policies alongside the growth of leisure time. I examine the creation of ParticipACTION, an arms-length not-for-profit social marketing organization, and situate its emergence within the social, political and economic context of the 1960s. Consulting policy debates about whether to pursue a sports *or* fitness agenda moving forward into the 1960s, the chapter reveals how

the expansion of leisure time, the strength of the labour movement, and the emergence of public health care significantly shaped new policy directions; efforts to promote fitness were sensitive to a social context in which earlier arguments about the disciplinary function of fitness would be out of favour with working people. The creation of ParticipACTION marks the introduction of information-based policies designed to persuade Canadian men towards fitness. While the evolution of the ParticipACTION program reveals a number of grassroots and community-building activities to support participation in physical activity, I show how the discourse on leisure and fitness disseminated in early advertisements – the primary mode of promoting ParticipACTION initiatives – suggest the continuity of efforts targeting Canadian men.

Chapter 3 traces the origins of concerns about work-life balance through the changing approach to fitness regulation initiated by a series of pilot employee fitness programs undertaken by the federal government in partnership with employers during the 1980s. The chapter analyzes how and why the federal government opted to enlist employers in programming addressing new concerns about the health of workers. This concern marked a departure from the commitment made to developing a community-centred fitness promotion agenda at the onset of the 1970s. The use of employee fitness programming undermined the basic goals of community leisure development and instead encouraged a wave of initiatives targeting individual sedentary workers and their passive lifestyles at home and at work. An important paradox emerges in this period: while employee fitness programs explicitly targeted men in white- and later blue-collar industries, women participated overwhelmingly in these programs. Policy officials were

forced to acknowledge the effects of paid and unpaid work on women's leisure time and healthy lifestyle practices. Moreover, enlisting employers in program delivery meant that only those women whose employment situation mirrored those of men could access newly established voluntary firm-based initiatives.

Covering the 1990s to 2006, Chapter 4 explores the most recent set of changes to the organization of fitness policies through an analysis of the transition from the activities of ParticipACTION and employee fitness programs to HRSDC's work/life balance strategy. By the 1990s, ParticipACTION was fighting for its own survival. The organization suffered major setbacks as a result of new trends in advertising and communications. The rise of a long-hours culture meant that fewer people had time to invest in fitness activities and practices of fiscal restraint through a prolonged period of economic downturn meant that companies had fewer resources to 'sponsor' worker wellness programming. ParticipACTION's inability to meaningfully establish a long-term public-private partnership meant that the program was basically defunct by 2001. The chapter proceeds to examine the initiation of HRSDC's work-life balance campaign in the early 2000s. This strategy, the most recent attempt to regulate the work/leisure relationship, promotes employee self-help, the consumption of individualized and marketized lifestyle commodities, direct employee-employer bargaining for flexible work-arrangements, and endorses the use of voluntary employer-sponsored family-friendly and workplace wellness programs by firms. The significance of these latter initiatives is underscored in recent policy discussions that probe how federal employment standards can be amended to promote work-life balance. The chapter questions the

efficacy of current work-life balance programs by examining the misfit between their core assumptions about working time and social reproduction and the changing nature of paid and unpaid work in Canada. Although the tensions facing women who combine paid and unpaid work have come to the fore in the work-life balance debates more than any other policy initiated in the postwar period, longstanding gender ideologies continue to thwart attempts to address healthy reproduction on a daily and intergenerational basis through leisure promotion.

Taken together, these chapters explore the ways in which the contradictions of the labour process under capitalism have been managed in formal state arenas, and specifically, the gendered consequences of various policy debates and decisions. The developments I trace point to messy nature of policymaking – that is, how at times the state may be seen to support directly and overtly the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, while at other times state policies, in response to pressure from subordinate social groups, appear to go against the short term interests of capital or specific sections of it. For example, in efforts to support (predominantly male) Canadians through the establishment of decent hours of paid work, regular time off, the promotion of healthy physical activities at leisure, and now work-life balance. My examination of fitness and employment regulation policies in different periods allow us to see through the messiness both change and the underlying persistence of gendered divisions and capitalist logic, including or perhaps especially, the emphasis on the individual productive worker. In spite of some progressive efforts, state processes and policies, in recent years, have come to favour overwhelmingly the health of capital over the health of

workers. This shift has become more acute since the late 1970s, as neoliberal economic ideologies have increasingly informed federal policymaking practices.

This study demonstrates how policymakers have attempted to ‘support’ social reproduction through policies designed to promote time-discipline through the self-regulation of healthy lifestyles. While much of the study examines changes in the vehicles through which such federal strategies have promoted time- and work-discipline, one of the key continuities is the focus on the individual paid worker. This approach to regulating the *daily lifestyles of paid workers* assumes the availability of unpaid domestic and care labour. Since WWII, policies to support a healthy work/life relationship have been predicated on assumptions about gendered divisions of labour and the flexibility of women’s labour. Federal policies have thus continued to obscure questions about the gendered organization of social reproduction. These assumptions and omissions continue to hamper efforts to address meaningfully new concerns about work-life balance in Canada.

Chapter One: “Eight Hours Sleep, Eight Hours Rest, Eight Hours Play”: The Emergence of a Gendered Approach to Regulating Work and Leisure

In a democratic country like ours the discipline necessary for the maintenance of order must be self-inspired rather than imposed from the outside. The society in which we live demands from the individual a greater measure of self-control. Man must learn to bend his will and conform his actions to the needs of the common weal. In fact, his happiness and success in life are conditioned, to a large extent, by his ability to integrate himself in the life of the community. In many ways, the practice of sports contributes to instill into the soul that internal discipline which is the best guarantee of success and happiness.⁷⁸

– Hon. Lion Chevrier, Member of Parliament,

1960

Since the early 1960s, sport and physical fitness policies have provided a vehicle through which to regulate and promote 'healthy lifestyles' and 'healthy leisure' among working Canadians. Although the expansion of fitness and lifestyle programs did not accelerate until the 1970s, many basic ideas about the relationship between work and leisure were established in earlier decades. While existing historical accounts of such interventions have emphasized the cultural and institutional underpinnings of early 'leisure' policies,⁷⁹ this chapter lays the groundwork for this study as a whole by

⁷⁸ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1): 8838.

⁷⁹ For an overview of the cultural development of Canadian sport policy see, for example, Ann Hall et al. ed., *Sport in Canadian Society* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991). On the institutional organization of sport in Canada, see Eric Broom and Rick Baka, *Canadian Governments and Sport* (Calgary: CAHPER, 1979); James L. Gear, “Factors Influencing the Development of Government Sponsored Physical Fitness Programs in Canada from 1850 to 1972,” Paper Presented at The Third Canadian Symposium on History of Sport and Physical Education, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Aug. 19-21, 1974; David MacIntosh, Tom Bedecki, and CES Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement Since 1961* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988); Elsie Marie McFarland, *The Development of Public Recreation in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Parks/Recreation Association, 1970); and J. Thomas West, “Physical Fitness, Sport and the Federal Government 1909 to 1954,” Paper Presented at The Third Canadian Symposium on History of Sport and Physical Education,

initiating a feminist political economy analysis of some of the earliest attempts at regulating fitness. I situate early debates about leisure and leisure time-use against the backdrop of emerging efforts by the state to regulate the labour market during the post-WWII era, and argue that certain forms of regulation be understood as a strategy used by state officials for promoting work-discipline in the community at large, particularly in a context where certain groups were assumed to have 'free' time. This interpretation reveals the gendered nature of early fitness policies, despite their gender-neutral discourse emphasizing the importance of mass democratic participation in physical activity. Early policies were also highly individualistic, even though as the opening quotation suggests, policymakers were mindful of the broader social context in which individuals worked and lived. Nevertheless, the mid-century vision of leisure regulation upheld individual self-discipline as a primary means to maintain fitness, and was premised on a dichotomous understanding of the waking day as comprised only of paid working time and free time, thus obscuring time spent, mainly by women, in unpaid work. Even though women were not formally excluded from discussions of health and fitness, the promotion of physical fitness during 'free' time, without any serious consideration of the content of this 'free' time or how such time was distributed between men and women, meant that early policy attempts to encourage individuals to use their

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Aug. 19-21, 1974. Bruce Kidd's *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* and the edited collections *Leisure, Sport and Working-class Cultures* and *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology* contain several articles that examine the intersection of culture and class in Canadian sport, with some attention to the historical development of federal-level sports policy.

time in ways that would make them better citizens – and ultimately better workers – implicitly targeted working men.⁸⁰

My analysis develops in three stages. First, I sketch the backdrop against which fitness policies emerged by tracing the development of Canada's working time regime and the consolidation of a normative model of employment based on a 'full' employment objective. In doing so, I show how legal restrictions on hours of work and provisions for vacation time were used as a method of managing conflicts over standards of living between labour and capital by attempting to ensure decent work. Second, I trace a

⁸⁰ My focus on the regulation of work and leisure as an entry point into a larger discussion of the state's concern with managing social reproduction does not mean to overshadow the significance of historical work, employing both discursive and materialist frameworks, examining leisure from the perspective of moral regulation. For an overview of important work in this area see Alan Hunt, *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Amanda Glasbeek, Ed. *Moral Regulation and Governance in Canada: History, Context, and Critical Issues* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2006); Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), nor is it meant to suggest that the state was the only or primary actor concerned with regulating the 'free' time of individuals. The agendas of a variety of moral reformers, such as religious institutions, charities, or philanthropic organizations (See for example: Little, 1998; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small-town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996)) operating in a number of institutional settings (schools and hospitals, for example) both pre-dated and underscored concerns about leisure time expansion in federal policy arenas. Two important illustrations are concerns about alcohol consumption (Robert Campbell, "Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-1954" *Labour/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999); Dan Malleck, *Try to Control Yourself: The Regulation of Public Drinking in Post-Prohibition Ontario, 1927-1944* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012); Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2004)) and sexuality (Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001). Nevertheless, my concern in this chapter is to establish that work-discipline was a welcomed and anticipated outcome of leisure regulation, albeit one with gendered underpinnings.

complementary pillar of Canada's emergent working time regime through the examination of House of Commons debates leading up to the adoption of Bill C-131, *An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport*. The emergence of working time norms emerged in tandem with provisions for leisure time. Early actions were focused on legitimating the state's role in regulating leisure by establishing centralized administration of fitness policies, while later efforts focused on the promotion of individual self-regulation of fitness. I conclude by exploring the gendered nature of this working time regime. The intersection of work and fitness policies shows how early interventions in the lives of Canadians – designed to encourage work-discipline through the production of bodies fit for work – served to lay the groundwork for an approach to regulating leisure and working time that, from the outset, obscured the tension between paid and unpaid work. While not typically conceived of as 'temporal' policies, I argue that it is crucial to understand sport and fitness policies attempts to encourage individuals to use time outside of the workplace in ways that facilitate work-discipline. Tracing debates surrounding the passage of these Acts through federal Parliament reveals how policies designed to encourage 'fitness' signal an important attempt by policymakers to influence the use of 'free' time, often with the goal of developing of a disciplined labour force.

Canada's Early Working Time Regime and the Promise of Leisure Time

In the 20th century a distinctive *working time regime* emerged in Canada, where working time restrictions and leisure provisions have come to form a central feature of the modern employment relationship. Working time regimes refer to broad constellations

of laws, policies and practices designed to regulate time use, including a variety of “legal, voluntary, and customary regulations which influence particular working time practices,” including, but not limited to, “daily and weekly working hours, shifts, overtime premia, vacation leaves, and public paid holidays.”⁸¹ Especially during the “golden years of labour market regulation” following WWII, labour standards regulating the temporal dimensions of work contributed to the stabilization of the standard employment relationship⁸² as a normative model of employment. In what follows, I trace the emergence of Canada’s working time regime, with particular attention to developments in the immediate postwar period.⁸³

My analysis begins with an examination of the early enactment of employment standards governing working time. Around the turn of the 20th century, employment standards legislation emerged to address a central long-standing inequality in the labour market – the unequal bargaining power of employers and workers in establishing employment contracts. Responding to early labour movements by recognizing the potential for exploitation of labour through long hours of work, the introduction of labour legislation represented a central effort by policymakers to regulate imbalances in the

⁸¹ See Jill Rubery, Mark Smith, and Colette Fagan, “National Working-Time Regimes and Equal Opportunities,” *Feminist Economics* 4(1998): 72. Quoted in Fudge, 266.

⁸² Vosko, *Temporary Work*, 24.

⁸³ The aim is to broadly sketch the construction of temporal norms governing work, and as such my analysis is limited to the *enactment*, by various legislatures, laws and policies regulating working time. However, the focus on legislative activity is not intended to diminish the importance of collective movements and struggles by workers and to secure decent working time standards.

labour market and “secure an irreducible ‘floor of rights’” for employees.⁸⁴ Together with international conventions, provincial and federal employment standards helped form the evolving labour market by providing “socially acceptable” minimum working conditions.⁸⁵ Moreover, they played “an important role in shaping broader norms of employment,” providing “an important indicator of change” as they expanded and contracted throughout history in response to organized interests and broad transformations in the economy.⁸⁶

Regulating Working Time Through Employment Standards

Historically in Canada statutes regulating employment have fallen under provincial jurisdiction, though important, often pace-setting, legislation emerged at times to regulate the federal public sector. Prior to the introduction of the Canada Labour Code governing federally regulated employment contracts, in 1964, existing legislation to establish working time norms lacked uniformity and comprised a series of piecemeal provincial statutes. Early efforts to regulate working time in Canada, such as the Factory and Shops Acts of Ontario and Manitoba in 1884 and 1888 respectively, centered largely on the prohibition of night work and the establishment of a shorter working day for women and children.⁸⁷ A similar direction was taken by provincial legislatures in the

⁸⁴ Geoffrey England, Roderick Wood and Innis Christie, *Employment Law in Canada*, 4th Ed. LexisNexis Butterworths. June 2009. 1.21 1-9.

⁸⁵ Thomas, 4-5.

⁸⁶ Thomas, 5.

⁸⁷ Ursel, 91-2.

Maritime provinces and in Western Canada in the following decades.⁸⁸ By the 1920s, provinces had begun to extend hours of work regulation to men, with the 8-hour day becoming the objective of most labour movements. At the turn of the century, legislation that set a maximum number of working days over the course of the week began to supplement those governing hours of work over the course of a day. In 1901, the Trades and Labour Congress appointed a committee to work cooperatively with the Lord's Day Alliance in an effort lobby governments to prohibit "the sale of articles and the employment of persons in industrial and commercial work on Sunday."⁸⁹ The Lord's Day Act was passed in 1906 under parliamentary authority over criminal law. Although largely plagued by problems with enforcement, the Act nevertheless helped "establish the practice of a weekly rest day for workmen in industry."⁹⁰ In 1928, Manitoba was the first province to pass legislation mandating one full 24-hour rest period in every seven days of work. There was some separation of the Act from religious purposes, as employers were encouraged, but not required, to give rest to workers on Sunday. Similar Acts were passed in Saskatchewan in 1930, in the hotel and restaurant industry in Quebec in 1918,

⁸⁸ Nova Scotia introduced protective legislation in 1901 and New Brunswick in 1905. In the West, British Columbia passed legislation in 1908, immediately followed by Saskatchewan in 1909. Ruth Frager and Carmela Patrias, *Discounted Labour: Women Workers in Canada, 1870-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 105.

⁸⁹ Edith Lorensten and Evelyn Woolner, "Fifty Years of Labour Legislation in Canada," *The Labour Gazette* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1950): 1418.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

and in Ontario in 1922.⁹¹ Guaranteed weekly rest was also provided for in general hours legislation in Alberta in 1936, in Nova Scotia in 1937 and under minimum wage orders in Quebec and British Columbia.⁹²

The growth of leisure norms for working Canadians can be more clearly seen in the reduction in hours of paid work through statutory holidays and paid vacations that were achieved through collective bargaining and legislative activity in the post WWII period.⁹³ Prior to 1914, provisions for paid vacations were limited to government and salaried workers in private industries. Following World War I and continuing until the onset of the Depression in 1929, vacation policies were extended to wage earners.⁹⁴ By 1926, the International Labour Office estimated that approximately 40% of industrial workers in Europe were receiving an annual paid vacation as legislated by the state or through collective agreements.⁹⁵ Companies suspended paid vacation plans as a measure of economy during the 1930s, though the practice of providing unpaid vacations persisted as a method of “spreading work” until “business conditions improved [and] suspended

⁹¹ “Labour Legislation in Quebec, Manitoba and Ontario,” *The Labour Gazette* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1928): 463.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ H.D. Woods and Sylvia Ostry, *Labour Policy and Labour Economics in Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1962) 337.

⁹⁴ J.C. Cameron, *Bulletin No. 3 Vacations With Pay in Canadian Industry* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Section, School of Commerce and Administration, Queen’s University, 1939) 1.

⁹⁵ “Annual Holidays for Workers and Collective Agreements,” *International Labour Review* (December 1926): 809. Quoted in Cameron, 1.

plans were again put into effect.”⁹⁶ Indeed, as Shirley Tillotson explains, work time reductions and increased leisure time surfaced not solely because workers were thought to need respite from work, but rather because these changes “would serve to distribute more widely the fewer hours of paid employment that the depressed economy was generating.”⁹⁷ Yet this was a contentious practice. As Tillotson argues further, not only was leisure as a ‘right’ not straightforwardly supported, in some cases parliamentarians acting in defence of employers actively resisted reduced work time. In some industries, such as in rural agricultural manufacturing, resistance to employment standards was quite strong as many opposed the standardization of working hours brought by the dominance of clock-time under industrial capitalism, largely because these standards contradicted the natural rhythms of seasonal agricultural work.⁹⁸

It was not always clear which workers benefited most from early vacations provisions. Executives and salaried employees working in offices were the first to access and the most likely to receive the most generous vacation packages in Canada, largely because of “their close association with management, their relatively small numbers, the nature of their work and their terms of employment.”⁹⁹ Yet workers and workers’

⁹⁶ Cameron, 1-2.

⁹⁷ Shirley Tillotson, “Time, Swimming Pools and Citizenship: The Emergence of Leisure Rights in Mid-Twentieth Century Canada,” *Contesting Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy E. Chunn and Robert Menzies (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002): 203.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Cameron, 17. See also “Paid Vacations in Canadian Industry,” *Labour Gazette* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1963): 553.

organizations themselves also demanded guarantees of paid vacations for industrial workers. In particular the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, as well as various provincial labour federations, regularly called on provincial and federal legislatures for better provisioning and requirements in vacation policies. Members of Parliament eventually warmed to the idea of mandatory vacations for all workers as new knowledge of the correlation between paid work hours reductions and productivity increases emerged. A 1939 study of vacation policies in industry cited “increased efficiency and better workmanship” as two of the many outcomes of providing paid vacations to workers. Other benefits to employers included:

reduced labour turnover with resulting savings on the costs of training new employees, more punctuality and less absence, a reduced percentage of sickness and accident with less lost time and less drain on the disability funds, fewer grievances, an opportunity for repairing and cleaning the factory in cases where the plant shuts down and better opportunities for work planning since regular planned vacations are less disturbing to the organization than unpredictable absences.¹⁰⁰

Five years later, in 1944, Ontario became the first province to enact vacations with pay legislation. The Ontario Hours of Work and Vacations with Pay Act provided for one week of paid vacation after a year's service, and set a limit on hours of work at 8 in a day and 48 in a week. While the Act stipulated that it was to apply to all employed persons, it did allow an administrative board to make exceptions to its provisions and, further, set up an alternative system of benefits for those working in the construction

¹⁰⁰ Cameron, 63.

industry.¹⁰¹ Similar legislation was enacted in Saskatchewan in 1944 (in force in 1946), in British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta in 1946, and in Manitoba in 1947. Most provinces provided for an annual vacation of one week with pay, while Saskatchewan provided a minimum of two weeks.¹⁰² This cluster of vacation policies that emerged mid-century reflected in part labour's strong support for decreased hours of work.¹⁰³ During the 1950s, Canadian labour leaders challenged the boundaries of newly emerging working time regime in an effort to realize "the potential of combining their agenda of specific job-related reforms for collective-bargaining rights, full employment, and high wages with schemes intended to alleviate social disparity."¹⁰⁴

Yet again these efforts were contested within legislatures. In 1950 and 1952, amendments to existing legislation that would increase vacation time from one week to two weeks failed in Ontario and Manitoba. A similar outcome resulted from a private member's bill in British Columbia in 1954, and attempts to establish holidays with pay for federal employees were unsuccessful in both 1956 and 1957. However, 1958 marked a critical turning point in the development of vacations with pay legislation. Not only did the federal government introduce provisions for the employees of all government

¹⁰¹ Lorensten and Woolner, 1453.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ For a good review of the emergence of postwar employment standards legislation in Ontario, see: Mark Thomas, "Setting the Minimum: Ontario's Employment Standards in the Postwar Years, 1944-1968," *Labour/Le Travail* 54 (Fall 2004): 49-82.

¹⁰⁴ Peter McNis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 58.

contractors, but also existing standards at the provincial level were improved with less opposition than in previous years.¹⁰⁵ For the next decade, the thrust of provincial and federal vacations policy involved a general strengthening of provisions at the provincial level, including the extension of the number of weeks of vacation relative to length of service, extension of benefits to previously excluded occupations, and increases in the amount of vacation pay from 2% to 4% of annual earnings, culminating in the inclusion of vacations with pay and general public holidays legislation in general employment standards legislation during the 1960s.

Throughout the 1950s, the rationale underpinning legal reductions in working time was linked explicitly to an emerging welfare state that claimed to support, at least in principle, a 'full' employment objective. This sentiment can be seen in the words of Stanley Knowles, Member of Parliament, as he addressed the significance of the 5-day working week to the House of Commons in 1960:

The whole idea in advocating the five-day week is that with the increased productivity of our modern economy it is axiomatic that a share of that increased productivity should be passed on to those who produce the nation's wealth. You do that in various ways. You do it by the scale of wages, by the prices you pay for farm products. You do it by social security and in various other ways. You also do it by reducing the number of hours or days per week that people have to work, thus making it possible for people to enjoy a little more of the life that they are working to make possible.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ "Changes in 1958 in Canadian Annual Vacation Legislation," *The Labour Gazette* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1958): 1161.

¹⁰⁶ "Extracts from Hansard of Interest to Labour," *The Labour Gazette* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1952): 860.

The assumption underpinning much of the legislation that comprised the postwar working time regime was that the periods of rest granted to workers through the establishment of employment standards would ensure that workers had adequate leisure time with which to pursue their own mental and physical recuperation. Unlike the rhythms of the workplace, where an employer exerted control over labour by directing the pace and process of production, the provision of leisure through employment standards did not directly impose any criteria about how that time might be used. Time spent outside of paid employment was assumed to be 'free' for the worker to use at his/her own discretion. However, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, the passage of legislation to provide workers with 'normal' working time – and especially leisure provisions – was quickly followed by efforts to shape the use of those hours with the goal of encouraging work and time-discipline among full-time members of the labour force.

Yet there was also an important gendered subtext to the emerging post-WWII working time regime. The acceleration of employment regulation in the postwar period incorporated ideologies of domesticity and reinforced the *ideal* of a primary male breadwinner. This complicated the organization of work and leisure for a number of women who combined paid employment with household labour at the time these policies emerged. Though the number of women to whom this matter applied was small, it was nevertheless significant. In 1941, for example, 20.7% of women were participating in

paid work and women comprised 18.5% of the labour force.¹⁰⁷ By 1951, these figures had risen slightly, with women comprising 22% of the labour force.¹⁰⁸ While some women sought paid work only when single and exited the labour force upon marriage, this was not always the case. Many women continued to work after marriage, depending on household finances or the economic demand for labour at a particular time. As Armstrong and Armstrong explain, historically there was much variation in women's participation in paid employment because of factors such as "social class, marital status, the presence or ages of children, race and immigration history, region, education, and age."¹⁰⁹

Women, and especially married women, comprised a reserve army of labour in the context of an emerging capitalist system, "taking paid jobs when new industries and occupations were being created, when men were off fighting wars, when the business cycle was peaking, [and] when seasonal or part-time work was available."¹¹⁰ A study undertaken by the federal Department of Labour in 1958 clearly exemplified this thinking:

There is a large group of married women who go in and out of the labour force as demand rises and falls in the work they are equipped to do, and depending on the pressure of home duties. Because married women do not

¹⁰⁷ Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010) 16.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto*, 21. See also Patricia Connolly, *Last Hired, First Fired: Women in the Canadian Workforce* (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1978) 26.

generally depend solely on their own earnings they constitute a more flexible source of labour than other workers. Many are happy to return periodically to being full-time housewives, holding themselves in readiness to take employment in seasonal industries at peak periods.¹¹¹

Leah Vosko has argued that, “[e]ven when policies and practices designed to spur women’s exodus from the labour market reached their height in the postwar period, the state, in conjunction with employers and various segments of the labour movement, still encouraged groups of women to accept casual and intermittent forms of employment.”¹¹² Where women did engage in paid employment, their contributions were often regarded as merely supplementary to the wages of an assumed male breadwinner and this perhaps contributed to the omission of any significant discussion of women’s leisure within federal policy debates. Thus while much of the discourse surrounding the adoption of law and policy concerning work and leisure mid-century appears on the surface as gender-neutral, leisure provisioning and leisure regulation were in fact highly gendered in that they were intended for and extended to a particular segment of the working population – men in full-time paid work.

Expanding the Working Time Regime Through Fitness Policies

While early working time policies had as their objective the shortening of daily, weekly, and annual working hours to limit employer abuses and ensure adequate rest time for

¹¹¹ See *Women at Work in Canada: Revised Fact Book on the Female Labour Force* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1958).

¹¹² Vosko, *Temporary Work*, 82. For an important discussion of how gendered ideologies of domesticity were built into the welfare state through early unemployment insurance policies, see Porter, Chapter Two, “Gender and the Construction of the Postwar Welfare State,” in *Gendered States*.

employees, such legislation emerged in tandem with efforts, hitherto underexplored, to shape the daily lifestyle practices outside of paid employment. As Tillotson argues, the growth of “leisure law” was closely related to the development of public recreation programs that involved the participation of several levels of government in an effort to extend “leisure and new obligations in its use.”¹¹³ Building on this argument, I contend that ‘fitness’ policies reinforced the temporal norms of work and leisure associated with Canada’s working time regime through their promotion of healthy leisure-time practices to get Canadians fit for work and that, in doing so, state officials willfully accepted the responsibility, although tentatively, for regulating some of the *daily* aspects of social reproduction, such as through physical activity.

A review of House of Commons debates surrounding the passage of two early statutes – *The National Physical Fitness Act, 1943* and the *Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1961* – reveals how struggles over work-discipline, often imbued with moral undertones, form an important part of the history of state regulation of leisure time. The central idea underpinning early fitness legislation was that physical training could be used to promote and maintain work-discipline. While my analysis focuses primarily on the post-WWII period, it is nevertheless important to note that the evolution of these policies can be traced back to efforts to regulate the activities of youth and the under/unemployed more generally. Although the federal government’s postwar commitment to fitness was set by the 1943 Act, a number of earlier statutes were

¹¹³ Tillotson, 199.

important in establishing a role for various levels of government in fitness promotion. For example, in 1937 the federal government passed the Unemployment and Agricultural Instruction Act, a piece of legislation designed to help provincial governments initiate programs that would teach unemployed youth new skills. In British Columbia, funds provided by this Act were used to support the Provincial-Recreation Movement Programme (Pro-Rec), one of the first state-funded provincial fitness programs in Canada.¹¹⁴ The outcome of skills development, it was thought, would be negligible if youth could not use these skills because of their poor physical fitness.¹¹⁵ Continuing unemployment and high rates of rejection for military service after the start of WWII prompted the federal government to replace this Act with the Youth Training Act, 1939, which made an even greater number of funds available for physical training programs at the provincial level.¹¹⁶ British Columbia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta all carried out programs under this Act.¹¹⁷ Thus the emergence of early fitness policies accelerated alongside the growth of the welfare state in Canada. Indeed, there was a direct link between fitness promotion, the 'problem' of unemployment and the movement towards full-employment for Canadian citizens. In the words of Leonard

¹¹⁴ West, 32.

¹¹⁵ West, 32-3.

¹¹⁶ It is possible that concerns about readiness for military service underscored the need for fitness policies throughout the Cold War.

¹¹⁷ West, 33. This was not the first time fitness programs were used to promote physical preparedness for military service. The Strathcona Trust, established in Nova Scotia in 1909, was used to train elementary school teachers to carry out physical education and military drills. See West, 26.

Marsh in his *Report on Social Security in Canada*, physical training programs could serve as a “particularly useful supplement to labour market organization.”¹¹⁸

A. The National Physical Fitness Act

Until the early twentieth century, sports and recreation delivery were largely the responsibility of various private organizations and service clubs, such as the YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and Cadets, with activities focused primarily on children. Physical fitness was not a common personal leisure time practice and few people exercised regularly. While many participated in sports and recreation for social reasons, sometimes segregated by class, most were not compelled to exercise for the health benefits to be derived from regular physical activity.¹¹⁹ As the potential benefits of physical activity became known in mid-century, a case was made for greater state involvement in the planning of sport and recreation. A statement made in the House of Commons in 1937 demonstrates this thinking: “[i]n Canada today, the control of amateur sports has been appropriated by groups of associations, self-constituted in their authority, which generally speaking owe allegiance to no one, and which within the confines of their particular sports are virtually dictators ...”¹²⁰ The National Physical Fitness Act of 1943 (NFPA) represents the first major attempt by the federal government to centralize control

¹¹⁸ Leonard Marsh, *Report on Social Security for Canada: with a new introduction by the author and a preface by Michael Bliss* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975): 89.

¹¹⁹ Mary Keyes, “Government Involvement in Fitness and Amateur Sport,” *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*, ed. Wayne Simpson. Frank Cosentino. Ron Lappage (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989) 325.

¹²⁰ House of Commons Debates. Volume I (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1937) 115.

of fitness programming and harness the promotion of such activities to particular social and economic ends.

The need to produce a national body of healthy workers capable of contributing to the modernization of economic production in Canada underpinned early efforts to regulate fitness. Over the course of 1930s, the question of “body slum” became a hotly debated area of public policy, tying issues of individual leisure practices to economic production. In 1936 The Youth Committee of the National Employment Commission issued the following warning about ‘leisure’:

The slackening of the economic machinery ... produced a large volume of leisure which was not marginal but total, and which bore with particular severity upon youth. Young people ... found themselves face to face with their own and society’s deficiencies in the matter of leisure. Work is undoubtedly a necessity for all, but the real end to be achieved for a satisfactory balance between work and ‘play’ is not mere loafing or mere off-side amusement, but activity of a truly recreational character which tends to sustain morale in times of idleness and to maintain employability at the highest possible level at all times.¹²¹

Centering on people “who did not take sufficient time for exercise” or who chose to spend their free time “in places of a questionable nature” rather than “out in the open air,”¹²² the regulation of leisure time, understood as time not spent in paid employment, and leisure time-use, emerged as potential strategy for maintaining work-discipline in changing economic conditions. In 1937, Member of Parliament H. J. Claxton proposed the creation of a national physical recreation council to oversee fitness planning at the

¹²¹ Kidd, 251.

¹²² House of Commons Debates. Volume I (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1937) 117.

national level. Citing international precedents in physical training in France, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom, Plaxton argued that government regulation of athletics and physical and recreational training was necessary for Canada to compete in a climate of “fast changing conditions in the world’s economic and social life.”¹²³

Yet, some questioned whether sport and recreation were the ideal sites of new policy interventions designed to produce healthy bodies.¹²⁴ One vociferous critic of Plaxton’s motion was Member of Parliament Tommy C. Douglas. Douglas questioned whether a sports council was the most direct and obvious means to regulate health and well-being:

... there are other things that are more important than recreation. Some of them are preventative dentistry; the proper care of children, particularly infants, and a proper program of mental and physical hygiene. ... We lag far behind New Zealand, Australia and the Scandinavian countries in combating these things. ... the fact remains that it is futile for us to talk about setting up a sports ministry when at the present time we are unable to provide medical service for large sections of our people, and while we are unable to give proper maternity care or proper pre-natal care to thousands of children born in this country.¹²⁵

While proponents of the proposed legislation maintained that sports and recreation planning did not preclude other forms of health and welfare initiatives, it was not possible to garner enough support to pass this motion, and it was eventually withdrawn.

Roughly six years later the subject of physical activity for the general population reemerged in the House of Commons. The proposed legislation was largely “non-

¹²³ House of Commons Debates. Volume I. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1937) 114.

¹²⁴ House of Commons Debates. Volume I. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1937) 122.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

contentious and non-controversial,” and was supported unanimously by the Special Committee on Social Security and further regarded as a complement to an existing “vocational training and recreational scheme” being carried out by the Department of Labour.¹²⁶ As the Second World War grew to a close, the federal government had in its possession a “greatly expanded source of discretionary funds” and the will to provide leadership and resources for national programs, especially those concerned with the health and welfare of the population.¹²⁷ Much of the discussion surrounding the passage of the NPFA justified the importance of physical activity as part of a larger project of securing a decent Canadian standard of living. Following from the experience of the Depression, physical fitness had taken on new connotations, extending beyond discussions of recreation to concerns about social security provisioning:

... hand in hand with any solution that is proposed for the whole problem of physical fitness is the corollary of full employment and a full pay envelope. ... We as a nation must find a way to succeed so that we shall never again see a condition in which our citizens are deprived of the means with which to obtain proper food and all the other factors that enter into what constitutes physical fitness.¹²⁸

In discussions surrounding the passage of the *NPFA*, normative assumptions about income and employment were intertwined with concerns about how public policies could support the preservation of health, including concerns about mortality,

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ MacIntosh, Bedecki and Franks, 17. See also Robert M. Campbell, *Grand Illusions: The Politics of the Keynesian Experience in Canada, 1945-1975* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1987), *in passim*; McInnis, *in passim*.

¹²⁸ House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1943) 5191.

housing, and general nutrition. As one parliamentarian noted, “[if] *methods of living are guided* the nation’s health will be greatly benefited.”¹²⁹

Responding to earlier calls for centralized coordination of physical recreation, the goal of the *The National Physical Fitness Act (NPFA), 1943*, was to establish a National Physical Fitness Council, whose job it would be to “promote the physical fitness of the people of Canada.”¹³⁰ Headquartered in Ottawa under the Ministry of Pensions and National Health and comprised of appointed representatives, the Council administered ‘The National Physical Fitness Fund’, which provided grants of up to \$225,000 to the provinces, to be shared on a 50/50 basis with the federal government.¹³¹ Although the choice of methods to promote physical fitness were left open to the Council’s members, the Act nevertheless suggested target areas for intervention, including the promotion of physical education, the promotion of sports and athletics, supports for the training of teachers, lecturers and instructors in the principles of physical education and fitness, the organization of activities designed to promote fitness, the provision of facilities

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ 7 George VI. Chap. 29. *An Act to Establish a National Council for the Purposes of Promoting Physical Fitness* Assented to 24th July 1943. Statutes Canada Prefix to Statutes, 1943-44. Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada. 4th session of the 19th Parliament. Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1944.

¹³¹ Ibid.

for these activities, and ongoing cooperation and coordination with grant recipients.¹³²

Despite the unanimous support for the NPFA at the time of its adoption, it was repealed in 1954. There was next to no debate on the subject of its termination other than the Minister's statement that the program was ineffective.¹³³ Some have argued that the repeal of Act was prompted in large part by the federal government's uneasiness with the ways in which provinces were using funds, and with the arms-length status of the Fitness Council.¹³⁴ While short-lived, early fitness legislation was an important precursor to welfare state expansion in the areas of health, employment and social security. It helped introduce the notion that the general health of individuals – achieved in part through adequate employment and appropriate leisure time-use – was part and parcel of a well regulated economy.

B. Bill C-131 An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport

In 1958 the Canadian Sports Advisory Council produced a brief entitled, "Concerning the Problems Arising from the Physical Fitness Deficiencies in Canada," making physical fitness and sport the subject of national attention once again. The report, circulated among government officials, departments and agencies as well as among

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ House of Commons Debates. Volume XI. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1953-4) 5873.

¹³⁴ Soon after the passage of the Act, the national director had announced that the National Physical Fitness Council would serve as an intermediary between sport organizations and the federal government, a decision that was subsequently challenged by the Liberal government, but upheld by the Department of Justice. MacIntosh, Bedeck and Franks, 20.

private sport and fitness agencies, called for renewed government intervention in the interests of both “national security and maintaining a healthy population.”¹³⁵ These arguments were bolstered by a speech made by the Duke of Edinburgh to the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) in 1959, where he declared that a scheme to encourage participation in sports and recreation was “absolutely essential to any modern community with a high standard of living.”¹³⁶ He also called upon medical professionals to address the problem of physical fitness deficiencies. The CMA subsequently held a joint conference with the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation in March of 1961 to address “many of the gaps in knowledge about the effects of participation in physical activity” and to “draw attention to the need for undertaking or assisting research on fitness and its relation to growth, development, athletic performance, specific disease morbidity, ageing, well-being and health.”¹³⁷

Although concerns about physical fitness spread among various social and health policy advocates throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, participation and excellence in sport was also regarded as fostering a “spirit of nationhood.”¹³⁸ In the years preceding the passage of Bill C-131 *An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport*, the intent for new legislation focused less on amateur athletes and more on the support for physical activity at the local level. As the Minister of Health and Welfare, J.W. Monteith

¹³⁵ Keyes, 326.

¹³⁶ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8716.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

explained, “[a]lthough we all experience a keen sense of pride and exhilaration when Canadians come out on top in such competition ... this should not be the overriding consideration.”¹³⁹ Whether through amateur sports or recreational activities, the objective of the new legislation was to provide opportunities to develop physical fitness because involvement in such activities was now shown to “have a beneficial impact on an individual’s well-being, particularly with respect to his emotional and social outlook.”¹⁴⁰ The legislation was heralded as a movement towards a “democracy of athletics.”¹⁴¹ As one Member of Parliament explained, “we want the largest number of people playing ... not for the prize but for the love of the game.”¹⁴² The Act was regarded in many ways as “a people’s program” – one that would further “the fitness of the people of Canada” and “provide opportunities for as many Canadians as possible to enjoy and benefit from healthy participation in sport and recreational activity.”¹⁴³

Efforts to promote ‘fitness’ were framed as an antidote to potentially troubling trends that were changing the nature of social life during the decades following WWII. For example, increasing urbanization was cited as a factor that demanded greater involvement regulating the moral character of individuals, especially the poor. Described as “[t]he movement of our people from the more vigorous life of rural areas to large,

¹³⁹ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8717.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8738.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8718.

crowded cities,” concerns were raised about whether urban centres were adequately equipped to provide opportunities for physical activity. Proponents of the Act lauded the activities of instructors who helped to lure youth away from bars, and showed them instead how to reach their optimal physical development. Participation in sports, it was argued, could spare young men from “a life of debauch.”¹⁴⁴ Sports organizations and leisure services were necessary to “enable our young citizens to indulge in wholesome recreation and to spend their leisure time building up their bodies and their minds.”¹⁴⁵ Canadian youth needed to be guided – to be shown “how to make good use of their leisure hours.”¹⁴⁶

Yet concerns about the uses of leisure time among young Canadians did not override concerns for the adult population – not only the unemployed, but those in full-time work, and especially those in emerging sedentary occupations:

It is much more important to keep fit later in life than it is to merely learn to play games during one’s youth and then neglect oneself later ... when there is a tendency to let down and take things easy. We older people sometimes need a bit of prodding to get us to do what we know we should do. Our bodies were designed to be worked. I have often stated that it is by work and care of our bodies that we earn and deserve the right to be fit.¹⁴⁷

One of the arguments in favour of renewed fitness legislation was made on the basis that “health and strength is just as valuable and important to the *average business man* and

¹⁴⁴ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8736.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8855.

other people as it is to the athlete” and that some of the same activities undertaken by athletes, though “in a modified form,” might also “promote strength and health for the one who may not wish to participate in organized sports.”¹⁴⁸ Introducing legislation in parliament, Minister Monteith presented the following warning: “the effects of automation have drastically reduced manual labour, and have opened the way for an increasingly sedentary way of life for many Canadians.”¹⁴⁹ And as another Member of Parliament noted, “[a]ctive participation in any sport is becoming more necessary ... with the modern tendency to replace men by machines, due to which physical effort is becoming less necessary to ensure one’s survival.”¹⁵⁰

Interestingly, the words ‘physical’ and ‘recreation’ were dropped from the text of the Act, marking a significant departure from earlier legislation. The decision to omit recreation was justified partly on the belief that recreational planning was largely a municipal and provincial endeavour and that opening up possibilities for federal government funding of recreational activities might dilute the more specific intentions of the Act. References to physicality were removed on the Minister’s suggestion that “it limited the concept of all-around fitness, which had received acceptance in other countries.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960) 5263.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. One parliamentarian also noted the increasing pace of work. House of Commons debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960) 5264.

¹⁵⁰ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8737.

¹⁵¹ MacIntosh, Bedecki, and Franks, 25. This is further evidenced by one Member of Parliament’s sarcastic remark on the removal of ‘recreation’: “I was very pleased to see that the word

While scholars are correct to point to postwar interventions in physical fitness as part a nation building exercise¹⁵² aimed at producing ‘good citizens’,¹⁵³ a point that is less well emphasized in existing in Canadian social histories of sport is how fitness programming as a form of regulation aimed at shaping the use of ‘free’ time was used strategically to promote individualized work discipline among segments of the population. Even as governments took measures to regulate work and economy and raise general social standards, state officials simultaneously emphasized that individuals should be encouraged to play a central role in the management of their own health and welfare: “I feel this to be especially important at this time since the government has become responsible for the health insurance of the people ... to be fit will also require a bit of self-discipline, a measure of self-denial, a bit of the will to do and a bit of hard work.”¹⁵⁴

Understood against the backdrop of expanding leisure time over the course of the late 1950s and early 1960s, fitness policies became part of an expanding working time

‘recreation’ has been omitted from the bill. Otherwise we would have been in the impossible position of possibly supplying coaches for ardent bridge players or golfers and we might even have found ourselves in the position of supplying coaches for those who play tiddly-winks.” House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8860.

¹⁵² Shirley Tillotson’s research on leisure policy traces the growth of liberal democratic citizenship ideals through early debates and legislation about Canadian leisure rights.

¹⁵³ For example, Minister J.W. Monteith cited the following statement made in a speech by President J.F. Kennedy: “[t]he physical fitness of our citizens is a vital prerequisite to America’s realization of its full potential as a nation, and to the opposition of each individual to make full and fruitful use of his capacities.” House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8832.

¹⁵⁴ House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960) 5264.

regime intended to support the health and well-being of the workforce through the individual choice of appropriate leisure time activities. Along with the formal extension of leisure provisions through the standard employment relationship came a growing anxiety among policymakers about how 'leisure time' might be spent. As one state official declared, "the spare time we have today is one of the greatest tragedies of our time ... shorter working hours have provided a great deal of leisure time ... the ideal day consists of eight hours work, eight hours sleep and eight hours play. I believe it is the eight hours of playtime that must be better planned."¹⁵⁵ Underpinning this statement was a sentiment that characterized much early leisure planning in Canada: how individuals chose to use their free time could impact not only their health, but also the self-discipline required to make one ready and eager for work.

One of the central goals of fitness regulation was individual work-discipline. New policies, it was thought, were needed to allow one "to develop self-reliance, self-confidence and self-control."¹⁵⁶ That this was to be done in the interests of economy was made clear by one Member of Parliament's blunt statement: "22 cents of out of every dollar of our budget is spent on welfare. One sure way of cutting this down would be the proper training of youth. ... without this training many of them later on in life help to swell the ranks of the unemployed."¹⁵⁷ Efforts by policymakers to bolster social security were offset by an underlying critical sentiment that maintained: "too much welfare dulls

¹⁵⁵ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8861.

¹⁵⁶ House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960) 5263.

¹⁵⁷ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8840-1.

the spirit.”¹⁵⁸ Some saw definite limits to state provisioning, arguing, “there must be a proper balance struck so that individual initiative and leadership are maintained and encouraged.”¹⁵⁹ In this way, early physical fitness programming was interwoven with the promotion of forms of individual self-regulation. As one Member of Parliament stated to the House of Commons in 1961: “[b]ut few will voluntarily take part in a physical activity simply because it may ‘do them good.’ It must capture their interest, arouse their enthusiasm, make demands on their physical and mental resources – only then will it be really satisfying, really educational.”¹⁶⁰ State-led management of work-discipline pivoted on finding the right answer to the questions: “How do we arouse enthusiasm? How do we arouse initiative?”¹⁶¹

Hon J. W. Montieth, Minister of National Health and Welfare, introduced *Bill C-131 An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport* in the House of Commons in September of 1961. Its objectives included nation-wide encouragement, promotion and development of fitness and amateur sport. Its lengthy list of provisions were broad and encompassed the following activities: the promotion and development of fitness and sport in national and international arenas; resources for the training of coaches; the creation of bursaries and fellowships; support for research in the area and resources for national conferences; recognition awards for high achievement in fitness and sport;

¹⁵⁸ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8727.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-61) 8723.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

preparation and dissemination of information on the subject; support for organizations working in the field; the coordination of federal activities with other departments and agencies; and finally, the development of projects, programs, and the provisioning of services and facilities to further the objectives of the Act.¹⁶² The stated purpose of the legislation was to support amateur athletics and fitness with the hope of improving performances at the international level, while encouraging mass participation in physical activity.

Like its predecessor, Bill C-131 passed with unanimous support. The legislation resulted in the creation of the National Advisory Council (NAC), comprised of 30 representatives from the provinces and agencies, whose job it was to advise the minister on matters related to the objectives of the Act. NAC was given full responsibility “to make its own rules for regulating the proceedings and the performance of its own functions, but it was not given any executive power, program funds, or an independent secretariat.”¹⁶³ This was a key modification from the council established in 1943, which had executive authority. Prior to the adoption of C-131, one parliamentarian noted that if a renewed physical fitness program was going to make a “real” contribution, it was going to have to be more centrally organized than its predecessor and have significant funds available.¹⁶⁴ To this end, the Act set aside \$5 million dollars for 50/50 cost sharing

¹⁶² Government of Canada. *An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport. Act of the Parliament of Canada*. Fourth Session, Twenty-fourth Parliament, Part I, Public General Acts, 1960-61.

¹⁶³ MacIntosh, Bedeck, and Franks, 31.

¹⁶⁴ House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960) 5307.

programs with the provinces. While NAC came to exercise full control over policy development, the decisions regarding funding allocations remained the responsibility of the Minister of Health of Welfare so that expenditures could remain under the federal government's "scrutiny and control".¹⁶⁵

But Fitness for Whom? Gender, Social Reproduction and Early Leisure Regulation

Although the development of Canada's working time regime did facilitate the expansion of 'leisure' time for some paid workers, these regulations were by no means universal. Both the expansion of leisure time and efforts to regulate its use in such a way as to promote work-discipline were gendered insofar as employment status (unemployed or extent and sector of employment), and later the employment relationship (standard or non-standard), were used as the basis for addressing the health and fitness of the population. Because the development of industrial capitalism in Canada had separated the sites of economic production and the activities to facilitate the social reproduction of the labour needed for economic production, production for the economy was predicated on the idea of a specific male breadwinner/female caregiver gender contract, the latter of which relegated, on the whole, the unpaid work of social reproduction to women. While struggles by workers to secure decent work conditions included demands for state regulation of certain elements of the employment relationship to guarantee the reproduction of workers over time, it was nevertheless assumed both by policymakers and by organized labour itself through dominant ideologies of domesticity that women in

¹⁶⁵ House of Commons Debates. Volume VIII (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1960-1) 8834. See also MacIntosh, Bedecki, and Franks, 31.

the 'private' realm of the household would complete some of the daily and most of the *generational* work needed for the social reproduction of the working population.

As the normative discourse and policy planning around work and leisure emerged mid-century, assumptions about this gender contract were built into the design of early policies.¹⁶⁶ While early legislation did not explicitly discriminate against women, the approach taken to regulating work and leisure targeted primarily breadwinning – or soon to be breadwinning – members of the paid labour force, those whose working day could be neatly divided into three segments – sleep, work, and play, as the opening quotation of this chapter suggests. Most women's lives did not reflect this compartmentalization, as the majority of women – at least married women – held full-time responsibility for unpaid work, with or without supplementary state supports. Housework and childrearing did not follow the same temporal rhythms as paid employment. As Armstrong and Armstrong have explained, housework “has no fixed hours” and is “never done.”¹⁶⁷ Unlike the standardized working time arrangements that emerged in the postwar period, the private work of social reproduction had no normative form – no maximum daily hours, no weekends, and no yearly vacation time during which choices around leisure might be cause for public concern. Despite the fact that women's unpaid work in households also supported the reproduction of working men, Canada's working time regime – both the legislation governing maximum hours and rest as well as the emergent

¹⁶⁶ Vosko, “Rethinking Feminization.”

¹⁶⁷ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto*, 20.

discussions around the need for physical activity at leisure – did not reflect this reality of ‘endless’ work and instead posited new forms of leisure regulation narrowly based on a male norm.

Conclusion

Early fitness policies were designed to complement an emerging working time regime by setting guidelines about the importance of regulating time-use to specific ends. Although the methods used to shape leisure practices did not emerge until later decades, early legislation was nevertheless significant. It established a commitment by the federal government to administer and finance efforts to ensure that individuals took interest in their own fitness, with the underlying mandate of encouraging work-discipline. While dominant Keynesian economic ideologies in the postwar period held that states play a role in demand management through the provision of a social safety net and welfare provisions to ensure adequate living standards for the population, fitness policies were nevertheless used to underscore the importance of individual self-regulation of health and fitness to prevent overreliance on new government supports. Like early employment standards providing norms of working time and leisure, fitness policies too had gendered subtexts.¹⁶⁸ While women and girls were not explicitly excluded from the provisions of early fitness Acts, silences with respect to the gendered nature of work and leisure indicates that ensuring gender-specific opportunities for physical training was not a

¹⁶⁸ For a good overview of the treatment of gender ideology and femininity in early Canadian sports policies, see Helen Lenskyj, “Femininity First: Sport and Physical Education for Ontario Girls, 1890-1930,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport* 12.2 (1982-3): 4-17.

significant interest of policymakers. This too reinforced assumptions about women's temporary status in the labour market.

The aim of this chapter has been to show how the early development of work/leisure policies centered on the employment relationship and an understanding of working time and free time based on a male norm. Efforts to promote physical activity as a method of regulating 'free' time emerged in the context of the development of a particular working-time regime in Canada. While Canada is not typically known as a leader in progressive working time policies, early working time legislation, later bolstered by the postwar social compact, brought some protections to workers, and set a normative framework for work and leisure in a modern, industrial society. As policymakers responded to the ongoing threat of unemployment and labour unrest by legislating protections for workers, it simultaneously established a method of facilitating the healthy maintenance of those workers. The method adopted was twofold. On the one hand, a legislative framework provided leisure time through employment standards and the promotion of work-discipline through the self-regulation of one's own health and well-being. Early leisure law was characterized by standard setting that provided workers with leisure time, yet also ensured that those same workers and those entering the workforce were also fit for work. On the other, state policies were built upon the assumption that the unpaid work of women in the home would also contribute significantly to the reproduction of workers over time.

Because Canada's working time regime was premised on the understanding that leisure encompassed the totality of time spent outside of paid work (excluding sleep), it

failed to account for time spent in unpaid work. It thus obscured one of the central concerns among a segment of the working population: how to manage the tension between paid work and unpaid work. The approach to leisure regulation that was adopted during the postwar period was gendered in so far as it did not question the particular organization of social reproduction at the time – one that was based on a male breadwinner/female caregiver gender contract. As women's relationship to paid work began to shift during the late 1960s and 1970s, the dominant male-centred work/leisure discourse developed inside public policy arenas persisted, exacerbating existing tensions that today remain unresolved.

Chapter Two: Motivating Canadians Through Lighthearted Shaming: ParticipACTION and Healthy Lifestyle Promotion, 1960-1973

Opportunities should be made available to discuss man and his needs, man as a total human being, indivisible into arbitrary autonomous sectors, man as a total person in his environment with all his potentialities. The function of Recreation Canada is to enhance these potentialities, to maximize them, so that man can savour life as richly as possible.¹⁶⁹

- Hon. Mac Lalonde, Minister of Health and Welfare, 1972

This chapter examines the federal government's efforts to shape healthy lifestyle practices through the promotion of physical activity over the course of the 1960s and early 1970s. I situate the emergence of ParticipACTION, a state-funded, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the nation-wide promotion of physical activity, within the context of the development of a national health care system and the expansion of leisure time for a large number of workers. Indeed, many of the activities promoted by ParticipACTION in its early campaigns were predicated on the availability of leisure time. Federal debates about healthy lifestyle reveal how 'sports' policy was overshadowed by the promotion of 'fitness,' though efforts were made to distill the best aspects of sport policy and integrate these into a national fitness strategy. Thus in a manner sensitive to changing social values and socio-political contexts, fitness promotion was strategically distanced from the references to work-discipline previously associated with physical training, even though the idea of time-discipline was used to urge individuals to use leisure time in ways that would ultimately keep them healthy. The federal government enlisted the support of advertising professionals – those best

¹⁶⁹ *Proceedings of the 1972 National Conference on Fitness and Health* (Ottawa: Department of Health and Welfare, 1972) Foreword.

equipped to 're-brand' fitness as a cooperative and grassroots community-centred activity. Yet the representations of men and women's relationship to leisure that emerge within ParticipACTION's early advertising campaigns suggest that the notion of fitness as 'community-wide activity' was used primarily a method of garnering widespread support for fitness, rather than an anticipated outcome of the policy itself.

My analysis develops in three stages. I begin with a brief overview of important changes to legislation regulating working time and leisure time for workers. The continued strength of the labour movement influenced policymakers' responses to prolonged industrial conflict through the extension of collective bargaining rights and employment protections for even larger numbers of workers. Yet support for the consolidation of piecemeal acts into comprehensive policies designed to protect employees at work remained contested and a movement by employers to challenge the idea of "healthy" working time undermined the establishment of federal and provincial employment standards. Set against the background of renewed labour struggles, I proceed to consider how such conflicts over the regulation of leisure time intersected with the healthy lifestyle promotion agenda, which emerged alongside the development of public health care. Using debates about federal sports policy, and in particular the *Report of the Task Force on Sports for Canadians* and *A Proposed Sports Policy For Canadians*, as a lens into the state's management of the work/leisure relationship, I suggest that the federal government's reluctance to abandon its support for the promotion of physical activity, despite the inadequacies of earlier attempts to legislate 'fitness' at the federal level, were largely tied to its mandate of ensuring social and economic

harmony. Decent working and living conditions for citizens, it was assumed, would ensure social stability. My reading of the federal sports policies of the 1960s attempts to demonstrate how the social climate of industrial conflict shaped to a significant extent the choice of policy mechanism used to regulate fitness – namely, ParticipACTION. Lastly, I examine the early health promotion activities of ParticipACTION, showing how, despite the emphasis on individual and community mobilization in its early years in operation, the program’s messages incorporated assumptions about the gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work, reinforcing the importance of healthy lifestyle for Canadian men.

Overall, this chapter aims to demonstrate the continuity of efforts to manage social reproduction through an integrated set of policies that, on the one hand, guaranteed leisure time provisions through the standard employment relationship, and, on the other, promoted individualized healthy lifestyle practices at leisure. In this way, the federal government attempted, through a variety of policies promoting time-discipline at leisure, to contribute to the maintenance of a healthy population. The choice of policy instrument reveals how this approach to social reproduction came to focus narrowly on the daily habits of individuals. Yet by promoting healthy practices through time-discipline at leisure, dominant state discourses, through ParticipACTION, perpetuated the idea that fitness was essential first and foremost for men in paid work. Concerns about the healthy *daily* reproduction of women (either women who worked in the household or combined paid work with unpaid household work in support of their families) did not emerge in policy discussions during this period.

Working Time and Leisure Time in the 1960s

The Canadian labour movement remained strong throughout the 1960s and this was reflected in both struggles around collective bargaining rights and general employment standards for workers.¹⁷⁰ A generational shift in the working-class movement, whose strength now rested primarily with militant youth, produced “a massive strike wave” grown from regional industrial conflicts beginning in the early 1960s.¹⁷¹ Yet by no means was the character of these movements exclusively male. During the same period, two female dominated professions – nurses and teachers – also pressed for rights to negotiate collective improvements to their work.¹⁷² These dispersed but consistent conflicts across the country reached a peak in 1966 when “working days lost to strikes reached an unprecedented number.”¹⁷³ In that year, there were over 610 strikes, and many were wildcat and illegal strikes, involving more than 410,000 workers, and costing employers over 5 million worker days.¹⁷⁴ This climate of conflict demanded a

¹⁷⁰ For a good overview of the masculine culture of industrial conflict and state responses, see the chapter on “Wildcat Workers” in Bryan D. Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s: Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2009): 211-241.

¹⁷¹ Fudge and Tucker, “*Pluralism or Fragmentation?*,” 283.

¹⁷² Julie White, *Sisters and Solidarity: Women and Unions in Canada* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc., 1993) 54-55. On women and union organizing in postwar Canada see also two important edited collections: Linda Briskin and Linda Yanz, ed., *Union Sisters: Women in the Labour Movement* (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1983); Linda Briskin and Pat McDermott, ed., *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy and Militancy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Joan Sangster, *Transforming Labour: Women and Work in Postwar Canada* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2010).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc, 1992) 273.

response by the state, which came largely in the form of commissions of inquiry and the meting out of additional union rights to certain groups of workers. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, public sector unionism grew significantly, and even though many public sector workers, many of whom were women, had collective bargaining rights but no right to strike, a number of illegal actions were organized and carried out.¹⁷⁵ The federal government appointed the Heaney Commission in 1963 to examine the issue of collective bargaining for federal workers and later the Woods Task Force to study the postwar state of industrial relations in Canada. The movement towards collective bargaining rights for public sector workers accelerated in the mid-1960s, with two major breakthroughs occurring in Quebec in 1964 and at the federal level through the Public Service Relations Act in 1967.¹⁷⁶ Yet as scholars have noted,¹⁷⁷ the legalistic framework that inscribed a number of restrictions on union activity, such as the use of work stoppages and slowdowns, largely tempered the extension of collective bargaining rights in this period.

Provincial and federal working time protections were strengthened throughout the 1960s and early 1970s and this contributed to the general discourse on improved rights for labour and leisure time expansion. Existing legislation was amended to further reduce standard working hours and working time provisions were extended to previously

¹⁷⁵ White, 52.

¹⁷⁶ Harvey J. Krahn and Graham S. Lowe, *Work Industry, and Canadian Society* (Toronto: International Thomson Publishing, 1998) 331.

¹⁷⁷ See for example: Fudge and Tucker, "*Pluralism or Fragmentation?*"; Stuart Jamieson, *Industrial Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973); and Panitch and Swartz.

excluded groups. Complementing the movement towards collective bargaining rights, the most important and far-reaching changes to the regulation of working time and leisure were occurring within the federal public service, which may have reinforced the emerging national discourse about leisure time expansion. In 1964, the Minister of Labour, Hon. Allen Joseph MacEchern, introduced the country's first set of consolidated employment standards in *Bill 126 An Act Respecting Hours of Work, Minimum Wages, Annual Vacations and Holidays with Pay in Federal Works, Undertakings and Businesses*, regulating standards for workers in federally regulated industries. Working time and leisure standards figured prominently in this legislation, which was to become known as the Canada Labour Code. Part I of the Code established standards relating to hours of work, specifying that working time "normally not exceed eight hours in a day and forty a week" and that overtime of an additional eight hours be permitted as long as one and one-half the regular hourly rate of remuneration was paid.¹⁷⁸ Part III repealed and replaced the 1958 Annual Vacations Act and held that every employee be entitled to at least a two-week vacation with pay (4% of wages) after one year of service.¹⁷⁹ These developments were replicated at the provincial level. Led by Ontario, many provinces enacted general employment standards legislation during the late 1960s and 1970s, consolidating previously piecemeal labour laws to form a consistent standard of labour protections and thereby solidifying and standardizing employment norms, especially

¹⁷⁸ "Canada Labour (Standards) Code Introduced," *The Labour Gazette* (1964) 1058.

¹⁷⁹ "Canada Labour (Standards) Code Introduced," 1060.

those related to working time, across the nation. As well, across a range of sectors and industries, vacations with pay provisions were modified to make it easier for workers to gain access to longer periods of rest.¹⁸⁰ Available data on changing hours of work indicates that, at least in manufacturing, the average weekly hours of work had dropped from 46.2 in 1945 to 41 in 1960.¹⁸¹

Even forces that could potentially undermine the eight-hour working day did not challenge fundamentally expectations about increasing leisure time. In 1972, Harris S. Johnstone, a former director of the Labour Standards Branch of the Department of Labour was appointed “to study the advisability” of changing the sections of the Canada Labour Code governing working hours. Undertaken over a six-month period, the study involved extensive consultation with firms, unions, business groups and the Canadian Labour Congress.¹⁸² The inquiry was “prompted by a request from five companies to put some of their employees on freer work schedules – ranging from a work week of three 12.5 hour days, to one of four days at 10 hours a day – without having to pay overtime rates after the daily eight hours.”¹⁸³ In Phase 1 of his report, Johnstone recommended that

¹⁸⁰ With respect to hours of employment legislation, examples of this type of modification include the extension of protections to various categories of workers within the British Columbia fishing industry and to Newfoundland shopkeepers in 1963, to deliverymen in baking industries in British Columbia and a reduction of weekly hours for Ontario’s firefighters in 1964. The number of statutory holidays were increased in Alberta in 1965.

¹⁸¹ *Hours of Work in Canada: A Historical Series* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, Economics and Research Branch, 1971) iii.

¹⁸² George Sanderson, “Canada Labour Code and the Shorter Workweek.” *The Labour Gazette* (1973) 235.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

employees of these five companies have permission to design their own work schedules so as to allow them to have larger blocks of free time. In his final recommendations, he made an even bolder claim, suggesting that the Canada Labour Code be amended to allow employees who work under federal jurisdiction to work a compressed workweek. Employees would work “longer but fewer days each week without overtime pay” in situations where “arrangements have been made through collective bargaining, and where, in the absence of a union, employer and employees agree to an altered work week to the satisfaction of the Minister of Labour.”¹⁸⁴ This type of arrangement would apply to a variety of workers governed by federal legislation, including those in transportation, communications, banks, fishing, agriculture, mining and the operations of Crown corporations.¹⁸⁵

Johnstone's support for the compressed workweek suggests that the idea of a three or four-day workweek was taken seriously in the early 1970s, one of many calls for a reorganization of working time, albeit one with potentially significant benefits for employers given its treatment of overtime wages. Although the idea was opposed by the Canadian Labour Congress, experiments with (and support for) modified workweeks were supported by legal arrangements at the provincial level. In 1972, only Ontario, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta required permission to extend daily hours of work without overtime pay. In the other five provinces, there was no

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

requirement to pay overtime for work other than the weekly hours, which were generally set at 48.¹⁸⁶

This period was also marked by a substantial increase in women's labour force participation. As of 1965, women comprised 29.1% of Canadians working in paid employment.¹⁸⁷ By 1971, this percentage had risen to 37.1%.¹⁸⁸ While roughly half of those women working for pay in 1961 were single women, the number of married women working for pay increased substantially as well. Whereas in 1951, 11.2% of married women worked outside the home, by 1971 the percentage had grown to 37%.¹⁸⁹ According to Armstrong and Armstrong, women have tended to be concentrated in a handful of industries: trade; finance, insurance, real estate; community, business and personal services; and public administration and defence.¹⁹⁰ Within these industries, women have also been concentrated in low-tier positions characterized by low pay, limited benefits, lack of job security and few opportunities for advancement.¹⁹¹ More significantly, the non-standard nature of much of women's paid employment left many unable to access working time and leisure provisions offered through employment

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Carole Swan, *Women in the Canadian Labour Market* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1981) 6.

¹⁸⁸ Swan, 7.

¹⁸⁹ Swan, 10.

¹⁹⁰ Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto*, 24.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

standards provisions, or other statutory entitlements, such as pay and employment equity protections.¹⁹²

Setting the Sport and Fitness Agenda for the 1960s

Chapter 1 traced debates about fitness policy in the immediate post-WWII period, showing how widespread support for a strategy of work-discipline through fitness resulted in the passage of *Bill C-131 An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport*. Despite the unanimous support surrounding the adoption of the Act, its first few years in existence were riddled with conflicts concerning the role of “sport” in the fitness agenda and the appropriate mix of federal-provincial cooperation. In what follows, I examine some of the problems encountered with this early legislation, the subsequent creation of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians, established to understand the deficiencies in Canadian sports policy, and the partial implementation of its key findings in *A Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians*, a federal policy paper released in 1970. My objective is to probe the nature of early debates about the directions of the fitness agenda in Canada, and explore the efforts of the federal government to reshape dominant understandings of fitness to make it more amenable to working Canadians. The tension over whether and how the federal government should pursue a sport and/or fitness-centered policy agenda underscores its commitment, in light of the development of a national healthcare strategy, to new community-based efforts to promote the health of Canadians through leisure time activities. Although the federal government did seek the assistance of a variety of

¹⁹² Armstrong and Armstrong, *The Double Ghetto*, 27.

'private' not-for-profit organizations (such as the YMCA) and the support of community thought leaders, the nature of this movement was not solely to save costs (though this was an added benefit) but rather to encourage mass participation and appeal at the community level.

A. The Emergence of Medicare in Canada

In assessing the federal government's preference for fitness policies over sport policy, and the creation of the ParticipACTION program, it is important to place the development of what was essentially a public health promotion initiative within the context of the development of Medicare. One of the defining features of the postwar social contract and the commitment to addressing social reproduction was the federal government's adoption of *The Medical Care Act* in 1966. The introduction of this legislation, which enabled provinces to build and expand hospital insurance programs to cover basic physician services,¹⁹³ followed the results of a Royal Commission on Health Services that had been initiated by the Diefenbaker government in 1961. The findings of the RCHS pointed to the fact that Canada, despite being a "modern industrialized nation," still faced many threats to the health of its population, including "high infant mortality, high incidence of illness, inadequate supply of trained personnel, general lack of insurance and inadequacy of much of it, inequitable distribution of expenditures on

¹⁹³ Roy J. Romanov, *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada* (Saskatoon: Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, 2002) 4.

health services among the provinces, and disparate financial capacities of the provinces to act.”¹⁹⁴

Reporting in 1964, the Commission recommended the adoption of a Health Charter, arguing that “the achievement of the highest possible health standards for all our people must become a primary objective of national policy and a cohesive factor contributing to national unity, involving individual and community responsibilities and actions.” The Health Charter laid the basis for a shared-cost national medical insurance scheme based on the principles of comprehensiveness, universality, public administration and portable benefits.¹⁹⁵ Years earlier, the province of Saskatchewan had acted as a pacesetter for Medicare by enacting a system of universal and compulsory medical insurance in 1962. Although opposed by both the Canadian Medical Association and insurance companies, and beset initially by problems of administration and financing, the “Saskatchewan example was, like Banquo’s ghost, a constant specter at every Liberal cabinet meeting when Medicare was discussed.”¹⁹⁶

Yet even though the introduction of Medicare signaled an important intervention intended to contribute to the health of Canadians, there was nevertheless a simultaneous uneasiness about the emerging financial relationship between the provinces and federal government that would accompany the commitment to a public health care. In the years

¹⁹⁴ Malcolm G. Taylor, *Insuring National Health Care: The Canadian Experience* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 142.

¹⁹⁵ Taylor, 145; 147.

¹⁹⁶ Taylor, 143.

following the adoption of legislation, concerns about how the federal government would manage health care spending grew among policy and finance officials. The federal Finance department was concerned about its degree of control over what it saw as an “open-ended health budget” that would require it to match medical and health expenditures at the provincial level.”¹⁹⁷ According to Taylor, by the early 1970s, fear of a “‘health costs spiral’ permeated the entire system.”¹⁹⁸ These concerns, which would in later years provide the impetus for the restructuring of the Canadian health care system, form part of the backdrop against which transformations in sport and fitness policy, and the adoption of ParticipACTION as a preventative health strategy, occurred in the early 1970s. Closely following the state’s commitment to take a greater role in its regulation of the health of Canadians, it simultaneously developed a fitness program that encouraged individuals to take greater responsibility for their own personal health.

B. Implementing *Bill C-131: An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport*

As the federal government worked with the provinces to develop policies and programs that would contribute to greater health and well-being of Canadians, it retained for itself a central role in the administration of these efforts. At the time of its adoption, the stated purpose of *Bill C-131 An Act to Encourage Fitness and Amateur Sport* was to promote greater coordination and public sector administration of sport and fitness. The Act established a Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate within the Ministry of Health

¹⁹⁷ Taylor, 152.

¹⁹⁸ Taylor, 153.

and Welfare to oversee the development of sports and fitness promotion activities. A National Advisory Council (NAC) was also created to assist and advise the Minister on matters of sport and fitness. NAC was responsible for the administration of grants for sports agencies, institutions and organizations, largely through shared funding ventures with the provinces. However, the activities of the Directorate and its relationship to NAC were not clearly defined in the Act. As the Minister increasingly turned to this intermediary group for advice, the Directorate assumed a more influential role than had been anticipated, much to the frustration of the members of NAC.¹⁹⁹ The result was growing conflict related to the administration of the Act. Members of NAC felt increasingly ignored over the early years of program, and a 1968 assessment report “cited a long list of cases which illustrated delays of months, and in some cases even years, between Council’s recommendations and a response or decision from the Minister.”²⁰⁰

Issues surrounding the autonomy of program administration and the distribution of funds emerged as another area of contention during the early 1960s. Although the total budget for the program was set at \$5 million annually, in its first two years in operation only \$1 million was spent.²⁰¹ In response to criticisms about the funding structure, the government increased total funding to \$2 million in the 1963/4 budget. Incoming Minister of Health and Welfare under the Pearson government, Hon. Judy LaMarsh, explained that the government was expecting the program to take a full ten to twelve

¹⁹⁹ Keyes, 329.

²⁰⁰ Broom and Baka, 12.

²⁰¹ House of Commons Debates. Volume I (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1962-3) 180.

years to implement fully and that funds would be phased in gradually over this period.²⁰² Between 1962-3 and 1967-8, nine provinces and two territories initiated cost-shared fitness ventures in co-operation with the federal government, and in 1968-9 Quebec entered into these agreements as well.²⁰³ Even though agreements varied in nature, the goal was to help provinces support fitness and sport at the local level. However, the initial agreements required provinces to adapt their priorities to meet federal funding criteria and/or “pre-clear” ideas with the federal government and this initially made certain provinces reluctant to participate.²⁰⁴ Broom and Baka have explained some of the initial conflicts over program administration that emerged with the 1961 Act:

Another 'touchy' point was that the federal approvals did not always match the provincial priorities and provincial projects were sometimes refused after they had been held. The provinces were fearful of putting monies into new programs, only at a later point to have the federal government unilaterally withdraw, thereby placing the provinces in the unenviable position of having to pick up sixty percent of the costs or else drop established services. Then too, the rich and poor provinces held conflicting objections about the agreements. The 'have' provinces complained that with ongoing commitments to already well-established programs operating before 1961, it was difficult to find additional funds needed to extend programs in order to make them eligible for federal aid. Meanwhile, the 'have not' provinces, with generally less well-developed programs, found the 60-40 matching provisions out of line because they forced an expenditure of already scarce finances.²⁰⁵

²⁰² House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1963) 5024.

²⁰³ Broom and Baka, 12.

²⁰⁴ Broom and Baka, 23-4.

²⁰⁵ Broom and Baka, 24.

The issue of the federal government's financial and administrative control over fitness and sport continued to dominate the direction of programming, illustrating the federal government's commitment to funding a strategy to support physical fitness, but only one that served its own priorities.

C. The Task Force on Sport for Canadians

Given the problems encountered in implementing C-131, MacEchern, now Minister of Health and Welfare, was put under pressure to initiate a Royal Commission to examine the state of amateur athletics and the overall operation of fitness administration.²⁰⁶ In August of 1968 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau followed up on an election promise by establishing the Task Force on Sports for Canadians to examine the state of sport and physical recreation in Canada.²⁰⁷ As the terms of reference for the Task Force were set, concerns about fitness, funding and federalism were sidelined, and questions about the state of amateur and professional athletics moved to the fore. In particular, the members of the Task Force were mandated to assess and report on existing conceptions and definitions of sport, the roles and activities of the federal government in relation to organizations and agencies supporting sport development, and ways of improving participation and performance in sport in national and international contexts.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ House of Commons Debates. Volume II (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1966) 1445.

²⁰⁷ Canadian athletes had dismal performances in some international competitions immediately preceding this.

²⁰⁸ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 8.

In February of 1969, its findings were revealed. The report called for increased and better-coordinated Canadian sports administration. The Task Force found that there was no clearly defined sports agenda in Canada because of the widely held view that public sector planning and resource provision for sports could only be initiated under the guise of 'fitness'. As the report noted, "[t]here is a widely held stereotype to the effect that physical fitness is eminently worthwhile, efficient and therefore publicly defensible, while sport is insubstantial, wasteful, a pursuit for kids and morons, and therefore indefensible."²⁰⁹ The Task Force made a critical distinction between sports policy and fitness policy, the latter of which was depicted as a series of "daunting charts, formidable progressions, and Spartan rigidities."²¹⁰ Sport, by contrast, was described as light-hearted, joyous, exciting, and fun - an "escape from time and worry and self-concern."²¹¹

The report made reference to the complicated matter of administrative influence between NAC, the Directorate and the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The Task Force had reviewed of the minutes and records of the NAC and had found that the Council's prime orientation was to fitness and that this in part explained why "the sports programme has not been altogether as effective and productive" as it could be.²¹² Further, the report raised questions about whether the three annual meetings of NAC were sufficient to provide adequate guidance and advice to policy makers within the Ministry.

²⁰⁹ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 16.

²¹⁰ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 14.

²¹¹ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 16.

²¹² Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 43.

Arguing that “the function of policy formulation must not be divorced from the responsibility to oversee the execution and administration of policy, nor be too far removed from the daily circumstances and flow of information upon which the framing of new policy must be based,” the report recommended that the primary responsibility for policy development be firmly located within the Directorate of Fitness and Amateur Sport.²¹³ More importantly, the Task Force criticized the review process for grant proposals, which required the Directorate to submit all requests for funds to a Grants Review Committee of NAC. The report argued that this process was unnecessary and time consuming and that existing federal government expenditure and budgetary controls were sufficient and would ensure appropriate distribution of funds. The Task Force concluded:

To our minds, the public purse is sufficiently protected by normal budgetary procedures; the addition of another review stage inhibits the progress of the government's programme, and introduces into it a bottleneck that occurs three times a year - because the findings of the Grants Review Committee are then reviewed by the whole Council. Sport is such a fluid kind of activity, and so subject to the contingent, like the presence or absence of snow for skiers, or the sudden increase of significance of a particular meet because of the unexpected presence of certain athletes or national teams, that national associations require a good deal of room to maneuver. Treasury Board procedures are inflexible enough; the addition of the Council's review structure introduces another element of rigidity into operations that should be as flexible as possible.²¹⁴

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 44.

To correct the obstacles to sport posed by fitness, and to strengthen the place of sports in public policy, the *Report of the Task Force on Sports for Canadians* recommended deep changes to the structure of sports and fitness administration at the federal level. Among its many recommendations, the report advocated that NAC be stripped of any influence over sport policy and that its name be formally changed to the National Action Council on Fitness and Recreation. Despite the criticisms of inflexible and slow-moving processes of the federal bureaucracy, the Task Force nevertheless recommended the appointment of a Director General of Sport within the Department of National Health and Welfare, suggesting that this individual report directly to the Deputy Minister and be given “the responsibility of making all recommendations concerning grants.”²¹⁵ The most important recommendation made by the Task Force was the creation of a non-profit corporation to be known as Sport Canada, to “provide a focus for the administration, support and growth of sport in Canada.”²¹⁶ Despite the report’s call for a more coordinated sports policy, its authors were “unwilling to prescribe just what mix of public and private participation there ought to be in [Sport Canada], though the need for initiative and bold imagination on the part of both is obvious.”²¹⁷ The Task Force refused to commit to a position on the future relationship between governments and the private sector with respect to sport, yet speculated that “it may be that out of the welter of sports bodies in Canada that one organization may emerge, capable of speaking for the whole of

²¹⁵ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 48.

²¹⁶ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 75.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

amateur sports spectrum, and providing unified leadership for it” and that “should this occur, the federal government ... should yield its position to the new national body, while retaining its important role in financial and other forms of assistance.”²¹⁸ In other words, the Task Force regarded centralized government coordination as a temporary arrangement. In an ideal situation, the federal government role would be limited to contributing financial resources, while the existing private sports organizations be relied upon to provide leadership, administration and program ideas.

D. A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians

As outlined in the previous chapter, the discourse on work and leisure that framed the debates about fitness in previous decades tended to understand work-discipline and participation in physical fitness activities as largely synonymous and mutually reinforcing. Policy developments during the 1960s initiated an important break from pre-WWII attitudes towards leisure. British leisure theorist, Peter Branham, has argued that the popular culture of 1960s which emerged alongside the new institutions of the welfare state, tended to incorporate a positive attitude towards progressive social reform in numerous policy areas, including work and leisure. In his analogy, if previous decades could be characterized by “Aesop’s proverbial ants working hard and deferring gratification, the 1960s generation embraced the grasshopper lifestyle, playing hard and

²¹⁸ Task Force on Sports for Canadians, 47.

enjoying the present.”²¹⁹ Particularly in the Canadian context, shifts in the militancy of the labour movement, as discussed earlier, raised suspicions about the motives behind top-down approaches to the regulation of time and work-discipline, even as legislation extended employment standards to larger numbers of workers. As the following discussions demonstrate new policy statements and subsequent policy developments in sports and fitness converged with and indeed supported the movement towards reduced working time and better leisure provisions for workers, particularly as these supported industrial democracy and industrial peace.

In 1970, the new Minister of Health and Welfare, Hon. John Munro, unveiled the federal government's plan of action for fitness and sport policy in *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*. His presentation offered a rather curious response to the findings of Task Force. Despite the commitment made to implement many of the core recommendations of the Task Force, Munro maintained that a program of general fitness and recreation, as opposed to support for elite-level amateur athletics, was to remain the central objective of public policy. The paper echoed proposals from the early 1960s insofar as it understood the “pursuit of international excellence ... as a consequence and not as a goal of mass participation.”²²⁰ In his opening remarks, Munro stated:

²¹⁹ Peter Bramham, “Choosing Leisure: Social Theory, Class and Generations,” *The New Politics of Leisure and Pleasure*, ed. Peter Bramham and Stephen Wagg (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 24.

²²⁰ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, Government of Canada: Department of National Health and Welfare. Presented by the Honorable John Munro, Minister of Health and Welfare. March 20, 1970, 23.

Our policy is about people - the greatest number of Canadians possible - increasing their participation in sports and recreational activities, and improving the benefits they can enjoy from such participation. If, along the way, it also serves to upgrade the caliber of Canadian participation in the world sports arena - which we are completely confident it will - then we will be able to really take pride in ourselves for having achieved something that very few other nations have been able to develop - a successful yet well balanced total national sports program.²²¹

While the federal government was willing to make some important provisions for the development of sport, the promotion of fitness for the general population, which would, over subsequent years, begin to target individual 'lifestyles', remained its core objective.

The federal government's reluctance to relinquish control over fitness to a new sports policy reflected its ongoing concerns about the rising cost of health care. Leisure figured prominently in Munro's policy because of the belief that the choices one made at leisure could potentially be used to support better health outcomes. In introducing the policy, Munro warned that Canada was on the "verge of a leisure crisis," in which, he explained, "the majority of ... people will have tremendous amounts of personal free time, yet either have no ideas of what to do with it, or no facilities available for the person to use his free time in the manner in which he derives the most enjoyment from it."²²²

Munro's statements demonstrate that changing working time norms, outlined at the onset of this chapter, could support a national fitness strategy. The proposed 'sports' policy offered a platform from which to articulate concerns about the projected expansion of leisure time and restate the importance of a program of national fitness to ensure the ideal

²²¹ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 1.

²²² *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 2.

(ie. healthy) use of leisure hours. Assuming that Canadians (or at least Canadian men) had or were about to have large blocks of free time at their disposal, Munro proceeded to identify a two-fold problem of “motivation and opportunity,” which pointed to a lack of awareness about the benefits of physical activity as a leisure time pursuit, as well as the obstacles posed by limited access to sports and recreation facilities.²²³

Drawing from the Task Force on Sport, Munro’s policy proposal adopted an understanding of fitness that distanced it from highly regimented physical activity. Past understandings of sport as a means to promote work discipline, he explained, had emptied 'fun' from physical activity and had made it difficult to inspire the motivation required for the achievement of 'mass' participation. Munro argued that physical activity had been hampered in its role in “re-creation” because of a particular “work ethic hangover” that thwarted meaningful participation in sports and fitness. In his words:

The classic work ethic is that nothing is of any redeeming social value if it is enjoyable -- that hard work (preferably devoted exclusively, or allied in some way, to your job) is the only way to be a good citizen. This attitude infiltrates sports and recreation through and through. Thus P.T. - boring, strenuous, unimaginative P.T. - is all too frequently considered the best way to conduct fitness programs in schools. Thus long hours of practice are essential to organized competition, even at the youngest levels. Thus parks and community centres are closed unless there is constant adult supervision of pre-planned programs - lest kids just actually 'mess around', enjoying themselves without any purpose or goal or orientation.²²⁴

²²³ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 1.

²²⁴ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 17.

If fitness and sport were to have any widespread appeal as a voluntary leisure time activity among children or adults it was necessary to recast the purpose of sport as facilitating the “enjoyment of the people taking part” as opposed to more hard work.²²⁵

The policy forcefully argued that sports and fitness, far from replicating work, should ideally be regarded as the “complete antithesis of work,” encompassing “relaxing, largely non-goal oriented activity.”²²⁶ Sports and fitness were simultaneously cast in terms that distinguished their utility from the processes of economic production:

... economics has become a major priority of every citizen - strongly influencing what he or she shall do with his life, how he shall spend his time. Accordingly, sports has a tremendously important role to play in offsetting this economic orientation. It has this potential because, ideally, the values and characteristics it develops are non-economic ... its prime focus is on health and personal satisfaction for their own sake - rather than what they can contribute towards making a person a better worker.²²⁷

In an attempt to secure mass appeal, the proposed sports policy put forward a new program of physical fitness that aimed to transcend the climate of social unrest that characterized the social landscape of the 1960s. This was approached through a radical re-visioning of the meanings and practices traditionally associated with sport and fitness.

Citing research on the mental and physical strains associated with the modern labour process, the proposal explicitly sought to disassociate physical activity with work,

²²⁵ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 19.

²²⁶ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 11.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

but also the rigidities of work-discipline. Munro's choice of language clearly sought to appeal to critical sensibilities:

... people are others-directed - controlled in their own lives by the decisions of other people greatly remote from them. This doesn't just happen in the sense of following increasingly detailed instructions and rules and regulations set down by businesses and governments. It also occurs from indirect and even subconscious pressure to conform to a pre-cast mold of values and life styles - most noticeable through the Niagara-like torrent and power of advertising.²²⁸

One central contradiction emerged from the policy. After a lengthy consideration of the importance of personal autonomy and freedom for the average citizen, Munro proceeded to suggest that sports and recreation activities take place *at work (ie. in places of paid employment)*. Given statements suggesting that the modern character of work was causing widespread "disillusionment with the current economic and social system,"²²⁹ it seems rather curious that the workplace be identified as an ideal site at which to spend one's leisure time. Nevertheless, the proposed sports policy for Canadians identified industrial recreation as a field of "limitless potential" which could "offset" elements of the "alienation of the individual" by alleviating "*the tensions of work right on site.*"²³⁰

[Industrial recreation] is easy to organize in comparison to the community or neighbourhood at large. It brings people together who might otherwise never get into contact, even if they sit beside each other in the steno pool or on the production line - brings them together in something they enjoy, instead of just endure, thus reducing feelings of alienation and apathy, anarchy and animosities toward the company. It creates bonds between people - bonds with workers, with foremen, with

²²⁸ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 10-11.

²²⁹ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 13.

²³⁰ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 14.

technicians, with administrators, with executives. In short, it helps restore a human soul and sense of human fraternity to what otherwise might remain just another agent of depersonalization.²³¹

Munro's sentiments are rather telling given the period of industrial conflict that preceded the introduction of the sports policy. Work itself, not the relationship between labour and capital – or workers and their employers – was upheld as the centre of conflict and disillusionment. Total working time was not seen as a problem, although the structure and pacing of work on the “production line” was identified as a contributing factor in the alienation of the individual. This focus on the *character* of work lent itself to a policy supporting the use of industrial recreation to ease the tensions facing workers by alleviating the stress and malaise caused by paid work.

The policy may also be read as an attempt to diffuse the potential for agitation in the community at large and address the question of ‘access’ to sports outside of the workplace. Munro's report noted that the twin problems of motivation and opportunity were particularly severe for poor communities, and he thus made a commitment to “devote special attention to the less fortunate regions and classes.”²³² Citing the cycle and culture of poverty in many of Canada's communities, the report named sports a key “strengthening agent” and “rallying point” for families, blocks, neighbourhoods, villages and communities.²³³ Sports, it argued:

²³¹ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 15.

²³² *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 3.

²³³ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 13.

... can demonstrate to the people that they can get together among themselves, regardless of their economic situation, that they can carry out ideas and programs themselves, that they can have some means of enjoyment, that they can build something for themselves, by themselves -- something they like and something they choose. It can show such people their own potential for other things -- like getting better parks and sports facilities.²³⁴

While one of the stated goals of the sports policy was to free people from the confines of “economy”, an additional ‘benefit’ for governments was the potential cost-savings associated with self-directed grassroots activities:

Think of the gross combined federal-provincial-municipal welfare bills. Think of the wasted manpower resources resulting from early school dropouts within the middle class as well as poverty groups. Think of the increasing police and fire protection costs to control crime -- crime born of economic desperation -- in poorer neighbourhoods. Even in these less human terms, you can see the need for more community catalysts -- and sports and recreation programs can be these catalysts.²³⁵

Grassroots and community-oriented participation in physical activity, as a complement to industrial recreation, was used as a way of addressing, through preventative means, a range of social problems, although the precise mechanism of implementation for this strategy remained undefined in the policy itself.

E. Responses to the Proposed Sports Policy

Munro unveiled the policy proposal to the presidents and officers of the national governing bodies of fitness and amateur sport as they assembled at a special annual meeting of the Sports Federation of Canada in Ottawa. He announced the division of the

²³⁴ *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 14.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

Fitness and Amateur Sport branch into two separate but complementary divisions: Sport Canada, to address concerns about the state of elite athletics in Canada, and Recreation Canada, to encourage and develop fitness programming for the general population. In this way, the Ministry attempted to respond to some of the concerns raised in the Task Force on Sports, while continuing to pursue a rigorous fitness agenda. Along with internal changes to the structure of fitness administration, Munro also announced the creation of a number of arm's length agencies, funded by the government but administered autonomously by independent boards of directors.²³⁶ Among these were The National Sport and Recreation Centre, which moved the administration of thirty-three sports "from 'the kitchen tables' of volunteers to the offices of professional executive directors," Hockey Canada, to address matters relevant to the national hockey team, the Coaching Association of Canada, to improve coaching for elite-level athletes, and Sport Participation Canada, whose sole mandate was to encourage Canadians to improve their physical fitness.²³⁷ As Broom and Baka describe, "while the principal of administrative support met with universal approval, the two level classifications system, and the corresponding major differences in extent of support, inevitably disappointed some."²³⁸ Nevertheless, these changes strengthened government intervention in the field of physical fitness, and quite dramatically in elite sport. Between 1971 and 1972, the

²³⁶ Keyes, 333.

²³⁷ Keyes, 333-4.

²³⁸ Broom and Baka, 30.

total allocation of funds for these areas rose 83% from approximately \$6 million to over \$11 million.²³⁹

In the House of Commons, Munro's efforts to democratize and diffuse fitness throughout workplaces and the community at large nevertheless met with skepticism from more progressive MPs. New Democratic Member of Parliament Mark Rose raised serious concerns about the feasibility of a program of mass participation:

The minister's proposal covers a 50 page document chock full of high-sounding phrases and good intentions. I was particularly interested in words like 'participation' 'involvement' and 'status' which sounds throughout. Sociological jargon such as 'others directed' and 'non-goal oriented' appears there too ... The report calls for things such as equal opportunity to play, the fun aspect of sports and industrial recreation, with which few could quarrel. It criticizes our North American work ethic as it has extended itself into sports, and at least in the lengthy preamble of the sports policy, enjoyment is stressed and competition played down.²⁴⁰

Rose proceeded to challenge the profit-motive underpinning the support of the private sector for sports initiatives, pointing out that to rely on business to encourage mass participation will only facilitate greater involvement among those "financially capable of consuming."²⁴¹ He concluded,

[a]fter we have cleaned all the dust away, how precisely are the lower and middle-income groups going to achieve greater participation? Where do you put facilities in the dense urban parts of our cities without slum clearance destroying housing? Where are the proposals to grant funds

²³⁹ Keyes, 334.

²⁴⁰ House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1969-1970) 5321.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

directly to the communities that need it for non-competitive, recreational facilities?²⁴²

Despite these criticisms, the proposed policy initiated the reorganization of sport and fitness administration within the Department of Health and Welfare, solidified the federal government's commitment to a policy of fitness, and raised important questions about how to change the image fitness to make it more appealing on a mass scale.

Motivating Canadians Through a Policy of 'Lighthearted Shaming': Implementing Fitness Through ParticipACTION

Although Sport Participation Canada formally began its operations following Munro's policy announcement, the work to create the organization began years earlier. Immediately following the results of the Task Force Report, Munro commissioned P. S. Ross & Partners, a Montreal based management consulting firm, to provide additional data on the state of fitness in Canada. The report pointed to a general lack of fitness among the Canadian population, as well as an overall indifferent attitude towards altering the status quo.²⁴³ As early as 1969, Phillipe de Gaspé Beaubien, president of Quebec Telemedia and then chair of NAC, began pressuring Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to "provide seed money for the creation of an independent fitness promotion agency involving both public and private sector funding."²⁴⁴ With the reorganization of the Fitness and Amateur Sports Directorate in 1971, the newly created Sport Participation

²⁴² House of Commons Debates. Volume V (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1969-1970) 5322.

²⁴³ Peggy Edwards, "ParticipACTION The Mouse That Roared: A Marketing and Health Communications Success Story," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 95.2 (2004): 7.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

Canada (SPC) would fill this role. Led by Beaubien and former Prime Minister Lester Pearson, its “single objective was ‘to increase the physical fitness level of all Canadians by convincing them of the need for more physical activity.’”²⁴⁵

The adoption of ‘convincing’ as a strategy to modify individual behaviour is perhaps most evident in the selection of Sport Participation Canada's first CEO - Keith McKerracher - a marketing consultant and former advertising executive with Canadian Breweries, who had no prior involvement or knowledge of physical fitness programming. Together with Jacques Gravel, a French marketing and advertising specialist, and Russ Kisby, a physical education specialist working with the YMCA, the three transformed SPC into ParticipACTION, a ‘brand name’ organization that would attempt to “market physical fitness as a product and mass sell it to the Canadian people.”²⁴⁶ According to Kisby, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate made the decision to “look to business” to organize the task of changing attitudes towards fitness because “they knew ... they would have to spend millions of dollars annually for promotion” to initiate a “modern marketing campaign” effective enough to encourage “physical recreation as a way of life.”²⁴⁷ Although its Board of Directors would include government representatives, ParticipACTION was incorporated as a private, not-for-profit company that would undertake significant fundraising activities among private sector donors. Although the

²⁴⁵ Gear, 23. See also “Fitness Seen on Decline,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 22, 1972.

²⁴⁶ Gear, 24.

²⁴⁷ Russ Kisby quoted in Bruce Reid, “New Organization Designed to Make Canadians Aware of Fitness Value.” *St. John's Evening Telegram* March 23, 1972.

organization relied initially on seed funds from the Department of Health and Welfare, its earliest activities were made possible by large donations from private sector sources, including advertising space from various telecommunications media such as television networks, radio stations and newspapers.

The strategy to hire professional advertising experts was initially quite contentious. Physical education professionals questioned whether the decision to appoint people from outside the fitness field to lead the organization was sound. Kisby himself was accused of “undermining the importance of physical activity” by “selling out to the marketing and the beer promotion people as compared to honouring the profession.”²⁴⁸ Yet the decision to create an entirely new name and approach to fitness promotion was intentional. In line with the insights of Munro's Sports Policy, the use of marketing experts could facilitate what was essentially a rebranding of popular understandings of physical fitness. According to Kisby, “Canadians associated the words ‘fitness’ and ‘exercise’ with hard work and inconvenience, ‘sport’ with high performance, and ‘Canada’ with a government agency.” The organizers at SPC felt it important to develop “a name that had no baggage attached to it” even if this would require extra efforts to help overcome any resistances caused by “the initial reluctance people have to a new word.”²⁴⁹ Indeed, Kisby attributed the successes of ParticipACTION in large part to its autonomy from the federal

²⁴⁸ ParticipACTION Archives Online, University of Saskatchewan Archives, <www.usask.ca/archives/participaction/english/home.html>.

²⁴⁹ Edwards, 8.

government.²⁵⁰ Drawing expertise and leadership from the advertising profession ensured that ParticipACTION would have access to media and communications channels that might not have materialized with an organization led by fitness experts or professional bureaucrats.

The creation of ParticipACTION marked the first large-scale collaborative effort to address the question, posed to the House of Commons in 1961, of how to arouse ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘initiative’ with respect to physical activity - a question echoed ten years later in Munro's proposed sports policy using the similar language of ‘motivation’. Program organizers sidelined questions of facility access, and instead chose to concentrate their efforts on raising awareness about the problems of physical inactivity. Kisby described the three-fold task of the newly created organization as follows: to motivate the people by emphasizing the fun and enjoyable aspects of physical recreation; to educate and inform people about the physical benefits of recreation; and to employ a “shock technique” to demonstrate the consequences of neglecting physical activity.²⁵¹ As one newspaper reported, the goal was to create commercials, televised during highly spectated sporting events, “so obnoxious that rotund viewers will be forced to bounce, waddle or lunge, at high speed, to their sets to turn down the volume” and “so frequent that they won't have time to tear the top off another beer can or gobble a handful of

²⁵⁰ Personal Interview with Russ Kisby, December 5, 2006.

²⁵¹ Reid.

potato chips between commercials.”²⁵² As Jim Struthers, one of the early members of the Board of Directors of ParticipACTION Saskatoon, recalls:

I think from the outset we may have invented the notion that, if you want to fiddle with people’s lifestyles, you better avoid what I call the ‘dire warning’ syndrome. We thought that on lifestyle issues we were better to tread more lightly with our messages. So we were engaging in a kind of lighthearted shaming of couch potatoes and in all of our mass demonstrations that we inspired, we were appealing to the competitive instincts of Saskatonians ...²⁵³

A. Early Advertisements

In the days following Munro's announcement of the SPC program, newspapers across the country declared the official commencement of Canada's ‘war on flab’. In Pearson’s address to the public, he explained that the new program was a necessary and important initiative that would remedy the low levels of physical activity among the population. Canadians, he claimed, were “less fit than the people's of other countries ... not only those we often think of as old and backward Europeans, but also peoples who we call poor and underdeveloped.”²⁵⁴ Armed with grants totaling \$350,000 and the rhetoric of national shame brought by comparatively low fitness standards, the activities of SPC were initially framed as seeking to “peel excess flab from physically unfit Canadians.”²⁵⁵ A focus on international competitiveness was weaved through ParticipACTION's first

²⁵² “Way to Lose It,” *Trail Times*, January 13, 1972.

²⁵³ Interview with Jim Struthers. ParticipACTION Archives Online.

²⁵⁴ “Canadians Are Not in Shape Says Fed-Prob Committee,” *Charlottetown Guardian* December 15, 1971.

²⁵⁵ “Viewpoints,” *Peterborough Examiner* December 28, 1971.

campaigns, perhaps in an effort to incite the spirit of competition that drew individuals to watch sporting events. This competitive discourse was most forcefully used in ParticipACTION's inaugural television advertisement, the 60 year-old Swede, which depicted two men jogging and the following narration: "These men are about evenly matched. That's because the average 30-year old Canadian is in the same physical condition of the average 60 year old Swede. Run. Walk. Cycle. Let's get Canada moving."²⁵⁶ Although somewhat far from achieving the 'shock' value that its creators desired, the sheer repetition of the advertisements contributed to the brand recognition of ParticipACTION.

At the national level, SPC characterized its own efforts as largely targeting the 'flab,' 'excess poundage,' and 'waist lands' of Canadians – all signifiers of a lack of physical activity among Canadians at leisure. While much of the reasoning that was used strategically to justify the creation of ParticipACTION pointed to Canada's poor standing by international fitness comparisons, these studies made links between fitness standards and the reality that Canadian adults were spending as much as 85 percent of their leisure time in "passive activities." As Kisby explained, "[v]ery few Canadians look toward physical recreation during their leisure time ... [m]ost of them spend an average of 25 hours per week watching television while the rest of the time is spent driving their car around."²⁵⁷ Kisby cited recent efforts in other countries, such as 'The Second Chance'

²⁵⁶ ParticipACTION Archives Online.

²⁵⁷ Westwick, "German's Call It 'Best Sport Export,'" *Ottawa Journal* December 21, 1971.

program used in Germany, designed to tackle the issue of leisure time use, arguing that if the Canadian program becomes “half as successful as the German program ... we'll have a lot more people interested in physical recreation.”²⁵⁸ The German counterpart, developed by Prelate Willy Bokler of the German Sports Advisory Council and Jurgen Palm of the working group for leisure and recreation in the German Federation of Sport, had attracted more than eight million participants, “all of whom come voluntarily, not on orders, attracted by a program offering the widest conceivable range of facilities for all age groups, for both sexes, irrespective of the individual's sporting ability.”²⁵⁹ Yet for Kisby, the lack of interest in physical activities was not due to a lack of facilities, but rather a lack of interest in leisure time recreation. This perspective was perhaps best exemplified in an article Kisby published in the 1973/4 issue of *Health*. Here Kisby asserted:

... [t]he Western world is being wrecked right now by the unsatiable demand for less work and more pay. Less work to get more time for what? More pay to do what? Few people give much thought to what they will do with their free time and extra money after they have reached a comfortable minimum income. Of course, there is such a thing as a minimum living standard; but in practice, the urgency of the clamor for improvement does not depend so much upon the number of working hours or the salaries earned, as upon the degree of dissatisfaction with life. We could do so much – and at little cost – by fighting this dissatisfaction. Why should we work so hard to avoid work?²⁶⁰

Thus many of ParticipACTION's initial advertisements focused explicitly on provoking interest in physical activity as a leisure time pursuit.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Russ Kisby, “Canada’s Fitness Problem” *Health* 1973/4.

B. Saskatoon: A Demonstration Community

The organization used Saskatoon as a ‘demonstration community’ for its first campaign, which was informally titled Motivate/Mobilize. As a companion to its media advertisements, ParticipACTION initiated a series of community-based initiatives to “assess whether it would be possible to obtain co-operation at the local level from the public and private sectors, as well as from community organizations and community ‘thought leaders.’”²⁶¹ On March 27, 1972 the project was approved by Saskatoon City Council and a committee was established to provide leadership to oversee the activities. The first members of the Board of Directors in Saskatoon included representatives from the medical profession, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the business community, school boards, the YMCA, the media, SIAAS and the University of Saskatchewan.²⁶² The ‘target audience’ was cast wide to include “all citizens of Saskatoon” and the basic objectives of the initial series of program activities were as follows:

- to promote the fitness of the citizens of Saskatoon through participation in sports and physical recreation;
- to work in cooperation with all other persons, organizations, societies, firms, institutions and the local mass media to promote physical recreation and fitness among the citizens; and
- to assess the effectiveness of a community-based, volunteer initiative to achieve the above two objectives.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Motivate/Mobilize (Model Community). File: ParticipACTION Saskatoon 1972-1978 Box 2 Participaction MG 291 2004-41.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

These objectives were to be achieved with resources that were entirely generated by donations from within the Saskatoon community, including free advertising space, local sponsorship from the business community, and volunteered time. The reliance on community resources was a strategic move by the national organization. Because the national branch of ParticipACTION did not provide any funding, program officials assumed that activities could be duplicated at no cost in any community, if successful. The decision to select Saskatoon as a pilot community stemmed in large part from Kisby's involvement in the local YMCA, but likely also because of the city's longstanding support for community health initiatives.²⁶⁴

Beginning in 1973, the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix published a series of ParticipACTION advertisements targeting local residents, with eye-catching titles such as *Saskatonians Are ... Unaware!* and *Saskatonians are ... Unusual!* These were adapted from advertisements targeting Canadians in national newspapers (see Box 1.1. and 1.2). These full-page features were intended to increase motivation to exercise by informing people of their poor standards of physical health. This campaign was accompanied by a “mobilization strategy” involving a community-based group physical activity. The creators of ParticipACTION believed that the messages, while a crucial awareness-raising tool, would have to be accompanied by some kind of organized action in order to optimize effectiveness. Soon after the local advertising commenced, community organizers initiated a Walk Around the Block campaign. The stated goal of the event was

²⁶⁴ Personal Interview with Russ Kisby, December 5, 2006.

to have every citizen of Saskatoon participate in a basic physical exercise: a walk around the block. According to Kisby and the event's other organizers, over 50% of Saskatonians participated in this walk.²⁶⁵

C. Self-directed community initiatives

Having established that collective participation in physical activity was feasible in a small community such as Saskatoon, ParticipACTION began the search for new approaches to community fitness that could replicate this model. Community activities were designed to supplement the continued advertising efforts of the organization – both in major media forums and through a range of other sites, such as on matchbooks, milk cartons and bumper stickers. In the mid-1970s, ParticipACTION, in collaboration with Sun Life Insurance and the Kinsmen Clubs of Canada designed a community physical activity program, ParticiPark, whose target audience was simply “inactive Canadians.” The objective of the ParticiPark program was to facilitate the construction of outdoor fitness facilities in communities in an effort to motivate Canadians to become physically active. Building on the Parcours movement in Switzerland, a Participark involved creating a trail of fitness stations through already existing public parks. At regular intervals, a station constructed of wooden post poles or bars, each with designated exercise instructions, would instruct participants through cardiovascular or strength building exercises. Participants would move from station to station in a circuitous fashion. Brochures for the program noted that “schools, clubs, senior citizens’ groups and

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

CANADIANS ARE...



UNFIT!

You unfit? Most likely! A Saskatoonian, a Canadian, and unfit! Concern about our state of physical fitness surfaced in 1943 when as a nation we became alarmed at the bad physical condition of young men entering the services. Since then the situation has steadily worsened. Studies reveal the shocking fact that Canadian adults spend 85 per cent of their leisure time in passive activities. In Saskatoon, of 294 adults interviewed recently, 64 per cent had done NOTHING in the past year to improve physical fitness. Canadians have never been more INACTIVE. We are ranked

among the LEAST fit nations. Our health costs are rising faster than in almost any other developed country. It has been estimated that the annual loss to the Canadian economy from cardio-vascular disease alone is 1700 million dollars. We owe it to ourselves and to CANADA to do something NOW to reduce the staggering social cost of our passive life-styles. That's what PARTICIPATION SASKATOON is all about... a community effort to prove that FITNESS IS GOOD FOR LIFE!

Where do you FIT in?



Box 1.1 "Canadians Are Unfit," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 6 Jan 1973, 10. University of Saskatchewan Archives, MG 291, Scrapbook no. 8.

CANADIANS ARE...



UNFIRST!

UNFIRST? Yes Canadians are UNFIRST AND UNFIT! Olympic competition proves it. During the thirties when our population was much smaller, Canadians brought home as many as sixteen Olympic medals. Now, we're lucky to bring home four. You don't have to be a Mark Spitz or a Nancy Greene to be in shape; but Olympic performance does say something about a nation's level of physical fitness. In Canada, not only are we UNFIT AND UNFIRST, we don't believe it. And Saskatonians are no exception.

In a recent survey, nearly sixty percent of those interviewed felt Canadians were as fit, or more fit, than people of other countries. Don't believe it. Canadians are among the least fit people in the world. And the cost, as reflected in spiralling medical expense, absenteeism, and loss of efficiency is shockingly high. PARTICPaction Saskatoon is this community's program to prove that FITNESS IS GOOD FOR LIFE!

Where do you FIT in?



Box 1.2 "Canadians Are Unfirst," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 13 Jan 1973, 22. University of Saskatchewan Archives, MG 291, Scrapbook no. 8.

all kinds of recreation organizations as well as individuals” could use these parks and that they served as a “meeting place – a place where families, neighbours young and old, fit and unfit can get active together.”²⁶⁶ A brief glance at the ParticiPark manual raises several questions about the suitability of the program for all audiences. The exercises included in the circuit were designed to promote muscle endurance, stamina, and the height and weight of the various components of these log structures suggest that, despite the call to all ages and abilities, these activities were designed for able-bodied adults (likely men).

The conceptualization of the program clearly demonstrates the movement, beginning in the mid-1970s, to balance community-centered health promotion activities with the financial stringency increasingly recommended by federal officials at the Department of Health and Welfare. While the grassroots nature of programming continued to be a priority for ParticipACTION, an emergent era of neoliberal policymaking, discussed further in the next chapter, placed new parameters on the activities of the organization. By drawing upon the local resources and manpower of the Kinsmen Club, a non-profit community service organization, the program lauded its choice to use “Kin ingenuity [to] replace the need for hard cash.”²⁶⁷ Local residents, with the help of Kinsmen, were directed to “scrounge or otherwise acquire the poles and posts

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ University of Saskatchewan Archives, ParticipACTION fonds, MG 291, Box 2, "A ParticiPark for Your Community," ParticiParks.

and supply the labour to erect a Participark.”²⁶⁸ The outdoor setting meant that facilities costs were reduced to the purchase of long-life all weather metal signs, which ParticipACTION arranged to have donated by Sun Life Insurance, along with some promotional materials. ParticipACTION provided a ‘how-to’ manual with specific information on the construction of each station, though community leaders would have to first seek permission from local parks department before embarking on the project. Roughly 100 of these were constructed, but it is difficult to say how widely Participarks were used once constructed.

But fitness for whom? Male-centred approaches to leisure regulation and ParticipACTION

The link between expanding leisure time and lifestyle practices meant that while the activities of ParticipACTION attempted to remain broad, a gendered subtext emerged in its advertising strategy, suggesting the organization’s concern for influencing the leisure time uses of Canadian males, and reflecting a narrow policy approach to regulating social reproduction. For example, the 60 Year Old Swede explicitly ridiculed the sedentary lifestyles of young Canadian men. The first broadcasts were aired during televised football games and were sponsored by the Canadian Football League. This suggests that male sport spectators were the targeted recipients of these early advertisements. Box 1.3 contains the text of an extended version of the advertisement, adapted for the radio. The workplace setting serves to reinforce the idea of fitness promotion oriented towards working-age Canadians. Even though a woman’s voice is

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

heard in the narrative, she speaks not of herself and her own fitness, but rather from her position as a caregiver, where she recounts what she provides for her children, and perhaps her husband too.

[Male #1. Office background – typing and paper shuffling noises] Well I was really active in school, you know, I mean football, hockey. Even though I don't exercise everyday now I think I've kept in pretty good shape.
[ParticipACTION Expert] The average 30-year old Canadian male is in about the same physical shape as the average 60-year old Swede. That's right, 60.
[Male #1] Look, it's not a question of not wanting to exercise, it's just a question of trying to find the time.
[ParticipACTION Expert] 85% of all Canadians spend their leisure time in passive activities. Maybe that's one reason why more of us die from heart disease than all other causes put together.
[Male #2. Gym setting, racketball noises] Me, I'm in great shape ... I think.
[ParticipACTION Expert] The fitness of Canadians actually begins to decrease at age 6. Physical time in our schools is among the lowest in the civilized world.
[Woman #1] I feed them well. They get the exercise they need. I don't have a problem with – **[voice cuts off]**
[ParticipACTION Expert] This message is brought to you by ParticipACTION, the Canadian movement for personal fitness. All we're saying to you is do something ... anything ... run, walk cycle, jog ... but do something to get Canada moving again. ParticipACTION.

Box 1.3 60 Year Old Swede Radio Advertisement 1973. ParticipACTION Archives Online.

The gendered division of paid and unpaid work also emerges and appears as natural in a television advertisement titled 'Road Hockey.' This commercial depicts a scene in which two adult men 'escape' the dinner table (and their wives – both caricatured as overbearing) to go outside to play an evening hockey game together. The narrative explains that adults should reconnect with some of the 'lost' habits of their childhood by being active on the street rather than "dozing in the house" during the evening. Yet questions about activities for wives, who stay behind to clean up after

dinner after their husbands leave to play hockey, and *their* need for active leisure, are absent.

Woman #1 (*sitting across the dinner table from her husband*): William! Don't wolf down your food!
Image of a man eating and chewing at full speed.
Woman #1: You'll get indigestion! William!
(Man #1 slowly wipes his mouth on his sleeve and stands up from the table)
ParticipACTION: Some people never grow up.
Woman #1 (*yelling after her husband who is now leaving the room after having grabbed his hockey stick*): What about dessert?
ParticipACTION: It was healthy energy that got us out into the street every evening after dinner when we were kids. There is no reason why that energy should be restricted to kids. It's better to be out on the street than dozing in the house. You'll sleep better and feel better next day. It doesn't have to be road hockey – a walk around the block will do.
Man runs up to the front door of a house. Woman answers with her husband standing behind her.
Man #1: Hi! Can Marvin come out?
Woman #2: Absolutely not, William. Not until he's finished every single last pea on his plate.
(Man #2 bustles past his wife, quickly giving her a kiss on the cheek before heading out into the street)
Man #1: Marvin!!
ParticipACTION: ParticipACTION – a step in the right direction.

Box 1.4 Road Hockey Television Advertisement 1975. ParticipACTION Archives Online.

Conclusion

This chapter traced an emerging relationship between the consolidation of employment policies regulating the labour process (including working time and leisure time standards) and healthy lifestyle policies directing leisure time use. Understood as part of an integrated working time regime and operating alongside the development of a national healthcare strategy, the emergence of these policies was shaped by both class and gender dynamics. Using the lens of leisure reveals how the labour movement was

able to shape the reduction of working time for a large – though far from universal - number of workers. As leisure time increased, policymakers strategically shaped its use in ways that would produce positive health outcomes. The promotion of fitness at leisure became an important government priority, despite repeated calls to support a new sports policy. What popular discourse on sport did exist in the mid-1960s was used to support the regulation of healthy lifestyle in a way that encouraged time-discipline, without using the language of work-discipline, which would have contradicted the popular progressive social sentiments of the time. The state's interest in managing class relations and supporting a climate of industrial peace was evident in proposals produced by the federal government, which explicitly suggested the use of sports to calm labour dissent at work and in the community at large.

To achieve its stated goals, the federal government created an arms-length organization – ParticipACTION – that undertook sports promotion activities to encourage healthy living at leisure. The use of marketing experts signals a coordinated attempt to implement a policy based on the principles of exhortation – or moral suasion. The ultimate goal of this type of policy was to compel (convince) individuals to act (freely) in ways that would facilitate their own healthy reproduction. The chapter traces the genesis of this strategy through the early years of the 1970s. The central objective of ParticipACTION was to encourage a program of lifestyle modification that would be generated by communities themselves, and a strategy of “shaming” Canadians was used to prod individuals into taking action. Yet, prevailing gender norms also shaped leisure policies and these in turn reinforced gender ideologies of domesticity. Despite the stated

goal of *community* leisure development, the activities of ParticipACTION reveal an emphasis on the lifestyle modification of working-age Canadian men. Both in print and radio advertisements, messages targeted men. The fact that women were assumed to perform unpaid work in the home was implicit in the narratives of ParticipACTION, but this gendered division of labour was not challenged in any way, nor women's leisure or women's lifestyles addressed in any significant way. To the extent that the promotion of daily healthy lifestyles may be understood as a strategy for regulating social reproduction, the policies adopted did not fundamentally challenge the underlying gendered division of paid and unpaid work that defined the postwar gender contract. The task of healthy lifestyle promotion continued, as in earlier decades, to be tied to expanding leisure time for male workers. As subsequent chapters will show, changing patterns of women's work exacerbated the underlying tension between paid and unpaid work, but the initial policy framework set in motion by ParticipACTION was ill equipped to cope with these new issues as they arose with force after the mid-1970s.

Chapter Three: Employee Fitness Experiments and the Reproduction of ‘Healthier, Safer and More Productive’²⁶⁹ Canadians

“Let’s face it, we cannot legislate fitness.”²⁷⁰

- Hon. Iona Campagnolo, Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1979

Despite the commitment made to promoting community-centered fitness promotion through ParticipACTION, an arms-length government agency, the federal government’s fitness policies during the 1980s undermined the basic goals of community leisure development and instead encouraged a wave of initiatives targeting passive individual lifestyles at home and at work. Discussions of the work/life relationship came to focus on the health of white-collar breadwinners, especially those in sedentary work, and new efforts to ‘measure’ fitness centered on an individual *employee’s* ability to cope with new *workplace* stresses. This chapter demonstrates how a new relationship forged between the fitness agenda and public health policies contributed significantly to the regulation of social reproduction and the work/life relationship. Moreover, the choice of voluntary employer-sponsored fitness policies to correct these tensions is situated against the backdrop of neoliberalism as a dominant mode of organizing political and economic practices.

The chapter opens with an examination of developments in the legal regulation of working time and leisure at the provincial and federal levels. Although the movement to reduce hours and increase vacation time eventually waned, the stabilization of working

²⁶⁹ House of Commons Debates. Government of Canada. 1978-9.

²⁷⁰ House of Commons Debates. Government of Canada. 1978-9.

time was immediately followed by initiatives to shift the temporal organization of work to make it more flexible for firms. I proceed to show how the growing silence about leisure in the realm of employment legislation was reflected in policies designed to regulate healthy *lifestyles* at home and increasingly at work. The fitness policy discourse found a new home within an emerging field of health promotion policy, and while severed from concerns about leisure time, it nevertheless retained an analysis of how the form (sedentary) and culture (stressful) of paid employment was having serious implications for the health of workers. Although the efforts of ParticipACTION continued to be supported financially and in principle by the federal government, the Department of Health and Welfare did not relinquish *total* responsibility for health promotion to local organizations. The Department itself was actively involved in direct efforts to shape fitness programming at the local level, though these were intended above all to demonstrate the sound business case for human resource investments and motivate firms to undertake similar initiatives. I thereby probe the nature of the federal government's continued involvement in fitness administration by examining a series of pilot employee fitness programs undertaken in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Viewed against the backdrop of the polarization of working time and changes to the temporal organization of paid work – especially the growth of flexible working arrangements – the launch of federally funded employee fitness experiments signal an important shift in the nature of government regulation throughout the 1980s. The federal government used these projects to *motivate firms* to undertake similar initiatives, regarding its own involvement as a temporary measure. Recreation programming thus became more closely

tied to a sphere of production and a discourse on the health of the *economy* and of *firms* came to overshadow earlier discussions of the health of communities.

Work and Leisure Standards Throughout the 1980s: Stabilization to Flexibility

As previous chapters have demonstrated, in the decades following World War II, working time laws were enacted and strengthened in several Canadian jurisdictions in an effort to support full-employment among (predominantly male) workers. Employment standards regulating work and leisure began to stabilize in the 1970s.²⁷¹ By 1975, most provinces had enacted hours of work and vacations with pay legislation, and the process of consolidating piecemeal legislation into general acts outlining employment standards continued as the general trend, with Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Quebec passing comprehensive labour standards acts in 1972, 1973, and 1974, respectively. Rather than further reductions in daily hours of work (ie. a reduction lower than 8 hours as a standard), what few improvements made at the provincial level tended to modify vacations with pay legislation. For example, between 1973 and 1975, Manitoba increased its provisions for vacations with pay to three weeks for those with five years of service, Prince Edward Island increased the minimum length of vacation from one week to two weeks and from 2% to 4% of pay, and Saskatchewan provided a three week vacation for employees with only a single year of service.²⁷² Yet while some areas of protection were expanded, *eligibility* for protection became more difficult for certain groups of workers

²⁷¹ Deborah Sunter and René Morissette, "The Hours People Work," *Perspectives on Labour and Income* Volume 6. No. 3 (Autumn 1994): 3.

²⁷² *The Labour Gazette*, 1973-1976.

in some provinces. Domestic workers, for example, were exempted from vacations provisions in Part III of Saskatchewan's Labour Standards Act in 1973; Quebec's Ordinance No. 3, also regulating vacations, excluded "persons who work outside an employer's establishment without possible control over the number of days per week spent at work"²⁷³ and, in 1975, Nova Scotia exempted teachers from its vacation with pay provisions of the Labour Standards Code and the Vacations Pay Act.²⁷⁴

By the 1980s, the pace of change to existing legislation had slowed completely, and in 1982 PEI became the last province to enact comprehensive employment standards legislation. Across the provinces, little variation existed with respect to the scope of working time protections and provisions for vacations with pay. In what follows, I examine how and why, despite the now formal and widespread regulation of working time, the promise of increased leisure time did not come to fruition for many of Canada's working people. I argue that changes in the temporal organization of work arose largely from the proliferation of 'flexible' work arrangements and shifts in the nature and organization of economic production. Although the formal legal regulation of working time persisted throughout the 1980s, it became increasingly anachronistic and largely ineffective at producing any sort of collective movement towards shorter working hours. I also document the polarization and gendered distribution of working time by analyzing changes in the employment of men and women during this period.

²⁷³ Henry J. Zwerek, "Labour Legislation in 1972 Part 4 Employment Standards," *The Labour Gazette* (1973): 303.

²⁷⁴ S. Allan Nodwell, "Labour Legislation in Canada in 1974 Part 4 Employment Standards," *The Labour Gazette* (1975): 388.

Contrary to earlier projections of an impending 'leisure society,' hours of work polarized during the late 1970s and 1980s, leaving many working Canadians with either too few or too many paid working hours. Neither situation provided for a healthy balance between paid work, unpaid work and leisure. The declining significance of hours of work legislation occurred in tandem with the growth of new forms of work that left increasing numbers of workers unprotected by existing regulations. To address this gap, older forms of collective organization and agitation were discouraged and in its place a new discourse stressing the individualization of labour/management relations emerged and set the stage for transformations in the regulation of working time. Unlike older forms of negotiation that stressed the centrality of shorter hours of paid work to the production of a healthy labour force, this newly emerging discourse on work time stressed the need for individual flexibility as a means of stabilizing economic forces and ensuring the health of firms. This shift in the dominant approach to regulating working time and leisure time through employment standards is indicative of broader transformations in the economy, labour market and in labour relations.

These developments reflect the rise of neoliberalism as a dominant economic paradigm, which brought with it important changes in the approaches taken to regulating employment during this period. In labour relations, employment standards and trade unionism seemed to take a secondary role to new methods of individualized bargaining for employment benefits. Yet while state discourse officially promoted experimentation with working time options, the context of high unemployment, declining real wages, and an overall reduction in the quality of work posed by the growth of precarious

employment suggest that new ways of working that might benefit *employees* were unlikely. Also significant is the fact that the catchall term ‘flextime’ was regularly heralded as a solution to both the desire among employees for increased leisure time and for those (mainly women) trying to combine paid and unpaid work.

A. Changes in the Macro Economy and its Impact on Labour Relations

Beginning in the early 1970s, the Canadian labour market underwent period of restructuring that was largely connected to broad transformations occurring in the world economy.²⁷⁵ Economic restructuring at the macro level provided a foundation for a new set of economic doctrines focused on supply-side economics. By the beginning of the 1980s, a period of restructuring “characterized by greater mobility for capital, rationalization of production in a global context, and economic interdependence among nation-states” was in full swing.²⁷⁶ Transformations in international economic policy had profound implications for international and national labour markets. On an international scale, capital now increasingly and rapidly moved “to sites of cheap, exploitable labour and away from areas with high direct and indirect wage costs, high taxation, and attempts

²⁷⁵ These changes were precipitated by the decline of Bretton Woods in the mid-1970s, resulting in the adoption of floating exchange rates, and a new multilateral management of the monetary system through co-ordinated national economic policies among G7 nations – all influenced in large part by the priorities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Vosko, *Temporary Work*, 119-120.

²⁷⁶ Andrew F. Johnson, Stephen McBride and Patrick J. Smith, ed., *Continuities and Discontinuities: The Political Economy of Social Welfare and Labour Market Policy in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) 5.

by states to impose some control over investment decisions.”²⁷⁷ In the Canadian context, concerns over regulating effective demand and tackling unemployment eventually gave way to a trio of policies designed to liberalize market production and trade. These included anti-inflation policies, a movement to free trade, and efforts to reduce the national debt.²⁷⁸

The 1985 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* (MacDonald Commission) made significant steps towards restructuring Canadian social and economic policy in neoliberal terms. The Commission reported on a number of pertinent topics and foremost among these was a review of trade policy and income support programs. The report initiated an important challenge to past practice in the federal government’s treatment of working time. Overall, the Commission adopted a critical stance towards existing employment standards legislation, though it claimed to do so in the interests of workers. The report identified “a number of labour market policies and privately negotiated arrangements that do not fully reflect employee preferences.”²⁷⁹ An example cited was the Canada Labour Code’s provision for paid holidays, which required an employee to work 15 of the 30 days prior to the holiday in order to be eligible for a paid day off. This, the report argued,

²⁷⁷ Warskett, G., “Long Term Strategies for Labour,” *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (1990): 122. Quoted in Johnson, McBride and Smith.

²⁷⁸ Judy Fudge and Brenda Cossman, ed., *Privatization, Law and the Challenge to Feminism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 13.

²⁷⁹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada: Volume Two* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984) 654.

disadvantaged part-time workers. In response to the problem of a growing disconnect between the policies regulating working time and the changing nature of work itself, the report argued that it was now necessary to modify existing employment standards – in short, to “change these policies and arrangements even when the economy supports full employment.”²⁸⁰

Yet in naming and supporting the needs of employees, commissioners devoted significant attention to shifting norms of working time and the potential for working time reduction *on an individual basis*, thereby undermining the support for the collective organization of labour. Here, the report pointed to the positive relationship between employers and employees as a prime determinant in the employment relationship and, by extension, as a superior mode of regulating working time. Stating that “each employee ... cannot simply be allowed to work his or her preferred number of hours each week,” the report proceeded to implore employers to offer “staff a work schedule which corresponds as closely as possible to the typical employee’s preferred hours of work each week.”²⁸¹ In outlining this request, the report outlined several incentives for employers to submit to an employee’s preferences, including avoidance of the high costs of employee turnover, reduced job satisfaction and employee fatigue associated with longer hours, as well as the high costs of payment for overtime wages.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada: Volume Two*, 650.

²⁸² *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada: Volume Two*, 650-1.

The privileging of individualized bargaining over working conditions, together with a call to reconfigure the terms of collective or union-based action, was one of the key recommendations of the Commission. In its discussion of Labour/Management Relations, the Commission stated that “the adversarial system of union-management relations” be “re-examined,” arguing further that:

... [m]anagement must respond to employee concerns about job security and job satisfaction, and to the often-tapped capability of all employees to contribute to improved productivity and product quality. Unions must find new ways to facilitate and to participate in this process; they should have and take the opportunity to do so, not by relinquishing their representation of employee interests, but by adding to it a responsibility for helping to achieve the levels of competitiveness essential to the survival of the enterprise.²⁸³

To this end, the Commission warned that “the right to strike or lock out must be rationally limited by the need to maintain the health and safety of the public.”²⁸⁴ In its place, employee-employer relations could be strengthened by a variety of initiatives at the level of individual firms, plants and union locals since these types of local interventions were deemed to be more effective than those undertaken at the provincial or national level. Specifically, commissioners recommended the use of three types of initiatives on a local and voluntary basis: preventative mediation programs; *quality of working life programs* and gains-sharing/compensation arrangements.²⁸⁵ While the Commission did not dismiss entirely the legitimacy of unions, it nevertheless promoted

²⁸³ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada: Volume Three* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984) 447.

²⁸⁴ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada: Volume Three*, 448.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

new individualized processes of bargaining, including bargaining over supplementary employment benefits to promote a better quality of working life, all with the aim of reducing social antagonisms and prioritizing the health of individual firms and the economy as a whole.

Cossman and Fudge have argued the period of state restructuring that began with the MacDonald Commission, which continued with the policies of the Mulroney government, undermined “working people’s economic position and standard of living by lowering wages and shifting more of the costs of reproduction onto them.”²⁸⁶ Indeed, economic restructuring, which had its roots in the monetarist policies of the 1970s had serious consequences for men’s wages throughout the 1980s. Between 1981 and 1995, real average earnings of men fell for the bottom 90% of male workers, although they rose by 6.2% for men with the highest incomes.²⁸⁷ Jackson and Robinson have argued that, since 1975, “there has been no real wage growth at all for men working full-year and full time ... and wages have just about matched the growth of prices through both the 1980s and 1990s.”²⁸⁸ This development had serious implications for the choice of working hours. By the 1980s, “it took between sixty-five and eighty hours of work each week for a family to earn what it took a single breadwinner, typically a man, to earn in a forty-five

²⁸⁶ Fudge and Cossman, 14.

²⁸⁷ Andrew Jackson et al., *Falling Behind: The State of Working Canada 2000*. (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2000) 20.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

hour work week in the mid-1970s.”²⁸⁹ For those in full time employment, this meant workers effectively had no wage gains to exchange for additional leisure time.²⁹⁰ Thus, while policy makers within the field of industrial relations were encouraging workers to bargain for additional and customized leisure provisions according to individual preferences, the realities of the labour market during this period meant that such a dialogue between workers and their employers was unlikely to occur, especially without the support and protections offered by a trade union.

The downward pressure on wages also meant that dual-earner households increasingly became the norm in Canada. Between 1981 and 1991, married women’s participation in the labour force rose from 51.4% to 61.7% and the total percentage of all women, regardless of marital status, in the labour force also increased from 52.3% to 58.5%.²⁹¹ There were likely many reasons why women took up paid employment. Nonetheless, the increase in women’s labour force participation coincided with important shifts in the nature of work.²⁹² As Vosko explains, since the mid-1970s, there has been a rise in feminized non-standard and precarious forms of employment “alongside the deterioration of full-time full-year employment.”²⁹³ More often than not, it was women

²⁸⁹ Fudge and Cossman, 15.

²⁹⁰ Sunter and Morissette, 3.

²⁹¹ Paul Phillips and Erin Phillips, *Women and Work: Inequality in the Canadian Labour Market* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company Ltd., 2000) 39.

²⁹² Vosko, “Rethinking Feminization.”

²⁹³ Vosko, “Rethinking Feminization.” See also: Vosko, *Temporary Work*; Fudge, 267.

who comprised the workforce in these latter positions.²⁹⁴ Working time patterns, often differentiated by industry, also changed as the manufacturing sector shrank in the 1980s, and the service sector expanded.²⁹⁵ As Fudge shows, this sectoral recomposition had implications for the gendered distribution of working-time, as long hours remained “common in goods-producing sectors, where men predominate, and short hours ... in service-producing industries, where women are more likely to be employed.”²⁹⁶ Moreover, industry-specific statistics mirror larger trends across the labour force: “[b]etween 1976 and 1998, the proportion of employees working thirty-five to forty hours declined from 65% of all workers to 54%, while the proportion working more or less increased. Women are (and historically have been) far more likely than men to work short hours of employment.”²⁹⁷

As shown in the previous chapter, the discourse on flextime was promoted as a method of allowing women to combine paid and unpaid work. Foremost among these flexible work options was part-time work. Nowhere is the gendered distribution and polarization of working time more obvious than in part-time work. As women’s level of participation in the labour force grew in the post-war period, so too did their representation among those employed part-time. As Julie White demonstrates, “the proportion of part-time workers who were women rose from 63% in 1953 to 69% in

²⁹⁴ Ibid. See also Vosko, *Temporary Work*, 160.

²⁹⁵ Fudge, 267.

²⁹⁶ Fudge 270.

²⁹⁷ Fudge 269.

1975, and by 1981 72% of all part-time workers were women.”²⁹⁸ As women, and increasingly married women, entered the labour force, part-time work was used as a method of combining unpaid work responsibilities while contributing to household income, though not without economic penalty. Despite women’s increased participation in paid employment, their contribution to social reproduction through unpaid domestic and caregiving work has remained stable since the 1960s; however, while women continue to perform this kind of work, they are increasingly doing so alongside men, whose aggregate time spent performing household labour and child care has been increasing slowly since the 1980s.²⁹⁹ Even so, as recently as 2005, significant differences between men and women’s contributions to unpaid work in the household continue to exist. Men, on average, perform 3.5 hours of unpaid work, as compared to women who perform 7.3 hours.³⁰⁰ Among those with at least one child under the age of 6, the average hours of unpaid work increase to 6.1 for men and 12.6 for women.³⁰¹

B. Flexibility for Firms

While employment standards legislation regulating working time and leisure generally remained the same or improved slightly in various jurisdictions, the movement

²⁹⁸ Julie White, *Women and Part-Time Work* (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1983) 45.

²⁹⁹ Katherine Marshall, “Converging Gender Roles,” *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 7.7 (2006): 7.

³⁰⁰ Leah F. Vosko and Lisa F. Clark, “Canada: Gendered Precariousness and Social Reproduction,” *Gender and the Contours of Precarious Employment*, ed. Leah F. Vosko, Martha MacDonald and Iain Campbell (New York: Routledge, 2009) 34.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

towards flexible working time arrangements presented both a challenge to the idea of standard working hours, and a proposed solution (for employers) to the costs associated with overtime wages, by naturalizing the practice of long daily hours. Escalating costs due to the payment of overtime wages meant that there were strong financial incentives for firms to adopt flextime arrangements. With existing laws seen as rigidities and obstacles to the 'natural' evolution of work processes, some experts felt that flextime would ultimately undermine and or displace working time standards. As reported in the *Labour Gazette*, "... laws and collective agreements in Canada continue, for the most part, to set rather narrow limits for variation from the norm. Contractual provisions for overtime pay after eight hours a work day, or after 40 hours a week, would restrict the scope of flexible, European-style schedules."³⁰² Thus, just as Canada's working time regime began to stabilize, movements to flextime quickly undermined it.

Introduced in Germany in 1967 by Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm, an aerospace firm looking for a way to solve the problem of late arrivals due to commuter congestion, the idea of 'flextime,' in theory, proposed that employees set their own daily hours of work, under the expectation that a required total number of hours be completed in a specified amount of time, such as over the course of one month.³⁰³ Emphasizing first the individual autonomy of workers, flexible working time arrangements were constructed by their proponents as a 'natural' development in the modernization of work processes.

³⁰² George Sanderson, "A New Work Style for the Life Style of the Seventies," *The Labour Gazette* (1973): 657.

³⁰³ Sanderson, "A New Work Style for the Life Style of the Seventies," 651.

Heinz Allenspach, Director of the Swiss Employers Association, promoted these new arrangements as “an example of industrial democracy at its most basic, because it affirms the individuality of employees.”³⁰⁴ Others argued that flextime reflected rising levels of education and income, and a culture among younger workers to reject “rigid worktime rules and other standardized prescriptions and regulations” and, further, that flextime allowed workers to “say with some meaning: ‘I can run my own life.’”³⁰⁵ Flextime also addressed new concerns about the “growing tendency in many countries for workers to achieve their own flexibility through absenteeism and high turnover.”³⁰⁶ To integrate workers into cooperative working time arrangements, the idea of flextime was disassociated from more long-standing symbols of time control at work: “time clocks and time records are viewed by some observers as the antithesis of democracy in the workplace ... time clocks are symbols of control, and therefore negative motivators.”³⁰⁷

Women’s increased participation in paid work also meant that discussions of gender were interwoven into early discussions of working-time flexibility, where the needs of women workers figured prominently in the construction of discourses stressing worker-driven demand for flexible working time. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the efforts of the women’s movement in Canada supported the goal of women’s economic independence through increased educational attainment and participation in paid

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Sanderson, “A New Work Style for the Life Style of the Seventies,” 657.

employment. Yet there was also widespread acknowledgement that the gender contract, which relegated primary responsibility for unpaid work to women, posed significant barriers to the improvement of women's social and economic status.³⁰⁸ Thus, as part of a broader movement aimed at challenging dominant gender ideologies that reinforced a traditional gender division of labour, many women also fought for the reorganization of working time arrangements. These ideas circulated freely in labour policy arenas, and as one expert in the *Labour Gazette* argued, "[w]omen are going to work, and they deserve to do so. Yet we keep the old male rules, nine to five, 40 hours a week, and if there's overtime you do it or you don't keep your job. Neither men nor women can combine working and parenting under those rules. We need new ways of working."³⁰⁹ Although the tension between standard work time arrangements and the organization of unpaid work was clearly acknowledged, statements such as these nevertheless assumed that the problem of combining paid and unpaid work was fundamentally a *women's* problem and one that flextime could potentially resolve: "... the growth of the number of women who combine family responsibilities with gainful employment fosters a demand for arrangements like intermittent or part-time work, and flexible working hours."³¹⁰

Yet this new policy discourse about the specific needs of women workers was at times conflated with initiatives that were designed to benefit ultimately the productivity

³⁰⁸ Ann Duffy and Norene Pupo, *Part-time Paradox: Connecting Gender, Work and Family* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc. 1992): 26.

³⁰⁹ Linda Rheaume, "The Altered Work Day," *The Labour Gazette* (1977): 393. Psychologist quoted is Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University.

³¹⁰ Sanderson, "A New Work Style for the Life Style of the Seventies," 652.

of firms. Flexitime also offered a method of supplying female labour during temporary shortages: “The potential for drawing more housewives into the labour force is largely responsible for a growing interest in these schedules among some European nations that have been experiencing severe long-term labour shortages, and are concerned about their dependence on imported labour.”³¹¹ Some scholars have suggested that the movement towards flexitime arrangements reflect an employer-based managerial strategy designed to “treat working time as a variable” that can “be manipulated to increase productivity or expand service provision, through making workers work harder, longer, or according to manager demands.”³¹² While employers’ accommodation of worker, feminist, and union demands for shorter hours in the postwar period supported a steady increase in productivity while allowing workers to “trade some potential wage gains for more leisure and still experience an increase in their standard of living,”³¹³ the changing macroeconomic context of the 1970s forced employers to look for firm-level strategies to boost employment, despite the introduction of new wage controls and other anti-labour legislation introduced by governments.³¹⁴ In this sense, to the extent that the re-

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Jill Rubery et al., “Working Time, Industrial Relations and the Employment Relationship,” *Time & Society* 14.1 (2008): 89. Quoted in Deidre McCann “Temporal Autonomy and the Protective Individualization of Working-time Law: The Case of Overtime Work.” *Labour & Industry* 17.3 (April 2007): 29 (15).

³¹³ Sunter and Morrisette, 3.

³¹⁴ Paul Phillips “Labour in the New Canadian Political Economy” in *Understanding Canada: Building on the New Canadian Political Economy* Ed. Wallace Clement (Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 1997) 66.

organization of working time arrangements supported management's desire to regain tighter control of the labour force rather than the creation of family-friendly workplaces as a goal in itself, flextime offered a new human resource strategy designed to improve efficiency and maintain competitiveness in a context of economic stagnation. As Christine Everingham argues, even though new discourses of workplace flexibility and flextime can be read to support the needs of working parents, it is crucial to remain cautious of the assumption, underlying many of these discourses, that the temporal order of the home "is regulated by only one type of timekeeping system – the clock."³¹⁵ Failing to acknowledge the multiplicity of temporal orders that govern paid and unpaid work leaves forms of flexibility that hold potential for transformations in the gendered division of paid and unpaid labour vulnerable to cooptation "by marketplace interpretations of 'flexibility' as 'de-regulation.'"³¹⁶

It is also clear from early discussions of flextime that the trade-off for this so-called 'autonomy' for workers was a promise of increased work-discipline for employers. Early studies of North American and European flextime arrangements showed that "productivity increased by as much as 7 percent, one-day absenteeism reduced by 50 percent, overtime payments declined, morale improved, and lateness ended."³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Christine Everingham, "Engendering Time: Gender Equity and Discourses of Workplace Flexibility," *Time and Society* 11.2 (2002): 337.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Sanderson, "A New Work Style for the Life Style of the Seventies," 651.

Companies also noted reductions in turnover and easier recruitment of personnel.³¹⁸ As one article in the *Labour Gazette* noted:

The European experiments have demonstrated that flextime produces more contented and co-operative workers, and fewer on the job grievances. Hours worked are also reported to be more productive – by an average of 3 to 5 percent – resulting in less need for overtime work. Many firms have found also that employees on flexible hours require less supervision. ... Rather than tailing-off in productivity at the end of the workday, there is an apparent increase.³¹⁹

Despite the dominant narrative that flextime was a worker-driven initiative, efforts to support flextime were shown to have a positive impact on productivity, whether this be through workers' willingness to perform tasks at an accelerated pace or through their compliance with the variable scheduling of work.³²⁰ As these debates about flextime unfolded, organized labour maintained a critical stance towards flextime (especially the idea of a compressed work week), and continued to support for the idea of a 32 hour, 4 day work week.³²¹

The rise of the health-centered lifestyle agenda

In the period between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s, health and employment policies came to intersect around concerns over *lifestyle*, particularly the growth of

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Sanderson, "A New Work Style for the Life Style of the Seventies," 656-7.

³²⁰ It is important to remember that these changes occurred during a period of increased unemployment and declining real wages, where the power of trade unions had been largely curbed by the state and that these circumstances to some extent may have shaped the responses of individuals to working time arrangements as well as their degree of participation in working time experiments.

³²¹ Rheame, "The Altered Work Day," 394.

sedentary work, and *lifestyle* became an important site of government regulation. The particular mechanisms of regulation that were adopted by policymakers during this period demonstrate a continuation of narrow policies designed to manage social reproduction by focusing on the health of paid workers. The integration of health and employment policies and the rise of fitness promotion as a tool to regulate individual lifestyles is evidenced by discussions held over two government-sponsored conferences in the early 1970s: the National Conference on Fitness and Health (1972) and the National Conference on Employee Physical Fitness (1974).

Sponsored by the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare, the 1972 National Conference on Fitness and Health brought together over 250 health and fitness ‘experts’ from the medical, paramedical, physical education and recreation professions to consider the relationship between fitness and health and to “discuss problems inherent in the lifestyles of many Canadians.”³²² The objectives of the conference were fourfold: to establish and promote greater co-ordination and communication between professionals and organizations in the field of fitness and health; to increase collective understanding of the relationship between health and fitness; to formulate new directions for the development of fitness policies; and to develop a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of the recommendations and proposals generated at the conference.³²³ Of particular importance was the need to build a

³²² *Proceedings of the 1972 National Conference on Fitness and Health*, Foreword.

³²³ *Proceedings*, 1972, 10.

scientific and technical understanding of the relationship between different levels of participation in physical activity and health outcomes, thereby contributing to a justification for continued government intervention in managing the health and fitness of the population.

The most striking transformation in fitness policy during the 1970s is best encapsulated by the words of Hon. Marc Lalonde, Minister of Health and Welfare, in his proclamation that the new role for the field of recreation policy was to act as an “instrument of preventive medicine.”³²⁴ To emphasize this new direction, lack of physical activity, rather than being described as a reflection of social or community culture as it had been just a few years earlier, was increasingly discussed as a form of *disease*.³²⁵ Some experts began to label this perceived affliction with names such as *mass inactivity syndrome*³²⁶ and *sedentaryitis* to emphasize the severity of the problem – one now focused on the movement of bodies (or lack thereof) at home and at work.³²⁷ An overwhelming proportion of papers at the conference were delivered by medical researchers, who attempted to demonstrate, largely in quantitative terms, the general health benefits of different forms of exercise, the advantages of particular forms of physical activity on different segments of the population, new methods of measuring the

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ *Proceedings of the National Conference on Employee Physical Fitness* (Ottawa: Department of Health and Welfare, 1974) 11.

³²⁷ *Proceedings*, 1972, 30.

fitness of individuals, the impact of stress on the nation's health, and innovative health promotion programs in Canada and abroad. Discussions of physical activity sought to explore the relationship between an individual's fitness and their risk for developing coronary heart disease, lung cancer, and cirrhosis of the liver,³²⁸ and there were frequently moral undertones to these discussions, as experts labeled these "diseases of indulgence."³²⁹

It is quite plausible that these anxieties about the *health* of the population were prompted by broader concerns related to the *costs* associated with providing medical insurance to individuals. Rising health care expenditures underscored the importance of the federal government's involvement in fitness policy. Citing Prime Minister Trudeau's priorities, Lalonde's stance on the new fitness agenda was clear: "improved physical fitness could save millions of dollars a year in federal medical-care costs."³³⁰ In his estimation,

... lack of physical fitness is now recognized as a disease whose gravity can be measured with precision for any individual. The disease is attributed to the lifestyle which so many Canadians have chosen for themselves - excessive smoking, excessive drinking, excessive use of pop and sleeping pills, excessive eating, being sports spectators rather than participants, driving instead of walking, using increased leisure time in passive activities rather than active ones - all of which contributes to an increasingly unhealthy population, pushing up the country's already huge medical bill in the process.³³¹

³²⁸ *Proceedings*, 1972, Foreword.

³²⁹ *Proceedings*, 1972, 47.

³³⁰ *Proceedings*, 1972, Foreword.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

Coronary heart disease alone, he explained, was now a major cause of death and disability, costing “the Canadian nation an estimated 1.7 billion dollars annually.”³³² He proceeded to speculate that an improvement of a mere 2% in the physical fitness of the population, would save the federal government “approximately 34 million dollars annually,” presumably, though this was not mentioned, in addition to a number of lives.³³³

Economic concerns about the lifestyle behaviours of individuals provided the foundation and inspiration for tools such as the Health Hazard Appraisal, an experimental computer program that could calculate a “personal mortality ratio” for individuals based on a survey of characteristics such as age, sex, medical history and health risk behaviours. This system, developed by Dr. Lewis Robbins, an American doctor working in Indianapolis, was unveiled to Canadians for the first time at the 1972 conference.³³⁴ While the appraisal could not predict with any accuracy the life expectancy of a particular individual, it could nevertheless highlight areas where individuals could alter certain health risks with the ultimate goal of joining “a group with a lower predicted mortality experience.”³³⁵ Dr. Harold Colburn, Director of the Smoking and Health Division within the Department of National Health and Welfare, remarked

³³² *Proceedings*, 1972, 95.

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Proceedings*, 1972, 47.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

that the Canadian health promotion agenda had been, up until this point, “handicapped by the lack of a tool to show peoples’ risks in perspective, to demonstrate the quantitative and interactive nature of risk-taking behaviours and the personal relevance and immediacy of the threats to their health.”³³⁶ Yet, while the tool had the potential to highlight areas for risk alteration, ultimately government officials believed that the key to “modern day preventative medicine” was “motivation - the individual’s desire to take measures to protect his or her own health and avoid or eliminate abuse of the body.”³³⁷

The idea that decisions individuals made about their *lifestyles* contributed significantly to the onset of illness formed a central principle of the health policies of the 1970s and was widely adopted by proponents of the preventative medicine doctrine. Rt. Hon. Roland Michener, Governor General of Canada, highlighted the importance of the need to reflect on the lifestyle practices of Canadians:

If people could be made more conscious of this simple fact - and realize ... that their one body has got to last them a lifetime - they might start to put greater emphasis on the value of exercise. They might also need a lot less psychoanalysis. These days when one is always seeing advertisements offering ever new items to replace the old, we should remember that we are living right inside a product that still cannot be replaced except in very small pieces.³³⁸

Thus, in addressing the spread of ‘mass inactivity syndrome,’ dominant state discourses maintained that the primary responsibility for health and wellness lay with individuals, and that greater awareness about the benefits of physical activity would inspire action,

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ *Proceedings*, 1972, 7.

though it was unclear whether awareness alone was sufficient. By the 1970s, questions about how to inspire, motivate and/or persuade individuals to act in certain ways remained central to health and leisure policy discussions. Although fitness policies now sought to regulate the behaviour of individuals to produce certain health outcomes, questions of motivation and inspiration would ultimately point to employers to develop voluntary firm-level policies and practices to regulate the health of Canadians through the employment relationship.

Concerns over lifestyle and illness gained momentum in the mid-1970 as fitness was incorporated into new public health policies. In 1974, a working paper titled *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians* was released by the Department of Health and Welfare under the direction of Hon. Marc Lalonde. While many scholars have noted the turn to a highly individualized movement towards personal health which began with *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*, few have noted the extent to which the emphasis on establishing a policy of lifestyle modification relied heavily on the use of techniques to support greater involvement in physical activity. In its recommendations outlining a strategy of health promotion, over half of the twenty-three recommendations involved the support of new and existing programs to promote physical activity, whether this be through the naming of particular sites to carry out programs, such as schools and workplaces, or through the enlistment of new partners in the health promotion project, such as employers, unions, and voluntary or community associations.³³⁹

³³⁹ Lalonde, Marc. *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians: A Working Document* (Ottawa: National Health and Welfare, 1974) 67-8.

The paper introduced the concept of the health field, a broad term that aimed to move collective understandings of health beyond questions concerning the structure of the health care system and the delivery of services, focusing instead on broader social concerns such as the impact of lifestyles and environment on personal health. Much of the analysis attempted to “show the links between different kinds of mortality and illness on the one hand, and their underlying causes on the other.”³⁴⁰ Poor lifestyle behaviours were shown to be a potential cause of chronic illness and the paper revealed connections between so called “self-imposed risks” such as drug and alcohol use, poor diet and lack of exercise, and chronic illness. It sought to measure the nation’s health, and drew links between the level of engagement in certain high-risk behaviour and the presence or absence of illness.

Discussions of fitness were interwoven into the description of the lifestyle component of the health field.³⁴¹ The paper showed a dramatic rise in the number of hospital days attributed to diseases of the cardiovascular system, with these accounting for roughly one-fifth of all hospitalizations. Canadians, it plainly stated, were not as fit as their European counterparts and a lack of fitness, characteristic of the modern lifestyle, was to blame:

A study in 1972 showed that 76% of Canada’s population over age 13 spend less than one hour a week participating in sport, and that 79% spend less than one hour per week in other physical activity

³⁴⁰ *A New Perspective*, 9.

³⁴¹ The three other elements in the health field quadrant include biological factors, environment and the organization of the health care system.

such as walking. This same survey shows that 84% of the population over age 13 watches four or more hours a week of television. Some 36% watch in excess of 15 hours a week. This pattern of living, dominated by sedentary living, explains why so few Canadians are fit.³⁴²

Interestingly, in its broad discussions of lifestyle, “lack of recreation and lack of relief from work and other pressures” were cited as a self-imposed risk, but subsumed within a broader category of “diet and exercise” that included other problem behaviours such as high-fat intake and fad diets. The emerging field of health promotion helped propel the demand for fitness regulation and implicitly drew attention to the limited physicality of lifestyle at home and at work.

Proponents of the lifestyle agenda generally ignored questions about wider socio-economic or cultural factors that might contribute to the presence of poor lifestyle habits. To the limited extent that broader factors were acknowledged, officials cited the tensions posed by new technologies in the modern work process as the main reason why lack of physical activity was becoming a widespread health problem. Not surprisingly then, the programs developed during this period were premised on an understanding of tension and poor health as arising out of the workplace lifestyle that spilled over to the private lifestyles individuals led at home. In so doing, policymakers rarely considered the tensions between paid and unpaid working time that were facing some workers, especially women, or the gendered division of labour within households and its impact on women’s employment.

³⁴² *A New Perspective*, 25.

The focus on lifestyle in new health and fitness policies did not preclude an analysis of the impact of the changing nature of work on poor health outcomes. Increasingly, policy discourses stressed that what individuals *did at work* appeared to be just as important in determining whether a lifestyle was healthy as how individuals used their leisure time. As the previous chapters have shown, some of the early concerns over leisure assumed that the modernization of work had increased the availability of time for leisure, and that this abundance of leisure time required some degree of social regulation. By the early 1970s, the lifestyle policy discourse contained far fewer references to the temporal organization of working life, and policy officials often blamed physical inactivity in *paid work tasks*, as opposed working time, for the changing norms of physicality in an individual's lifestyle. The 'modernization' of work, it was held, was making work more sedentary and it was the effects of this "inertia and physical ease" that were now garnering the attention of public officials.³⁴³ Whereas only a few years earlier the discussions about sport and fitness policies had focused on the use of fitness policy as a means by which to address areas of social decay in industrial societies, such as the threats posed by the mass alienation and disillusionment of workers, here the changing physicality of work and leisure was thought to be fueling problems that were more individual and biological in nature.

Given these new concerns, at the 1974 National Conference on Employee Physical Fitness, the national dialogue around fitness policies shifted somewhat, moving from a

³⁴³ *Proceedings*, 1974, 12.

discussion of general health concerns to a more focused approach to the promotion of physical activity *at work* and employee fitness in particular. This shift is demonstrated most clearly by the words of Hon. A W Gillespie, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who explained how, despite the increasing presence of clubs and organizations to promote physical activity, only a “very small percentage of the population” were benefitting from these efforts. Building on the medicalized framework for understanding the relationship between work and health established two years earlier, he warned that the movement towards *occupational inactivity* was threatening to create a “serious health hazard” among Canadians. Gillespie called for the introduction of “special initiatives” that could “reach the increasing number of Canadians whose day-to-day work has become more and more sedentary ... requiring less and less physical activity.”³⁴⁴

In discussions of the changing patterns of work and lifestyle, sedentary work was frequently described as unnatural and concerns were raised about the increasing number of people “living and working in abnormal conditions.”³⁴⁵ Such statements were also used to describe changes to the social-psychological environment that characterized new work processes. During the early 1970s, *stress* was cited as a new workplace health issue in the Labour Gazette, using examples from European workplaces to capture the attention of management, labour leaders and government officials. Awareness of issues

³⁴⁴ *Proceedings*, 1974, 8.

³⁴⁵ *Proceedings*, 1974, 10.

surrounding workplace stress surfaced first at a conference held in the United Kingdom in 1972,³⁴⁶ where factory and union medical officers, managers, and mental health professionals probed the causes and outcomes of mental stress in the workplace. Experts argued that the increasing number of work days lost to sick leave, accidents and staff turnover in firms were largely attributable to workers' lack of job satisfaction, low morale, and poor communication with superiors.³⁴⁷ These factors were causing workers to labour under a condition of stress: "whether these take the form of a telephone buzzing at an increasingly accelerated rate or a mountain of information that must be assimilated, processed, synthesized and spewed out, it all amounts to the same thing: a lifestyle whose rhythm is unnatural and disturbing."³⁴⁸

Union officials and managers disagreed to some extent over who was experiencing the most extreme cases of workplace stress. Unions claimed that it was workers who suffered most, as they had "become pawns in industry's quest for results," while others insisted that executives and managers were worse off because their problems received less attention than those on the shop floor.³⁴⁹ Managers "with high technical ability," it was argued, were too often promoted without any actual knowledge of how to go about "handling people" and this lack of formal management training could "set off a

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Christine Doyle, "Work and Mental Health," *The Labour Gazette* (January 1972) 20.

chain of conflict, resentment and unrest among those under their control.”³⁵⁰ In addition, it was noted that the “family life” of executives was disrupted more often. This belief was so widespread that the Labour Gazette reported one British job advertisement which explicitly sought men “who are not too fond of their wives - the implication being that, if they expected to do well, then they couldn’t expect to have much time to devote to their families.”³⁵¹ This impression was likely reinforced by the fact that managers were not protected by hours of work laws or other employment standards.

Among the discussions between Canadian policy leaders, similar trends can be noted. Concerns about the health of managers tended to dominate early discussions of workplace health. Whereas the fitness discourse of earlier years was tied to efforts to promote a climate of industrial democracy that would break up divisions and hierarchies within the workplace, especially between managers and workers, here the concern shifted somewhat to focus on the role of *managers* in these relationships. Although many still recognized that “the growing labour strife we’ve been witnessing in the past few years are in some way attributable to, even commensurate with, the frustrations ... employees face daily,” the dominant understanding held that “coupled with an abysmal lack of physical activity,” these tensions were having the most deleterious consequences on “the prime movers of our society, our leaders, causing their stress index in turn to soar to

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

ridiculous heights.”³⁵² Indeed, policy discussions shifted from a generalized concern about ‘workers’ to more specific targets: “the average businessman, union, government official.”³⁵³

Early discussions of workplace stress mark an important place in the growth of the work-life balance discourse, described at the time as “the desire ... to *re-establish a sounder and more stable equilibrium* in our lives and in the lives of those surrounding us.”³⁵⁴ There are a three points worth noting about this early incarnation of the balance discourse. First, the targets of workplace interventions were managers. Insofar as work/life issues were addressed in the 1970s, they were understood as a problem of long working hours (in paid work), accelerated pace of work (in paid work), and lack of formal management training for (primarily) executives:

[t]hose people we call managers are burdened from the outset with what is popularly called ‘information overload’. Add to this the demands made on their time, the innumerable decisions they are obliged to make, and the sheer scope and complexity of the problems confronting them, and you emerge with an image of our time that would have sent our primeval ancestors scurrying back to their caves.³⁵⁵

This perspective was underscored by the outcome of a so-called “chilling” US study, which showed that in 1973 alone, 30% of managers had changed jobs and that 35% of

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ *Proceedings*, 1974, 10.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

middle managers admitted looking for a career change.³⁵⁶ Thus efforts to promote greater work-discipline – via a happier, healthier, stable workforce - now came to focus on the health of managers. Second, the decline of a picturesque vision of the leisure society and the growth in knowledge of the realities of modern work processes signaled a modified role for fitness policies. The response of experts to the disequilibrium caused by what was happening at the workplace was to “discover and promote ways for people to actively ‘sweat out’ their tensions.”³⁵⁷ Plainly stated, “[o]ffering sedentary workers the opportunity to participate in physical fitness classes reduces the health hazard and may well contribute to increased interest in their jobs, greater happiness, more positive attitudes, reduced absenteeism and increased production.”³⁵⁸ Lastly, this treatment of workplace health had the effect of relegating the issue of job stress and tension to the sphere of paid employment. The least controversial aspect about this early discussion of workplace stress is that it was ostensibly a *men’s* problem. For example, the Labour Gazette cited working days lost to *men’s suffering* from mental health, the costs of *men’s failure* to cope with their problems, and the “mental agony” of *men’s unemployment* - “of attempting to maintain his wife and family to their accustomed standard of living.”³⁵⁹ The assumption that the work-related conflicts with which individuals were coping stemmed from the structure of paid work, combined with a lack of physical activity to reduce

³⁵⁶ *Proceedings*, 1974, 11.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ Doyle, “Work and Mental Health,” 18-27.

tension in one's leisure time, were reflected in the scope of policies designed to combat these tensions.

Debates about the involvement of the federal government in administering lifestyle policy

The federal government's interest in maintaining responsibility for issues of health and well-being also changed significantly during this period. Closely tied to the rise of neoliberal policymaking practices, such changes marked a significant departure from earlier policy objectives. In particular, the federal government sought to limit its financial support for sport and fitness, going so far, as the opening quotation of this chapter suggests, to declare centralized coordination of a fitness agenda a futile project. Although one of the priorities of the Department of Health and Welfare was to build a scientific case to bolster support for physical activity programming as an instrument of preventative medicine, it was now widely believed that the involvement of the federal government would ideally be limited to providing information and coordination between relevant groups who might then undertake more comprehensive programming. Officials increasingly looked to a range of actors outside of government bureaucracies to provide the necessary initiative and resources in policy planning and implementation. The ParticipACTION program was regularly lauded as a model program that was carrying out its mandate of health promotion through social marketing techniques, while largely being supported by private sector sponsors.

The effort made by policymakers to translate new concerns about the health of workers into program development shows how new neoliberal policy techniques, like their predecessors, explicitly targeted male breadwinners, with the two-fold aim of

facilitating and promoting improved work-discipline and healthy lifestyle. Indeed, by contrast to the discourses on fitness promoted during the 1960s, new approaches to regulating fitness revived the emphasis on work-discipline. One of the most interesting outcomes of the 1972 conference was the modified role prescribed for the federal government. While it was clear that the Department of Health and Welfare was concerned with how it might help meet “the emerging demands” of a society “adjusting to a leisure orientation,”³⁶⁰ it sketched a rather passive role for itself in meeting the needs of Canadians. In his description of the objectives and activities of Recreation Canada, Lalonde explained this approach:

... Recreation Canada and its program of promotion of physical fitness is quietly and purposefully doing its work, which is not to prescribe or direct which activity should be practiced, but which is to play a supportive role - its *true* role - of doing necessary research planning and of assisting organizations to develop programs and, in general, of encouraging a better state of physical fitness throughout the nation.³⁶¹

His statement points to one of the implicit objectives of the 1972 and 1974 conferences, which was to transform the *nature* of the administration of sport, fitness and recreation policies. Rather than citing efforts to design and implement a physical activity strategy, Lalonde explained that the time had come for “*communities themselves*” to foster recreational programs. Thus the do-it-yourself ParticipACTION strategy was to be replicated on a wider scale throughout the fitness field.

³⁶⁰ *Proceedings*, 1974, 95-6.

³⁶¹ *Proceedings*, 1974, 97.

Not only were individuals now expected to take responsibility for their own health, but a wider group of actors, including community organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional societies, employers, and even different levels of government were to work towards self-sufficiency in program administration. At the 1974 National Conference on Employee Physical Fitness, Lalonde gestured to the importance of co-operative ventures by admitting that the problem of physical inactivity was “far too complex and pervasive for either government or industry to handle alone.”³⁶² He stressed that “delegates from both the public and private sector, from unions and management, from provincial and federal bodies, from academia and elsewhere” needed to “come together and pool their knowledge in the search for solutions.”³⁶³ He also explicitly asked organizations to refrain from developing recommendations and solutions merely “calling for more federal support.”³⁶⁴ Indeed, Lalonde’s comments suggest a significant though partial retreat of federal involvement in fitness, itself a reflection of emerging neoliberal state practices. As he explained, “we already have hundreds of such resolutions accumulating here and there. Rather than that, I would prefer that your efforts mainly focus on what you can accomplish within your own surroundings, with your own resources, and devoting some of your own time if need be.”³⁶⁵ These comments were echoed by others, such as Phillipe de Gaspe Beaubien, recently transplanted from his

³⁶² *Proceedings*, 1974, 12.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ *Proceedings*, 1974, 42.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

posts and Sport Participation Canada (SPC) to become the President of Quebec Telemedia Incorporated, who bluntly registered the following appeal to delegates: “I pray that one of your solutions will not be to hand the entire affair over to government and abdicate your responsibility in the matter. A nation is not built, nor does it survive and grow by governments alone. A nation is built by people, and you are here to exercise your responsibilities collectively and in earnest.”³⁶⁶

It is not surprising then that Lalonde had nothing but praise for the recent efforts of SPC. In his speech to conference delegates, he lauded the efforts of SPC for its efforts to transform the lifestyles of Canadians. He noted that although the Department of Health and Welfare had provided *seed* money to the organization, the *core* funds it used to carry out its program were drawn “from the private sector, by direct contributions from broadcasters, press organizations, private entrepreneurs” – “direct contributions which are several times that of my own department in that area.”³⁶⁷ Combined with the sentiment of the above statements that discouraged federal leadership and funding to address social issues, the ParticipACTION model – an early incarnation of a public-private partnership – offered the *ideal* framework within which to pursue social programming. As Lalonde explained, “I think this is a good example of what government

³⁶⁶ *Proceedings*, 1974, 12.

³⁶⁷ *Proceedings*, 1974, 42.

and the private sector can do together when there is a general concern and interest without spending millions and millions of cash dollars in a particular area.”³⁶⁸

Even in the House of Commons, ParticipACTION occupied a peculiar place in the policy agenda of the governing Liberals. The program was often subject to criticism, such as the question raised by Otto Jelinek M. P. in 1974, which asked: “[w]hy has Recreation Canada in its massive ParticipACTION television advertising program, at great cost to the Canadian taxpayer ... failed to follow up the need for physical fitness with any kind of positive programs for the Canadian people, or does the minister feel that merely letting us know we are physically unfit is sufficient justification for this costly program?” Because of ParticipACTION’s ambiguous status as a private entity, defending the program was relatively straightforward. Lalonde responded that ParticipACTION was a private organization, indicating that such criticisms were thus misguided, and further, that he was “glad to see” that ParticipACTION was doing “an excellent job in getting from the private sector a contribution of more than \$8 for each dollar in physical subsidies obtained from the public sector.” Encouraging private involvement in fitness and recreation planning, financing, and implementation came with the potential added bonus of allowing Ministers to sidestep questions about the success or usefulness of these programs.

In addition, arguments in favour of bringing private sector actors into program development were bolstered by a particular rhetoric around the limits of government

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

involvement in directing the lifestyles of Canadians. Ideas about liberal democratic individualist freedoms formed an important subtext to the leisure and lifestyle debates. The challenge for governments was to reconcile a desire to influence the conduct of individuals in particular ways, while respecting the autonomy and freedom of individuals assumed to be the heart of modern democracies. This tension was reflected most clearly in the discussion of the health promotion agenda and the lifestyle component of the new health field concept in *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*:

The ultimate philosophical issue raised by the Concept is whether, and to what extent, government can get into the business of modifying human behaviour, even if it does so to improve health. The marketing of social change is a new field which applies the marketing techniques of the business world to getting people to change their behaviour, ie. eating habits, exercise habits, smoking habits, driving habits. It is argued by some that proficiency in social marketing would inevitably lead government into all kinds of undesirable thought control and propaganda. The dangers of governmental proficiency in social marketing are recognized but so are the evident abuses resulting from all other kinds of marketing. If the siren song of coloured television, for example, is creating an indolent and passive use of leisure time, has the government not the duty to counteract its effects by marketing programs aimed at promoting physical recreation? ... One must inevitably conclude that society, through government, owes it to itself to develop protective marketing techniques to counteract those abuses.³⁶⁹

Using arms-length, largely privately-funded, organizations such as ParticipACTION could resolve this tension. While the government consistently maintained its support for health promotion (via social marketing or other techniques), looking beyond government for initiative and support might lend greater legitimacy to these interventions.

³⁶⁹ *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*, 39.

Moreover, community groups and employers were cautioned on how best to engage in health promotion. As de Beaubien instructed delegates at the 1974 conference: “[y]our solutions and recommendations must not take on the evangelical veneer of wanting to change people. Remember, we do not live in a society where people can be programmed as we see fit. Yours is a more difficult task. You must convince them, you must motivate them, you must inspire them to take action.”³⁷⁰ Here again the now decades old question of how to arouse motivation surfaces in policy debates. By the 1970s, an answer to this question was beginning to take shape. New priorities around maintaining fiscal constraint, coupled with the drive to seek private sources of funding, fit well with the idea that governments, by virtue of the prescribed limits of their role in managing populations, should not take sole or even primary responsibility for fitness promotion. By the mid-to-late 1970s, the Department of Health and Welfare was explicitly seeking new sites and new actors to build on the success of ParticipACTION and sell the idea of physical fitness to the Canadian population.

The approach taking shape focused less on community fitness, instead targeting individuals in paid work. Over the course of the 1970s, the Department of Health and Welfare and later the Department of Fitness and Amateur Sport, actively pursued a strategy of encouraging employers to develop programs to promote fitness at work. With the rhetoric of the coming ‘leisure society’ slowing noticeably by mid-decade, policy makers now acknowledged that “[i]n the present society, the large majority of people

³⁷⁰ *Proceedings*, 1974, 12.

spend most of their waking hours outside the home at work, and it is at work that we are going to have to reach them.”³⁷¹ Especially given the growth of flexible work arrangements, officials could no longer assume that individuals were faced with a large amount of structured or predictable leisure time, nor could individuals be trusted to initiate a physical activity regimen without some supervision. This approach, which incorporated the workplace and employers, can also be read as an effort to transfer the costs of maintaining a healthy labour force to employers.

At the 1974 conference, several international examples of the employee fitness movement were given significant attention. What is perhaps most interesting about these examples show how employers attempted to control directly the ‘free’ time of workers before, during and after work – even on vacation. At the Bosch company in Stuttgart, West Germany, for example, all new employees entering the labour force from school (between 17 and 21 years of age) were required participate for a full year in two mandatory hours of physical education per week, which included either participation in activities led by qualified sports instructors or attendance at educational seminars. After seven years of continuous employment with Bosch, employees became eligible to apply for a residential course, held at a mountain resort with a “full compliment of facilities” such as “sports’ fields, pool, sauna, fitness testing equipment, gymnasium, [and] hiking trails” owned by the company.³⁷² In order to participate in this program, *employees would*

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² *Proceedings*, 1974, 15.

*exchange one week of their own vacation time, but in return would receive two weeks of an all-expenses paid visit to this resort. Other programs, such as that initiated by the Edeka Company in Hamburg, provided a “choice of two very low-cost (50 cents a day) lunches for their employees.”*³⁷³ Throughout European countries such as Germany, Finland and Sweden, employers consciously tried to transform coffee breaks into ‘fitness breaks.’³⁷⁴ Of course, in discussing the applicability of such programs in the Canadian context, Sandy Keir, Head of the Fitness Section at the Department of Health and Welfare noted:

In Russia, in China, and in Japan, in several other countries, the programmes are for the most part, compulsory for employees to take part in and they are really the accepted thing, as part of the employment conditions. But again, I find it difficult to see in most Canadian situations a whistle going at a certain time of the day, people stepping back from their machines and doing their one, two, three in time with the music.³⁷⁵

Despite the concerns about limiting the freedoms of workers, such programs were nevertheless justified on the basis that exercise at work was shown to produce “enhanced work attitudes and work performance; more positive feelings of sound health and well being; and better health habits and behaviours.”³⁷⁶ Indeed, as the results of one pilot study among ‘white collar’ workers in a US firm showed, employees were shown to make comments such as the following on a regular basis: “I feel more energetic and more

³⁷³ *Proceedings*, 1974, 16.

³⁷⁴ *Proceedings*, 1974, 17.

³⁷⁵ *Proceedings*, 1974, 14.

³⁷⁶ *Proceedings*, 1974, 34.

productive. I enjoy my work more because I get more done. My normal work routine seems less boring now.”³⁷⁷

Connecting concerns about paid work, health, and fitness in federal policies

In 1976, Hon. Iona Campagnolo became the new Minister of State, Fitness, and Amateur Sport. Immediately following her appointment to this position, Campagnolo announced that the Ministry would begin to work towards developing a new “coherent national policy” on fitness and amateur sport.³⁷⁸ This announcement did not come as a surprise given the new prominence of sport in the cultural milieu, as evidenced by Montreal’s hosting of the 1976 Olympic Games, Trudeau’s strategic use of “sport as a unifying factor” to suppress the separatist movement in Quebec, the growth in televised sporting events, and the “fitness craze of the 1970s” apparently spawned from the success of ParticipACTION.³⁷⁹ Renewed interest in sport and fitness policy had the initial effect of reinvigorating debates about whether the federal government’s should support sport policies over fitness policies, although Campagnolo declared herself committed to

³⁷⁷ *Proceedings*, 1974, 33. In addition to citing benefits such as increased morale, productivity, less absenteeism and employee turnover, one recreation manager at Xerox asked delegates to consider the “dollar value” of a corporate executive: “... if this person dies from a heart attack, the corporation will not only lose the wealth of knowledge that they have instilled in him, but they will lose somewhere between \$500,000 dollars to one million dollars. This money not only includes salary ... but also includes finances for bringing in another executive.” *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ MacIntosh, Bedeck and Franks, 113.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

the development of both fitness and sport excellence, and “dismissed suggestions that there was a conflict between these two aims.”³⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the emphasis on policy development seemed to shift significantly from fitness in favour of sport during the first few years of Campagnolo’s leadership. The Ministry planned to hold a series of public consultations in different communities across the country so that Canadians themselves could help “forge ... directions and goals into the 1980s.”³⁸¹ Yet the 1977 Green Paper *Towards a National Policy on Amateur Sport* and the 1979 White Paper entitled *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence* were both widely criticized on the grounds that the timeframe for the consultative process had been too short and the opportunities for feedback limited.³⁸² Both papers dealt exclusively with the subject of sport, and the objectives in each did not meet the desires of local actors for less government bureaucracy, less emphasis on elite athletes, greater funds for sport, and continued concern for mass sport participation.³⁸³

In addition to these criticisms about the treatment of sport policy, larger concerns emerged about the stance taken towards fitness policy – specifically, its absence. Although Campagnolo promised a second series of working papers outlining the federal plan for fitness, there were significant delays in releasing these and this led some to question Campagnolo’s commitment to fitness and physical activity initiatives. Indeed,

³⁸⁰ MacIntosh, Bedeck and Franks, 114.

³⁸¹ House of Commons Debates (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1977-1978) 177-8.

³⁸² MacIntosh, Bedeck and Franks, 116.

³⁸³ Ibid.

in her address to the House of Commons in 1977, Campagnolo's comments dealt almost exclusively with "federal role in sport – the structure of sport, its administration, its technical development, its promotion and many other programs,"³⁸⁴ and identified sport as a key priority of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch.

When Campagnolo's paper did emerge, it signaled a new role for the government in the administration of fitness. Released in 1978, *Towards a National Policy on Sport and Fitness: A Discussion Paper* set out to "establish a cohesive framework of guidelines, roles, strategies and basic structures for the eventual formation of a national policy on fitness and recreation."³⁸⁵ The paper aimed to weave together the various "patches" that comprised the fitness and recreation field, describing the status quo as a "scatter of duplication and overlapping programs."³⁸⁶ Given Campagnolo's reluctance to pursue the fitness and recreation agenda, the paper introduced several important transformations in the governance of the fitness and lifestyle agenda. In line with earlier efforts to restrict the federal government's financial and administrative support for fitness, it narrowed further the role of the federal government, promoted an enhanced role for partners in the fitness and recreation field and reframed the fitness discourse in terms of economic health and the health of organizations.

³⁸⁴ House of Commons Debates (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1977) 178.

³⁸⁵ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1979) 5.

³⁸⁶ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 3.

In outlining the new direction for fitness and recreation policy, the federal government withdrew its active involvement in policy implementation. The “basic tenets of the national policy” were as follows: the volunteer is indispensable; recreation services can best be provided by those agencies closest to the people being served; and finally, the collective role of *governments* should be refocused on strengthening those agencies.³⁸⁷ The absence of any explicitly stated involvement of the federal government suggests that the call for “better coordination and communication” and “more productive intra- and inter-governmental relations” meant in practice the devolution of responsibility for program development and implementation to the provincial and territorial governments, as well as private agencies and actors.³⁸⁸

On the one hand, the discussion paper argued that the absence of “consultative, cooperative, [and] coordinating elements” meant that “the full potential of recreation’s contribution to social development is as yet unrealized and the social fibre of the nation is the lesser for it.”³⁸⁹ On the other, the policy aimed to promote neo-liberal values such as “self-sufficiency,” “self-determination,” and “responsible self-direction” of individuals and organizations and to “reduce dependency on government for the direct provision of recreation programs.”³⁹⁰ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation* stressed repeatedly that the role of the federal government was to act as a

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 8.

³⁹⁰ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 11.

catalyst – to initiate or coordinate some kind of movement or action without directly involving or committing itself in the process. In essence, the discussion paper offered no policy at all. In its own words, “we do not suggest a definitive national policy for fitness and recreation. We can only hope to play the role of partner in enabling this to happen.”³⁹¹

By the late 1970s, the policy discourse on fitness regulation was also transformed in important ways and these changes were tied to a general critical sentiment in policy arenas about the state’s continued commitment to the health and social welfare of citizens. Concerns about the health care system that dominated the fitness agenda earlier in the decade disappeared entirely, though concerns over the proper fiscal management of government departments persisted. The paper suggested that, “[i]n times of fiscal restraint, it is even more pressing to make better use of existing resources ... to reap a greater return on the dollars invested in fitness and recreation.”³⁹² Accompanying the desire to “control non-essential spending and hold tax levels down,” the paper outlined several changes to the structure of funding. Although the last chapter gestured to the federal government’s *will* to promote greater fiscal self-sufficiency, in Campagnolo’s paper these wishes were *concretized*. Beginning with the fiscal year 1979-1980, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch would “contribute funds only to those national fitness and/or recreation associations currently in place” and only on the condition that the

³⁹¹ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 3.

³⁹² *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 5.

activities of these existing actors agree with the “fulfillment of the national mandate.” Alongside this restriction on the growth of new actors and partners, the document also specified that “national associations will be encouraged to raise as much of their financial requirements as possible from memberships, private sources and other governments and organizations.”³⁹³

Alongside changes in the fiscal management of fitness programming, the meanings and practices associated with leisure came into sharper focus in *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation*. The approach to fitness replicated early leisure provisions insofar as they promoted a return to the practice of using physical activity as a method of building work-discipline. The report argued that through “an active lifestyle” it was possible for individuals to “become more sensitive to their own well-being – joie de vivre – and be provided with a true understanding of the joy of effort.”³⁹⁴ However, the document now stressed the importance of freedom and choice for individuals. This new approach to leisure emphasized the “freedom” of the individual “to do as he or she pleases.”³⁹⁵ In a sense this relieved the federal government of much of its responsibility to provide the necessary resources for healthy lifestyle promotion, reframing lifestyle as a series of choices an individual could make in an effort to pursue opportunities to “balance their lives with meaningful leisure experiences.”³⁹⁶

³⁹³ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 18.

³⁹⁴ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 13.

³⁹⁵ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 11.

³⁹⁶ *Towards a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation: A Discussion Paper*, 11.

In fact, by the 1980s, fitness was being integrated with notions of individual “well-being” and “quality of life” on a regular basis and the health care concerns of previous decades came to rest as a “quiet bonus” to other more holistic benefits.³⁹⁷ When Gerald Regan assumed responsibility for the Fitness and Amateur Sport portfolio in 1980, he released a working document that addressed some of the turmoil in the broader policy community and aimed to rebalance and reaffirm the federal government’s commitment to both fitness and amateur sport policies. *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* sought to clarify the form that fitness policy should take in the coming decade so that Canadians would no longer “be faced with uncertainties as to the government’s resolve to build upon past successes.”³⁹⁸ Under Regan’s authority, the two primary objectives for policymakers were to increase the total number of people participating in physical activity so that “maximum physical, social, and economic benefits that accompany such activity are achieved” and to continue to promote excellence in international competition.³⁹⁹

Yet while Regan maintained that “participation in physical activity contributes to an improved quality of life and a sense of well-being,” he simultaneously noted that,

³⁹⁷ *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1981) 15. In part the distancing of fitness policy from its now long-standing association with health policy may be associated with changes in the political realm. After Trudeau’s defeat by Joe Clark in 1979, the Branch was transferred from Health and Welfare Canada. Subsequent to Trudeau’s resumption of political power in 1980, the Branch found a new home within the Department of Labour.

³⁹⁸ *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 4.

³⁹⁹ *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 5.

ultimately, “because of a variety of differences in personal preference, values, family background or demands at work, definitions of ‘fitness’ and ‘quality of life’ are personal matters.”⁴⁰⁰ While Regan’s mandate was in part to smooth out some of the wrinkles in the policies of previous years, he did not challenge in any way Campagnolo’s commitment to a partnered role for the federal government:

Most Canadians recognize that a healthy lifestyle is an elementary requirement for effective performance in our daily activities and a sense of well-being. But it has a broader purpose. A commitment to physical fitness flows from the personal responsibility that each of us has toward our families and to the society. The shape of the nation in the 1980s, therefore, is dependent on all of us, not just government.⁴⁰¹

Thus, many of Regan’s proposed activities for the Fitness Canada Branch involved closer co-operation with agencies (such as ParticipACTION), as well as workplaces, to promote physical activity.

A significant innovation of the new policy was the stated need to reach out to “groups that have the greatest need for fitness or physical activity programs.” Building on Campagnolo’s commitment to develop fitness policies in close collaboration with local actors, Regan’s report highlighted three specific areas of program development. First, working with unions and large corporations, ‘Fitness in the Workplace’ was identified as a “major theme of the 1980s.”⁴⁰² Specifically, the Branch hoped to extend the Employee Fitness and Lifestyle Project (discussion to follow) to blue-collar

⁴⁰⁰ *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 15.

⁴⁰¹ *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 5.

⁴⁰² *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 19.

workers, since “[h]ealthier lifestyles and increased physical recreation” was believed to “impact positively ... both employee well-being and productivity.”⁴⁰³ Second, the report stated that the 1980s would “see a redirection of the efforts of ParticipACTION,” who will “seek to make specific target groups, which historically have not participated in fitness activities, aware of opportunities available.”⁴⁰⁴ The report did not name these target groups, although it did identify disabled persons as requiring “specific emphasis” for physical recreation and sport development. 1981 marked the International Year of Disabled Persons and, accordingly, the policy set out to support this group by “striking a balance between encouraging broad participation of disabled persons and developing the high-performance disabled athlete.”⁴⁰⁵

A Challenge to the Nation remained the policy of the Fitness and Amateur Sport branch for several years following its release, until Hon. Otto Jelinek was appointed the new Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, under the Mulroney government, in 1984. Under his leadership, the Branch organized the Canadian Summit on Fitness in 1986. Jelinek appointed Mary E. Keyes to lead the planning of this event. The Canadian Summit on Fitness aimed to provide a forum to “to develop a vision for Canadian fitness for the year 2000, and to establish goals and strategies to guide the future direction of fitness development in achieving this vision.” 188 members of the fitness community, which for the first time included corporate sponsors (such as Campbell Soup Company

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 20.

Ltd and the Dairy Farmers of Canada) and delegates of the “private fitness industry,” were involved in this project to develop a comprehensive agenda for fitness in Canada. A report entitled *Fitness ... the Future* summarized the resolutions made at the Summit and highlighted directives for Canadian fitness policy.

The Summit introduced a modified vision of fitness, defined now as the movement towards “optimal well-being” and a new Canadian “cultural trademark.”⁴⁰⁶ The values and attitudes that formed the basis of this vision included: “a concern for a healthy mind, body, spirit and environment; a movement to a better quality of life; self-responsibility and self-reliance; lifelong commitment; equal opportunity and access by people of all abilities; mass participation; [and] fun, enjoyment, self-actualization.”⁴⁰⁷ In describing how such a mandate would be *put in practice*, the report pointed to the following actions that might allow Canadians to “enact this vision.”⁴⁰⁸ These included: “participating in daily physical activity as a key priority in life; seeking a balance between work and physically active leisure; avoiding smoking, obesity and other risk factors; [and] involving family and friends in the pursuit of physical fitness and optimal well-being.”⁴⁰⁹ While individual actions were given special priority, it was nevertheless necessary for a “multidisciplinary team of well-qualified professionals” – also referred to as fitness movement lobby – to partner with the government in an effort to “facilitate

⁴⁰⁶ *Fitness-- the Future: Canadian Summit on Fitness*. (Ottawa: Fitness Canada, 1986) 3.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ *Fitness-- the Future: Canadian Summit on Fitness*, 14.

individual choice of health-promoting activities.”⁴¹⁰ It is important to note that although public officials looked for new methods of regulating fitness, most were reluctant to abandon all public support for a program of fitness development. This is perhaps best evidenced by an appendix in the report that made reference to an informal discussion held over a luncheon (that is, not as part of the final plenary discussions), where the following resolution was adopted: “it is essential to retain a strong federal government involvement in the fitness-wellness area and that we do *not* support a shift to the privatization of this mandate [original emphasis].”⁴¹¹

Although it may have been premature to suggest a wholesale privatized vision for the fitness movement, in moving forward with the fitness agenda, the government looked to build partnerships with the private sector to carry out activities. In mapping the development of how this might unfold, the report distinguished between three “areas of emphasis”: youth, workers, and target populations. While schools and the public education system could be relied on to provide youth with proper training and opportunities for physical development, adult populations required different approaches. Through employment fitness programs, workplaces were named a potential site for the implementation of fitness programs and, as outlined in the policies of previous governments, ParticipACTION could tailor its programming to target marginal populations. With respect to the latter, the report emphasized for the first time that certain

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ *Fitness-- the Future: Canadian Summit on Fitness*, 57.

groups did not have “equal access to fitness opportunities as a result of physical, mental, social or economic or geographical handicaps, or requiring special information and/or attention”: rural Canadians; native people; socio-economically disadvantaged; older Canadians; chronically ill; and women (specifically pre/post natal; women working in the home, and socially-economically disadvantaged women).⁴¹² This approach (division of the population into segments requiring different mechanisms and partnerships to regulate behaviour) created problems over the next two decades as the fitness agenda moved from addressing participation in “physical activity” to questions of “optimal well-being.”

Employee fitness experiments

The policies enacted by the federal government during the late 1970s and early 1980s focused less on community building, co-operation and mass participation in sport and fitness than ever before. Emerging justifications for fitness and sport policy in the 1980s linked long-standing preoccupations with the health care system to explicit concerns about economic production – or the ‘competitiveness of the nation’. This is evident in Campagnolo’s address to the House of Commons in 1977:

Canadians spend \$7 billion per year on health care. Over 40 percent of this cost goes to the overwhelmingly unhealthy lifestyle habits such as smoking, use of liquor, the licit and illicit use of drugs, nutritional imbalance and physical exercise that is abandoned, to name a few. As a people we are slowly learning together to change our attitudes and expectations. It is as essential to our physical well-being that we learn a more healthful lifestyle *as it is also essential to our economic survival. The two are irrevocably linked together. We have to learn to match reduced expectations to our*

⁴¹² *Fitness-- the Future: Canadian Summit on Fitness*, 42.

*ability to produce. A radically changing world economy is part and parcel of everything we face today ...*⁴¹³

The federal government aimed to show how fitness and lifestyle programs could improve worker health and workplace productivity. This effort became the primary method by which lifestyle regulation transpired after 1978.

The discursive shift in the target of intervention (from people to firms) was reflected quite clearly in the types of initiatives undertaken by the federal government in the late 1970s. In 1976, following the National Conference on Employee Physical Fitness in 1974, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare undertook an Employee Fitness and Lifestyle Study in cooperation with researchers at the University of Toronto, the YMCA of Metropolitan Toronto, North American Life Assurance Company and the Canada Life Assurance Company. The project had two distinct thrusts: “to develop and implement a model employee fitness and lifestyle awareness program in a large business” and “to measure the effects of such a program on a variety of parameters, including health care costs, productivity, fitness levels, staff morale, absenteeism and job satisfaction.”⁴¹⁴ While the lifestyle and fitness component aimed quite simply to increase the number of individuals participating in physical activity, the research component focused predominantly on understanding the benefits

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ *Report on the Employee Fitness and Lifestyle Project Toronto 1977-1978*. (Ottawa: Ottawa: Minister of State, Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1979) 2.

derived from this increased participation. The major objectives of the research program were as follows:

1. To define current fitness levels in a selected subpopulation of healthy adult office workers.
2. To determine by controlled trial whether current fitness levels of the adult worker relate to job productivity, and whether productivity can be increased by a well-regulated employee fitness program.
3. To determine the relationship between fitness levels and health costs, and to test whether health costs can be reduced by participation in an employee fitness program.
4. To examine the possible contribution of an employee fitness program to job satisfaction and general well-being in the adult population.⁴¹⁵

Thus moving into the 1980s, concerns about work-discipline and about measuring the value of employee fitness programming through a process of “sound cost-benefit indices” lay at the heart of the federal government’s approach to fitness. In introducing the project, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch stressed that “[b]usiness and industry lose many more millions of dollars yearly in Canada from absenteeism than from strikes and lockouts” and that “employee turnover, especially among senior executives, is a consistently costly experience faced by all companies.”⁴¹⁶ To this end, the project aimed to demonstrate, through a controlled experiment comparing two Toronto insurance firms, the benefit that fitness might play in mitigating the negative effects of work and job stress.

The initiation of this project suggests two important changes in policy orientation. First, following an active period of discussion and debate about health and fitness in the

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ *Report on the Employee Fitness and Lifestyle Project Toronto 1977-1978*, 1.

early 1970s, the discourse on the health of the population curiously did not figure prominently in the rationale for devising employee fitness programs. Even in *Labour Gazette*, a 1978 article on employee fitness pointed out that rising costs of medical care as “only one of the several reasons such plans are beneficial,” and cited “greater work output, more enthusiasm for work, less tension and ‘end of day exhaustion’” as other reasons firms should invest in such programs. Having firmly established that one’s occupation and lifestyle could have high costs for individuals and firms, policy makers turned their attention to the search for low-cost solutions. Because governments were keen to build partnerships with local and private actors (thereby sharing the costs associated with fitness programming), this project offered an opportunity to demonstrate how such a partnership might work and to produce research that would justify the start up costs of employee fitness programming (to be borne by companies) by highlighting the benefits of such programming *for firms*.

A second shift can be detected with respect to the understanding of the appropriate site for physical activity programs. In line with the policies of Regan and Jelinek, the place of work was now accepted as a “logical” site to run programs aimed at promoting healthy lifestyle. As the report on the project noted, “[d]uring an eight hour workday, employees are often more willing to participate in fitness programs ... than during their leisure hours at home.”⁴¹⁷ However, embedded within the ‘convenience factor’ of an employee fitness program was the reality that workers – at least the “healthy

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

adult office worker” subpopulation consulted for this study – were spending *longer* hours at work and that this in itself contributed to the possibility that an employee would choose to spend some of their ever-decreasing leisure time in physical activity. After all, the results of the 1981 Canada Fitness Survey undertaken by Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch had shown that only 7% of respondents aged 20 and older felt that activities sponsored by their employer or union would encourage them to spend more overall time in fitness activities. Of the eleven changes cited in the survey, employee sponsored fitness programs ranked tenth. At the top of this list, however, cited by 40% of those interviewed, was the need for “more time” to pursue such activities.⁴¹⁸

Even though the report spoke in broad terms about the availability of leisure time, the program’s own evaluation pointed out that individuals spent much of their daily leisure time in other activities such as commuting, meal preparation, and/or *childcare*:

[e]arly morning and late afternoon fitness classes were generally not well attended because people complained of not being up for exercise at 7:30 or 8:00am. Others, living in the suburbs, found the rescheduling of buses, trains and carpools too inconvenient. This same problem provided a deterrent to participation in late afternoon programs. In a company with a large proportion of women, after-work classes are a problem since many women are in a rush to get home to prepare dinner or to tend to children.⁴¹⁹

Although it was not explicitly acknowledged by Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch, the survey of employees participating in this program revealed that time outside of work was taken up by other commitments and, especially for women, with unpaid work. One of the

⁴¹⁸ *Fitness and Lifestyle in Canada: A Report by Canada Fitness Survey*. (Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1983) 17.

⁴¹⁹ *Report on the Employee Fitness and Lifestyle Project Toronto 1977-1978*, 24.

most striking outcomes of the pilot project was its popularity among women workers - nearly 70% of program participants were women. This is especially surprising since women were not the intended targets of such interventions.

In the early 80s, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch and the Canadian Public Health Agency set out to extend the pilot study from Toronto's insurance companies. The focus of the new project was to test the viability of employee fitness programs among *industrial and blue-collar* workers, now that such programs had been demonstrated to be useful to workers in white-collar office environments. The rationale for extending the program was "that industrial workers represented a large proportion of the Canadian work force and that, by increasing their physical activity and improving their lifestyle habits, these workers could gain the same benefits that office workers had experienced."⁴²⁰ However, it is also possible that given the over-representation of women in a trial that was initially intended for men, the follow-up represented a second attempt to reach its original targets – men in full-time employment.

Three companies were selected to take part in the trial. These included: Crossley Karastan, a carpet manufacturing company in Truro, Nova Scotia; Alcan, an aluminum production facility in Jonquière, Quebec; and Canada Safeway, a food distribution centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba. These sites were chosen because of their size, diversity in terms of geographic region and industrial sector, and because each had indicated interest in developing a workplace fitness program in a previous national survey of employee

⁴²⁰ *Summary of the Report on the 1983 Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project: A Demonstration Project.* (Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1985) 2.

fitness programs, conducted in 1981. The final report of the trial makes no mention of union support, presumably indicating that no union represented workers in these three sites. The main objectives of the project were:

- to develop, implement and evaluate a Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project at each of the three selected industrial sites in Canada;
- to promote healthy lifestyles and fitness participation by employees at these sites, through educational, motivational and awareness programs;
- to evaluate the components and methods of the program, of both primary and secondary importance, in order to develop a model for future Canadian employee fitness and lifestyle programs in the labour force;
- to develop guidelines that could be applied throughout Canada to implement fitness and lifestyle programs in the labour force;
- to evaluate the Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project in terms of participation, absenteeism and perceptions of labour and management.⁴²¹

Fitness Canada contributed \$500,000 to the project and each of the three companies invested between \$20,000 and \$250,000, depending on the scope of the project proposed. These funds were used to transform existing spaces within workplaces to accommodate a fitness room. Programming at each of the three sites included fitness classes, educational seminars on topics such as smoking cessation, nutrition, stress and hypertension, as well as educational literature (brochures, newsletters) on these subjects.⁴²² Overall, participation in these activities was high (roughly 75%) at Crossley Karastan and Canada

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² *Summary of the Report on the 1983 Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project: A Demonstration Project*, 11-12.

Safeway, but at Alcan only 218 of 7,000 employees attended fitness classes and of these 38% stopped attending classes during the course of the trial.⁴²³

The significance of these programs is two-fold. First, perhaps more than the initial trial held in Toronto, the program was intended to promote work-discipline and measure its effectiveness. In their evaluation of the program, administrators sought to measure changes in attitudes towards work and the program itself, but also found it necessary to consult records of accidents and injuries (using Workmen's Compensation Claims) and absenteeism. Although the evidence to support the effectiveness of the program was mixed in these respects, it is nevertheless important to note that the program itself was justified on the basis of its potential to contribute to the health of the organization. Indeed, the report of the project highlighted the following benefits:

- quality of life at work has been enhanced and acknowledged as important at each site;
- employees participating in the program have experienced increased fitness levels;
- effective lifestyle habits regarding smoking, weight control and stress management have been acquired by participants in the health promotion activities of the project; improved morale and overall quality of work has been observed by supervisors of those participating in the program;
- many of the traditional interpersonal barriers between labour and management were overcome by the shared experience of physical activity. Even within labour and management ranks as separate entities, new social networks were established which were perceived as unifying forces that helped people feel good about where they worked and with whom they worked.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ *Summary of the Report on the 1983 Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project: A Demonstration Project*, 13-15.

⁴²⁴ *Summary of the Report on the 1983 Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project: A Demonstration Project*, 16.

Thus, it is clear that by the 1980s, concerns about worker well-being, quality of working life, and the health of organizations were increasingly fastened to a range of programs designed to promote fitness and health in the workplace. In 1988, another report released by the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch heralded employee fitness as an important part of the Canadian corporate culture. Here there was recognition was that the health of companies was being affected by the health and vitality of its employees. In its words, employee fitness program have the potential to become “profit centres”, as “the fitness of the Canadian employees is one ‘weapon’ in the competition for world trade.”⁴²⁵ In order for the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch to persuade firms to undertake investments in the health of their employees, they first tried to demonstrate the benefits of these programs, often using quantifiable statistics, such as rates of injury or absenteeism to make a point. Of course, these statistics were strengthened by employees’ own testimonials, which included stories of people citing their increased energy, new friends, and high morale as some of the outcomes of participation in their company’s fitness program.⁴²⁶

Second, similar to the study conducted among office workers in Toronto, the paradox involving the participation of women in fitness experiments were replicated. The programs initiated as part of the experiment were decidedly more popular among women. In fact, the ratio of women to men in fitness classes at Crossley Karastan registered as

⁴²⁵ *Fitness and Lifestyle at the Workplace* (Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1988) 6.

⁴²⁶ *Summary of the Report on the 1983 Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project: A Demonstration Project*, 15-16.

high as 3:1. These results are particularly striking given that the programs were not specifically intended for women, and those who created the trial chose not to select firms with a balance between male and female workers. Of the three companies chosen to participate in the experiment, two had predominantly male employees (at Canada Safeway, 82% of the workforce was male) and the third had a balance of male and female employees.

Yet contrary to the implicit objective of promoting fitness among men in blue-collar occupations, women participated in large numbers in this program. Reporting on the program, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch specified that “[w]omen benefitted most from the program because they had started at a lower fitness and activity level than the men.”⁴²⁷ The report also noted the importance of adopting a gendered perspective with respect to the administration of fitness programs: “[t]hese results lend credence to the need for increasing the number of women’s programs by illustrating their potential effectiveness. It is also essential that sex differences be taken into account in planning ongoing programs to ensure the continuing motivation and participation of both sexes”.⁴²⁸ Although the report emphasized the need to remain cognizant of sex differences in facilitating employee fitness programs, at a broader level these differences were only significant at the level of the organization.

⁴²⁷ *Summary of the Report on the 1983 Labour Fitness and Lifestyle Project: A Demonstration Project*, 19.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

This chapter traced the changing approach to fitness regulation initiated by a series of pilot employee fitness programs undertaken by the federal government in partnership with employers during the 1980s. By situating fitness policies against the backdrop of changing working time norms, new approaches to labour relations and the rise of neoliberal economic ideologies stressing the need for different forms of government intervention in the economy, the chapter sought to show how the focus on community-driven healthy leisure time activities in fitness policies gradually came to be refocused on maintaining work-discipline, particularly among men, and healthy firms.

The shift from promoting healthy 'leisure' to regulating fitness at the worksite had several implications for future policy directions. First, because the federal government sought ultimately to enlist the financial and administrative support of employers, the benefits of employee fitness *for firms* in terms of greater work-discipline tended to be emphasized most in the new healthy lifestyle discourse. Second, the association of poor cardiovascular health with certain forms of white-collar work meant that, at least initially, the scope of healthy lifestyle policies tended to centre on the regulation of a small segment of the working population. Although efforts were made to pilot employee fitness in "blue-collar" industries, little discussion of whether the strategy would work in a variety of workplace settings ensued. Lastly, the assumptions embedded in the policy prescription (employee fitness) reinforced a work-leisure binary such that the stresses and tensions posed by family responsibilities and unpaid work was obscured from analysis of an emerging relationship between health and work. An important

paradox emerged with respect to women's participation in workplace fitness programs, signaling to policymakers to question the temporal rhythms of paid and unpaid work outside of the formal labour market. Yet even though policymakers recognized the needs of working women as they became apparent through their chosen participation in firm-level fitness activities, the resolution of such tensions were left to employers; even then, such efforts would likely only extend to women whose employment situation mirrored that of men. If, during the postwar period, the employment relationship became a primary vehicle through which to deliver leisure provisions, this period saw the introduction of a set of new benefits and initiatives designed to promote healthy lifestyle and worker well-being. Yet these too were now being delivered through the employment relationship.

Chapter Four: Work-Life Balance or Work-Work Conflict? State Regulation of Social Reproduction through Healthy Lifestyle 1990-2006

“Work-life balance is about creating supportive, healthy work environments for employees who are striving to better integrate their work and personal responsibilities. By implementing proactive programs and initiatives that support employees, organizations can strengthen employee commitment and loyalty, resulting in higher productivity, improved customer satisfaction and healthier bottom lines.”

– Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2001⁴²⁹

Beginning in the early 2000s, a new policy area broadly termed ‘work-life balance’ emerged at the federal policy level to address the changing work/leisure interface. Work-life balance has become a catch-all term for a variety of persistent working time issues affecting the well-being of Canadian workers, such as job stress, unpaid overtime, and the ongoing tensions facing those attempting to combine paid, unpaid and caregiving work. Also implicit in the term is the idea that leisure is becoming more difficult to secure as ‘free’ time is increasingly allocated to paid and unpaid work commitments. In essence, new discussions in labour policy arenas point to an intensified tension underpinning the traditional gendered organization of unpaid work in which women are assumed to hold primary responsibility for domestic labour. For this reason, I challenge the notion of work-life ‘balance’. *Work-work conflict* is a more accurate term to describe the difficulties individuals and families face as they attempt to ensure their own economic security while maintaining a decent standard of living that includes optimal health and well-being. The label work-life conflict is sometimes used interchangeably

⁴²⁹ “Work-Life Balance in Canadian Workplaces” *Labour Program, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada*, Government of Canada, 12 September 2010
<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/lp/spila/wlb/08benefits_costs.shtml> .

with work-life balance, but I avoid using this term as well because it reinforces the idea of a tension arising from too much paid work (work) and too little time off (life), without acknowledging that much of what happens in the ‘life’ part of the equation is actually unpaid work. Work-work conflict captures the tension between paid and unpaid work. These difficulties are faced by many dual-earning and single-parent households, as well as individuals with no dependents. The realities of the contemporary labour market have opened up new spaces to explore various pathways to public policy development.⁴³⁰ And yet, faced with new concerns about how *work-work conflict* is affecting the health of Canadians, policymakers have chosen to borrow heavily from the information-based policy frameworks provided by earlier health promotion schemes – such as ParticipACTION and the employee fitness experiments – to devise new strategies to manage the production and maintenance of healthy workers.

This chapter explores the decline of ParticipACTION and the emergence of a federal-level *Work/Life Balance Strategy* as the latest iteration of efforts to manage the work/leisure relationship. I argue that the shift from a commitment to statutory protections for workers and families to a purely informative or healthy lifestyle promotion-based strategy encouraging individuals and firms to undertake voluntary initiatives is a reflection of new neoliberal policymaking practices. These practices uphold private solutions (whether through the individual purchase of lifestyle

⁴³⁰ See Alice de Wolff, *Bargaining for Work and Life* (Toronto: Ontario Federation of Labour, 2003) and *Family-Friendly Workplaces: A Study of Saskatchewan Collective Agreements* (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, 2000).

commodities, local do-it-yourself strategies, or corporate social responsibility in human resource management) as the most effective and efficient route to the production of a healthy population. The incorporation of neoliberal ideals into leisure policies involves multiple forms of privatization. First, in the case of ParticipACTION, I identify ‘the privatization of the costs’⁴³¹ of running a public health campaign. In the years prior to its termination, program officials were under pressure to find new program sponsors and local volunteers in order to offset declining contributions from the federal government. Second, with respect to new work-life balance programming, the shift to neoliberalism entails a ‘privatization of responsibility’ for managing the work/life interface.⁴³²

‘Balance’, as a neoliberal technique of government, requires that individuals and the households within which they live ‘self-manage’ competing work responsibilities without the support of state-administered programs and services. Yet the very notion of ‘balance’ glosses over the tensions. Taken together, the strategy re-privatizes the costs of social reproduction by shoring up the traditional male breadwinner/female caregiver gender contract and individual level bargaining over working conditions as a normative framework for achieving work/life balance.

I begin with an assessment of ParticipACTION’s final years of operation, and a discussion of the circumstances surrounding its cancellation and replacement with Active Living, a public health campaign designed to promote optimal physical movement in

⁴³¹ Pat Armstrong, “Neoliberalism in Action: Canadian Perspectives,” *Neoliberalism and Everyday Life*, ed., Susan Braedley and Meg Luxton (Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2010) 196.

⁴³² Armstrong, 187.

daily tasks and activities. The analysis aims to demonstrate the contradictions engendered by neoliberal approaches to policymaking, which promote voluntary actions by individuals and community health organizations as contributions to program sustainability in lieu of policy coordination and funding by the federal government.

I proceed to examine recent trends in working time and leisure regulation at the provincial and federal level between 1988 and 2006. Despite the fact that most provincial and federal legislation continued to provide legal limits on hours of paid employment, the effectiveness of these employment standards were nevertheless undermined by efforts to limit the scope of protection for certain categories of workers and for the purposes of allowing employers to build alternative or flexible working time arrangements. Over the course of the 1990s, the hours of work of well compensated, high-skilled workers increased, while the hours of work of those on the bottom end of the labour market remained un- or poorly regulated. These deficiencies prompted federal government officials to revisit Part III of the Canada Labour Code in the early 2000s. The final recommendations of the *Federal Labour Standards Review* reinforced the need for effective protections to curb abuses related to working time and uphold limits on long hours. Yet they did not address in any transformative way the problems associated with conflicts over time in paid employment and time spent in activities related to daily or intergenerational social reproduction, despite a number of proposals citing potential

amendments.⁴³³ Nevertheless, work-life balance policy was identified as a potential area that could address these tensions.

I conclude with an examination of how new neoliberal forms of self-regulation are promoted in policy frameworks addressing work-life balance. I show how this policy area evolved from earlier concerns about the health and wellness of workers and how the framework for fitness policies discussed in previous chapters came to be used as a tool to address the proliferation of a ‘long-hours’ culture among white-collar workers. I argue that the use of employer-sponsored initiatives (as shown in the previous chapter on employee fitness programming) dominated emerging policy areas and I demonstrate how the federal government continues to uphold voluntary employer-driven ‘balance’ benefits as a way to regulate the ‘fitness’ and ‘wellness’ of the working population. Despite widespread recognition of how unpaid and caregiving responsibilities have been central to workplace tensions, the federal government’s approach to managing the health of workers through a work-life balance strategy continues to posit the notion of a worker unencumbered by familial responsibilities.

Changes in Health Promotion after 1980

In December 2000, the federal government declined ParticipACTION’s request for annual funding for the first time since the 1970s, effectively bankrupting the

⁴³³ Judy Fudge, “Working-Time Regimes, Flexibility, And Work-Life Balance: Gender Equality and Families,” *A Life in Balance? Reopening the Work-Family Debate*, ed., Catherine Krull and Justyna Sempruch (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011): 170-193.

organization and forcing it to cease its health promotion activities permanently.⁴³⁴

Despite the fact that ParticipACTION was widely recognized as a *model* for organizing health promotion activities, the potency and frequency of the organization's messages diminished throughout the 1990s and programming officially ceased in early 2001.

Ironically, the features of ParticipACTION that were initially upheld by government officials as the key strengths of the program – namely, its cost-effectiveness and success in using public-private partnerships to ease the need for direct government financial support – eventually undermined the organization's strength and formed one of the central reasons why ParticipACTION experienced difficulty sustaining its operations into the late 1990s. The demand for self-sufficiency on the part of health promotion organizations – part and parcel of the neoliberal approach to social programming throughout the 1990s and early 2000s – influenced both the character and reach of ParticipACTION's activities.

A. Public-Private Partnerships and ParticipACTION

Throughout the 1980s, the federal government's approach to fitness promotion at the local level regularly emphasized the need for community organizations to take greater initiative in identifying and securing private contributions to fund programs on a long term basis. This model is one that ParticipACTION had, since its inception, employed through its acquisition of donated advertising space and local in-kind resources for various fitness promotion activities. However, as the nature of public broadcasting and

⁴³⁴ "ParticipACTION Packing It In?" *CBC Digital Archives*, 7 July 2000
<<http://archives.cbc.ca/lifestyle/fitness/clips/3312/>>.

advertising changed over the last decades of the twentieth century, it became difficult to sustain the frequency with which public service announcements were broadcast.⁴³⁵ To buoy the efforts of the organization and keep operations costs low, ParticipACTION entered into a number of public-private partnerships to continue its operations, such as with the HJ Heinz Company of Canada, Nestle Canada, the Milk Marketing Board, and Merck Frosst, a pharmaceutical company. The most widely recognized partnership formed during this period was with Crown Life Insurance Company of Canada, who sponsored ParticipACTION's promotion of physical activity during a nation-wide week-long fitness campaign.

Beginning in 1983, ParticipACTION partnered with Crown Life Insurance Company of Canada and for 11 years carried out the Crown Life ParticipACTION Challenge – a series of events designed to promote physical activity at the community level. The program aimed to attract “all citizens” of “all ages and abilities” including “children, the elderly, the disabled and the athletic,” allowing ParticipACTION to maintain its community-centred roots by involving a range of local organizations, schools, and workplaces.⁴³⁶ Highly advertised in local and national media, the Challenge involved a one-day annual competition between similarly sized communities, testing which communities were better able to *mobilize* people to participate in physical activities. Personalized letters, brochures, and a ‘how-to’ guide were mailed to 1,000

⁴³⁵ Interview with Russ Kisby.

⁴³⁶ “CrownLife ParticipACTION Challenge,” *The ParticipACTION Archive Project*, University of Saskatchewan Archives, 18 April 2010 <<http://www.usask.ca/archives/participation/english/mobilize/crownlife.html>>.

community mayors and recreational directors each year, soliciting their involvement in the challenge.⁴³⁷ Individuals who partook in 15 minutes of physical activity registered their participation with sponsoring community organizations and the towns or cities with the greatest number of participants were declared winners.

The program reflected a neoliberal approach to fitness promotion. Particularly in the economic context of the early 1980s and the federal government's declining interest, as chronicled in previous chapters, in administering health promotion programming for local communities, ParticipACTION's ongoing desire to 'build community pride' and increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity necessitated the search for corporate partners in order to keep program costs minimal. To complete this task, the organization was compelled to use its time and resources to secure its *own* sustainability, alongside its broader mandate of health promotion. Thus, the search for corporate partners produced a shift in ParticipACTION's advertising strategy, which expanded from advertising the benefits of physical activity to *advertising the benefits of entering into a partnership with the organization*. The competing demands placed upon ParticipACTION's central organizers – to continue to carry out its health promotion activities while simultaneously securing ongoing funding – highlights one the important contradictions of neoliberal discourses that link privatization to efficiency.

In 1988, ParticipACTION produced a 6-minute Challenge launch video, the sole purpose of which was to promote the benefits of corporate sponsorship of their activities.

⁴³⁷ Ibid. ParticipACTION estimates that roughly half of the communities invited chose to participate.

The video opened with scenes from the Crown Life ParticipACTION Challenge, followed by this appeal: “Can your company generate this kind of excitement, and maximize your promotional and marketing dollars at the same time? Yes you can! ParticipACTION has a proven track record of providing corporate sponsors with an excellent vehicle to reach their target audience.”⁴³⁸ One of the central messages of the video was that the objective of promoting healthier and more active lifestyles among Canadians could be balanced with or achieved simultaneously by “meeting the objectives of its corporate partners” – that is, by reaching large numbers of Canadians (such as the 4.2 million Canadians who recorded their participation in the Challenge every year).⁴³⁹ The video featured an interview with a Crown Life representative, who explained that “from a marketing perspective,” the Crown Life ParticipACTION Challenge offered one of the most “efficient vehicles” for mass marketing in Canada.⁴⁴⁰ ParticipACTION’s central message stated bluntly that “[c]ompetition in the marketplace is tough. Companies are vying for publics’ attention and their dollars. Major advertising campaigns are expensive to produce and don’t always deliver the desired impact.”⁴⁴¹ ParticipACTION, it was argued, through its “consistently positive message and excellent media contacts,” had produced “over \$3 million dollars of measured media exposure for

⁴³⁸ “Challenge Launch Video,” *The ParticipACTION Archive Project, University of Saskatchewan Archives*, 18 April 2010
<<http://www.usask.ca/archives/participaction/english/mobilize/crownlife.html>>.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

Crown Life” and was ready and willing to do the same for potential new partners.⁴⁴² In addition to the marketing benefits that came from being a ParticipACTION sponsorship partner, the video noted “an equally important motivation benefit to” the “morale and performance” of the sponsor’s employees.⁴⁴³

Yet while ParticipACTION was able to generate this value for sponsors, its operating budget, comprised of contributions from governments and the private sector, remained relatively modest. At the height of its operations, ParticipACTION’s annual budget reached \$1.4 million dollars, which included the salaries of 12 full-time employees.⁴⁴⁴ In the words of the organization, its “superior distribution network” was comprised of an “extraordinary network of community-based supporters” and was capable of generating substantial returns on small contributions from its partners.⁴⁴⁵ For example, in carrying out the Crown Life ParticipACTION Challenge, each of the participating communities was responsible for donating “funds, human resources and substantial volunteer time” in support of their local challenge.⁴⁴⁶ No funds were transferred between ParticipACTION and local communities – only “educational and promotional materials” – creating the appearance of a low-cost endeavor.⁴⁴⁷ At the local

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ “CrownLife ParticipACTION Challenge.”

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

level, however, the event incorporated the “donated time” of approximately 850 municipal workers and over 22,500 volunteers across the country.⁴⁴⁸ In this sense, the value of corporate sponsorship was tied to the unpaid contributions of local people. As ParticipACTION’s public-private partnerships unfolded across Canadian communities, each was bolstered at the local level by contributions of in-kind resources and volunteer time. It was this format that government officials continued to uphold as a model of effective social programming. In describing the ParticipACTION Crown Life Challenge, Minister of Sport of Fitness, Hon. Pierre Cadieux, emphasized how it had demonstrated “great cooperation between the public sector and private sector.”⁴⁴⁹ Ontario Minister of Tourism and Recreation, Hon. Peter North, went one step further, describing the program as a prime example of a “perfect working relationship between the public and private sector.”⁴⁵⁰ Yet the long-term viability of the partnership was jeopardized when Crown Life pulled its financial support in 1995, only a few years before its financial operations ceased and subsequently folded into those of the Canada Life Insurance Company.⁴⁵¹

Despite the fact that involvement in these activities reached many millions, this and similar events were nevertheless subject to criticism because they did little to challenge the day-to-day lifestyle habits of ordinary Canadians. While the program was

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁹ “Challenge Launch Video.”

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ “Canada Life: The Early Years,” *The Canada Life Assurance Company*, April 13 2010 <<http://www.canadalife.com/003/Home/CorporateInformation/CompanyOverview/EarlyYears/index.htm>> .

able to effectively motivate certain Canadians to participate in 15 minutes of physical activity,⁴⁵² it was unclear whether this single act would translate into continued participation or interest in physical activity. As the 1995 evaluation of a large-scale advertising campaign ('Sneaker Day') aimed at encouraging employees to wear running shoes to work noted: while 'Sneaker Day' could be regarded as a "solid 'one day' active living promotional event," the "long term impact on daily lives and program initiatives is marginal and unfortunately difficult to track."⁴⁵³

B. The Shift to Active Living

One of the last initiatives undertaken by ParticipACTION before its closure was the Vitality/Vitalite campaign, a public awareness initiative designed to reduce 'obesity' through the promotion of physical activity, good nutrition and positive body image. My close analysis of the promotional materials used in Vitality/Vitalite reveals how the program initiated a slightly modified framework for addressing healthy living, one which recognized both the changing temporal organization of work and leisure and built upon neoliberal ideas in which individuals and families were to undertake greater responsibility for their own well-being.

Described as a "new and fresh approach to motivation," Vitality/Vitalite more than any previous ParticipACTION campaign, adopted an explicit focus on the family as

⁴⁵² "Challenge Launch Video."

⁴⁵³ University of Saskatchewan Archives, ParticipACTION fonds, MG 291, Box 7, "Sneaker Day 1995," SummerActive '95, 31.

a site of healthy living.⁴⁵⁴ Targeting individuals in their prime working years (those between 25 and 45 years of age), the campaign explicitly incorporated women into its promotional activities. According to program materials, the reasoning behind this shift was threefold: first, this age group was believed to exercise a high degree of “influence on young families and social values;” second, health research had shown that those within this demographic were most likely to be at risk for the development of heart disease, cancer and diabetes; lastly, recent research had shown that:

Canadians aged 25 to 45 are completely absorbed by family life and their work. They often feel too tired to exercise. While they often know about nutrition, they often think that healthy foods take too much time to prepare. And time is something they just don't have.⁴⁵⁵

The movement to the family as a site of intervention suggests that the primary reason women were incorporated into the public awareness campaign had less to do with rectifying a long-standing emphasis on the healthy lifestyle of men within ParticipACTION's advertisements and more to do with women's primary role in organizing and carrying out unpaid work within the home. Whereas ParticipACTION's early advertisements assumed the presence of a female caregiver, the Vitality/Vitalite campaign aimed to reinforce the idea of a traditional gender contract, and sell the idea of healthy homemaking for women, irrespective of the prevalence of conflicts over time. Take, for example, the following statement made in the Vitality/Vitalite Challenge

⁴⁵⁴ “Vitality Launch Video,” *The ParticipACTION Archive Project, University of Saskatchewan Archives*, 18 April 2010
<<http://www.usask.ca/archives/participation/english/motivate/vitality.html>>.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

Launch Video: “It is just as easy to join a game of basketball with the kids, or to eat a tasty green vegetable instead of a chocolate bar.”⁴⁵⁶ The visual imagery to accompany this sentiment shows a scene in which an adult male, arriving home after work, joins a basketball game with his children, while subsequent scenes show a woman preparing and serving a tray of vegetables and sandwiches. Here, the focus on the consumption of healthy foods and participation in physical activity underpinning the Vitality/Vitalite movement both reinforces and naturalizes women’s productive role in household labour through the blanket statement: “it’s easy to eat healthy foods, to be active and to feel good about yourself.”⁴⁵⁷ According to the creators of the Vitality/Vitalite campaign, these vignettes are designed to showcase “adults who forget their daily struggles when they experience a moment of intense joy with their friends or their children.”⁴⁵⁸ Yet these vignettes simultaneously hide from view the unpaid work that contributes to the production of these “wonderful moments of instant pleasure.”⁴⁵⁹

The integration of physical activity into daily household reproductive activities has been the cornerstone of the Active Living program, which succeeded ParticipACTION in the late 1990s as the federal government’s central strategy for fitness promotion. Described by Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Hon. Marcel Danis, as “a maturing of the fitness delivery system and the recognition that ... various partners

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

can accomplish much more by working together and pooling ... resources,” the approach facilitates a low-cost partnership model – one which has come to form the dominant approach to fitness programming in the current period.⁴⁶⁰ While the administration of the movement originated primarily within the Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, by the mid-1990s, fiscal constraints resulted in the elimination of funding to secretariats, alliances and centres, the termination of 30 jobs, and the amalgamation of the bureau and its affiliated offices into a single organization called Active Living Canada Inc.⁴⁶¹

Active Living modified existing conceptions of fitness. Physical activity came to be understood as:

... more than a mechanical movement. It involves or engages the whole person *physically*, e.g., through bodily movements; *mentally*, e.g., through concentration and intensity while learning new skills; *psychologically*, e.g., through the confidence that comes from enjoying established skills; *socially*, e.g., through associating with others, cooperating, competing, and respecting differences in others; and *spiritually*, e.g., through a feeling of inner peace and connection to a larger meaning or purpose in life.⁴⁶²

Proponents of Active Living called for the integration of physical activity with daily life activities. Gardening, housework, washing the car, or walking the dog, are regularly cited as examples of ways for individuals to get daily exercise. Personal choice is a key component of the Active Living strategy. As one promotional brochure noted succinctly: “You decide. You make these decisions based on what ‘being physically active’ means to

⁴⁶⁰ Kim L. Bercovitz, “Canada’s Active Living Policy: A Critical Analysis,” *Health Promotion International* 13.4 (1998): 321.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² “Active Living Presentation,” ParticipACTION Archives, 2.

you.”⁴⁶³ This new approach to fitness embraced the neoliberal emphasis on the individual in its policy agenda, stressing how

... the very act of participating in physical activity is empowering. It makes a person feel more in control. It increases opportunities to meet others and reduce loneliness, and provides ways to learn new skills and enjoy a variety of physical activities. More active people have more energy, function better physically and cope with stress better. They experience improved health status, well-being and an enhanced quality of life.⁴⁶⁴

Bercovitz has argued that because Active Living is “typically packaged and sold as an adaptable, ‘low or no cost’ population approach to physical activity, the “bureaucratic and political discourse of Active Living” contains within it the threat of misuse by “governments in an era of fiscal conservatism.”⁴⁶⁵ As she explains, the shift to Active Living was used to “justify budget cuts to fitness (ie. research and program development) and withdrawal of ‘expert authority’, as well as formal exercise programs and services.”⁴⁶⁶

In this sense, Active Living has been the latest incarnation of a neoliberal approach to fitness. On the surface, the federal government continues to maintain some semblance of a policy position on fitness and the healthy reproduction of individuals (ie. there is a residual concern about the health implications of low levels of physical activity) but the strategy adopted, emphasizing ‘personal choice,’ prioritizes matters of

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Bercovitz, 325.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

economy by virtually eliminating the costs associated with a ‘program’ per se. This transformation has in part been facilitated by the changing nature of work, which has eased historical concerns about the problem of too much ‘leisure’ for workers. It is no longer assumed that large numbers of Canadians have massive amounts of free time that require some degree of regulation in order to maintain time-discipline that supports productivity at the place of paid employment. Rather, there is public acknowledgement that time is scarce and that more individuals find themselves torn between competing demands.

Proponents of fitness promotion do not question the impact which changing leisure time has on the health of individuals, even as they acknowledge transformations in the temporal organization of paid work as a source of increasing stress for Canadians. Rather, they have adapted programming – and have done so without fundamentally challenging the gendered organization of social reproduction. To the extent that ParticipACTION, and subsequent programs such as Active Living, help set norms and expectations about healthy lifestyle, they reinforce the traditional male breadwinner/female caregiver gendered division of labour associated with social reproduction, thereby perpetuating a gendered framework for promoting physical activity that relies on women’s unpaid labour.

Changes in Working Time and Leisure after 1980

A. Provincial-level Working Time and Leisure Standards

After 1980, few changes were made to existing employment standards legislation regulating weekly and daily hours of work. Across the provinces and territories, an eight-

hour day and/or a working week of 40 to 48 hours remained in place between 1986 and 2006.⁴⁶⁷ New Brunswick was the only exception to the norm, as it passed no maximum hours of work legislation in the postwar period, opting instead to develop overtime provisions specifying that premium wages be paid to workers who perform over 44 hours of labour in a week. Similarly, vacations with pay legislation remained relatively consistent during this period. All provinces and territories except Saskatchewan (which offered three vacation weeks and four weeks after ten years of continuous service) offered 2 weeks of paid vacation plus 4% salary. Very few changes were made to these provisions. Between 1991 and 1995, Quebec gradually lowered the qualifying time for three weeks of paid vacation from 10 years of continuous service to 5 years of continuous service. In 1989, Alberta amended its provisions to allow those with 5 years of continuous service to take a third week of paid vacation. Newfoundland extended a third week of vacation to people with 15 years of continuous service in 1998, and New Brunswick did the same for those with 8 years of service in 2001.

Even though working time and vacations with pay legislation remained relatively consistent during these years, various actions taken by provincial governments demonstrate a gradual weakening of these standards over time.⁴⁶⁸ One common strategy

⁴⁶⁷ In British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Yukon, and in the Canada Labour Code, weekly maximum hours were set at 40. Alberta, Newfoundland, Quebec and the Northwest Territories had a weekly maximum of 44 hours, and in Nova Scotia, PEI and Ontario, the weekly maximum remained at 48 (with overtime payable after 44 hours in Ontario). See *Canadian Master Labour Guide 20th Edition* (Toronto: CCH Canadian Limited, 2006) 71-123.

⁴⁶⁸ The following changes were identified using issues of the *Canadian Master Labour Guide* published between 1978 and 2006. For a good discussion of recent changes to minimum standards in Quebec and their limits in addressing the problem of precarious employment, see

involved changes to the scope of protection offered through minimum standards. For example, Quebec's decision to lower maximum weekly hours at regular pay from 44 to 40 between 1996 and 2000 was preceded by a decision to expand the list of exempted occupations in 1991. Similarly, while the protections offered by employment standards legislation in British Columbia remained relatively static over the years, in 1999 it added an entirely new section on 'high technology professionals', greatly expanding the existing list of exempted occupations to a range of new professions including computer systems analysts, internet developers, computer engineers and software developers and testers, for example.

Another strategy focused explicitly on regulating the flexible scheduling of work. In 1996, British Columbia introduced new regulations to address the movement towards flexible work schedules. The province amended its Employment Standards Act to exempt 8 daily/40 weekly hours provisions if an approved flexible schedule existed. The amendments also included new provisions surrounding the adoption of such schedules. In workplaces governed by a collective agreement, the introduction of flexible work schedules required the approval of a trade union representative. In non-unionized workplaces, however, the employer would require the support of only 65% of affected employees before implementing new work schedules. In non-unionized workplaces, the employer had full control over the termination of such a schedule. In a similar move,

Stephanie Bernstein, "Mitigating Precarious Employment in Quebec: The Role of Minimum Employment Standards Legislation" Ed. Leah F. Vosko *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press): 221-240. In Ontario, see Thomas, *Regulating Flexibility*.

Alberta amended its hours of work legislation to allow employers to “require or permit” employees to work a compressed workweek. These extended daily working hours from 8 hours to 12 hours, although maximum weekly hours stayed at 44 hours. Modifications to the Ontario Employment Standards Act in 2000 extended the working week up to 60 hours, provided such an arrangement was mutually agreeable by the employer and employee.⁴⁶⁹ These changes reinforce Thomas’ contention that employment standards provisions have not been as comprehensive or as unconditional as proponents purport, whether through changes to the scope of coverage, new exemptions or poor enforcement and dispute resolution practices.⁴⁷⁰

In practice, working hours steadily increased for workers in ‘core’ jobs after 1990, and recent estimates reveal that it is not uncommon to find Canadians working an extra full day of (unpaid) overtime outside of regularly scheduled paid weekly working hours.⁴⁷¹ Despite the widespread adoption of working time and leisure time legislation, between 1976 and 2000, the percentage of Canadians working over 50 hours at paid

⁴⁶⁹ Further amendments were made in 2005, which specified that such an “agreement” required written approval by an employee.

⁴⁷⁰ Thomas, 73. For a good overview of the existing legal machinery available to regulate precarious employment and its gaps, see Stephanie Bernstein, Katherine Lippel, Eric Tucker, and Leah F. Vosko, “Precarious Employment and the Law’s Flaws: Identifying Regulatory Failure and Securing Effective Protection for Workers,” Ed. Leah F. Vosko *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press): 203-220.

⁴⁷¹ Jackson et al., 20; Andrew Jackson, “Social Determinants of Health: Working Conditions as a Determinant of Health,” Paper Presented at The Social Determinants of Health Across the Life-Span Conference. Toronto, November 2002. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/oi-ar/pdf/05_working_e.pdf>. See also *Report of the Advisory Group on Working Time and the Distribution of Work* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994).

employment increased from 11% to 14% of the workforce.⁴⁷² The problem of long hours has been most severe for those who are not covered under minimum employment standards legislation, such as self-employed workers and managers.⁴⁷³

For those on the margins, the key problem is not necessarily long hours, but rather the predictability of work, as well as pacing and control of the timing of work.⁴⁷⁴ Between 1989 and 1994, the number of people working in forms of employment different from the temporal norms associated with the standard employment relationship, such as part-time work, shift work, temporary work, and multiple-job holding, increased.⁴⁷⁵ More significantly, many of these forms of work are associated with greater precariousness, whether this be through lack of control over the labour process, employment insecurity, or lack of protection under various employment statutes, particularly minimum employment standards and collective bargaining rights.⁴⁷⁶ These changes have had a disproportional affect on women, and especially immigrant women and women of colour, who continue to be over-represented in part-time and temporary

⁴⁷² Figures were much higher for men, 20% of men worked 50+ hours in 2000, as compared to 7% of women in the workforce. See Canadian Labour Force Survey data: "Long Hours of Work," *JobQuality.ca*, 3 September 2011, <http://www.jobquality.ca/indicators/job_demands/dem2.shtml> .

⁴⁷³ For example, 41% of self-employed men and 20% of self-employed women work over 50 hours a week. 30% of male managers work over 50 hours. For women, teachers and professors log the longest hours (17% working 50+ hours), followed by managers (15% working 50+ hours). <http://www.jobquality.ca/indicators/job_demands/dem2.shtml> .

⁴⁷⁴ Jackson, 2002.

⁴⁷⁵ Harvey Krahn, "Non-standard work on the rise." *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (Winter 1995): 41.

⁴⁷⁶ Vosko, 24.

employment, forms of work associated with a high degree of precarity.⁴⁷⁷ As of 2004, 52% of women aged 15 to 24, 21% of women 25 to 44 and 45 to 54, worked part-time, compared to roughly 5% of men in each of these age groups.⁴⁷⁸ Consistently, since the mid-1970s, women had comprised about 70% of those in part-time employment.⁴⁷⁹ In 2004, 26% of women and 28% of men working part-time were doing so involuntarily.⁴⁸⁰ There are deleterious effects associated with the time-scheduling required in many forms of non-standard jobs. According to Girard, non-standard work results in negative effects on work/life balance, as these workers are “stressed, perceive a lack of control in their lives, do not spend as much time with their children and partners as they would like, and are thus, less satisfied with their family life and marital life.”⁴⁸¹

Along with changes in the temporal organization of work, the use of information and communications technologies has made working from home easier, suggesting a spatial evolution of the Canadian workplace.⁴⁸² While working from home (workstation flexibility) is assumed to contribute to flexible working options and greater possibilities

⁴⁷⁷ Leah F. Vosko, Nancy Zukewich and Cynthia Cranford, “Precarious Jobs: A New Typology of Employment.” *Perspectives on Labour and Income* 4.10 (2003): 24.

⁴⁷⁸ Colin Lindsay and Marcia Almey, *Women in Canada 2005: A Gender-based Statistical Report* (Canada: Statistics Canada, 2010) 109.

⁴⁷⁹ Lindsay and Almey, 124.

⁴⁸⁰ Lindsay and Almey, 110.

⁴⁸¹ Magali Girard, “Effects of Non-Standard Work on the Work-family Balance: A Literature Review.” *McGill Sociological Review* 1 (Jan 2010): 50.

⁴⁸² Ernest B. Akyeampong and Richard Nadwodny, Evolution of the Canadian Workplace: Work from Home.” *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (2001): 30-31.

for combining paid employment and unpaid and caregiving work, it also makes it difficult to delineate clearly the boundaries between home and work. As Armstrong and Armstrong have noted of the movement of female-dominated clerical work and some forms of manufacturing such as garment work into the home, “stress levels increase with such work, as women try to squeeze a paid workplace into their domestic workplace and juggle two loads simultaneously.”⁴⁸³

Taken together, these trends suggest that for many workers, decent work time and provisions for leisure time, despite highly standardized provisions offered through employment standards legislation, were more difficult to secure after 1990 given the growth of precarious work, especially self-employment and part-time work and the reclassification of many emerging high-skilled jobs as primarily managerial. As of 2004, only 33% of the Canadian workforce worked “standard hours (Monday to Friday, 9 to 5) in a standard job at the employer’s workplace.”⁴⁸⁴

B. The Federal Employment Standards Review

The misfit between the statutory regime regulating employment and changes in the nature of employment giving rise to a long hours culture has underpinned the movement to revisit the role of employment standards in regulating the labour market. These new tensions around working time are inextricably linked to the growing number

⁴⁸³ Armstrong and Armstrong, 61. See also Heather Menzies, *No Time: Stress And The Crisis Of Modern Life* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2005).

⁴⁸⁴ “The Changing Face of Canadian Workplaces,” *Federal Labour Standards Review Backgrounder*, December 2004, *Labour Canada*, 8 August 2006, <http://www.flsc.gc.ca/en/bg_01.asp> .

of dual-earner families and the reality that, as of the mid-2000s, more households, collectively, have been working longer hours in paid employment in recent decades than at any point since WWII.⁴⁸⁵ In 2004, the federal government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Paul Martin, commissioned Harry Arthurs to undertake a review of Part III of the Canada Labour Code, which regulates labour standards. The objective of the Commission was to examine how older “regulatory machinery” in Part III of the Code could be updated to respond adequately to shifts in the nature of employment, such as those arising from new “technology, growing international economic integration, deregulation, intensified competition and a shift to a knowledge-based economy,” as well as the changing demographic composition of the workforce.⁴⁸⁶ The ensuing process involved the collection and dissemination of research and data on employment standards across Canada and in other countries and the input of two advisory panels (one expert and one comprised of labour and employer representatives), and more than 170 groups and individuals across the country.

Several submissions dealt with the question of the role of employment standards in regulating the work/leisure relationship, with a new focus on work-life ‘balance’. More importantly, expert submissions examining ‘control over time’ and ‘work-life balance’ drew attention to the inadequacies of the existing regulatory framework for

⁴⁸⁵ Linda Pannazzo and Ronald Colman, “Working time and the future of work in Canada: A Nova Scotia Case GPI Study,” (Halifax: GPI Atlantic Measuring Sustainable Development Series, 2004): 23.

⁴⁸⁶ Harry Arthurs, *Fairness at Work: Federal Labour Standards for the 21st Century* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2006) ix.

meeting the needs of workers, particularly women, who combine paid employment with unpaid childrearing. This sentiment was expressed most succinctly in a report prepared by legal scholar Sandra Fredman:

[m]ost labour law systems continue to operate on a paradigm based on a dichotomy of time: all time is either paid working time within the market, or private time, in the exclusive domain of the individual and of no concern to labour law. Unpaid work within the family remains invisible, largely because it has been traditionally performed at home by women. Equally invisible are the many forms of voluntary work performed within the community, many of which are done in default of state action and most of which contribute to vital social capital.⁴⁸⁷

Some submissions included recommendations to modify and contemporize the parts of the existing Code regulating the temporal aspects of employment. These dealt with a number of areas, including daily and weekly limits on paid working time, overtime, public holidays, vacations with pay, as well as maternity and other unpaid care leaves, such as emergency care leave and compassionate care leave. Moreover, some of the submissions also highlighted the problem of exclusions in the Code, and recommended the extension of any new provisions to both those in ‘non-standard’ and precarious forms of employment (such as part-time workers and fixed-term workers, for example), as well as those who, at the time of the Code’s inception, were thought not to need ‘minimum’ standards because of their relative position of privilege in the labour market, such as managers and the self-employed.

⁴⁸⁷ Sandra Fredman, “Control Over Time and Work-Life Balance: Comparative/Theoretical Perspective.” *Submission to the Federal Employment Standards Review*, October 2005, *Labour Canada*, 8 August 2006, <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/employment_standards/fls/research/research16/page00.shtml>.

With respect to daily hours of paid work, some recommendations focused on fixing the system of emergency permits that had rendered legal limits on maximum daily hours ineffective and on the problem of excessive overtime. Specific recommendations included: limits to individual derogations of hours of work standards; the establishment of an annual cap on overtime hours (set at 200, only 100 of which could be substituted for time off); the introduction of an explicit right of workers to refuse overtime work; the introduction of minimum *rest* periods between long stretches of paid working time; and an education campaign for workers and employers highlighting the negative health effects of working beyond 48 hours a week. The provision for two weeks of paid vacation currently offered through the Canada Labour Code was deemed insufficient, and calls were made to increase paid vacation time to 3 and 4 weeks, as well as to lower the years of service needed to acquire additional weeks of vacation time. Additionally, one report suggested that the waiver of vacation time should no longer be permitted and that workers be allowed to substitute paid days off for public holidays to accommodate workers of different religious faiths.

Highlighting best-practices from other countries, many recommendations dealt with changes to accommodate working parents, with a view to transforming the existing “bias”⁴⁸⁸ in the Code towards a traditional male breadwinner/female caregiver division of

⁴⁸⁸ Judy Fudge, Control Over Working Time and Work-Life Balance: A Detailed Analysis of the Canada Labour Code, Part III,” *Submission to the Federal Employment Standards Review*, 28 February 2006, *Labour Canada*, 8 August 2006, <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/employment_standards/fls/research/research17/page00.shtml> .

labour. Some of the suggestions included broadening the scope of maternity/parental leaves to include ‘non-employees’ (the self-employed, for example) and the elimination of a minimum qualifying period for benefits. As well, it was suggested that individuals have more flexibility in terms of the timing of parental leaves. For example, the extension of rights to postpone, interrupt and extend leaves, according to individual needs and preferences. Certain amendments to parental leaves, such as higher replacement rates and individual non-transferable dedicated time for paternity leave, could also potentially encourage men to take more responsibility for childcare. Many recognize that the ageing population in Canada will likely compound the need for unpaid care work over the next several decades, and thus recommendations are made for improved supports for workers to cope with changing demographics, such as a dedicated emergency leave of 10 unpaid days and extended compassionate leave.

Despite these extensive calls for greater protections to workers, Arthurs’ final report, *Fairness at Work*, aimed at facilitating “decency at work”⁴⁸⁹ through “regulated flexibility,”⁴⁹⁰ contained few transformative recommendations to enhance control at work and work-life balance for workers. Attempting to take a stance that balanced workers’ needs for greater economic security with employers’ needs for increased flexibility - in the timing of production and the use of labour – to ensure success “in an increasingly

⁴⁸⁹ Arthurs, 47.

⁴⁹⁰ Arthurs, 54.

competitive environment,”⁴⁹¹ Arthurs adopted few of the aforementioned recommendations concerning working time and overtime in his final report. *Fairness at Work* reinforced the status quo by keeping the working day at 8 hours, the threshold for overtime at 44 and maximum weekly hours at 48. Accepting that the system of permits and exceptions were susceptible to abuse by employers, Arthurs recommended “better-designed workplace-level procedures” to encourage greater consultation between employers and employees.⁴⁹² However, Arthurs did recommend that employees be given a limited right to refuse overtime on the basis of potential conflicts with family-related commitments, educational commitments or other work commitments (in the case of part-time workers).

With respect to ‘health, rest, and recreation,’ Arthurs acknowledged that designated periods of rest are crucial if workers are to achieve work-life balance. He writes:

Earmarking specific daily, weekly, and annual times as nonworking times, and ensuring that they are relatively sacrosanct, makes it possible for workers and their families to plan and participate in the large and little events that are a necessary feature of busy lives – when to do the shopping, when to book a vacation trip, when to schedule a trip to the dentist. Expectations of work without respite simply do not confirm to our basic notions of decency.⁴⁹³

To this end, Arthurs recommended an increase in the weekly minimum rest period from 24 to 32 hours, the provision of at least 8 hours rest in every 24 hour period (effectively

⁴⁹¹ Arthurs, 17.

⁴⁹² Arthurs, 142.

⁴⁹³ Arthurs, 160.

setting a maximum paid workday at 18 hours) and an unpaid meal break of 30 minutes (paid if the employee cannot leave the work premises), with exceptions in the case of emergency work. However, on the subject of annual time off, Arthurs did not recommend an increase in paid time off, except in the case of long-serving employees.⁴⁹⁴

Arthurs' recommendations demonstrate an adequate attempt to revive the contributions made by federal level employment standards to the healthy reproduction of workers through limits on paid working time and provisions for time off. Yet the recommendations are hardly transformative, in that most essentially reinforce the status quo, even though numerous submissions identified problems with the existing Code. To the extent that the final recommendations point to actions that can be taken by the federal government to re-regulate the temporal dimensions of work to facilitate social reproduction through 'work-life balance', they do not emphasize the need for an *enhanced* role for the state, but rather an extension of past practice where regulation concerns itself only with those aspects of social reproduction that involve the *daily* regeneration of the paid worker, without fundamentally altering the gender division of labour or the level of unpaid work that is contributed by (mainly) women to the reproduction of labour on a societal scale over time. This approach is perhaps most evident in Arthurs' treatment of maternity and parental leaves. Arthurs recommended no new leaves with pay, no higher replacement rates, no extended duration for parental

⁴⁹⁴ Arthurs recommended two weeks of paid vacation (plus an optional unpaid third week) for those with one to five years of service, three weeks after five years and four weeks after ten years of service.

leave, and no flexibility for employees in terms of the timing of leaves, but suggests instead that employees be entitled to take up to 10 days of unpaid family responsibility leave annually, that each parent be entitled to the full entitlement of parental leave and that eligibility for maternity and parental leave be enhanced. On the issue of dedicated paternity leave, Arthurs writes: “[a]lthough the issue of establishing a new paternity leave has merit, I believe that this issue has ramifications that go well beyond labour standards and should therefore be examined further within a broader policy context, bearing in mind the importance of income replacement measures.”⁴⁹⁵ Therefore, changes to labour law that held the potential to alter traditional gender division of labour, facilitate greater sharing of care work, enhance women’s paid work, ease the tensions workers face between paid and unpaid work, did not result from the Federal Employment Standards Review. Rather, the overall approach to work-life balance recommended by Harry Arthurs gestured to the continued use of methods, discussed in the next section, that had come to the fore in other federal policy arenas in the early 2000s: “[t]he federal government should *raise awareness* about the issue of work-life balance and *encourage parties to voluntarily adopt measures* to improve it. It should focus on *disseminating accurate and comprehensive information* on work-life balance matters.”⁴⁹⁶

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada’s Work-Life Balance Strategy

⁴⁹⁵ Arthurs, 157.

⁴⁹⁶ Arthurs, 167.

A growing body of literature on work-life balance in Canada has emerged in recent years, much of which examines this policy area through the lens of human resources management. My discussion aims to transcend traditional conceptions of work-life balance as a 'human capital' problem by situating the rise of this policy discourse against transformations in working and leisure time, heightened labour market insecurity, and a welfare state increasingly informed by neoliberal economic ideologies and practices, such as those informing the demise of ParticipACTION. Work-life balance policies hold the potential for addressing a range of issues related to changing family forms, the unequal distribution of unpaid work between women and men, and the increasing number of Canadians who lack access to meaningful leisure experiences. However, the trajectories which policy planning has taken in recent years has meant that developments in this area remain stunted by the turn to highly individualized, employer-sponsored arrangements that fail to account for the changing nature of work and instead perpetuate an outdated gender contract that places primary responsibility for social reproduction onto women. The federal government's steps towards the adoption of a work-life balance policy framework, in essence the most recent iteration of policies designed to regulate the work/leisure interface, errs as its predecessors did, by adopting a narrow definition of work as paid employment, thus failing to address some of the fundamental tensions associated with social reproduction. This is particularly curious given that a significant part of the discourse surrounding work-life balance centres on the problems of social reproduction posed by women's increased participation in the labour market and the subsequent weakening of the postwar gender contract.

Between the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Health Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), formerly Social Development Canada (SDC), distributed a series of studies and publications examining the issue of work-life balance. Guided by the objective to secure and strengthen Canada's "social foundation," SDC's primary policy orientation was to develop "policies, services and programs" that would promote the well-being of individuals, families and communities.⁴⁹⁷ In 2001, Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, the scholars commissioned to report on work-life balance, released the first of a six-part research series. In *The 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study*, Duxbury and Higgins asserted that strained relationships between work life and family life were causing more Canadians to suffer from stress, poor physical and mental health, and lack of satisfaction with work and family life.⁴⁹⁸ The authors identify a number of economic and demographic factors contributing to these strained relationships. For example, the 1990s are cited as a decade of national economic turbulence, as "companies downsized, rightsized, restructured and globalized."⁴⁹⁹ It is acknowledged that these movements occurred alongside other significant changes shaping the Canadian labour market, such as an increase in the labour market participation of women and dual-earner families, an increase in the number of

⁴⁹⁷ "About Social Development Canada," *Social Development Canada*, Government of Canada, 1 June 2007 <http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/es/comm/sd/about_us.shtml>

⁴⁹⁸ Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, *The 2001 National Work-Life Conflict Study* Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2002. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/work-travail/pdf/rprt_1_e.pdf>

⁴⁹⁹ Duxbury and Higgins, vii.

lone-parent families, an aging population, changing immigration patterns, the growth of non-standard work, and new work arrangements.⁵⁰⁰

The reports prepared for, and subsequently distributed by, Health Canada and HRSDC fundamentally frame work-life *imbalance* as a potential human capital crisis, and this characterization leads the authors to reinforce the need for actions by multiple parties to ensure the maintenance of the time- and work-discipline of individuals in service of their employers. This perspective operates in the reports in two ways. First, in reviewing macro-level changes in demography and economy, Duxbury and Higgins cite the importance of work-life balance policy *for firms* as a preventative means of coping with anticipated labour shortages in the Canadian labour market.⁵⁰¹ The report warns that an aging workforce will likely mean that organizations will have to adopt creative methods of phasing in retirement, and, further, that the ‘nexus generation’ now entering the workforce will have adopted clear expectations about the role of the employer and what constitutes meaningful ‘balanced’ work. It is argued that in this context, employers need to look beyond remuneration in wages to recruit and retain “good” (i.e. “committed and productive”) workers. Thus Duxbury and Higgins argue that a sound approach to work-life balance is necessary for an organization to become “an employer of choice” moving forward into the next millennium.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰⁰ Duxbury and Higgins, 4-7.

⁵⁰¹ Duxbury and Higgins, 3.

⁵⁰² Duxbury and Higgins, 8.

Second, in outlining the key costs associated with a poor work-life balance (or work-life conflict), the authors point to the changing temporal character of work as a potential site of tension for workers. The findings of the study reveal that average hours and pace of work have steadily increased in recent decades. One in four Canadians spend more than fifty hours per week in paid employment and one in six “report that they work at a high speed ‘all of the time.’”⁵⁰³ Citing global competitive pressures and technological change as causal factors determining the level of stress and anxiety that Canadians contend with on a daily basis, Duxbury and Higgins note that the percentage of Canadians reporting high job stress actually doubled during the 1990s, rising from 13% to 27%.⁵⁰⁴ They argue that work-life conflict is “linked to productivity decreases associated with lateness, unscheduled days off, emergency time off, excessive use of the telephone, missed meetings, and difficulty concentrating on the job,” and that the combined effect is in essence poor work-discipline, costing firms approximately \$3 billion a year.⁵⁰⁵

Pathways to achieving work-life balance

⁵⁰³ “Addressing Work-Life Balance in Canada,” Labour Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (Accessed 2006): <<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/lp/spila/wlb/awlbc/02introduction.shtml>> .

⁵⁰⁴ Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, *Work-Life Conflict in the New Millennium: A Status Report* Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2003. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/work-travail/pdf/rprt_2_e.pdf> .

⁵⁰⁵ Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, *Work-Life Balance: Where are we? Where do we need to go?* (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2001) 4.

Even if concerns about time- and work-discipline do figure prominently in calls for a work-life balance policy, this in itself does not suggest any particular pathway to policy development. As such, in each report, Duxbury and Higgins outline a series of actions that can be taken by employers, governments, unions and individuals to better manage the work-life balance of Canadian workers. Despite the numerous suggestions made by the authors, no federal government department has advanced a cohesive policy on work-life balance. The de facto approach to managing work-life balance remains stunted at the level of information dissemination and encouraging personal efforts by individuals, thereby reinforcing neoliberal policy discourses stressing individualized and market-centred approaches to a healthy work/life relationship.

Building on human capital arguments, Duxbury and Higgins emphasize the benefits of *voluntary* employer-driven actions to make work arrangements more attractive to employees. These types of initiatives involve the implementation of new policies at the worksite to address the needs of workers. The authors' suggestions are numerous and address a number of issues related to the work/life relationship, such as workplace policies intended to transform the culture of long hours and unpaid overtime, improved human resources practices to correct unsympathetic management, counseling services, and/or various programs designed to make care work easier for employees through an on-site daycare, or by providing opportunities for home-work, flexible scheduling, or mobility to move between full-time and part-time work and vice versa. Although these suggestions are broad, they fundamentally leave the option to introduce (and presumably terminate) benefits and programs up to employers. Moreover, this

approach leaves unanswered the problem of how to address the work/life balance of those working in non-standard or precarious forms of work, where the bargaining power of the individual worker is severely limited or the nature of the work poses problems for benefit delivery at the worksite.

Duxbury and Higgins also underscore the need for legislative changes to promote work-life balance. They acknowledge that many workers go unprotected by aspects of labour law and lack access to “security provisions provided through the employer-employee relationship.”⁵⁰⁶ These findings appear particularly important given that hours of work, pace of work and degree of regulatory protection are associated with “quality of working life, workplace health and safety, and ... job stress and burnout.”⁵⁰⁷ A number of state-centred policy options are examined. For example, legislative changes to promote work-life balance could include stricter rules on the regulation of overtime in employment standards legislation, the introduction of a small number of paid days off for emergency familial care, or the option of longer term unpaid leaves to care for elderly dependents. Duxbury and Higgins also call for the introduction of a child care and elder care strategy to reduce the impact of family to work interference.

Yet the approach to managing work-life balance that gained the most traction in the 2000s, becoming the dominant approach, and setting the contours of the policy discourse in this area of labour policy, is one focused on self-regulation of work-life

⁵⁰⁶ “Addressing Work-Life Balance in Canada.”

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

balance. While the six-part series contained only small suggestions that individuals could undertake to achieve work-life balance, self-regulation comes to the fore in a number of other reports, many authored by Duxbury and Higgins, distributed by the Labour Branch of HRSDC. At the core of the individualized approach to work-life balance is the assumption that the tensions between paid and unpaid work are self-induced and temporary, and that every individual has the capacity – and responsibility – to organize their working lives in order to bring about better balance. This sentiment is perhaps most clearly conveyed in the following passage from the work-life balance pages of the HRSDC website: “[t]he more out of balance and out of control your life is, the longer hours you work, and the more intense your work experience, the greater likelihood it is that you pay a physical and emotional price.”⁵⁰⁸ Whereas this individualizing policy discourse points openly to how the recession of the early 1990s and its ‘jobless recovery’ have raised concerns over employment security for many Canadians and their families, the strategy it outlines to redress this problem downgrades the role of social programs and instead focuses narrowly on *tips* to help people “get control of their lives.”⁵⁰⁹ Thus a crucial disjuncture emerges between what HRSDC identifies as the structural and contextual factors reshaping the temporal organization of work, and the solutions to combat the growing tensions Canadians face in meeting their most basic needs.

⁵⁰⁸ “Work-Life Balance and New Workplace Challenges.”

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

Recent policy discourses on work-life balance now emphasize the importance of *individual strategies* and *individual choice* in easing the tensions posed by changes in the economy. One report distributed by HRSDC outlines nine strategies that any individual may adopt in an effort to “put their life in order.”⁵¹⁰ Such tasks include putting things into perspective; goal setting; and better organization in the approach taken to paid work and family. Although it is recognized that “balance takes work,” and individuals are urged to accept this maxim as well, this report nevertheless suggests that Canadians find paid work they enjoy, exercise more, select a partner who does their share at home, and, to the fullest possible extent, “enjoy life.”⁵¹¹ As a pathway to work-life balance, state policy discourse suggests that actualizing this vision is merely a matter of *individual perspective* and *choice*. Within official state discourses, there is no recognition that underlying race, class, and gender relations may structure – to a significant extent – the range of choices and options available to individuals. Rather, it is assumed that every person has an equal capacity for “making choices and setting priorities.”⁵¹² Further suggestions endorsed by HRSDC include:

consciously separating work and home; consciously putting family first, reducing the amount of time devoted to paid employment; choosing shift work so that one partner is at home to care for the children; learning to make do with less; having a partner who does not work outside the home; making time for

⁵¹⁰ “Voices of Canadians: Seeking Work-Life Balance.” Labour Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (Accessed 2006):
<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/vcswlb/05table_of_contents.html>.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Ibid.

hobbies and for yourself; deciding not to have children, or postponing having children.⁵¹³

In essence, dominant discourses in state arenas reduce the processes and tensions associated with social reproduction to a matter of individual strategy and choice. That such tensions are often a key component of the subsistence process under late capitalism is negated entirely. What the above recommendations may offer (if anything) is the suggestion that it *might* be possible for individuals to *attempt* to establish a *sense* of control in their everyday experiences of work – by recognizing some ability to choose rather than through actual or substantial change.

The adoption of individualized and de-contextualized approaches to stress management places the task of negotiating conflicting work roles squarely on individual employees who – in the absence of adequate resources or protections to transform their socio-economic conditions – must alter how they perceive or understand the challenges they face. This approach is highlighted most clearly by Duxbury and Higgins: “the more control employees *feel* they have over their lives, the more they are able to balance work and family. Employees with a high level of *perceived control* are less likely to report high role overload and high interference between work and family roles. ... If control is key, the question then becomes, how do we increase perceived control?”⁵¹⁴ This emphasis on perception rather than actual, substantive change is echoed elsewhere:

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Duxbury and Higgins, *Work-Life Balance: Where are we? Where do we need to go?*, 62.

“there isn’t any work environment, any job, any position, that can’t be in some way *designed to allow the individual to achieve a sense of work-life balance.*”⁵¹⁵

Beyond the focus on individual stress management to deal with this conflict – a strategy that can at best alter perceptions rather than actual material conditions – HRSDC suggests that workers negotiate one-on-one with employers for ‘balance’ oriented benefits. An illustration outlines how a worker needing to drop down to part-time hours to undertake caregiving tasks may approach an employer:

... going to a manager and saying ‘I need to drop down to half-time because I want to spend more time with my family,’ means nothing to them. But if you go to them with a concrete proposal that you want to do the job share with somebody to maintain your career path and to fulfill the obligations that you have with the clients and customers in such a way that it assists the organization to meet their objectives, then the manager’s got something to consider, evaluate and approve. You remove the personal from the decision-making.⁵¹⁶

This notion of family time as private time emerges repeatedly in Duxbury and Higgin’s work and in HRSDC’s web-based work-life balance materials, but what I hope to emphasize here is that despite the ongoing concern with individual time- and work-discipline, the current policy approach at the level of the federal government demonstrates an unwillingness by the federal government to take seriously the tensions associated with social reproduction, the impact of these tensions on broader economic processes, or even that social reproduction itself is a matter for public concern. While several federal government departments did support a large-scale research initiative

⁵¹⁵ “Voices of Canadians: Seeking Work-Life Balance.”

⁵¹⁶ “Work-Life Balance and New Workplace Challenges.”

designed to sketch the key issues facing Canadians, these departmental actions to date remain at the level of information gathering and distribution. No cohesive or concrete policy action has been taken by any federal government department to deal with the systemic issues involved in work-life balance.

Moreover, the fact that HRSDC's approach to policy and program development consists of offering advice to individual paid workers – such as the promotion of self-help and stress relief lifestyle practices and/or the encouragement to engage in individual negotiation for “family-friendly” benefits from employers – suggests, on the one hand, a shift in the state-based management of labour relations that characterized the postwar social compact, and on the other, the continuity of the traditional gender contract as the primary method of organizing social reproduction. Increasingly, voluntary initiatives by firms are filling the void left by cutbacks to social services and income transfers – a trend that may suggest further erosion of state protections and benefits in the realm of social and labour policy, where entitlement may become increasingly linked to employment status. It is perhaps not surprising that, in its discussions of work-life balance, HRSDC upholds two corporate models of welfare provision: 3M's Family CareLink Resource and Information Service and Kraft Foods' Framework for Success. In the case of Kraft, the “philosophy of work-life harmony” developed by the company includes the goals of respect, self-awareness, a nurturing and flexible culture and the development of programs

within the organization, because “Kraft believes the most important elements of organizational change *can’t be legislated.*”⁵¹⁷

Policymakers have been slow to acknowledge the gendered underpinnings of work-life balance. Most policies neglect an examination of how unpaid work and caregiving requirements exacerbate conflicts over time. The changing temporal rhythms of paid work under late capitalism altered postwar norms and made efforts to secure a decent standard of living increasingly difficult for individuals – and even more so for families who must negotiate the demands of paid, unpaid, and/or caregiving labour. Suggestions such as finding a partner who does their share at home or having one partner choose not to engage in paid labour are highly problematic as they suggest a return to male breadwinner family model. Without recognizing the tensions emerging from the organization of a gender contract that has traditionally supported the reproduction of capitalism, state policies will continue to avoid a central issue at hand in discussions of work-life conflict – that the organization of social reproduction is often in conflict with the profit maximizing interests of business.⁵¹⁸ Market-centred solutions to long-standing conflicts over time perpetuate the assumption that work-life imbalance involves too much paid work and not enough time for leisure or relaxation and at best offer a solution available to only a narrow segment of the working population. Although efforts to support time- and work-discipline now also include the promotion of *voluntary*

⁵¹⁷ “Addressing Work-Life Balance in Canada.”

⁵¹⁸ For a good theoretical discussion of the impacts of restructuring on working-class households and women’s work, see Meg Luxton and June Corman. *Getting By In Hard Times: Gendered Labour at Home and On the Job* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2001), Chapter Nine.

employer-sponsored work-life balance initiatives (employee fitness and workplace wellness initiatives, for example), these are unlikely help individuals and families in the absence of other rights and protections at work.

Conclusion

My examination of the efforts of the federal government to regulate the work/life relationship between the early 1990s and the early 2000s reveals both continuity and change in the state's management of social reproduction. Together, the movement from ParticipACTION to Active Living and recent debates about transforming the regulatory framework provided by employment standards legislation to address concerns about work/life balance demonstrate that the political economic principles associated with neoliberalism, such as the privatization of once public provisions, the creation of new niche markets for products and services, and the support for free markets – including markets for labour - now inform policymaking practices.⁵¹⁹

In the context of fitness policies, changes in the 1990s and early 2000s were two-fold. With respect to ParticipACTION, despite the best efforts of the organization to secure additional private sources of funding to maintain its health promotion activities, it could not do so, and ultimately ceased operations after the federal government withdrew all its financial support in a measure of cost-cutting and fiscal restraint. Its replacement with Active Living suggests that, even as the federal government continued its

⁵¹⁹ For a good overview of the role of the state under neoliberalism, see David Harvey, "Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction." *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* (2007): 22-44.

commitment to the idea of fitness promotion outside of the workplace, it increasingly looked to the private institutions of the market for fitness services and the household as sites for physical activity promotion. Only those with the means to consume are behind the exponential growth of the private health club market and fitness goods markets, which by 2005 had a business worth of \$1.6 billion in Canada.⁵²⁰ This is significant given that the purchase of lifestyle commodities and new incentives to exercise through tax credits have gendered consequences, especially for low income women and children.⁵²¹

For many others who do not have purchasing power to buy into the private health club market, physical activity can be integrated into daily routine activities, such as household labour. This strategy does not question income disparities or even time disparities, as those who may have the resources to consume fitness services and commodities have no time to do so. Active Living sidesteps important questions about leisure time, such as who has it, who does not, or who has it but cannot use it. These are

⁵²⁰ "Resolving to get fit." CBC News Online. January 3rd, 2007. One of the first board members of ParticipACTION, in an interview, expressed mixed feelings about the growth of the private fitness industry. On the one hand, he explained, the people behind the creation of the ParticipACTION movement never predicted that gyms would dot every street corner of major Canadian urban centres, and yet, this objective 'success' of ParticipACTION in spreading awareness of the benefits of physical activity is undermined by the fact that children, at least in Saskatoon today, cannot access the best facilities the city has to offer without paying a fee. Private fitness delivery, in his mind, was not part of the vision of ParticipACTION.

⁵²¹ See for example, Sheila Block, "The Children's Fitness Tax Credit Less than meets the eye," *Canadian Women's Health Network* (Spring/Summer, 2007); 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).

deemed to be 'private' matters, where individual choice governs decisions about the management of time-discipline.

Questions of leisure *have* emerged, however, in recent policy debates about employment standards and work/life balance. Even though the failure of existing standards to regulate working time and leisure are acknowledged, the final report of the federal labour standards review recommended no changes to existing provisions and instead supported the rights of individuals to negotiate independently with employers for benefits. On the subject of work-life balance, *Fairness at Work* points to the importance of exhortation-based instruments, such as information-based resources. As these types of initiatives emerge to address the changing work/life interface, the types of solutions offered uphold individual self-regulation and voluntary employer initiatives as the primary method by which to manage the work/life relationship. Replicating older forms of interventions, the construction of time-discipline as an individual private matter continues to be a theme emerging in new work-life balance policies. Moreover, as the demise of ParticipACTION illustrates, privately sourced contributes offer little long-term security as they are highly contingent upon broader fluctuations in the market economy.

Because neoliberalism is a highly ideological project that uses 'natural' and so-called common sense ideas, in the work/life context, this has meant that new work-life balance policies have drawn upon and reinforced traditional ideas about the appropriate role for men and women in social reproduction. Work/life balance policies, like their predecessors in the field of leisure policy, are predicated on ideologies of domesticity in which men earn and women care. With program delivery now intricately tied to

neoliberal policymaking practices, the social and material bases of ongoing tensions around social reproduction are “increasingly being cast aside in favour of individual solutions to what are perceived to be individually determined problems.”⁵²² Under neoliberalism, individuals and families are left with the sole responsibility for social reproduction, yet the changing nature of work has meant that they have fewer resources with which to manage the dilemmas posed by a prolonged period of economic instability. As Picchio has noted, “the structural tension inherent in the production-reproduction relationship finds its buffer in the enormous amount of unpaid work absorbed in the process of social reproduction.”⁵²³ Again, such realities have gendered implications as the residual effects of ideologies of domesticity have left women with the largest share of unpaid and caregiving labour within the household. Moreover, because “the unequal distribution of unpaid work has been considered a private problem and this has contributed to the fact that, in both labour market analysis and bargaining over wages and conditions of work, living conditions are also considered a private problem,”⁵²⁴ the emergent crisis of social reproduction – manifested in struggles over time - is given little attention in mainstream public policy debates and is instead recast as an issue of human resources.

⁵²² Bakker, 4-5. See also Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State,” *Signs* 19.2 (Winter 1994): 309-336.

⁵²³ Picchio, “The Reproduction of the Social Structure,” 205.

⁵²⁴ Picchio, “The Reproduction of the Social Structure,” 209.

Conclusion: Challenging the Gendered Regulation of Work and Leisure

If we are to have enlarged leisure, in an automated future, the problem is not 'how are men going to be able to consume all these additional time units of leisure?' but what will be the capacity for experience of the men who have this undirected time to live? If we maintain a Puritan time-valuation, a commodity-valuation, then it is a question of how this time is put to use, or how it is exploited by the leisure industries. But if the purposive notation of time-use becomes less compulsive, then men might have to re-learn some of the arts of living lost in the industrial revolution: how to fill the interstices of their days with enriched, more leisurely personal and social relations; how to break down the barriers between work and life. ... If men are to meet both the demands of a highly-synchronized automated industry, and of greatly enlarged areas of free time, they must somehow combine in a new synthesis elements of old and new, finding an imagery based neither upon seasons nor upon the market but upon human occasions.⁵²⁵

The temporal nature of work continues to shift alongside rapidly changing social and economic conditions. In Canada, as in many other advanced industrialized nations, the growth of global and networked markets, 24-hour service economies, as well as the spread of information and communication technologies, have lengthened and intensified the working day. These changes alter the capacity of individuals, and the households and communities in which they live, to cope with the daily insecurities and stresses of working life. Given the recent proliferation of discussions of 'work-life balance' in Canadian labour and social policy arenas, the questions posed by EP Thompson in his 1967 piece quoted above have new resonance in the contemporary period. While Thompson's vision of an industrialized capitalist workforce with increased leisure time has not come to fruition - or at least seems somewhat anachronistic - concerns about the interface between work and leisure remain central to discussions of working time and its

⁵²⁵ Thompson, 95-6.

effects on the health and well-being of populations. While notions of time-management and time-thrift – in short, time-discipline – are still implicitly supported by policymakers because, among other things, they support economic production, the precise methods of managing the work/life interface have nevertheless undergone profound changes in recent decades.

The central objective of this study has been to understand the gendered nature of the state's management of the work/life relationship through an examination of the intersection of employment regulation and public health policies directed at leisure. The focus on leisure policy has provided a way to probe the treatment of social reproduction with policy arenas. Through a review of policy developments at the provincial and federal levels, I have documented an ongoing interest in and commitment to facilitating healthy reproduction on an individual and collective level. In doing so, I have exposed gender assumptions underpinning different phases of policy development over the postwar period, by asking how and for whom the policies provided 'leisure' benefits in each phase. The study contributed to an emerging literature on work-life balance in Canada by probing the state's treatment of the work/life interface historically. Through my analysis, I have shown how concerns about gender and work-discipline were built into the design of leisure policy and how these have continued to permeate discussions of work-life balance in the current period.

While it can be said that policymakers, at least at a surface level, have taken various actions to address some of the *daily* aspects of social reproduction, these efforts have merely supplemented the significant amount of unpaid labour carried out by women

in households. Indeed, assumptions about the gendered division of labour, rooted in ideologies of women's domesticity, underpinned efforts to regulate leisure. As women's increased labour force participation destabilized the gender contract and gave rise to conflicts between paid working time and unpaid working time over the latter half of the twentieth century— what I call *work/work conflict* — state policies focused on healthy leisure could not adequately address these new tensions.

The enduring silence on the part of policymakers has been exacerbated by new neoliberal economic ideologies that inform the policymaking process. Indeed, my focus on leisure has laid bare the particular interests that have shaped state action at different historical moments. By analyzing how the state's regulation of the work/life relationship corresponded with shifts in dominant economic ideologies, the study has shown how the adoption of certain policy instruments reinforced rather than resolved gender inequalities within households and the labour market. In order for leisure policies to improve the health and well-being of Canadians and ease the tensions between paid and unpaid work that underpin conflicts over working time, such policies must address first and foremost the gendered division of labour and changing family forms.

Working time and leisure through the lens of feminist political economy

The preceding chapters employed a feminist political economy framework for analyzing public policies regulating leisure using concepts and insights from three research traditions. First, I examined the relevance of Marx's concept of value as a way of illustrating the tensions in the wage relationship under capitalism. The capitalist

imperative to derive profit from the production process has significant implications for its treatment of labour. While there are numerous ways in which labour is sometimes exploited and the health of workers compromised through the employment relationship, the central concern of this study has been to examine conflicts around working time. My analysis of the regulation of working time and leisure aimed to be attentive to some of the underlying imperatives compelling employers to modify the working day to suit their own needs. Throughout the history of industrial capitalism in Canada, this logic has compelled employers at times to lengthen the working day and/or intensify the pace of work. Such strategies often have negative impacts on the health and well-being of workers. More recently, some employers have used these strategies in tandem with others, such as the promotion of various forms of 'flexible' work, to adapt the timing and pacing of the labour process to their own ends. Temporal flexibility in employment has posed obstacles to the healthy reproduction of Canadians, as these strategies impinge upon workers' control over the labour process and their ability to achieve employment security over the life course.

I also looked at the system of labour regulation set in motion in the post-WWII period and maintained by the state to understand how struggles over time evolve in specific social and economic contexts. Over the course of the twentieth century, largely in response to workers' challenges to the exploitative nature of capitalist production, various state policies managed the tensions associated in the wage relationship. This was achieved by offering workers protections against the worst abuses of employers, at times providing the means to ensure a basic level of subsistence for those who could not work.

Recognizing that this process of negotiation and accommodation emerged in particular social and cultural contexts, I considered how Thompson's notions of time- and work-discipline might usefully guide an inquiry into the nature of leisure regulation.

Struggles over the temporal dimensions of the labour process form one of the primary areas of contestation between labour and capital. In understanding how and why state officials chose to regulate leisure at different times, I found it helpful to trace developments in leisure policy alongside the emergence, stabilization, and declining power of organized labour in Canada. The study traced the emergence of minimum employment standards against the backdrop of an emerging Canadian labour movement and demands by workers for better wages, working conditions, and collective bargaining rights. I argued that the power of organized labour to advocate on behalf of workers was a driving force in the regulation of working time and provisions for leisure time – and indeed, of work itself.

I also probed the relationship between the power of the labour movement to shape working time in Canada and broader economic forces shaping the policy environment. This study attempted to situate developments in leisure policy alongside changing economic paradigms. The earliest policies to regulate leisure emerged in tandem with the growth of the welfare state in Canada and demand-management Keynesian-inspired ideals about the role of the state in providing basic welfare to its citizens. As infrastructure to provide Canadians with publicly funded health care emerged in the postwar period, the framework for leisure regulation converged with efforts to regulate healthy lifestyle practices. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the entrenchment of

neoliberalism as a dominant economic paradigm shifted the nature of work, the manner in which the state organized social policy delivery, and dominant discourses used to justify continued government involvement in managing social reproduction.

Lastly, my analysis has been concerned fundamentally with understanding how the federal government's management of the work/life relationship affects processes of social reproduction. Social reproduction refers to the unpaid work required to maintain individuals and households on a daily and intergenerational basis. Feminist political economy understands social reproduction as a key feature of the capitalist mode of production. This study asked how state interventions directed towards the regulation of leisure affected the ways in which social reproduction has been carried out. Because assumptions about the gendered division of labour were built into the design of leisure policies – that is, policies were predicated on the availability of a full-time caregiver in the home – these assumptions have in turn undermined the efficacy of such policies over time, especially as dual-earning and single-parent households have become the norm in Canadian society.

The emergence of a gendered framework for regulating working time and leisure in Canada

The empirical dimension of this dissertation traced the emergence of a gendered framework for regulating social reproduction through state-led management of the work/life relationship. I have identified four phases of federal leisure policy development through my analysis of federal-level policy debates, policy papers and program materials.

My opening chapter examined the emergence of working time and leisure provisions before 1960 at both the provincial and federal level. In this earliest phase, fitness and recreation programs to promote healthy leisure time use were introduced to maintain work-discipline among under- and unemployed youth. These programs were piloted during the Depression era, and fully adopted in the post-WWII period where they were used to supplement new piecemeal Keynesian-inspired employment standards provisions guaranteeing workers shorter hours of work and annual paid vacations. Early leisure time provisions, although on the surface gender-neutral, were nevertheless built around a male-breadwinner/ female caregiver gender contract and sought implicitly to promote the work-discipline of working men.

My analysis demonstrated how early policies designed to manage the work/leisure relationship through the regulation of leisure time, part and parcel of an emergent working-time regime, supported the growth of industrial capitalism in Canada. Such policies did so by attempting to promote work-discipline and better health outcomes among full-time paid workers and would-be workers. The analysis revealed that state-sanctioned efforts to manage social reproduction assumed the existence of women's domestic labour within the home. State policies were intended to supplement a broad range of private activities that would support the reproduction of the labour force over time. Policymakers did not regard domestic labour as work and this served to reinforce women's exclusion from the scope of early leisure policies.

A second phase, beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the 1970s, was marked by the creation of ParticipACTION, a federal public health agency that used

exhortation techniques to encourage physical activity and active lifestyles through healthy leisure time use. In Chapter Two, I situated the emergence of ParticipACTION within the context of expanding leisure time for some workers, the growth a publicly funded health care system, and a climate of broad social change. The notion that the maintenance of healthy bodies was a shared responsibility was at the heart of these policies. Yet despite the federal government's commitment to working in cooperation with local governments, sports programs, employers, unions and various social movements, efforts to establish community-level interventions were undermined by social marketing campaigns (television, radio and newspaper advertisements) which focused primarily on the maintenance of healthy *male* bodies.

This chapter illustrated the federal government's treatment of the work/leisure relationship at the height of Keynesian welfare state development, showing how the emergence of a pan-Canadian fitness strategy intersected with other health and welfare policies. Gendered ideologies and assumptions about work and working time were built into the design of post-WWII leisure policies. Specifically, efforts to manage social reproduction through the promotion of healthy lifestyle rested on the availability of leisure time, which in turn was tied to the standard employment relationship. As in earlier years, this framework for leisure and healthy lifestyle promotion was also predicated on the organization of a particular gender contract. The federal state's use of exhortation as a policy instrument through which to manage the daily aspects of social reproduction reinforced the notion of men's rights to leisure and women's responsibilities for unpaid labour in the home.

In Chapter Three, covering a third phase spanning the 1980s and 1990s, I considered how shifts in macroeconomic policies – particularly the rise of neoliberalism as a dominant economic paradigm – transformed the nature of working time and leisure, and the state’s management of social reproduction through leisure policies. Despite the existence of standards regulating the temporal dimensions of employment, the polarization of working time (the growth of a long-hours culture on the one hand and increasing rates of under-employment on the other), as well as new pressures on governments to cut or privatize social programs, initiated an important shift in the policy mechanisms used to regulate social reproduction through leisure.

I have shown, through an examination of the implementation of workplace fitness experiments, how policymakers’ preferred approach to regulating the health of workers shifted from the promotion of community-centred activities to practices focused narrowly on the health of employees. The state’s retreat from organizing social policies meant that it looked for new actors to advance the fitness agenda. Foremost among these were employers, who were encouraged, through the promise of work-discipline, to take a more central role in managing the health of their workers.

Chapter Three demonstrated how shifting ideological contexts and women’s increasing labour force participation destabilized the postwar gender contract and how this produced certain unintended outcomes in the federal government’s new fitness strategy. Women overwhelmingly participated in early workplace-wellness programs, even though men were the intended recipients of these programs. What this meant was that only women whose employment situation mirrored that of men could access new

workplace-wellness initiatives, which served to marginally extend the male-centered framework for regulating social reproduction through leisure established in earlier decades. Even so, the idea of 'fitness' through healthy lifestyle practices as leisure (even at the site of employment) nevertheless failed, as older forms of managing the work/life relationship had, to address the underlying gendered division of work. Policymakers did not probe further the conflict between paid and unpaid work as a source of tension or job stress. Moreover, state discourses simultaneously upheld the proliferation of new flexible working time arrangements, such as part-time work, as a solution to the tensions surrounding the growing misfit between paid and unpaid work. While cognizant of the emerging tensions facing dual-earning households, new state policies, organized along neoliberal lines, therefore upheld as paramount *individual choice* (read: women's choice) to pursue flexible working time arrangements as a method of managing social reproduction.

In a fourth phase of policy development, discussions of work/life balance came to dominate policy debates about work, leisure and the health of workers. The tension between the traditional gendered organization of unpaid work in which women held primary responsibility for domestic labour and the realities of dual-earning or single-parent households became widely acknowledged in labour policy arenas. Yet faced with the choice between updating existing employment standards (specifically, provisions for working time, overtime, leisure time and parental leaves) to address the problem of precarious and non-standard work or promoting 'softer' forms of voluntary regulation, policymakers opted for the latter. The adoption of a national *Work/Life Balance Strategy*,

which endeavoured to promote individual self-help strategies, aided through increased consumption of lifestyle commodities, and new human resource initiatives such as voluntary firm-based family-friendly programs, flexible scheduling and worker-wellness programs, further entrenched the privatization of social reproduction by shoring up the standard employment relationship and individual level bargaining over working conditions as a normative framework for achieving work/life balance.

The chapter demonstrated the ways in which neoliberal principles informed policy responses to the changing work/life interface. New state policies extended the idea that individuals should maintain primary responsibility for the management their personal work/life boundaries, as well as their health and well-being more generally. Narratives introduced by state policies supported exercise of freedom of choice, without fundamentally examining how changes in the nature of work posed constraints for certain groups in the labour market. Furthermore, I showed how such approaches to regulating working time continued to obscure the contributions to social reproduction made by individuals in the private sphere of the household. By failing to question the traditional gendered division of labour, and neglecting to acknowledge some of the tensions associated with the process of social reproduction and the productive capacity of such work, new work/life policies have reinforced longstanding gender-based social and economic inequalities.

In sum, the study has demonstrated how a feminist political economy lens can illuminate the operation of gender dynamics and gender ideologies in policies and policy discourses surrounding the work/life relationship. I have shown how, since WWII,

Canadian laws and policies addressing leisure have been premised on false dichotomy between paid working time and leisure time. Rarely has unpaid work outside the formal market economy been acknowledged as work. This has obscured the reality that time outside of paid work is not simply leisure time but also time that must necessarily be spent in reproductive activity on both an individual and intergenerational level. I have shown how policies that neglect to understand working time as comprised of both paid and unpaid work simultaneously hide from view the significant amount of unpaid work necessary for social reproduction – work that is performed mainly by women in Canadian society. The tension between paid and unpaid work is at the root of work-work conflict. Historically, policies attempting to manage healthy lifestyles through leisure merely acted as a supplement women's unpaid work in households. In more recent years, policies to promote 'balance' individualize work-work conflict and suggest that it is up to individuals to self-manage their work/leisure boundaries. Therefore, efforts to manage social reproduction through leisure time provisions and exhortation policies guiding leisure time use have incorporated and reinforced traditional gender divisions of labour.

Despite the ongoing commitment at the federal level to regulating the healthy lifestyle of workers through various leisure policies, tensions between paid and unpaid work - work-work conflict - remains untouched by the reach of such policies. Instead, over the postwar period, state policies have become progressively focused on using leisure as a way to encourage time- and work-discipline among workers. This shift has been particularly evident since the 1980s, when state policies began to focus explicitly on

encouraging employers to adopt voluntary firm-level strategies to promote healthy lifestyle practices at the place of employment.

The adoption of neoliberal policymaking techniques has promoted the use of exhortation-based policy instruments. Recent approaches to managing the work/life relationship, such as HRSDC's *Work/Life Balance Strategy*, reinforce the neoliberal notion that state interventions in the economy – including the labour market – must be limited. While there has not been a wholesale retreat of the state's regulation of leisure and healthy lifestyle, the dominant approach to managing the work/life interface through leisure has nevertheless been stalled at the level of information dissemination.

Collective organizing against work-work conflict: Some final thoughts

The partial retreat of state-led management of the work/life interface reflects a contradictory process of reconstruction and deconstruction within neoliberal policymaking practices.⁵²⁶ While neoliberal restructuring of labour markets has entailed important shifts in the temporal nature of production and social reproduction, new points of tension simultaneously signal the need for new policy interventions. In this sense, despite the fact that the tensions posed by social reproduction are deeply embedded in social and gender relations, the contradictions do not in themselves point to negative outcomes. Rather, opportunities to introduce and debate policies that do not re-inscribe the work of social reproduction onto women have come to fore.

⁵²⁶ Harvey, 22-23; Jill Rubery, "Reconstruction Amid Deconstruction: or Why We Need More of the Social in European Social Models," *Work, Employment and Society* 25.4 (2011): 671.

This dynamic is most clearly evident in the recent debates about federal employment standards, which represent the clearest articulation of the tension between paid and unpaid work to date in labour arenas to date. Still, even as policymakers acknowledge that the changing nature of work necessitates new policy responses, dominant state discourses continue to point to new employer-focused forms of ‘flexible’ work, particularly for women, as a solution to the tensions between paid and unpaid work. Yet the fact that job stress and tension remain high, despite recent Canadian statistics showing that average working hours are declining,⁵²⁷ suggests that some forms of flexible or non-standard forms of work, especially those involving a low level of employee control, may not offer an adequate response to work-work conflict. Policymakers remain relatively silent in response to the known impacts that new employer-driven flexible work arrangements have on the health of workers.⁵²⁸

Strong public policies may help mitigate some of the stresses and tensions associated with the changing work/life interface. As a first step, those responsible for the creation of new policies must check their assumptions about the content and dynamics of contemporary family forms. Policies must reflect the variability of household

⁵²⁷ Jeannine, Usalcas, “Hours Polarization Revisited,” *Perspectives on Labour and Income* March (2008): 5.

⁵²⁸ See, for example, Alice de Wolff, *Employment Insecurity and Health: A Literature Review* (Toronto: National Coordinating Council on Determinants of Health and Wellesley Institute, 2007); Wayne Lewchuck, Marlea Clarke, and Alice de Wolff, *Working Without Commitments: The Health Effects of Precarious Employment* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011).

composition, particularly the rise of single-parent households and households in which there are both children and older adults requiring care. Today, more than any other point in Canadian history, it is highly erroneous to assume that most households resemble the traditional nuclear family, with one partner readily available for unpaid work in the home. Additionally, with aging or sick relatives, it is also important to acknowledge personal responsibilities to family members may involve time spent outside one's place of residence. Often times there is work to be done at a family member's home (either a private residence or at a public facility such a hospital). Thus, the variability of family forms and responsibilities means that the traditional gender contract must no longer form the basis of the organization of social reproduction. At the same time, policies can actively promote men's involvement in this work. Although there are some signs of change, the hours that men contribute to unpaid and caregiving work and the levels of stress associated with such work remain well below that of women. Policy options that may correct this imbalance are worthy of exploration.

It is also clear that a wide variety of policy interventions, at different levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal), may be needed to address the problems associated with work-work conflict. Much of this policy development will involve exploring modes of work redistribution - ways to make time available to overworked individuals and additional work and resources available to those who are underemployed. Thus, employment policies form an important area of change at both the provincial and federal level, as such policies set important norms about availability of work, working conditions, working time and time off for unpaid and caregiving work and for leisure.

Many of the submissions to the Federal Employment Standards Review included policy proposals to address time conflicts for a wide variety of workers. These included provisions, for example, for those in non-standard forms of employment (part-time and temporary workers), managers, workers with emergency caregiving and compassionate care needs, as well as new mothers and fathers. These submissions, and indeed Arthurs' own recommendations, remain largely ignored by federal level officials.⁵²⁹ Yet, the numerous changes recommended by submissions could provide a useful starting point for policy development.

Employment policies alone cannot transform the tensions surrounding the organization of social reproduction. New policies may be required to ensure that adequate support is available to help individuals and households cope with the changing nature of social life. These include supports for childcare and eldercare, coordinated by different levels of government, which are not contingent on the employment relationship (i.e. available only to high skilled workers or those working in large-size firms or certain parts of the public sector). Important regional differences, both among provinces and between rural and urban centres within provinces, shape the options available to individuals, households and communities. While differences may continue to persist, minimum standards should be established to ensure that such supports are easily accessible to those who need them. In addition, continued healthy lifestyle promotion could be enhanced by greater accessibility of recreation initiatives and cultural events,

⁵²⁹ Brian B. McArthur, *In Praise of the Arthurs Report on Canadian Federal Labour Standards* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2007).

and new initiatives to promote walkability, cycling and the addition of green spaces in communities and neighbourhoods.

Moreover, new policies should be sensitive to the fact that individual and household needs change over the life course. In addition to building gender-sensitive policies, new efforts to tackle the work/life relationship must be attentive to how needs change depending on one's age or stage of life. The notion that work/life balance is something mid-career women require to help them continue unpaid work in the home while participating in the labour market widely permeates public discourse. Viewing all workers as potential earners and potential carers would challenge the notion that unpaid work is the responsibility of women. Is it worthwhile to ask what kinds of initiatives would facilitate better health outcomes for younger workers and older.

Though many of these changes are directed towards individuals and households, it nevertheless remains important to acknowledge that transformative social change is unlikely at the level of the individual worker or the individual household, even if individuals and households can and do make adjustments to facilitate the temporal organization of paid and unpaid work. In order to realize a reconstruction of work/life policies, some form of collective mobilization is necessary. There is evidence that such movements are emerging. For example, since 2006, a Seattle-based joint US-Canada movement, Take Back Your Time, has been working actively to address what they call an "epidemic of overwork, over-scheduling and time-famine" across North America.⁵³⁰

⁵³⁰ Take Back Your Time Online. <www.timeday.org>.

Supported by a number of major trade unions, the movements' proposals include guaranteed paid paternity leaves, paid sick leave, limits on compulsory overtime, and, in the US, the introduction of a public holiday on election day to improve civic and political engagement. Movements such as these suggest the need for broad based organizing around work/life issues.

Indeed, one of the underlying themes of this study has been the power of the labour movement and of workers to shape the direction of state policies regulating the work/life interface. It is clear, given the historical developments recounted herein, that the collective power of workers holds significance in how policies evolve over time. For example, the ability of labour to influence policy discourses explicitly supporting the needs of employers is demonstrated in Chapter Two, where the language of work-discipline was dropped temporarily from the lexicon of work/leisure policies in response to the relatively strong organization of labour in trade unions at the time. Since the mid-1970s, transformations occurring in the global economy have produced shifts in the nature of production in Canada and these have had a significant impact on the strength of the trade union movement. The adoption of neoliberal social and economic policies reshaping the labour market to facilitate flexibility, for example, reflects a decline in trade union power. Indeed, as Chapter Four has shown, official state discourses on the work/life relationship uphold the individual contract of employment as the primary method of achieving adequate working conditions.

To date, no comprehensive efforts have been undertaken by the Canadian labour movement or individual trade unions to working to the changing work/life relationship.

Historically, in Canada, unions have been slow to adopt progressive measures to address areas of collective agreements that are perceived to be 'women's issues' such as maternity and parental leaves, childcare and emergency family leaves.⁵³¹ The dearth of efforts linking union process and work/life balance reflects the fact that mobilization around these issues remains at a very preliminary stage.⁵³² If a mass movement towards new working time standards (including paid and unpaid working time) is to emerge in Canada, it will likely need the support of trade unions, labour federations and workers' organizations. Groups dedicated to better living and working conditions must develop clear policy statements on work/work conflict that actively challenges the notion that such policies are solely for women to help them 'balance' competing demands. These groups must simultaneously recognize that many women do face particular barriers in the labour market that stem from their traditional familial roles and that these are not adequately resolved by the shift to part-time employment. Such efforts would provide an important entry point into debates about workplace flexibility, precarious and non-standard work through the negotiations of employee-friendly 'positive' flexible work arrangements in collective agreements.

⁵³¹ Pradeep Kumar, "Collective Bargaining and Women's Workplace Concerns," *Women Challenging Unions: Feminism, Democracy and Militancy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993): 207-230.

⁵³² Some limited signs of change include the publication of the following: Alice de Wolff, *Bargaining for Work and Life* (Toronto: Ontario Federation of Labour, 2003) and *Family-Friendly Workplaces: A Study of Saskatchewan Collective Agreements* (Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, 2000).

In sum, there is much that can be done collectively to improve the work/life relationship for Canadians. Whether through transformations in internal union practices, the setting of new priorities for collective bargaining, more focused lobbying of governments for effective and inclusive labour standards, or simply the creation and dissemination of research capable of transforming the public discourse on the work/life interface as a counterpoint to official state materials, there are numerous opportunities for the Canadian labour movement, in the interests of producing healthier and more vibrant communities, to take a stronger stand on work-work conflict in order to facilitate both a reduction of working time and a meaningful redistribution of work and care between men and women.

APPENDIX A – INTERVIEWS

Members of the ParticipACTION Board of Directions

Dr. Donald Bailey

Russ Kisby

James Struthers

Peter Zakreski

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