THE CAREGIVER PROGRAM: HOW SOCIAL RELATIONS OF CHILDCARE ARE RECONFIGURED TO THE DETRIMENT OF CANADIAN WOMEN

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By
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Stephanie Fathi, candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Social Studies, has presented a thesis titled, *The Caregiver Program: How Social Relations of Childcare are Reconfigured to the Detriment of Canadian Women*, in an oral examination held on June 8, 2016. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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ABSTRACT

A gendered lens helps highlight the underlying asymmetrical power relations within the economy for marginalized groups. Using a feminist political economy (FPE) approach under a critical realist paradigm, it is argued that the Caregiver Program (CP) reconstructs social relations of childcare, thereby creating gender, race, and class divisions. This reconfiguration is examined in past domestic work immigration and childcare policies to demonstrate escalating neoliberal ideals. The theoretical framework provided by a feminist analysis of social reproduction helps uncover how the CP supports privatization, individualization, familialization, and commoditization. The consequences of these transformations are grave, which includes upholding the gendered division of labour, supporting the double burden for women, and intensifying inequality in Canada. Dismantling the CP in favour of a more socially-just policy would challenge these unequal responsibilities for caregiving. The proposed national childcare framework consists of increasing and redistributing existing government funding to construct state organized care based on the Quebec model. It also involves changing the existing work-related legislation to help families better balance work and family life through the implementation of an adequate structure of supporting benefits.
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DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my husband, Shawn, who believed in me and stood by my side through it all. You have been my best cheerleader. I also would like to make a special thank you to my loving parents, Arleen and Eli, for the unceasing encouragement and support throughout this endeavor. To my sister, Kate, thank you for pushing me to strive to my fullest. And finally to my friend, Laura, who would listen and provide advice during our long phone conversations.
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<tr>
<td>CCAAC</td>
<td>Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada</td>
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<td>CCED</td>
<td>Child Care Expense Deduction</td>
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<td>CCB</td>
<td>Canada Child Benefit</td>
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<td>CCTB</td>
<td>Canada Child Tax Benefit</td>
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<td>CFAFIA</td>
<td>Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action</td>
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<td>CIC</td>
<td>Citizenship and Immigration Canada</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Caregiver Program</td>
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<td>CPP</td>
<td>Canada Pension Plan</td>
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<td>CRA</td>
<td>Canada Revenue Agency</td>
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<td>CTB</td>
<td>Child Tax Benefit</td>
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<td>CTC</td>
<td>Child Tax Credit</td>
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<td>ECEC</td>
<td>Early childhood education and childcare</td>
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<td>ESDC</td>
<td>Employment and Social Development Canada</td>
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<td>EI</td>
<td>Employment Insurance</td>
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<td>EIA</td>
<td>Employment Insurance Act</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Feminist Political Economy</td>
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<td>FDM</td>
<td>Foreign Domestic Movement</td>
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<td>GBA</td>
<td>Gender Based Analysis</td>
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<td>GSS</td>
<td>General Social Survey</td>
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<td>HRSDC</td>
<td>Human Resources and Skills Development Canada</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>INTERCEDE</td>
<td>International Coalition to End Domestic Exploitation</td>
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<td>IRPA</td>
<td>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</td>
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<td>IRPR</td>
<td>Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations</td>
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<td>LIC</td>
<td>Live-in Caregiver</td>
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<td>LCP</td>
<td>Live-in Caregiver Program</td>
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<td>NCBS</td>
<td>National Child Benefit Supplement</td>
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<td>NDP</td>
<td>New Democratic Party</td>
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<td>NICHD</td>
<td>National Institute of Child Health and Human Development</td>
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<td>NLSCY</td>
<td>National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth</td>
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<td>NIEAP</td>
<td>Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program</td>
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<td>NSWA</td>
<td>Non-Standard Work Arrangements</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>QPIP</td>
<td>Quebec Parental Insurance Program</td>
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<td>QPP</td>
<td>Quebec Pension Plan</td>
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<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural adjustment programs</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Service Canada</td>
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<td>SI</td>
<td>Swedish Institute</td>
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<td>SWC</td>
<td>Status of Women Canada</td>
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<td>TFWP</td>
<td>Temporary Foreign Worker Program</td>
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<td>UCCB</td>
<td>Universal Child Care Benefit</td>
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<td>UNRISD</td>
<td>United Nations Research Institute for Social Development</td>
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CHAPTER 1: THE CAREGIVER PROGRAM AS A CHILDCARE APPROACH

1.1 Current State of Childcare in Canada

Canada, an economically prosperous country, has not developed a national childcare policy or enacted any national early childhood education and childcare (ECEC) legislation. Although there are a few agreements between the federal and provincial governments to assist families with childcare, such as the Social Union Framework Agreement, the National Children’s Agenda, and the Early Childhood Development Services Agreement, these initiatives are flawed and their power and enforcement are lacking (Broad and Foster 2003).

Key ECEC services offered in Canada are childcare and kindergarten. There are two main types of childcare: formal and informal care. Formal care is childcare services and programs that are paid positions, regulated by provincial and territorial licensing or monitoring standards (Cool 2004; Chandler 2009; Friendly and Prentice 2009). Within the formal regulated care, the services are either for-profit, not-for-profit or publicly operated. Examples of formal care are specialized care, day care, family childcare home, early intervention service and work-related care. Conversely, informal care refers to the often unpaid private arrangement of childcare provided by untrained social network members, such as family or friends, and thus is not monitored by the government (Chandler 2009; Friendly and Prentice 2009). Informal care includes parental care, care by a relative or non-parental care in or out of the child’s home. According to the 2011

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1 Childcare is a necessity for many families. Yet Canada lacks adequate government-funded care. Countries that have some sort of national childcare policy include Sweden, Portugal, Norway, Slovenia, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand (Anderssen 2014).
General Social Survey (GSS), the three most used childcare arrangements are daycare centres (33%), home daycares (31%), and private arrangements (28%) (Sinha 2014).

The childcare community, which comprises advocacy, professional and service groups, researchers, and organized parent groups, criticizes the absence of a systematic strategy and a coherent planning framework. They argue that the current approach has resulted in a “chaotic triangle of services” that arise by “default rather than by design” (Doherty, Friendly, and Forer 2002:1). This patchwork of services offered in formal or informal settings creates instances where care may be expensive, inaccessible, unreliable, inconvenient, and poor quality.

Formal regulated childcare is currently inadequate, as it is provincially licensed, underfunded, and fails to meet Canadian families’ needs (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2004). Between the provinces there are substantial differences in access, quality, age group served, staffing, funding, and many other important aspects (Beach et al. 2009; Friendly 1994; Friendly and Prentice 2009; OECD 2004). Major barriers to ECEC quality are “financial instability and insufficient government funding; inadequate levels of staff education and too few professional development opportunities; directors who are inadequately prepared for the jobs; and lack of infrastructure support to programs” (Chandler 2009:89). These have disastrous effects. For instance, limited public financing forces programs to operate as cheaply as possible, encouraging underpayment of care providers (Friendly and Prentice 2009).

Advancements in the care of children are only marginal from a generation ago. Provinces are working towards the integration of childcare and early childhood education, which may account for the slight improvements in early childhood educators’
wages (Ferns and Friendly 2014). However, since 2004 there is a trend that for-profit childcare is expanding at a greater rate than non-profit childcare (Ferns and Friendly 2014). Many parents cannot afford the cost of these services. Fees vary considerably within and across provinces. Across Canada, the “median monthly fee was $761 for infant care, $696 for toddler care and $674 for preschool-aged care in 2012” (Ferns and Friendly 2014:14). That same year, the median monthly infant cost of care ranged from a low of $152 in Quebec to a high of $1,152 in Ontario (Ferns and Friendly 2014). Further inconsistencies between provinces are discussed in a few paragraphs and in section 5.2.4.

Children’s enrollment in regulated care is vital given the accumulation of evidence documenting the benefits of quality ECEC programs. This is particularly relevant for children of low-income and second-language families, who may require additional support (Hoeppner 2010; The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD] Early Child Care Research Network 2001; Votruba-Drzal et al. 2010). A well-designed service with adequate public financial support can meet diverse objectives, including enhancing children’s well-being, healthy development and lifelong learning; supporting parents in education, training, and employment; facilitating the entry of newcomers to Canadian society; building strong communities; reducing poverty and its effects; and providing equity (Campaign 2000 2009; Chandler 2009; Friendly and Prentice 2009; OECD 2004). Adequate care is also important considering contemporary trends, such as changes in family structure (e.g., increasing numbers of lone parents), and an increasing casualization of the labour market.

As Broad and Foster (2003) point out, childcare is defective in Canada due to lack of formal social policy on childcare as part of a formal family policy. Awareness
campaigns to gain support from the public for childcare have been unsuccessful. The government did not consider the services as a community and social responsibility. Instead, Canada has an informal social policy that places the responsibility of childcare on individual families, which affects its female citizens in particular.

Overall, there is a deficiency of publicly funded and delivered childcare. This is not to say the Government of Canada does not play a role in childcare. Rather, its function is mainly limited to fiscal regulation and policy implementation, including but not limited to administration of the CP. For instance, in 2006 Stephen Harper put forth the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), which provided a monthly benefit for each child under six and a reduced benefit for children from 6 to 17 (Chandler 2009). The idea was for the private sector to take responsibility for creating new childcare spaces.

To complicate matters, under the Constitution Act of 1867 childcare legislation and regulation are under provincial jurisdiction. This creates variation and inequalities across the country, and hinders the improvement of quality, accessibility, and affordability. Quebec, for example, minimizes these issues with its more comprehensive family policy when compared to other Canadian provinces. The 2011 GSS found that Quebec parents were most likely to rely on childcare (Sinha 2014). While not without troubles such as growing waitlists, the Government of Quebec has implemented its own universal childcare policy (CBC News 2013). Drawing on the province’s constitutional responsibility for social matters, Quebec is making major investments towards developing, planning, managing and delivering ECEC development programs and services. Section 5.2.4 explains childcare in Quebec further. Province of residence thus defines the amount and quality of support for childcare in Canada. As federal funding for
childcare services has grown slowly or shrunk, the problem worsens in most provinces (Connelly and MacDonald 1996; Friendly 2009; Friendly and Prentice 2009; White 2001). This trend continued even after several governmental policies were instituted, which is further discussed in Chapter 2.

The state provides care, known as kindergarten, when children reach five years old (Friendly et al. 2013). Full-day care is offered in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and Yukon, while part-day is offered in all other provinces (Friendly et al. 2013). Some provinces, such as Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta offer kindergarten to children less than five years old, but the care may be part-time and targeted to communities for vulnerable children (Friendly et al. 2013). Ontario, for example, offers full-time kindergarten to four-year olds, while Alberta offers Program Unit Funding starting at two and a half years of age for young children with severe disabilities requiring additional supports and services prior to Grade 1 (Friendly et al. 2013). The lack of standardization among the provinces is discussed in section 5.2.4. Thus, childcare does not meet the needs of children, mothers, families, communities, or society.

As of 2012, Canada had 986,842 regulated childcare spaces, enough to cover 20.5 percent of the country’s five million children aged zero to 12 (Friendly et al. 2013). Similarly, 22.5 percent of children aged zero to five years have sufficient regulated childcare spaces (Friendly et al. 2013). Withholding the figures for kindergarten enrolment and children in Quebec would make the extent of the care shortfall more obvious. These figures are troubling when the 2011 GSS found that 46 percent of all Canadian parents used some form of childcare for children under 14 years of age, with
the highest usage rates being between the ages of two and four (Sinha 2011). These figures are below the United Nations’ minimum recommended benchmarks of 25 percent for children under three years having access to ECEC and 80 percent for children three to five years (Campaign 2000 2009). The problem is compounded by abnormally high closure rates of childcare services due to high staff turnover and poor funding (Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action [FAFIA] 2008; Doherty et al. 2002). The high level of facility instability prevents families from having a steady means of childcare support. Evidently, the state of childcare is poor. Canada needs to make major strides to reach adequate coverage, funding, policy, and infrastructure levels.

1.2 An Overview of the Caregiver Program (CP)

Introduced in 1992, the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), known as the Caregiver Program (CP) as of late 2014, is a federal immigration policy that enables Canadians to hire foreign live-in caregivers (LICs) to care for family members. LICs refer to individuals who reside in and provide care on a full-time basis for children, seniors, or individuals with disabilities, without supervision, in a private household in Canada (Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations [IRPR] 2002). For the purpose of this thesis, only the duties of childcare providers will be examined. Approximately ninety percent of the caregivers are women and eighty percent of these foreigners originate from the Philippines (Oxman-Martinez et al. 2005). The remaining workers generally originate from the English-speaking Caribbean, such as Jamaica.

On November 30, 2014, the LCP became the CP (Citizenship & Immigration Canada [CIC] 2014b). Under the program, caregivers now have reduced pathways to permanent residency and more onerous requirements to qualify. The two entry pathways
are for child caregivers and health care aids (CIC 2014b). Starting in 2015, there will be a cap of 2,750 applications per year under each of the new categories, which allegedly avoids a growing backlog of permanent residency applications (CIC 2014b). However, this decreases the number of caregivers who will qualify. In 2012, 6,242 individuals entered Canada under the LCP on top of those currently working as LICs (CIC 2013). The need for caregivers is higher than the new entry figures. Thus, childcare needs of Canadian families continue to be unfulfilled.

Other changes include ending the live-in requirement. The previous live-in requirement compromised human dignity and freedom contrary to international human rights and labour law regimes. The option to live outside of the employers’ home may be misleading, as many families enjoy having the aid any time of the day. Employees are still tied to their employers and employers still make the rules for caregivers through the employment contract. Many carers will likely still be encouraged to choose the live-in option, especially if employers show a preference to this option. Individuals with disabilities, for example, may require day and night care and thus require live-in care.

The Government of Canada’s perspectives highlight the motivation for the program. According to CIC (2011b), the CP exists because there is presently a labour shortage of Canadians who want to perform live-in care work. Immigration, or the possibility of it, is a way to fill market shortages and stimulate the economy. Arguably, the reasons few Canadians are willing to perform menial domestic duties are the poor working conditions, the inadequate pay, and the devaluation of care and domestic work as women’s work (Arat-Koc 2005; Khan 2009). After all, the occupation is situated in a
residual and low-status category. Ultimately, the CP contributes to the debasement of caring labour, even if this effect is unintended.

There is also another plausible explanation for why the program continues. The government supports the “Anything But Child Care” attitude, which promotes child development over the caring of children (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada [CCAAC] 2004). With state intervention only supporting the labour force participation of low-income families, this approach along with the CP allows the government to off-load social responsibility on to individual private families. The government is able to avoid the enactment of a national childcare program, as Canadians are divided on the best solution (Chandler 2009). The various debates include public or private responsibility, regulated or unregulated services, and for-profit or not-for-profit facilities.

Foreign sending countries also have a rationale for supporting the CP. Beginning in the late 1950s, a variety of economically marginalized nations, like the Philippines and some Caribbean countries, implemented structural adjustment programs (SAPs) managed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to help bolster the economy (Sayson 2006). SAPs are features of neoliberal policy paradigms that foster an environment of privatization and offer tax incentives for foreign investment while deemphasizing social spending. Given that the sums of financial capital borrowed are substantial, countries encounter a challenge repaying the principle of the loan (Harvey 2005). The surplus of professionals who are either unemployed or underemployed only exacerbates the problem (Sparacio 2005). This translates into increasing poverty, debt and dependency, with women affected disproportionately (Harvey 2005; Sparacio 2005). For instance, SAPs intensify the feminization of the labour market. This process
increases women’s jobs within the service sectors by destroying alternative job opportunities for women and men, devastating family income, and acceptance of longer hours of stressful work for a similar wage (Elson 1995).

The negative effects of SAPs cause governments in poor countries to promote working overseas in order to send remittances back home. The International Labour Organization (2013) estimates the number of domestic workers worldwide, who were mostly women, at 52.6 million in 2010, compared to 19 million in the mid-1990s. The remittances benefit the families to which they are sent, but also their country’s economy, by reducing the balance of payments owed to the IMF and World Bank. In fact, remittances received in the Philippines amount to approximately US$6.4 billion per year (Freund and Spatafora 2005). This accounts for about 10 to 19 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Kingma 2006).

These economic conditions have contributed to a gendered migration from economically marginalized countries like the Philippines. The increased migration of women for work has various implications for gender relations, not to mention the breakdown of extended family networks typical to many economically marginalized countries. For instance, a care crisis is exhibited in these foreign sending countries, given the sexual and gendered divisions of labour. Mothers are forced to leave their children with relatives while they work abroad. This has increasingly led to phenomenon of transnational motherhood, or motherhood across borders (Parrenas 2008, 2005).

The goal of this thesis is to analyze how the CP reconfigures social relations of childcare based on the neoliberal paradigm to reinforce gender, class, and race divisions. This includes examining how privatization, individualization, familialization, and
commoditization are linked together and how they contribute to and reinforce the changed social relations under the program. This will help explain and understand how the CP exacerbates the intersecting dimensions of oppression. The effects of the CP on Canadian women and caregivers are a primary focus, while the impact on race and class are also of importance. To do this, informed by the tenets of critical realism, I completed a document review of the legislation supported by a literature review of secondary sources and statistics. As a result, solutions to eliminate the failures of the CP and mitigate the oppression of the marginalized will be uncovered.

1.3 Theoretical Approach

At the centre of the sociological study of work is the nature of the relationship between employer and employees. Thus, a conflict perspective of the social world is adopted. In this section, classical sociological theory is used to explain and describe the causes and consequences of capitalist development, which is linked to the CP. These theories examine inequality, conflict, power, control, and distribution of resources. The deficiencies in these theories are then highlighted by the feminist political economy (FPE) approach used within an overarching critical realist paradigm. Critical realism “offers a philosophical ‘compass’ to researchers engaged in critical social scientific inquiry” (Egbo 2005:268). This will provide a more holistic understanding of the deep generative causal mechanisms and underlying structures behind the CP.

Karl Marx’s critical examination of capitalism via historical materialism focused on the bourgeois owners who controlled the means of production but were dependent upon the wage labour of the working class or proletariat (Krahn, Lowe, and Hughes 2006). This influenced the social relations of production by creating a class conflict
between the two groups. Resources were inaccessible to the workers while the wealthy, who often held political power, exploit them. Given that Marx’s theory was based on the male bourgeoisie, there was little mention of gender or other differences between individuals, such as race and ethnicity. He overlooked that those with high status may be women, and with that, they have privilege and power. Moreover, his belief in a socialist mode of production replacing the capitalist one through a revolution has not been fulfilled. Chapter 5 highlights some of the possibilities for a more egalitarian and humanized perspective than the existing social policy.

The tendency of Canadian social policy to be associated with neoliberal theory can be linked to Adam Smith. He believed in a laissez-faire approach to government intervention in the economy, as the market was seen as self-regulating. This was accomplished through the division of labour between individuals or countries who competed and acted in their own self-interest to increase productivity and thus attain greater wealth (Krahn et al. 2006). Hence, the CP can be seen as a way to increase the creation of wealth. Although the CP is a government program, it aligns with Smith’s belief in the elimination of barriers to competition. The policy’s structure keeps government involvement at a minimum for families hiring foreign workers.

Emile Durkheim saw the division of labour from a different perspective. He realized that society consisted of a diverse group of individuals, creating a conflict over how resources are distributed, rights and privileges, as well as which beliefs and values should prevail (Krahn et al. 2006). Durkheim argued that individuals’ differences could be a source of social cohesion via mutual dependence. What he neglected was that although different groups must rely upon one another, some implemented this better than
others. The status and thus power of an individual, was not the same for all, producing a conflict between classes, genders, and races.

To overcome all of these limitations, an analysis of the literature on the CP uses a FPE framework, challenging the orthodox neoliberal economic model that emphasizes the market economy with growth and accumulation as its primary goals via the means of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. FPE provides a gender based analysis (GBA) to highlight and confront the underlying inequalities in which power and resources are distributed, which often occurs at great cost to groups marginalized because of gender, race, and class. This perspective realizes that asymmetrical power relations exist, which can be applied to the CP to demonstrate different individual realities.

FPE calls attention to the importance of supposedly non-market activities, such as childcare, for the development of the economy. FPE strives to make domestic work, including childrearing, visible, valued, and transparent. This is accomplished by analyzing the concept of social reproduction, which refers to the daily and intergenerational creation and maintenance of persons and communities, as well as social, political, and economic systems (Bakker 2007; Bezanson 2010, 2006; Brodie 2008a, 2008b; Gill and Bakker 2006; Luxton 2006). It is a complex process in which women help reproduce the capitalist mode of production, by physically reproducing the working class. This consequently links women’s public and private roles in everyday life. The CP is no different in this regard; it facilitates social reproduction. The concept of social reproduction explains sexual inequality under capitalism and where to locate women’s work, both paid and unpaid, in the mode of production. This notion helps
explore the deeply complex interrelationships between gender, race, and class in shaping women’s relationship to capitalism via the state, market, household, and community. Thus, gender blindness can be highlighted and challenged.

Gender is a concept thoroughly discussed in this thesis. It is defined as socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that are deemed appropriate within a specific culture for women or men (Enloe 2004). Women’s care of children is part of their gender role, whereas men are associated with the productive realm of waged work. This gendered division of labour continues even as women are becoming a bigger part of the workforce. In 1976, employment patterns for families with at least one child under 16 consisted of 33 percent double-earner couples, 5 percent couples, no earner, 51 percent couples single-earner father, 1 percent male lone parents, 2 percent couples, single-earner mother, and 8 percent female lone parents (Uppal 2015). In 2014, those same figures were reported as 55 percent, 3 percent, 17 percent, 4 percent, 5 percent, and 16 percent, respectively (Uppal 2015).

Even with mothers participating in the paid workforce, they spend more time than fathers caring for children. According to Milan, Keown, and Urquijo (2011), women spend an average of 50.1 hours per week on unpaid childcare in the household, while men spend only 24.4 hours. These figures are larger when the youngest child is under age five, with women on average reporting 67.5 hours per week on care and men reporting 30.2 hours (Milan et al. 2011). Irrespective of women’s employment situation, they still shoulder far more social reproduction tasks than men (Milan et al. 2011). Only when women have high income was there a parity of labour with each spending 1.5
hours on housework (Marshall 2006). These statistics support the fact that gender is a necessary topic when discussing childcare.

Recent Canadian trends suggest that men are performing more caregiving and domestic work than in the past. With the changes to parental leave outlined in section 2.3.3, the proportion of fathers who took some form of leave from work for the birth or adoption of a child increased from 38 percent in 2001 to 55 percent in 2006 (Beaupre and Cloutier 2007). Fathers still tend to take less time off than mothers do and use vacation time or unpaid leave rather than paid parental leave (Beaupre and Cloutier 2007). Also, the unpaid care men perform tends to differ from that of women. Paternal involvement with child rearing tends to be more engagement and accessibility focused, while maternal participation tends to be more about responsibility for planning, scheduling, orchestrating and coordinating family activities (Daly 2004). This is beneficial for the father and child, but the isolation of the mother with the father’s more public involvement can be problematic. As men’s responsibility for care continues to be less than women’s, the effects of patriarchy will continue to persist. Men’s role in care is discussed further in sections 4.1 and 5.3.1.2.

The discussion of gender is of paramount importance, as it addresses a social issue prevalent in Canadian society today. There has been an increase in privatization of care needs under neoliberal government policies (Stasiulis and Bakan 2003), which are linked to trends of individualization, familialization, and commoditization. Broadly defined, individualization refers to individuals being independent and self-reliant, while familialization renders the family as the principal unit obliged to care for its members (Bezanson and Luxton 2006). Commoditization involves the process where goods and
services are assigned an economic value for sale on the market (Bezanson 2006). These ideals within social policy significantly influence women’s lives, given that they are predominately based on gender role assumptions that construct women as primarily responsible for caring work. Due to privatization, the lack of a national childcare program, and the increase of women in the public workforce, a childcare crisis is currently occurring in Canada. Unfortunately, the program intended to mitigate this crisis only aids some parents. This inequality prevents collaborating to overcome the barriers erected by and surrounding the CP. These gender assumptions must be unearthed to advance gender equality.

In what follows, I will discuss critical realism, which will provide a philosophical underpinning for this research. Critical realism is a rigorous and holistic philosophical framework that seeks to explain reality using theory and empirical research to emancipate the oppressed (Bhaskar 1978; Danermark et al. 2002). Studying the CP for general knowledge via FPE avoids a narrow perspective by removing individual ideas and values to uncover reality. Examining the three different levels of reality uncovers events, mechanisms and structures. These levels consist of: the empirical (what we directly or indirectly experience), the actual (the events – what actually occurs) and the real (the generative mechanisms and structures, that is, what causes that which occurs and is observed) (Bhaskar 1978; Danermark et al. 2002).

Mechanisms, which are isolated by conceptual abstraction via structural analysis, are the causal powers and liabilities that produce events (Danermark et al. 2002). The activation of mechanisms is contingent upon external conditions that operate in a dynamic and open social world. That is, “mechanisms are regarded as tendencies which
can be reinforced, modified or suppressed in a complex interaction with other mechanisms in an open system” (Danermark et al. 2002:163). Societies and humans also operate in open, changing systems – both influencing one another yet are different phenomena with their own autonomy (Danermark et al. 2002). Thus, awareness of how knowledge is multi-dimensional, based on the interplay between social structure and individual agency, is important in this analysis. While causal mechanisms operate in a dynamic, changing open social system, “in real life mechanisms do not appear at random and unsystematically” (Danermark et al. 2002:166). This offers us a unique opportunity to get tenable knowledge of social life by focusing our attention on the “empirical manifestations of mechanisms”, known as “demi-regularities” (Danermark et al. 2002:175, 204). Once we have identified these semi-regular empirical patterns at the empirical level of reality, our main task is to expose the causal, generative mechanisms and the underlying social structures behind these demi-regularities (Danermark et al. 2002). Predictions cannot be made as these would be quite unreliable as social science objects always operate in open systems, where disturbances and changes are an integral, essential part of studied reality and processes (Danermark et al. 2002). This is why we talk of a mechanism in motion as a ‘tendency’. Abduction and retroduction are methods to identify mechanisms at the deepest level of reality. Abduction recontextualizes interpretations to give new meaning to events, while retroduction uncovers the basic conditions for the existence of the phenomenon studied (Danermark et al. 2002).

To be explanatory and interpretive, critical realism employs critical methodological pluralism, which employs methods grounded in metatheoretical consideration rather than an unreflecting choice (Danermark et al. 2002). Multiple,
complementary empirical approaches are important to the research process because some approaches may not be representative (intensive empirical designs) while others may not be explanatory (extensive empirical designs). In the present study, using content analysis as a directed approach, a thorough analysis of the CP legislation and a supporting literature review are undertaken. Although this research technique lacks a firm definition and procedure, this unobtrusive, analytical and descriptive method provides a detailed investigation of the direct text to establish the existence and frequency of central concepts (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Theory is used as guidance to summarize initial aspects from the written documents, while existing research identifies key concepts to highlight categories of interest and help draw inferences from the texts (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Caution in reporting is important for concrete patterns and contingent relations are not necessarily representative, average or generalizable (Danermark et al. 2002). In addition, supportive inferences for a theory can be made for theory building and to evaluate research, but unsupportive evidence should not be ignored and theory should not hide contextual aspects of the phenomenon (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). The history and the effects of the CP are discussed to include the context that produced the text, as well as the state of things after the text is produced.

Government and secondary sources are used as well to help clarify the research process and narrow down the essence. This method enables the conceptualization and investigation of the generative causal mechanisms and underlying structures involved, as well as their implications. To do this, theory describes causal mechanisms and their underlying structures to discover the substantial necessary, internal relations that account for their ways of acting. As Danermark et al. further elaborate, “[c]ritical realist analysis
is built around this understanding of natural necessity, and our abstractions should primarily aim at determining these necessary and constitutive properties in different objects, thus determining the nature of the object” (2002:44). In turn, statistics are used to substantiate trends discovered in the legislation, that is, to exemplify the outcomes of a mechanism (Danermark et al. 2002). A secondary literature review allows a more extensive view of the issue than individual interviews, which only provides insight into individuals’ interpretations and experience of the CP. Gaps and deficiencies that would arise from a narrow focus on individual experiences are clarified by this method. Furthermore, the use of secondary sources is time and cost effective. The accuracy and reliability of the information is not an issue, given that the sources tended to have similar and overlapping ideas. Time is also not of great relevance, as these issues tend to be constant over several decades. In fact, they appear to be growing, rather than relenting.

1.4 Chapter Outline

This thesis is organized as follows. The next chapter explores the history and context of the CP’s experience. Chapter 3 provides a structural analysis of the four mechanisms operating in the reformation of social relations via the CP: privatization, individualization, familialization, and commoditization. Chapter 4 analyzes the consequences of the reformation and Chapter 5 concludes by exploring possible solutions to the CP and the lack of a national childcare as well as easing of gender, race, and class divisions.
CHAPTER 2: THE CREATION OF THE CP

2.1 Neoliberal Trends in Domestic Work Immigration Policies

Over the years, various Canadian policies have focused on domestic workers because demand for care providers exceeded supply. Table 1 summarizes some Canadian domestic work immigration policies enacted from 1947 to the present. The welfare state was the basis for these policies, which focused on protecting and promoting the economic and social well-being of its citizens. This included aiding parents’ in the care of their children (e.g. Dominion-Provincial Wartime Agreement for Day Nurseries), the protect their children (e.g. Ontario Day Nurseries Branch), and the need to ease parents’ burdens and fight the war on poverty (e.g. the Family Allowance) (Friendly 1994).

Within the immigration realm, the Canadian government also initiated policies to assist families. The increased proportion of mothers working left children unattended at home. Immigration policies were relaxed to establish a variety of domestic workers’ programs to find a solution to the childcare need, including the contracting of displaced persons from war-torn European countries in 1947 and the 1955 Caribbean Domestic Scheme (Spitzer and Torres 2008). These recruitment programs accepted a diverse group of women to perform the needed labour to assist Canadian citizens. Around the late 1960s, immigration policies changed in line with neoliberal thinking. This included the introduction of the point system, the TFWP, the FDM, and finally the LCP, now called the CP with the live-in requirement waived as of late 2014.
Table 1: Domestic work immigration policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displaced Persons (DP)</td>
<td>1947-52</td>
<td>Immigration legislation to enable displaced persons from European war torn countries to work in Canada. This included single refugee women aged 18 to 40 who were contracted as domestics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Domestic Scheme</td>
<td>1955-67</td>
<td>An immigration plan focused on bringing small quotas of Caribbean women to work in Canadian households as domestic workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Point System</td>
<td>1967-Present</td>
<td>An immigration policy that consists of a numeric point system rating workers in relation to their potential contribution to and value for the Canadian labour market. It was meant to facilitate and encourage the flow of skilled migrants to Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-immigrant Employment and Authorization Program (NIEAP) now known as Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)</td>
<td>1973-Present</td>
<td>An immigration program focused on bringing migrants to Canada to fill jobs Canadians do not want to perform. The foreigners are provided temporary work permits and must return to their country of origin upon expiry. The TFWP is part of the Point System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) Program</td>
<td>1981-92</td>
<td>An immigration program that enabled domestic workers to provide childcare and other services on a live-in basis to Canadian families. These foreigners had temporary work permits and entered under the TFWP and Point System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) now known as Caregiver Program (CP)</td>
<td>1992-Present</td>
<td>An immigration plan that allows caregivers and nurses to enter Canada and care for children, the elderly and individuals with disability in their homes on a temporary work permit if certain entry requirements are met. The CP falls under the TFWP and the Point System.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.1 The point system. In 1967, Canada implemented an immigration policy that consisted of a numeric point system based on rationalized and objective immigration criteria (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). The policy screens immigrants by rating workers in relation to their potential contribution to and value for the Canadian labour market. This system removes explicit racial discrimination and seemingly reduces immigration officers’ discretion, but the system increases the commoditization of immigrants. With the prioritization of education, profession and language proficiency (IRPR 2002), it creates a two-tiered immigration system. Highly skilled middle-class professional and technical workers are favoured, thereby restricting the ability for many low skilled domestics to qualify as independent immigrants (Elgersma 2007). This reasoning is the basis for how care workers are viewed and is expanded upon throughout each chapter.

Under the point system, market relations dictate how care providers’ services are bought and sold. In general, neoliberal commoditization increases the reliance on the market for the financing or delivery of services (Zaman 2007). The federal and provincial governments amplify their reliance on the global market for a constant supply of care providers. Domestics provide caring in the private sphere, financed privately by the employers. Hence, the welfare state has been fundamentally restructured and the national standard has been devalued. In the name of reform, an environment of deregulation and privatization is sustained. The point system delivers childcare to newly commoditized sectors, like private homes (Zaman 2007).

Despite historical high demand for domestic workers, their ratings in some of the categories of the point system were arbitrarily reduced without any explanation or supporting evidence for decreasing demand (Arat-Koc 1999a,c; Daenzer 1993). This was
linked to the perception of the lack of value of childcare within the market economy, which is elaborated further in Chapters 3 and 4. Contrary to neoliberal ideology of minimizing the state’s involvement, this system provided the Canadian government more control over who was considered an acceptable immigrant (Panitch and Gindin 2009). This highlights the state’s crucial role in regulating the market.

The racist, classist and gendered character of Canadian immigration policies became evident under the point system. This policy created immigration obstacles for women from developing countries, as they were deemed unskilled. Initially nursemaids and nannies from the Caribbean were singled out to not migrate to Canada, while British women received more points (Arat-Koc 1999a,c). Traditional gender roles were also reinforced. Male migrants were discouraged from coming to Canada for domestic work (Arat-Koc 1999a,c). Domestic work was perceived as women’s work and men were seen to have no business performing these duties. Consequently, this system enabled the selective access of domestics.

2.1.2 Non-immigrant employment authorization program (NIEAP) and TFWP.

To solve the labour shortage in domestic services that the previous policies could not, the government introduced the NIEAP (now the TFWP) in 1973 (Cohen 2000; Hodge 2006; Khan 2009; Spitzer and Torres 2008). This new program functions in addition to the existing point system. Employment visas under the TFWP only permit care providers to stay in Canada for the duration of the contract to work as full-time domestic workers and were originally required to live in the home of the employer stated on the permit (Arat-Koc 2005, 1999b, 1992; Gogia and Slade 2011; Kelley and Trebilcock 2010; Schecter
1998; Stasiulis and Bank 2003). Essentially, this restrictive legislation concretized the privatization of caring work.

As stated in Chapter 1, the temporary visa system meets the urgent needs of Canadian employers to fill jobs that cannot be filled domestically, without ultimately threatening the employment opportunities of Canadian residents (CIC 2011b). The government limits its involvement in private matters, which highlights the growth of individualization and familialization. Yet, neither the need nor the solution is temporary, given the constant requirement to import domestic workers since the 1900s.

The TFWP falls in line with the need to reduce the cost of production under capitalism (Zaman 2007). The initial production costs of the workers are located elsewhere. The source country pays for the upbringing and education of the individual, whilst the receiving country minimizes its outlay by gaining the replacing labour at a low cost. The TFWP allows for the importation of cheapened labour, while offering precarious employment conditions (Enloe 2004). This assures a group of individuals whose labour is highly exploitable, excluded from the minimal protections of the welfare state, and who may be effortlessly and promptly disposed of without consequences (Stasiulis and Bakan 2003; Walia 2010). The TFWP is based on the assumption of a revolving door of foreign workers. This refers to the endless number of workers who will willingly take the place of others for the opportunity to work in Canada as carers or in other sectors. Thus, the interests of the Canadian state and employers who are citizens, rather than those of non-citizen employees, are advanced.

Care providers face vulnerability under the TFWP. Researchers have documented carers not given sufficient food; being isolated; working overtime for which they are not
reimbursed; performing additional tasks, such as housekeeping; having their contracts ended without justification; lack of privacy; and in some cases, verbal, physical or sexual abuse (Arat-Koc 2001; Langevin and Belleau 2002; Oxman-Martiney, Hanley, and Chung 2004; Pratt and Philippine Women Centre of B.C. [PWC-BC] 2003; Romero 1992; Schacter 1998; Silvera 1989; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003; Zaman 2006). These events take place even though employers are required to “make reasonable efforts to provide a workplace that is free of abuse” and employment standards officers are allowed to “enter and inspect” the private homes of the employers to ensure the rules are being obeyed (IRPR 2002: 209.2(1)(a)(iv), 209.8(1)).

Few care providers file formal complaints because they require release papers and references from their employers to obtain another job as a domestic (Zaman 2007). They are hindered from exiting domestic service because their stay in Canada is contingent upon an employment contract as a domestic worker. The condition of this captive labour force is characterized as indentureship (Arat-Koc 1999a,b). The TFWP positions the domestics as unskilled workers whose skills cannot be transferred elsewhere in the market, unlike all the other temporary workers entering under the program (Stasiulis and Bakan 2003). The systemic abuse of these women reinforces the historical devaluation of care work and the association of this work as a woman’s role.² Yet, the TFWP solves the problem of previous immigrant women not fulfilling their employment contract as domestic workers. Consequently, the government indirectly supports the negative effects on these women by not addressing them.

² In 2014, there were 36,321 female compared to 57,781 males who held valid TFWP work permits on December 31 (CIC 2015). Of the females, 8,833 held higher-skilled permits, 27,253 held lower-skilled permits, and 235 held other occupations, while the males held 31,739, 25,806, and 236 respectively (CIC 2015).
2.1.3 Foreign domestic movement (FDM). After years of domestic workers’ groups lobbying the government, their temporary status under the TFWP was amended in the 1981 FDM program (Hodge 2006; Macklin 1992). The revision enabled domestic workers to apply for permanent residency from within Canada following a two-year period of service, on the condition that they demonstrated abilities to establish themselves successfully to show self-sufficiency, financial security, and social adaptation (Arat-Koc 1999a,c, 1992; Bakan and Stasiulis 1994). Later, skill upgrading was only required for domestics who were assessed as requiring this vocational direction. It was only in 1985 that the Federal Court of Canada ruled that the self-sufficiency criterion was illegal, because a person seeking temporary work authorization could not be assessed on an immigrants’ potential (Daenzer 1993; Schecter 1998).

Although this amendment to apply for permanent status represented a modest change to the existing policy, these requirements had mixed interpretations. It supported neoliberal beliefs of independence and individualism, as the workers had to be autonomous. Yet, dependency also ensued due to the live-in requirement, which made carers reliant upon employers for wages, a dwelling place, continued stay in Canada, and eventually permanent residency. These relations parallel paternalistic tendencies, whilst simultaneously privatizing responsibility.

Foreign domestic workers were and continue to be the only occupational group who requires temporary work permits as a route to permanent status, while other occupational classes are able to enter Canada as permanent residents (Arat-Koc 2005, 1992, 1990; Elgersma 2007; Human Resource and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC] 2010 (now Employment and Social Development Canada [ESDC])). The FDM
program further entrenched the revolving door of guest workers. Though the government partially recognized the need for childcare via the implementation of the program, the overwhelming sense remained that caring was a private familial responsibility.

The rights of the employers and workers also became a private matter. The employers were responsible for the conditions and welfare of workers, not the state (Arat-Koc 1999a,b; Khan 2009). This was especially important, considering the obligation of domestics to live in the homes of their employers. The live-in clause isolated the domestics from public view and from those who enforce labour standards. When interviewing carers, Stasiulis and Bakan (2003) and Zaman (2007) found this reduced the likelihood that violations would be reported or detected. The entrenchment of a mandatory live-in requirement strengthened the practice of bonded servitude, for it allowed employers to call on domestics at any time (Arat-Koc 1999b; Bakan and Stasiulis 1994; Schecter 1998; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003; Stiell and England 1997). Unfortunately, the preservation of class interests through the marginalization of domestic workers continued. As a result, inter-class conflict was exacerbated.

The FDM restored the function of domestic service as a bridge to enter Canada, while devaluing the worth of domestic employment. The live-in clause insinuated that the domestic work’s wage was insufficient to live off. In fact, CIC stated that the live-in requirement kept the caregivers’ salaries “artificially low” (2014b:para. 3). The revision also confirmed and perpetuated the low value of domestic work and these workers as undeserving immigrants (Arat-Koc 1999a). Yet, immigration bureaucrats and politicians argued that the FDM “privileged” the workers, by providing them an “opportunity” to
immigrate to Canada, especially for those who would not otherwise qualify under the point system (Arat-Koc 1992:238).

As a condition of obtaining visas, the domestic worker signed employment contracts before coming to Canada. These contracts obliged them to live in their employer’s residence as a care provider for one year. While there was a provision stating employers might be denied future caregivers if they fail to honour the terms of the contract, the contracts were not legally enforceable (Macklin 1992). This made them empty guidelines for employers to bend at their will. Although some provinces introduced minimum wages and maximum working hours for domestic workers by their inclusion under the provincial Employment Standards Acts, their wages remained low (Arat-Koc 2001; Armacost 1995; Daenzer 1993; Oxman-Martinez et al. 2004). Schecter (1998) found that some domestics earned $400 per month in 1987, which was below the minimum wage of $4.75 an hour at that time. Employment legislation was not enough to prevent exploitation. The lack of unionization for carers, except for a brief period in Ontario in 1992 under the New Democratic Party (NDP), meant that they remained in a vulnerable position without access to collective bargaining arrangements (Calliste 1991; Daenzer 1993; Fudge 1997; International Coalition to End Domestic Exploitation 1992). Overall, the FDM program enabled the federal government to prevent domestics from leaving the occupation and from filling jobs for which Canadians competed.

2.1.4 Caregiver program (CP). Biases in the FDM program instigated a revision, followed by the implementation of the LCP in April 1992 (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). Under this new program, domestic workers still enter under the TFWP, but they are now called caregivers. The scope of responsibilities of the caregivers expanded to include the
care of children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities (IRPR 2002:2). The program retains many of the old requirements, consequently abiding by neoliberal trends. Carers continue to enter primarily as non-immigrants, and require permission from Employment and Immigration before changing jobs (Immigration and Refugee Protection Act [IRPA] 2002; Kelley and Trebilcock 2010). Compared to previous policies the entry requirements are more stringent, while the criteria for permanent residency are relaxed. Some of these conditions are slightly different when applying for a temporary work permit in Quebec (Arat-Koc 2001).

Applicants seeking employment as caregivers must possess the equivalent of Canadian grade 12 educational programs, six months of formal training in household service work, and the ability to speak, read, and understand French or English at a level sufficient to communicate effectively in an unsupervised situation (CIC 2011c). Based on the program’s changes in 2014, carers must also have completed Canadian post-secondary education of at least one year or have an equivalent foreign credential (CIC 2014b). With basic schooling extending only to Grade 10 or 11 in certain poorer countries, these changes restrict access (Arat-Koc 1999a; Daenzer 1993). Women’s immigrant groups and domestic workers’ organizations protest that the prerequisites unfairly discriminate against women from the economically marginalized countries, as class and gender govern access to foreign language training. These changes mimic the “covertly racist” motives of previous polices demonstrating Canada’s Eurocentric and patriarchal ideology (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010:393). In fact, section 12.1(1) of the IRPR (2002) singles out individuals from specific countries, like Jamaica, to collect their
photograph and fingerprints before obtaining visas or permits to enter Canada.\textsuperscript{3} The program continues the process of systematically subjecting foreign caregivers to greater oppression and decreasing rights in the Canadian labour market.

An amendment in 1993 enabled applicants to replace the six months of formal training with one year’s experience specializing in caregiving (Arat-Koc 1999a; Bakan and Stasiulis 1994; Macklin 1994). Theoretically, training and experience of the caregivers might lead to quality care (Goelman 2001), which might increase the wages as well as securing benefits for Canadians and the caregivers’ families. However, this modification was in response to concerns from employers about the decreasing number of caregivers arriving under the program, rather than the pressures from domestic workers’ organizations to improve working conditions. The change benefits Canadian families more than the workers themselves.

On April 1, 2010, further amendments were made to the program. Before an employment offer is made, employers require a positive Labour Market Opinion (now Labour Market Impact Assessment) from Service Canada (SC), stating that they are eligible to hire a caregiver (CIC 2011b; HRSDC 2011b). The IRPR (2002:203(1)(d)(iii)) also requires evidence of sufficient resources available to pay the caregiver’s wages, restricting the service to affluent families. With the added changes, the government’s oversight powers help certain families sustain private, over public, options.

A written legally binding employment contract signed by both the employer and the employee is another requirement to ensure fair working arrangements and to protect

\textsuperscript{3} In principle, the government cares about safety of its citizens, especially if foreign employees are to be working with children. However, in practice, individuals from certain countries may be marginalized in order for the government to help protect Canadian citizens.
both parties’ rights (CIC 2011b). This contract must include pay and deductions, details of job duties and conditions of employment. Nevertheless, exploitation and abuse of the caregivers continues (Arat-Koc 2001; Kelly et al. 2009; Parrenas 2001). Canada acknowledges the abuse by providing sources for the caregivers to contact for help; however, caregivers are responsible for ascertaining the labour laws of the province or territory in which they work (CIC 2011a). Individualization rears its head once again.

As a unique provision among temporary worker programs, caregivers are able to apply for permanent residency upon fulfillment of the required obligations. Eligibility is based on 24 months or a total of 3,900 hours of authorized full-time employment in caring within a window of four years of the caregivers’ arrival date (CIC 2011a). Up to 390 hours of overtime is also accounted for if proven, which enables the caregivers possibly to complete the employment requirements within 22 months of their arrival date in Canada (IRPR 2002:113(2)(b)). These changes provide a more reasonable timeline for the caregiver, as they may have a period of unemployment between employers. However, if the caregiver has not already obtained permanent residency, the new rules under the program stipulate that there is a four-year maximum cumulative duration for work in Canada as a caregiver (CIC 2011a). This ultimately restricts some carers from working permanently in Canada, yet provides a constant flow of new foreign workers. In effect, it reaffirms most of the previous issues.

Alterations to the CP are attempts to improve the conditions for the employers and employees. Unfortunately, the program is an example of the typical international domestic worker policy (Stasiulis and Bakan 2003). It is characterized by discrimination leading to strict immigration regulations. The CP is based on the hypocrisy of Canada, as
a liberal democracy, to promise opportunity while simultaneously creating labour
categories to exploit workers. While the CP tends to be less exploitative and abusive than
those in Asia and the Middle East (Bakan and Stasiulis 1994; Kalaw and Gross 2010;
Stasiulis and Bakan 2003), this policy's structure still shapes the social relations between
the employer and employee as well as those between Canadian women. The CP creates a
global care chain whereby women move from their home country to Canada to undertake
care of another family’s children, while some workers leave their children in another’s
care back home (Parrenas 2008, 2005). This not only leads to the commoditization of
care work, but to easing only the burden of reproductive labour in wealthier countries
rather than worldwide. The ramification of this reality on women’s inequality is
discussed in Chapter 4.

2.2 Neoliberal Trends in Childcare Policies

Though childcare policy had spotty beginnings, there have been several instances
of governmental responsibility. To date there have been a variety of policies
implemented. Table 2 summarizes national policies related to childcare that have been
implemented from 1920 to the present. These include, but are not limited to, universal
programs, financial incentives, as well as maternal and parental leave. The following
section discusses examples of Canadian federal childcare policy but does not include, for
instance, certain agreements made between the federal and provincial/territorial
governments. Federal-provincial agreements are beyond the scope of this thesis, as
federal policies are more relevant in conjunction with the national CP.
Table 2: Childcare policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Allowance Act</td>
<td>1920-97</td>
<td>An Ontario monthly allowance that was provided to certain poor mothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion-provincial Wartime Agreement for Day Nurseries</td>
<td>1942-6</td>
<td>The first 50:50 federal-provincial cost sharing agreement subsidized day nursery care for mothers working in essential wartime industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Nurseries Branch</td>
<td>1943-78</td>
<td>Canada’s first provincial childcare authority to license and supervise nurseries. The branch was established in Ontario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Allowance</td>
<td>1945-92</td>
<td>The first federal universal welfare program that provided tax-free monthly payment to families, based on the number of children and level of family income, to assist with in the cost of raising children under eighteen years of age. In 1992, the CTB replaced the Family Allowance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Insurance (EI) Maternity Benefits</td>
<td>1971-Present</td>
<td>Federal benefits provided to biological mothers, including surrogate mothers, who cannot work because they are pregnant or recently gave birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED)</td>
<td>1971-Present</td>
<td>A federal tax deduction enabling families to deduct $7,000 per year of their work-related childcare cost for children under age seven, $4,000 for children seven to sixteen, and $10,000 for children who are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit (Friendly et al. 2007). In January 2015, these figures were further increased by $1,000 (Economic Action Plan 2014). As of 2009, the CCED tax deductions have cost Canada $700 million (Friendly 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refundable Child Tax Credit</td>
<td>1978-92</td>
<td>A federal income-tested refundable tax credit that provided $200 per annum for families in need of assistance (National Child Benefit 2009). It was replaced by the CTB in 1992.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Tax Credit</td>
<td>1988-Present</td>
<td>A non-refundable tax credit for individuals with a severe and prolonged physical or mental impairment to reduce income tax payable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Child Care Act (Bill C-144)</td>
<td>Proposed 1988; not enacted</td>
<td>The first childcare proposal introduced by the Progressive Conservatives that later died in the Senate. The bill was limited, including a ceiling on support for childcare, causing the childcare community to reject it. The fiscal crisis in Canada provided a rationale for failing to invest meaningfully in children and families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>1990-</td>
<td>Federal benefits payable to biological or adoptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insurance (EI) Parental Benefits</strong></td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>parents while caring for their newborn or newly adopted child upon proof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Tax Benefit (CTB)</strong></td>
<td>1992-2016</td>
<td>A monthly federal discretionary benefit for parents based on the number of children in the family and level of household income. The benefit consolidated the Family Allowance, the Refundable Child Tax Credit and other non-refundable tax credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red Book</strong></td>
<td>Proposed 1993; not enacted</td>
<td>A Liberal federal election platform to promised an additional $720 million to expand existing childcare spaces by adding 50,000 quality spaces per year for three years, contingent upon a 3 percent annual growth in the economy and provincial willingness to share the costs (Friendly and Prentice 2009). When elected, the Liberals emphasized elimination of the deficit and the reduction of debt, both of which had a negative impact on social programs. Social programs were the scapegoat for the high deficit, thus the election promise was not enacted as actual legislation ((Scherer 2001)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EI Family Supplement</strong></td>
<td>1996-2016</td>
<td>EI that provides an income-tested supplement targeting low-income families receiving the CCTB based on the number of children in the family and their ages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Tax Credit (CTC)</strong></td>
<td>1997-2015</td>
<td>A federal refundable tax credit for families based on the number of children under the age of 18 residing in the home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)</strong></td>
<td>1998-2016</td>
<td>The CCTB replaced the CTB as a federal-provincial program that was administered by the federal government to provide tax free monthly discretionary payments to low- and middle-income families with children. In 2012, the CCTB provided families with a net income between $24,183 and $41,544 in benefits of up to $1,367 per year for the first child, $1,367 for the second child, and $1,462 for each additional child for families (National Child Benefit 2011). Incomes above those figures receive partial benefits. The CCTB included the NCB and the CDB. It was replaced by the Canada Child Benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS)</strong></td>
<td>1998-2016</td>
<td>A joint federal and provincial initiative as part of the CCTB that helped eradicate child poverty, promoted attachment to the labour market and reduced overlap of benefits by providing tax free monthly income for low-income families with children. It was a discretionary payment and was replaced by the Canada Child Benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Disability Benefit (CDB)</strong></td>
<td>1998-2016</td>
<td>As part of the CCTB, the CDB provides a tax-free monthly benefit for families with children under the age of 18 who are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit. To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation: A National Early Learning and Childcare Program</strong></td>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>A federal campaign promise by Liberal Paul Martin Jr. to provide $5 billion over five years for a national childcare program that would create 250,000 new childcare spaces by 2009 (Friendly and Prentice 2009). Upon election, Martin’s minority government negotiated and signed deals with the provinces for a plan, but was replaced by the UCCB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bill C-303</strong></td>
<td>Proposed 2006; not enacted</td>
<td>The federal NDP announced a childcare bill that focused on quality, accessibility, universality and accountability and to appoint a council to advise the Minister on matters related to early learning and childcare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB)</strong></td>
<td>2006-16</td>
<td>A monthly federal taxable benefit that helped families with children under the age of six. The UCCB was a discretionary benefit to be spent as parents see fit and was part of the Universal Child Care Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universal Child Care Plan</strong></td>
<td>2007-16</td>
<td>A Conservative childcare plan that encompassed direct financial support to parents through the UCCB and the creation of childcare spaces via the Child Care Spaces Initiative. The goal was to provide families with resources to help balance work and family at their discretion. It was replaced by the Canada Child Benefit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Care Spaces Initiative</strong></td>
<td>2007-Present</td>
<td>A federal Conservative initiative to create up to 25,000 new childcare spaces per year across Canada by transferring $250 million yearly of funding to provinces on an equal per capita basis (originally ranging from 0.2 million in Nunavut and Yukon to 97.5 million in Ontario) and providing a 25 percent investment tax credit to businesses in order to create new spaces in the workplace, for a maximum of $10,000 per space (Friendly et al. 2007; HRSDC 2011a). Unfortunately, the regulated childcare spaces are still not sufficient and are not guaranteed to be affordable high quality spaces. This initiative is part of the Universal Child Care Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Childcare Plan</strong></td>
<td>Proposed 2008; not enacted</td>
<td>Liberal Stéphane Dion’s national childcare plan stated during the federal election to create new childcare spaces in Canada and raise federal funding for childcare that was not enacted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund</strong></td>
<td>Proposed 2011; not enacted</td>
<td>A childcare strategy proposed during an election campaign by Liberal Michael Ignatieff’s that would provide funding for childcare spaces. This plan was never established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Caregiver Tax Credit</strong></td>
<td>2011-Present</td>
<td>A federal non-refundable tax credit provided to taxpayers that care for a dependent with severe and prolonged physical or mental impairment. A letter from a qualified medical professional is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Name</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Fitness Tax Credit</td>
<td>2011-Present</td>
<td>A refundable tax credit enabling parents to claim up to $1,000 annually in physical activity fees per child under the age of 16. The allowable amount was reduced by half in 2016 and the program is slated for elimination in 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Arts Tax Credit</td>
<td>2011-Present</td>
<td>A tax credit that allows parents to claim a maximum of $500 per child with cost related to programs of artistic, cultural, recreational or developmental activity. The allowable amount was reduced by half in 2016 and the program is slated for elimination in 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Tax Cut</td>
<td>2014-5</td>
<td>A non-refundable tax credit of up to $2,000 for eligible couples with children under the age of 18 based on a notional transfer of income from the higher income to the lower income spouse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Child Benefit (CCB)</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>A federal Liberal tax free child care benefit for families with children under the age of 18. This benefit replaces the CCTB and the UCCB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Framework for Early Learning and Child Care</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>A Liberal initiative to work with the provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples to develop a framework in 2016 for the childcare investments expected in 2017-8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a qualified medical professional is required to claim this credit.
2.2.1 Attempts at national programs. Over the years, national childcare policies have been promised, but none were completely enacted. The failure of such programs is not surprising in a neoliberal policy paradigm, as universalism is contrary to neoliberal values of private responsibility and individualization. These childcare proposals include the Progressive Conservative Canadian Child Care Act (Bill C-144) of 1988, the Liberal Red Book of 1993, and the Liberal Foundations: A National Early Learning and Childcare Program of 2005.

In 2006, a confidence vote forced a general election. Newly elected Conservative Harper scrapped Martin’s national plan and the federal and provincial childcare agreements in favour of Canada’s Universal Child Care Plan (SC 2009). Despite its name, the UCCP contributes to stalled progress towards building the foundation for a system with truly universal access. In addition, the government discounted the burdens it placed on working and single parents when it reduced social programs and cut public sector employment in ways that disproportionately harmed women. In an attempt to mask this reality, the aim of the program is to provide “families with resources to help balance work and family as they see fit – regardless of where they live, their circumstance or preferences” (SC 2009:para. 1). The plan encompasses the UCCB along with the 2007 Child Care Spaces Initiative.

The UCCB originally provided parents with a monthly taxable allowance in the form of a $100 cheque for each child under the age of six (Canada Revenue Agency [CRA] 2011c; HRSDC 2011c; Friendly and Prentice 2009; Friendly et al. 2007). In January 2015, the UCCB monthly payment increased to $160 and included a new enhanced monthly benefit of $60 for children aged 6 to 17 (Economic Action Plan
The enhanced UCCB replaces the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The flexibility of the UCCB is to provide parents a choice and to avoid an institutional or one-size-fits-all approach for childcare. Yet, notions of individual responsibility are clear. The neoliberal discourse of choice also reinforced this private childcare model. The newly elected Liberal party has declared the cancellation of UCCB in July 2016.

Although the UCCB costs $2.6 billion annually for 1.5 million families with 2 million children (Friendly and Prentice 2009), it enables the government to believe they are saving a significant amount of funds. The state perceives a universal and publicly funded program as being more expensive. Additionally, the current payments are taxable cash transfers, so no family ends up with the full amount (Friendly and Prentice 2009). The additional funds may even bump individuals into a higher income tax bracket, which means they have to pay more on their personal income tax. Moreover, the true value of the funding after taxes is substantially negligible compared to the cost of childcare mentioned in section 1.1 or even the daily subsistence needs of a child. Thus, parents are still primarily responsible for their child’s care, illuminating the fact that individualization and familialization are key components of the UCCB, under the guise of universality.

The UCCB signifies the change of funding from universal, as in the proposed Liberal plan, to individual and the replacement of a national childcare strategy. The term universal, however, masks this individualism. The UCCB simply sustains the demand side instead of improving the supply side that would provide the necessary resources to a system, its programs, and its infrastructure (Cleveland and Krashinsky 2004; Friendly
Thus, the state holds little power in monitoring, promoting, and regulating quality, including the price of care.

While some individuals and families are content with receiving direct cheques, the UCCB prevents a universal system of childcare. As a result, a class division occurs. By having the payments taxable, they are unequally distributed across income and family groups. One-earner couples are favoured over single parents and two-earner couples (Friendly and Prentice 2009), which generally supports the male-breadwinner model as the ideologically dominant family form. In one-earner couples, the benefit is included in the income of the spouse that does not earn anything, enabling them to keep a larger amount of the benefit. Taxable benefits tend to result in lone-parents making the smallest after-tax benefit gains because the benefit is in addition to their incomes. This tendency is also similar in two income families. Individuals with adequate resources also may perceive this additional money to be used at will, while those with less stable finances may find the UCCB funds insufficient. This form of income does not redress the major conflict between labour market and family life.

These issues are compounded by the gender inequalities in social programs regarding access to many services and rights, benefit levels, and redistributive outcomes. Although public programs and social services have always depended on the care provided by women in families, this reliance is growing under the guise of individual and familial responsibility (Rice and Prince 2000). Increased dependency on unpaid work has led to the mounting demand for employment of childcare services. This demand is constructed socially and economically and is paralleled by an escalating supply of foreign women willing to work in Canada to overcome economic obstacles at
home (Stasiulis and Bakan 2003). The lack of adequate childcare programs creates an environment necessary for home care, filled by foreign workers in need of improving their quality of life.

Recent proposals of universality were ignored by the state, primarily because they would have involved a state role in childcare provision. This included the NDP’s Bill C-303 in 2006 to “ensure quality, accessibility, universality and accountability” in childcare (Friendly and Prentice 2009:86), Liberal Stéphane Dion’s proposed national childcare plan in 2008 (Grundig 2011), Liberal Michael Ignatieff’s announcement in 2011 of a childcare strategy (Liberal Party of Canada 2011), as well as the $15-a-day national childcare program proposed by NDP leader Tom Mulcair during the 2015 election (NDP 2014). The newly elected Liberal party has announced a joint effort with the provinces, territories and Indigenous peoples to establish a National Framework on Early Learning and Child Care. The Liberal government proposes to invest $500 million in 2017-8 childcare and early learning, with $100,000 for Indigenous programs on reserves (Government of Canada 2016).

2.2.2 Tax benefits and credits. As more mothers enter the labour force, there are still an insufficient number of licensed childcare spaces marked by high care costs. In an attempt to appease parents and advocates, past governments have instituted a variety of provisions in the Income Tax Act. Deductions from taxable income expanded the role of the tax system in supporting childcare, such as the 1971 Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) and the 1998 Child Disability Benefit (CDB). Unfortunately, the allowable deduction amount is insufficient to pay for raising a child or even childcare for that
matter. For example, from July 2015 to June 2016, the maximum CDB payment was $2,695 per year for each eligible child (CRA 2015).

Tax credits are also a common means of support from the government for parents, such as the 1978 Refundable Child Tax Credit. However, changes to the federal tax system often occurred. This changed the tax credits families were eligible for. For example, in 1992, the Family Allowance as well as some refundable and non-refundable tax credits were replaced with the Child Tax Benefit (CTB) (Justice Laws Website 2014). Then in 1998, the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) replaced the CTB (CRA 2011a). In March 2016, the newly elected Liberal party announced the geared-to-income Canada Child Benefit (CCB) in place of the CCTB, the NCBS and the UCCB. The tax free child care benefit provides up to $6,400 per child under the age of 6 and up to $5,400 for those aged 6 through 17 (Government of Canada 2016). Not only is this new benefit not earmarked specifically for childcare, but it is yet another individualized and familialized approach. Overall, the amount parents receive from tax credits falls short of the actual costs of childrearing.

There are varieties of other federal refundable and non-refundable tax credits for families with children. Some examples are the Family Caregiver Tax Credit, Children’s Fitness Tax Credit (which was reduced in half in 2016 and will be eliminated in 2017), the Children’s Arts Tax Credit (which was also reduced in half in 2016 and will be eliminated in 2017) and the Family Tax Cut (now eliminated) (CRA 2014). These are calculated as 15 percent of specified personal amounts and generally have a maximum deduction on federal tax liabilities (Chandler 2009). Some of these credits are not claimable if another credit is declared. For instance, individuals cannot claim the
caregiver credit and an eligible dependant or infirm dependant tax credit together (Chandler 2009).

Regrettably, the tax benefits and credits are intrinsically flawed. For one, deductions and credits treat children as a business expense (Friendly and Prentice 2009). They also signify a fundamental shift in thinking from universal benefits to a targeting system. Intended for employed parents as a tax relief (Friendly and Prentice 2009; Mahon 2001), unemployed parents are perceived as undeserving of receiving the benefits and credits, as they were not self-sustaining. This limits some individuals from collecting them. These differentials in socioeconomic status are exacerbated if one compares Canadian and non-Canadian born women. In 2005, 20 percent of immigrant girls and women lived below Statistics Canada’s low-income cut-off before tax, compared with 10 percent of Canadian-born girls and women (Chui 2011). These rates are also 19 percent higher for immigrant girls and women than their male counterparts (Chui 2011).

According to Ren and Xu (2011), Canadian and non-Canadian born women are more likely to experience low income than men. In this way, the tax benefits and credits contribute to the maintenance of unequal gender relations. Underdevelopment of financing and services reinforce gender inequality given that women remain primarily responsible for filling the care gap.

Tax benefits and credits reinforce class differences among families, by creating a two-tiered system for financing childcare. Deductions are more beneficial for higher-income families and dual-earner families, while credits target lower-income families (Friendly and Prentice 2009; Scherer 2001). This is because the former has more income to spend on the deduction, while the latter tend to fall under the credit threshold. Strict
parameters exclude some and may leave these families without financial support. Overall, targeted services are less developmentally and socially productive (Friendly and Prentice 2009). Targeting childcare services to low-income families leaves them at risk when there are changes in the government, social climate, and swings in the economy. Friends, family, neighbours, police, the government and society as a whole may stigmatize these families, as it is believed they are personally to blame for their poverty (Brodie 1999; Friendly 1994; Friendly and Prentice 2009). This follows the neoliberal ideology of individualization and familialization that affirm the responsibility of individuals and families over that of communities and state. These new childcare payments are manifestations of privatization, individualization, and familialization.

Tax initiatives enable the government to privatize childcare, thereby reducing public costs. The state still claims support for childcare with this tactic, even though it is a small form of aid in the larger childcare burden context. Some of these deductions and credits are non-refundable, meaning they do not provide additional funds if the individual does not owe any taxes. Potentially, this saves the government additional funds. In fact, benefits are a source of revenue by virtue of being taxable. This enables monies, fronted by the government, to be redirected into its management again.

Reliance on tax measures to distribute public funds to parents is inefficient, inequitable, and based on an individualistic notion. It is a simplistic solution that costs more than a comprehensive childcare system (Chandler 2009), which is outlined in Chapter 5. Childcare in this context is a market commodity, rather than a public service. Spending public funds this way does not contribute to the goal of providing high quality childcare, as it does not distinguish between the types and quality of care. Instead, this
method is in line with the free market approach, which assumes the availability of options within the community and the proper financial resources to purchase the choice of care.

2.2.3 Maternal and parental leaves. The first form of financial support for caregiving was in 1920, when the federal Mothers’ Allowance Act was passed in an attempt to encourage mothers to stay at home to care for their children (Chandler 2009; Friendly 1994; Friendly and Prentice 2009; Varga 1997). Maternal leave has grown since then to protect mothers. For instance, 90 percent of mothers of children aged 1 to 3 living outside Quebec reported taking paid leave in 2010 (Findlay and Kohen 2012). In comparison, only 10 percent of the women covered by maternity leave provisions received any income during their leave in 1967 (Woodsworth 1967). In 1971, maternity leave was established as a federally regulated system, providing a needed support for mothers (Friendly and Prentice 2009; Friendly et al. 2007). Under the Unemployment Insurance Act (now Employment Insurance Act or EIA), biological mothers, including surrogate mothers, who cannot work because they are pregnant or recently gave birth may be entitled to benefits. EI maternity benefits offer mothers with 20 or more insurable weeks, 15 weeks of payments, eight weeks before giving birth when they sign a statement declaring the expected due date or the actual date of birth (SC 2014). A two-week waiting period is common. This delay might significantly affect the finances and quality of life for those who live from pay cheque to pay cheque. These individuals may be unable to pay their rent or purchase food. Payments are also deducted dollar for dollar if the mother works for pay during this period (SC 2014).
Maternal leave shapes whether mothers primarily pursue employment or remain home to provide care for young children. Arguably, some individuals may believe that mothers with young children belong at home, while others may view it as a woman’s free choice. This choice may however be limited, as women often earn less than their male partners, thereby reducing the financial impact. Morissette, Picot, and Lu (2013) report that women’s median hourly wage is 87 percent of those of men in 2011, compared to 77 percent in 1981. This is expanded upon in Chapter 3. Even though the current legislation of maternity benefits and leave is poor, it is vital to women. This is evident by the number of mothers in the labour force, highlighted in Chapter 1.

Parental benefits were first introduced in 1990 in conjunction with maternity leave (Friendly and Prentice 2009; Marshall 2003; White 2001). The benefits are payable to biological or adoptive parents while caring for their newborn or newly adopted child upon proof. Either parent or both were allotted up to 10 weeks of parental leave, which was later amended to 35 weeks in 2001 by Bill C-32 (Chandler 2009; Marshall 2003). This increases the total maternal and parental leave benefits from six months to one year.

Both the maternal and parental leaves have an individual and familial focus rather than a collective one. In this way, the private is prioritized over the public. For instance, not all individuals are eligible for maternal and parental leaves. Parents must have had EI premiums deducted from their pay, with the exception of self-employed fishers (SC 2014). In other words, if the parent is studying, or not working for pay, she or he is unable to use this leave as a form of protection and support. To qualify for EI parental leave, a parent’s normal work weekly earning has to be reduced by more than 40 percent and they must have worked for 600 hours in the past 52 weeks (SC 2014). The number
of hours needed before an individual is able to take leave is high. This requirement is biased against part-time workers, who are overwhelmingly women and thus a form of gender discrimination. In 2013, 2.2 million women from 15 years and older worked part-time compared to 1.1 million men (Statistics Canada 2014). The ability to qualify may also vary by class and race, with some individuals more likely to work part-time than others. Section 3.3 discusses the employment differences among race and class.

Evidently, these benefits are not universal.

The amount individuals receive depends upon many factors. Usually, the basic rate for calculating EI benefits is 55 percent of their average insurable weekly earnings (SC 2014). As of January 1, 2015, the maximum amount received was $524 per week, based on a maximum salary of $49,500 (SC 2014). If an individual earns more money than that amount, they are unable to claim more benefits to offset this loss of income. Those with already low earnings may have trouble making ends meet with this benefit. Low-income families, earning $25,921 or less per year in 2015, with children and receiving the CCTB may also be eligible for the EI Family Supplement (SC 2014). These strict qualifications alienate families who need more than the standard benefit but do not qualify for the supplement. For those who meet the EI Family Supplement requirements, their benefit rate increases as high as 80 percent of their average insurable earnings to a maximum benefit of $524 a week (SC 2014). Even though aid is provided, the responsibility of individuals for their family is the underlying notion.

The current parental leave system is affected by decentralization in Canada’s federal system. A lack of national standards produces a division between individuals in different provinces. While the federal government provides the benefits under EIA, the
provinces set the length and conditions of leave under employment legislation as per the constitution. For example, Alberta provides 15 weeks of maternity leave and 37 weeks of parental leave (Government of Alberta 2011), while Saskatchewan provides 18 weeks of maternity leave and 37 weeks of parental leave (Government of Saskatchewan 2014). This is an important issue, given that caring responsibilities affect the paid work of parents. Without uniformity among the provinces, the discrepancy will continue to increase inequality within the Canadian population.

Although there have been improvements in Canadian childcare over the years, domestic immigration policies and childcare policies historically privatize childcare and emphasize division between gender and class. This was highlighted by the United Nations Children’s Fund, in 2008, when Canada received the lowest ranking for quality and accessibility of ECEC out of 25 economically privileged nations on ten indicators (Friendly and Prentice 2009; Adamson 2008). Evidently, Canada has a long way to go before childcare will be considered as adequate.
CHAPTER 3: TECHNIQUES USED IN THE RECONFIGURATION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

3.1 Privatization

Under the CP, public childcare services are increasingly privatized. Some feminist political economists refer to this process as reprivatization of social reproduction, as it is privatizing something previously in the private home (Bakker 2007). Bakker (2007) explains how reprivatization is based on three states. Beginning in early capitalism, unwaged caregiving and domestic work was privatized through the gendered division of labour. When waged labour was commoditized, the costs of social reproduction became “externalized to the household” (Bakker 2007:553). In the welfare state era, social reproduction was socialized through state services (Bakker 2007). Under the neoliberal era, social reproduction is once again thrust into the private sphere of the home as an activity unimportant to public policy (Bakker 2007).

Privatization happens via the distinction between the public and private spheres, which is known as the public/private divide, and is based on the division between the state, the market, and the family. Within the CP, these distinctions play out in various ways. Privatization, however, is the basis that links the three other aspects of the reconfiguration: individualization, familialization, and commoditization. For instance, by having responsibility privatized, individuals and families are increasingly accountable for their needs (individualization and familialization). Moreover, services are becoming a commodity purchasable on the market (commoditization). Social reproduction, then, is based on a system of private concern, perceived as being separate from the public sphere.
Privatization of public services is the first social relation exemplified by the CP. Privatization is a broad concept, generally referring to the downsizing of the public state’s responsibility paralleled by the boosting of the private sector’s role (Armstrong 2010). In accordance with the neoliberal practice of cutting public expenditures, services are increasingly privatized. For instance, in 2012 the number of social assistance beneficiaries for the Canadian population aged zero to 64 years was 1.8 million, falling from its high point of just under 3.1 million in 1994, which is a 12 percent decline (Kneebone and White 2014). Although childcare was never universal in Canada, it has become increasingly privatized. For example, federal provincial funding agreements focusing on childcare have been increasingly difficult to enact (Friendly 2009). In addition, childcare has become not only a private burden shouldered by families, but also a thriving business in the private sector enabling companies and individuals to profit. The CP also ideologically constructs caring for children as a private responsibility satisfied by market arrangements.  

The historically ingrained division between the public and private spheres is rooted in three main ideological distinctions: the state and the market, the market and the family, and the state and the family. Although distinction between these three areas is intensified by the CP, their dissimilarities are also simultaneously blurred, as they tend to overlap each other. This is elaborated upon when discussing the market and the family

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4 It would be difficult to conceive the CP as a public responsibility that would exist without all the current problems. Issues of privatization, individualization, familialization, and commoditization, and thus, the gendered division of labour, the support of the double day from some families, and the amplification of inequality in Canada would still ensue. The only possible conclusion is to eliminate the program.
later in this section. Overall, the ideology of the public/private dichotomy allows the government to avoid responsibility for the state of the private world.

The dualism also helps reflect, support, and reinforce patriarchal power as well as a class hierarchy. After all, neoliberal orthodoxy constitutes the public and private spheres in distinctively gendered ways (Connell 2010). Societal institutions and their discourses, including the state and its policies, shape the meaning of the public and private spheres. In turn, this affects the construction of gender roles, activities, and representations of women and men depending on their socioeconomic and racial positioning. Following this logic, the CP results in a gender, race and class divide. In what follows, this section will build upon on how the intersecting dimensions of oppression are exacerbated by the CP, followed by a discussion of the transformations of social relations within the program.

3.1.1 The State and the market. The first perceived distinction is between state regulations and private economic activity. This refers to the division of state activity and the market. Neoliberal thought asserts that the market thrives when left unregulated by the state, thereby providing a rationale for privatization. It is founded on the assumption that the private sector, made up of the competitive market, is more efficient, equitable, adaptive, and innovative in distributing resources than the public sector (Armstrong 2010; Brodie 2008a, 1999; Gill and Bakker 2006; Luxton 2010).

In her research on privatization, Armstrong (2010) demonstrates that assertions about markets’ inherent efficiency are not supported by evidence. She illuminates the ways in which neoliberal policy reforms have emphasized privatization causing shifting boundaries in the public and private. The CP, operating within the private market, is an
excellent example of what Armstrong points out. The program is supposed to provide for the various needs of parents; however, not all parents are able to utilize this means of care. Families may not have a caregiver due to lack of knowledge of the program’s existence, the high cost and many other reasons. The reality is that the superiority of the private sphere is unfounded. This assumption also ignores the social costs of the supposed improvements. For example, communal concerns are increasingly dissipating in favour of private ones. This tendency is elaborated upon in section 3.2.

Neoliberal initiatives confine the state’s role to enhancing markets and minimizing social services (Brodie 2008a; Bezanson 2006; Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Connell 2010). This notion is supported by one of the IRPA objectives that permits “Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration” (IRPA 2001: 3(1)(a)). However, this notion is contradictory to the existence of the CP itself. The program did not develop through an even progression determined by the unhindered, inevitable expansion of the market. Rather, the CP is determined politically by the lack of adequate and good quality childcare as well as the continuing availability, via immigration legislation and practices and discriminatory labour laws, of cheap and vulnerable sources of foreign carers (Arat-Koc 2005). Given this, social reproduction is constructed in the market as gendered, classed, racialized, and poorly remunerated.

The state’s role in regulating the market is larger than suggested. The IRPA (2001: 34(1)(a)) demonstrates the state’s oversight power when it says that a “foreign national [may be] inadmissible on security grounds for [...] engaging in an act [...] that is contrary to Canada’s interest”. Neoliberalism is not used in this sense as an ideological
strategy to free markets from states, but as a material form of social rule that has involved the liberalization of markets through state intervention and management.

With the state’s role defined as such, economic and social inequalities persistent in the private sphere are viewed as natural and something beyond the scope of proper state activity (Boyd 1997; Brodie 2008a, 1999; Gill and Bakker 2006; Luxton 2010). Inequality is a private affair rooted in the efforts and performance of the individual within the marketplace. Inequality, then, is based on the rationalization that individuals get what they deserve because of their efforts or lack thereof (Armstrong 2010; Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Braedley and Luxton 2010; Connell 2010; Luxton 2010). This is an individualist notion based on the privatization of responsibility.

On the one hand, based on this neoliberal assumption, the lack of finances for an individual family to pay for childcare, and a caregiver specifically, is not the government’s concern. Canadian families who are able to benefit from the CP are considered worthy due to their hard work in the labour force and their impact on society. Introducing regulatory measures to address class issues is perceived as meddling in places that are outside the acceptable realm of state regulation (Aronson and Neysmith 2003; Macklin 1994). Ironically, this reasoning ignores that privatization and economic restructuring, often based on gender, class, and racial differences, exacerbate inequalities in income, opportunities, citizenship, and support (Bezanson and Luxton 2006).

On the other hand, the implementation of the CP shifts these perceived boundaries by enabling Canadian women to work and thus control their private economic activities. The state is attempting to mobilize the labour supply within Canada to develop employment-related skills and promote an efficient labour market (White
The goal of active labour market policy is to assist Canadian women and their families, but also to attract investment. Accordingly, the state’s involvement in structuring social reproduction via the CP contradicts the neoliberal theory it is based upon. It challenges the belief of reduced participation of the government in individual familial affairs, allowing the government to create a program where neoliberal principles prevail and dictate life. In theory, gender and class inequalities are reduced. However, in practice this may not be the case. The relation between gender and socioeconomic class is further explored in section 3.3 and section 4.3. Nevertheless, the division between the state and the market is blurred.

3.1.2 The market and the family. Another distinction in the public/private split is between market and family. In terms of childcare, these two zones can be characterized by paid and unpaid labour. Section 1.1 outlined that generally the market sustains formal care via paid and regulated childcare services and programs, while the family provides informal care via unpaid private arrangement with their social networks (Chandler 2009; Friendly and Prentice 2009). Though these types of care are distinct, they tend to overlap. For instance, different types of care providers often engage in similar care tasks and work in the same location – the child’s home. The CP also helps challenge this division. With the home now having ties to the public sphere through the market, it becomes a quasi-private sphere. Section 3.4 further analyzes this blurring of care.

3.1.3 The state and the family. The final distinction within the public and private spheres is between state and family. Regulations are the basis of this debate. The question is whether childcare is the responsibility of the public state or the private family. Within Canada, there has been a long dispute over whether childcare is a societal
responsibility that, like healthcare, requires state financing and involvement, or an individual parental responsibility to be organized and purchased privately. Policy discourse, such as the notion of choice, pressing childcare into the private domain, upholds the idea that choice affects the public arena and private life positively (Aronson and Neysmith 2003). With the lack of substantial governmental childcare programs, the family is primarily responsible for social reproduction. Additionally, gendered ideologies position women as responsible for domestic and caregiving work. Together, these cause the work to often fall disproportionately on women as unpaid and poorly paid labour, as illustrated by the statistics in section 1.3. The line dividing family and public responsibilities for the care of children is therefore “politically constructed” (Aronson and Neysmith 2003:98).

The CP’s history, as discussed in section 2.1, shows that the state has recognized its obligation for care provisioning, but only to a very limited extent. The CP enables the government to provide limited regulation, while enabling families to be responsible for their own children. Thus, the program allows the state to ignore its collective responsibility and its role in the social reproduction of its citizens.

Upon scrutinizing the three main distinctions underpinning the separation of the public and private spheres, it becomes apparent that this public/private divide is flawed. The fallacy emerges upon examination of the profound impact of the CP on Canadian parents’ lives. For example, the necessity of providing care to a child affects the daily rhythm of a carer’s life and career pattern, along with future pension entitlement (Kay 1997). Private and public roles are effectively linked. Yet, the patriarchal model of the neoliberal state “defines such issues as private matters to be negotiated among family
members who freely enter the caring contract as equals” (Aronson and Neysmith 2003:109). The dichotomy is blurred when adding gender, class, and racial dimensions. These social categories may limit the negotiation among specific individuals and families, thereby revealing the inaccuracy of this neoliberal imagery. Clearly, the private and public spheres overlap, thereby having more in common than previously supposed.

Restructuring social relations through privatization is found in these three components of the public/private divide. The contradiction between the state and the market highlight that the market is perceived as superior, justifying the privatizing of childcare under the CP. This notion simultaneously distorts the distinctions between paid and unpaid work, as the home is now a quasi-private sphere. Although the state shapes the program, childcare still remains a private family responsibility.

3.2 Individualization

One cannot discuss the public and private without the collective and the individual, marked by the various links mentioned above. This brings us to the second transformation of social relations, that of individualization. Neoliberal values, such as autonomy and self-sufficiency, create an instance were individualization is prized. Individualization refers to the process by which the individual becomes the key unit of society. To accomplish this, individuals must earn financial capital through the market. This does not mean the state has no role. In fact, it is the state’s task to “increase self-sufficiency and labour force participation [especially] among those ‘addicted’ to government assistance” (Brodie 2008a:170). The state compels individuals to rely on earnings as well as support from friends, family, voluntary organizations and privatized services, in order to avoid reliance on state services (Luxton 2010).
Under neoliberalism, individuals’ independence is proposed as a choice. This concept is implied in Canadian childcare programs, including the CP. Although Conservative MP Mark Adler was discussing tax implications when he said, “the government gives Canadian families more flexibility in making the choices that are right for them” (House of Commons 2013:para. 866), it is a central theme in neoliberalism. For individuals to be autonomous, they need to make their own decisions. The CP is a choice parents can make concerning the care of their children. It may appear as though individuals are benefitting from choice, but it is based on an individualistic reasoning dissolving the state’s responsibility. This notion of choice fails to mention that childcare is still families’ responsibility, not the state’s.

The recent reforms in 2014 to the CP mentioned in section 1.2 also exemplify neoliberal choice discourse, this time applied to the caregivers. For example, Immigration Minister Chris Alexander recently stated that, under the new reforms, caregivers are able to choose whether or not to live in employer homes (Mas 2014). This statement ignores gender, race and class inequalities that caregivers experience. For instance, immigrant women tend to have a lower employment rate, work part-time, have a higher incidence of low-income and work in traditional female jobs compared to Canadian-born women (Chui 2011). This makes it difficult for caregivers to have the resources to set up an independent home and thus, it is not really a choice for many.

The approach of CP, like other social policies, is premised upon neoliberal conceptions of the individual that are “abstract, ahistorical, and generic” politically (Gill and Bakker 2006:50). This individualistic notion ignores the concrete realities of the difficult job market, especially in the current economic climate. Many individuals find it
challenging to make ends meet for their families. In 2012, one-third of Canadian households are living paycheque to paycheque (Marotte 2013). The rhetoric of choice individualizes responsibility for social inequalities. Thus, the policy does not take into consideration people’s different socio-economic statuses.

Under the rhetoric of individualization, the CP is depicted as an individual choice. It is linked to the neoliberal concept of fetishization of choice (Bezanson 2010). Enhancement of freedom and thus choice is taken to the extreme under neoliberal ideology. It is often an illusionary enrichment of choice. After all, exercising autonomous choice depends on an environment that is rich in choice-worthy childcare options and public benefits. The discourse of choice is based in consumer choice and freedom of the market. After all, the market is conceived as an all-purpose cure-all for economic and social ills.

In the current childcare structure, parents must find a private solution to their own caring needs. Individuals are believed to choose what is best for their family, whether it is hiring a caregiver, caring for their child themselves, or sending their child to a centre. The notion of individual choice under the CP neglects that the actual decision making process is much more complex. Moreover, not all childcare options are available, affordable, or of high quality. Section 4.3 examines this idea more in depth.

While some parents can choose the best option for their needs, others must take whatever care they can afford regardless of the implications for them and their child. In fact, the “possibility of choice is greatest where: financial resources are sufficient to purchase services on the market; family structures are such that a spouse is present and in reasonably good health; and the care needs” of the child are minimal (Aronson and
Neysmith 2003:108). Freedom of choice in regards to the CP is, then, only for wealthy Canadian families. The notion of choice is an illusion, given that many other social and economic factors are involved (Bezanson 2010). For example, childcare rates vary among households depending on family labour force participation. Seventy-one percent of dual earner families use childcare for children 4 and under, while only 42 percent of couple households where only one parent worked for pay and 58 percent of lone-parent families use childcare for their preschool children (Sinha 2014). This can be for a variety of reasons, including the high cost of care. Use of care by employed parents is closely tied to household income. Parents belonging to a higher income household are more likely to have used childcare. In fact, 65 percent of parents with an annual household income of at least $100,000 used childcare for their preschooler versus 34 percent of households with an income below $40,000 (Sinha 2014).

Choice, or lack thereof, has gender dimensions. The CP upholds freedom, autonomy, and self-sufficiency by creating an environment of individual responsibility. The program assumes caregiving in the private sphere of the family, by a family member or privately hired caregivers. The policy discourse is ungendered, treating the family as a monolithic unit without mentioning the power differentials within it. Thus, women’s role in childcare is hidden. Accordingly, the rhetoric of choice obscures the gendered dimensions of caregiving (Aronson and Neysmith 2003).

Non-gender specific wording within the CP (and previously in the LCP), IRPA, and IRPR is attributable to neoliberalism, which “erodes the political and social relevance of gender in daily life and in policy making by constructing both men and women as genderless individuals and, optimally, as self-sufficient market actors in
pursuit of self-interests, freedom, and choice” (Brodie 2008a:170). Politicians operating in a neoliberal-individualist framework tend to discount the importance of gender, thus perpetuating these assumptions leading to harmful effects for women. The notion of choice is viewed as more important than gender equality.

Another potential cause of omitting gender from the legislation is that the Canadian Government intended to remain gender neutral. For instance, the IRPA (2001:2(1) and 10.4) refers to individuals as “foreign national” or “temporary resident”, while the IRPR (2002:2) uses the same terms as well as “live-in caregiver”. Gender neutrality may be used for many reasons including promoting equality and attempting to broaden the impact of policies. However, in practice, this attempt at neutrality negates the material impact of sex, gender, class, and race. As a result, women’s and children’s interests may be overlooked for the benefit of the state or the family. The lack of gender-attentive policy is in part due to the government’s gradual weakening and elimination of the capacity for GBA of policies (Hankivsky 2009). This includes the major cuts to the Status of Women Canada (SWC), which is responsible for promoting gender equality within policy by using a gendered lens to analyze the potential implications. The elimination of GBA capacity within SWC was justified as a way to mainstream GBA in all government departments, rather than have a single department responsible. Yet, the result was that GBA capacity was eroded and not replaced (Hankivsky 2009).

The abstract notion of choice is of little use for analyzing the market and its limits. For instance, the CP ignores structural barriers. Income levels determine the choices one can make concerning social reproduction. Childcare is one of the most expensive items in family budgets. Based on a 40-hour work week, Canadian employers
can expect to pay caregivers around $1,700 gross per month (Job Bank 2014). This expenditure generally ranges from 18 percent of a dual-earner family’s net household income to 42 percent of a single-parent family’s net income (Cleveland et al. 2008). Again, the CP privileges dual-earner families over single-parent families.

The ideology of choice discounts that individuals may not be able to choose freely depending on their class and race. Single mothers on income assistance, for example, tend to rely on relatives, friends or neighbours for inexpensive or unpaid care (Kershaw 2004). For them, only a few options for childcare are available, which may not be desirable. Although low-income families are declining, they are more likely to lack choice in care. In 2011, 8.8 percent of Canadians had low income compared to 15 percent in 1996 (ESDC 2014a). Incidence of poverty increases depending on race. For instance, the 2006 Census showed that 22 percent of the people who self-described as a visible minority faced high levels of poverty, compared to 9 percent for non-racialized persons (National Council of Welfare Reports 2013). Individuals that may have limits on choice include those identified by a House of Commons report on poverty: children, lone parents (particularly female lone parents), women, unattached individuals, seniors, Aboriginals, people with disabilities, recent immigrants and visible minorities and low-wage workers (Hoeppner 2010). This perception of choice may lead some individuals to wrongly assume that those who do not use the program choose not to use the program.

Privatization of childcare is justified through the neoliberal emphasis on expanding market relations and the politics of scarcity (Bakker 1996; Connell 2010). The politics of scarcity refers to the position that the welfare state is a costly drain on our scarce resources. Based on this reasoning, the levels of public spending are reduced and
fiscal deficits are avoided. This is further supported by the state’s responsibility via the CP as merely a regulatory role rather than a financial and supportive role. In reality, increases in public expenditures are merely a secondary factor in producing deficits, with tax breaks and debt-servicing costs being the primary factors (Bakker 1996). Using deficit reduction and budget-trimming as a justification for public spending restraints is hence unfounded. Assessment of the outcome of the CP in quantitative terms neglects the actual impact of policy measures in mothers’ and caregivers’ lives (Braedley and Luxton 2010). It also disregards that the claimed cost reductions in public spending represent a redistribution of cost to families (Aronson and Neysmith 2003). Arguably, Canada is able and willing to exploit the supply of foreign women to advance its own policies of structural adjustment (Bakan and Stasiulis 1996; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003).

Individual autonomy is valued and reinforced under the CP. Although the use of the program is represented as a choice, further examination uncovers that it is not actually an all-inclusive and encompassing choice, especially for women of colour in lower socioeconomic classes. With this set up, the Government of Canada redirects its responsibility and blame onto individuals thereby reducing its own expenditures.

3.3 Familialization

The third aspect of the transformation is slightly more collectivist than individualization – familialization. The role of familialization changes social relations under the CP. Familialization defines the hetero-patriarchal family as the primary unit of care (Vosko 2003). With reference to childcare, it is based on firmly lodging care into the private sphere of familial responsibility (Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Neysmith 1997). This notion of family responsibility assumed by neoliberal ideology is
increasingly embedded in social policy discourse and practice. Beauvais and Jenson (2001) refer to the process of familialization of social reproduction as a family responsibility paradigm. This concept holds parents responsible for children financially and in making decisions about their well-being. Public policy simply facilitates families’ decision-making by providing a range of options. Yet, as Beauvais and Jenson (2001) note, the policies, such as social assistance, EI and the tax regime, usually only allow families to choose full-time parental care or labour force participation. This is because access to these benefits and services depend on labour force involvement.

At first glance, the CP may appear to support family caretaking and promote family stability. The program is responding to escalating tensions in social reproduction by supporting women in the paid labour force and the family. The state is credited with providing a means for families to address their childcare needs. However, the program undermines Canadian families’ caretaking of their children by placing the burden solely upon the family. Under the program, the private family is liable for all the reproduction and provisioning of caring needs. Following this line of thinking, families requiring aid are stigmatized, as they cannot follow a leading neoliberal principle of self-sufficiency. Due to the division of care between the private sphere of families and the public sphere of state activity, the state’s responsibility is disregarded.

Neoliberal ideology and contemporary society’s prevailing familial ideology hold the family as the foundation for society with the primary role of ensuring individual well-being (Brodie 2008a; Luxton 2010). The family supposedly protects individuals against insecurity and unpredictability in the liberal state. Today, the family is more compensatory than protective of the outside world. It supplies intimacy, love and trust in
the competitive and aggressive world, as we rarely require protection from predators. The family supports the individuals within it. It supplies what is vitally needed, but missing in other social arrangements.

Like other social policies, the belief that the family ensures the child’s well-being is encompassed in the CP. For instance, the families hire caregivers with their personal finances to care for their child. The government simply provides a means for this transaction to take place. The rhetoric of family, such as it being the building block for society, obscures differences between families. For example, families have different incomes based on their occupation. Often, well- and poorly-paid jobs are linked to one’s gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In 2005, immigrant women 25 to 54 who worked full-time full year earned a median of $35,000 compared to $38,000 for Canadian-born women, even though 33 percent of immigrant women had a university degree compared to 23 percent of their Canadian-born counterparts (Chui 2011). Recent immigrant women earn even less than both these groups at $26,700 (Chui 2011). In 2010, immigrant women were more likely to be low-income than their Canadian counterparts, with 28.3 percent of recent immigrants and 17.5 percent of the total female immigrant population classified as low-income, compared to a low-income rate of 14.6 percent amongst Canadian-born women (Statistics Canada 2015b). Aboriginals fare much worse with the median total income of those aged 25 to 54 just over $22,000 in 2015 (Statistics Canada 2010). Evidently, wages vary by group.

Occupational segregation characterizes many employment opportunities. Women remain heavily concentrated into traditionally undervalued and poorly compensated occupations, such as teaching, nursing, clerical and services jobs (Ferrao 2010).
Stereotypically feminine jobs are often referred to as the “pink ghettos” (Fine 2010:56). In 2005, over one-half of visible minority women aged 25 to 54 were employed in such occupations (Chui and Maheux 2011). Men tend to be overrepresented in craft, operator and labourer jobs (Ferrao 2010). The Ontario gender wage gap in 2011 was 26 percent for full-time, full-year workers, as female workers earned $0.74 for every $1.00 earned by male workers (Cornish 2014). That same year, the average hourly wage of women aged 17 to 64 employed full-time was $21.85, compared to $25.03 for men (Morissette et al. 2013). Generally, women’s work pays less and is less inflation-proof than men’s (McDaniel and Tepperman 2007). Gender dictates an individual’s economic position.

Recently, drastic changes are occurring in the workplace configuration from broader economic and social conditions to NSWAs (Vosko, Zukewich and Cranford 2003). These changes are linked to neoliberal principles, such as privatization, individualization and deregulation. In this current transformation, “good” jobs are replaced by “bad” jobs that are referred to as “nonstandard employment” (Rice and Prince 2000:23). This casualization creates polarization in the labour market between full-time, well-paid jobs with benefits and a secondary sector of part-time, low-wage jobs with no job security, little opportunity for promotion, requiring few recognized skills, poor labour conditions and a flexible labour pool (Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Luxton 2010; McDowell 2006; Townson 2003; Vosko et al. 2003). The proportion of part-time workers in the labour force is increasing compared to that of full-time workers. In 1976, the full-time employment rate was 50.0 percent and the part-time employment rate was 7.1 percent, compared to 50.2 percent and 11.6 percent in 2012, respectively (ESDC 2014b). Within these employment opportunities there are more nonstandard
work hours (Rice and Prince 2000). Consequently, fewer Canadian families may be able to afford the costs of caregivers. NSWAs are further discussed in section 5.3.2.

Women are more likely than men to work part-time or part-year. In 2005, 56 percent of visible minority women and 52 percent of non-visible minority women worked part-time or part-year compared with 47 percent of visible minority men and 40 percent of non-visible minority men (Chui and Maheux 2011). There are a number of reasons why more women occupy low paying jobs, including limiting their work to fulfill caregiving duties. As a result, women fill positions that are often part-time, not secure and poorly paid. In 2014, 31.8 percent of women and 4.1 percent of men aged 24 to 44 claimed caring for children as a reason for part-time employment (Statistics Canada 2015c). Women’s access to high-paying jobs may be reduced as employers may be resistant to hire women, due to expectation that women may have more frequent career interruptions and absences for family-related reasons. Lapierre, Hackett, and Taggar (2006) found that frequent family demands interfering with work lead to poorer relationships with superiors and fewer career advancing opportunities.

Effectively, neoliberal values of freedom and equality become pitted against each other. Individuals are supposedly free to choose, yet the unequal circumstances of families’ socioeconomic status limit this freedom. Caregivers can be perceived as a privilege to only certain individuals. Familialization only exacerbates this tendency.

Another distinction between families is the transformations within family structure in contemporary Canada. Though not overtly stated in the legislation, there is a specific focus on a traditional family with a husband and a wife. This neglects the diversification of family forms nowadays. Not all families are headed by two members,
nor are they necessarily of different sexes. Family forms are becoming more pluralized. Lone-parent families are common these days. In 2006, there were 1.1 million female and 281,800 male lone-parent families in Canada (Milan et al. 2011). Single mothers, who are more likely than couples to be poor, have an especially hard time living up to this autonomous familial household standard. In 2009, 68.9 percent of female lone parents with children less than 16 years old were employed, compared with 73.8 percent of mothers in two-parent families (Ferrao 2010). In lone-parent families headed by a female, 21 percent were low income, compared with 7 percent in families headed by a male in 2008 (Williams 2010). Lack of income and gender biases plays a role in this inability to sustain a self-sufficient home.

Grounded on the defense of the family as an institution, familialism is an ideology that implies male dominance and gender differentiation. With the family as the basis of care instead of the state, the ideology conveys a conservative view of social order. As discussed previously, women tend to perform family-based care, either as a caregiver or as a female family member. Familialism is then patriarchal in nature, as men are less likely to perform the work. Luxton (2006) defines patriarchy as social and cultural relations of power and control of men over women. Intertwined with capitalism, as capitalist patriarchy, it creates a sexual and gendered division of labour, dictating the position of women and the form of their subordination (Newman and White 2006). Consequently, women are marginalized in both spheres. The public/private distinction simply perpetuates indifference to injustices within the family.

Patriarchy influences the gender blind CP in other ways. Gender blindness refers to the omission of gender altogether from issues, thereby having no regard for how the
CP impacts gender differently (Vosko 2003). For instance, the rhetoric of family masks gender inequality (Braedley 2006) and the patriarchal tendencies in the CP. It strengthens the family’s caring role, which reinforces women’s role in care. This is because caring work is characterized as feminine work or women’s work (Arat-Koc 2006; Baines, Evans, and Naysmith 1998; Brodie 2008a; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003). This is linked to the historical characterization of the private home as the feminine sphere, making the belief in women’s caring role difficult to overcome. Effectively, caregiving is rendered politically irrelevant when it is provided in the private realm (Hankivsky 2004), even though it is a socially necessary labour.

That foreign women perform childcare duties in the homes of Canadians further reinforces caregiving as women’s work. It encourages the continuation of a gendered division of labour regarding care. Consequently, feminine activities are poorly respected (Newman and White 2006). The gendered division of labour and the social norms that support this division are not addressed and remain intact within both heterosexual family and the paid labour force. This has profound importance given women’s increased labour force participation. Accordingly, the CP is a key gender-bias vehicle that systematically oppresses women within the family, and thus does not sufficiently offset the negative impact on women as much as the government may believe.

Familialization is based on holding the family responsible for childcare. Though it may appear that the state is helping support families via the CP, it is not. The rhetoric of family obscures differences in family income (Aronson and Neysmith 2003; Neysmith 1997). Those who cannot afford to hire caregivers are then marginalized. The program also indirectly assumes a traditional family structure of husband and wife. This
assumption is problematic since most lone parent households, which are generally headed by women, cannot afford to hire these carers.

3.4 Commoditization

The final characteristic of the reorganization is commoditization. Privatization enables the commoditization of social relations. Commoditization refers to the transformation of the value of a good or service by assigning it commercial value (Armstrong and Armstrong 2003; Bezanson 2006; Connell 2010; McDowell 2006). The significance of the object, the individual, and the relation between the two is changed from its original form. Previously the importance was on the interaction between individuals based on a necessary service provided; now the focus is geared to financial aspects. Friendly and Prentice (2009) demonstrate how childcare, like other forms of care, is now a user-fee commodity that is almost entirely privatized. The importance of the care itself is relegated to the margins, while questions of financial costs to individuals, the government, and others become increasingly significant. In fact, care stands in contrast to individualism, the market, and the rational economic agent, given that interdependence and networks are its essential characteristics (Bezanson 2006; Leira 1994). Commoditization of childcare suggests the Government of Canada believes it is the private responsibility of individuals and families, thereby preventing a comprehensive publicly funded system.

Childcare becomes a market commodity based on waged work rather than a public service built on the importance of caring. Service-oriented collectivism is traded for consumerist individualism. This market-centred approach dictates the rules and prices of childcare, generally referred to as marketization (Gill and Bakker 2006; Rice
and Prince 2000). Thus Braedley and Luxton (2010) argue that the logic of the market is influencing every facet of social life.

Neoliberal policy assumes childcare can be transformed into a free competitive market and that private sector practices will work (Armstrong and Armstrong 1998). This notion is parallel to the concept of primitive accumulation, which enables privatization to ensure the primacy of rights for a few (Bakker 2007; Gill and Bakker 2006). However, the nature of caring work itself is hard to quantify as it often consists of additional tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and providing emotional support. This labour tends not to lead to a definite final product to attest to the performance of work, making it difficult to attest to its worth.

It is not easy to transform childcare into a purchasable item, nor should it be privatized or marketized as a commodity in the first place. Children are, after all, the future human capital of a nation. Armstrong and Armstrong (2003:28) best illustrate this argument when they posit childcare and wage labour as neither “equivalent” nor “interchangeable”. The nature of the relationship between these two is distinct, given that better care work is unlikely to result in a better wage for the caregivers. Childcare for purchase on the market is thus a problem. Market failures further complicate matters and make one question the notion of commodifying childcare. For instance, policy makers are unable to predict if there will be a continuous supply of foreign workers willing to endure the current conditions for providing private childcare (Hankivsky 2004).

With the commoditization of caring labour, the definition of caring work as well as the private and public boundaries are blurred. Commoditization obscures the division between the private household and the external social domains. The care is provided in
the home, yet the work is now a marketable commodity. Previously unpaid childcare in the home now becomes a paid position, often performed by a stranger. Caring work occurs along a continuum, clouding lines between the informal and formal sectors. Caregivers blur the distinction between professionals and lay people performing care work. Tasks overlap when attending to children’s daily needs, such as cooking, and personal demands, like support. The CP is based on the assumption that the status of the work and worker changes when work is performed on a professional basis. To a certain extent, caring work is accorded a higher status under the CP, but it is simultaneously devaluing social reproduction. For instance, rising demand did not promote the development of professional standards nor did it contribute to the recognition of domestic service occupations (Friendly and Prentice 2009; Macklin 1994).

With caring work now being a commodity, caregivers also become an object that can be purchased on the market at a minimal price. Their intrinsic value is no longer based on human relations, but is now dependent on costs. Essentially, caregivers are objectified by employers. Looking at the greater picture, the CP commoditizes their labour, making the foreign workers themselves a commodity.

The location of work has a large impact on the commoditization of the labourer. Yet, this too holds contradictory tendencies, as care work is simultaneously commoditized by making it paid employment and decommoditized as it is performed in the domicile quarters. The caregivers’ worth is readily downgraded by the setting, whilst at the same time they are given a sort of value by having this work now paid. Regardless of the inconsistencies, the program enables the introduction of a new type of commodity into what is believed to be the private sphere. This new commodity, like others, can be
based on a price. Of course, with this caring work being performed in the home and seen as “unskilled”, the wages are kept low (Armstrong and Armstrong 2003; Morgan 2005). Ironically, marketization of a task formerly performed in the private residence by women exacerbates and entrenches the racialized, classed, and gendered divisions of labour (Bakan and Stasiulus 1994; Vosko 2002).

Another issue surrounding the location of the caregiver’s work is that it prevents unionization. For example, the Ontario Labour Relations Act (1995) explicitly prohibits unions in private home for someone employed as a domestic. Generally, employees see unionization as a means of protection from employer maltreatment. Without unionization, workers’ rights are restricted. The inability to unionize demonstrates the poor regard the province has for caregivers who work in the home. Unionization also plays a large role in reducing the pay gap between women and men (CFAFIA 2008). Thus, the CP may prevent equality in wages for female foreign workers.

The implications of these issues are grave, especially for Canadian women working in similarly “feminized” areas that are less likely to be unionized, such as the hotel industry. The feminized periphery comprises people of colour, migrants, working class women, and illegal workers (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). If individuals within this group do not speak English or French well, they may have trouble communicating their issues with the government. This may make it harder for them to influence change further relegating them to the periphery. Canadian women in similar positions will be impaired in their abilities to challenge the status quo within these marginalized positions. Accordingly, working class women will only become more disadvantaged, and this argument can be extended to the caregivers. Construed as a
commodity, the caregiver’s rights and bargaining abilities are minimized. The inability to uphold the autonomous individual image attaches a stigma to that person. These are only a few of the dilemmas involved. All together, the tendencies based on the commoditization of the childcare labourer end up harming these women’s earning power and sustaining the low status of social reproduction.

The final aspect of commoditization concerns Canadian families as consumers. Labour power, or the capacity to work, when transformed into a commodity, renders people increasingly reliant upon purchasing wage services or goods (Armstrong and Armstrong 2003). The CP creates a foundation where the employers using this care are transformed from a citizen into a consumer (Aronson and Neysmith 2003; Rice and Prince 2000). They become consumers who purchase service, not citizens with social obligations to provide and receive care. Effectively, the individuals purchasing the commodity are also commoditized through this market relation, in addition to the act of caring itself and the care workers.

This signifies the changing relationship between a citizen and the state through neoliberalism and globalization. The state confers upon its citizens rights, duties, and benefits, whilst customers have only choices that are defined by their purchasing power (Rice and Prince 2000). Unfortunately, the commoditization of the employer undermines the social fabric of community, especially because they are expected to be self-autonomous individuals. The social cohesion and collective responsibility individuals have to one another is, thus, eroded. This thinking is in line with the free market approach, which not only assumes there is an assortment of childcare options within the
community but also the proper financial resources to purchase this choice of care. This process will only be continuously perpetuated under the CP.

Commoditization places the focus on financial costs. The value of childcare work is transformed to a commodity purchasable on the market rather than its interconnections between individuals. Consequently, the problems and contradictions with commoditizing childcare are ignored. Under the CP, caregivers also become a commodity. This process is tied to the location of the work itself and the lack of unionization, both of which have repercussions for certain Canadian and foreign women. Finally, employers are commoditized by the program, as they become consumers rather than citizens.

The CP reconfigures social relations of childcare, thus upholding gender, class, and racial inequalities. It becomes evident that this reconfiguration reinforces the neoliberal policy paradigm. This is achieved via the privatization of the state, the market, and the family. Individualization advances the notion of the autonomous individual capable of choosing what is best for one’s family. Familialization furthers patriarchal notions of family responsibility, which ignores differences within families and between historically engrained gender roles. Finally, commoditization converts the care, the worker, and the employer into a commodity.
CHAPTER 4: TRACING IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECONFIGURATION

4.1 Gendered Division of Labour

Although many human societies exhibit some degree of division of labour by gender (Bakker 2007), the CP strengthens this occurrence within Canada, especially by encouraging mainly women to provide childcare services under the CP. The gendered division of labour is based on the delegation of different tasks for males and females (Newman and White 2006). The CP aids in upholding traditional gender roles for childcare via all four aspects highlighted in the reconfiguration of social relations in the previous chapter. The lack of national, publicly-supported care offloads childcare onto the CP. Privatizing the care, for instance, ignores the existence of the gendered division of household labour, whilst simultaneously relying on foreign women picking up the slack that the private market does not fulfill. With childcare perceived as an individual and familial responsibility, women’s oppression is intensified by making females primarily responsible for the care. Persistent lack of recognition for gender disparities in childcare emphasizes how this current social policy reinforces imbalances in caring responsibilities (Hankivsky 2004; Leira 1994). Effectively, the CP systemically institutionalizes the notion of gendered labour.

Social reproduction is intimately linked to gender relations. Despite that attitudes towards gender roles and relations have been changing, women disproportionately shoulder the burden of childcare in contrast to their husbands or partners (Aronson and Neysmith 2003; Beaupre and Cloutier 2007; Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007; Daly 2004; Milan et al. 2011). Gender creates a social hierarchy of differences that are constantly reproduced through social interaction (Browne and Misra 2003). Although
previously touched upon in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, the role of women in childcare is an important issue that will be discussed further here.

Gender inequality is often justified through ideologies of biological difference. This ideology naturalizes gender difference through the argument that women’s bodies are built for reproducing a new life, thus women are seen as suited to perform the caring work. It is perceived as a natural occurrence that women would care for children after birth (Bakker 2007; Baines et al. 1998; Enloe 2004; Macklin 1994; Teghtsoonian 1997). Other biological arguments are based on hormonal differences, linking oxytocin to nurturing in women and testosterone to aggression and competitiveness in men, as well as differences in the structure and functioning of female and male brains (Fine 2010), suggesting that females are biologically better suited for the childcare provider role. Fine (2010) breaks down these essentialist arguments by showing how neuroscience is used in a sexist way to reflect and reinforce gendered cultural beliefs. Fausto-Sterling (2005:1495) discusses how the discourse of biological differences is like an “oil spill” used to justify and rationalize more and more unfounded social beliefs about gender via references to bodies and science. These reductionist views base women’s capabilities and duties on unfounded and stereotypical biological arguments.

Women’s duty of childrearing is also tied to ideologies surrounding gender role socialization and motherhood (Saxonberg 2009). Historically, there have been culturally specific boundaries surrounding the public and private spheres that have different implications for women and men (Abu-Ladan 2008). In other words, there is disparity regarding the roles, rights, and duties of women and men in relation to families and
caring, jobs and workplaces, and the political and governmental system. This is not to say that women have not made gains in formal equality, such as the right to vote.

In practice, however, gender disparities still exist. Although the experiences of both sexes vary by class, race, ethnicity, religion, and ability, among other forms of difference (Abu-Ladan 2008), these experiences are based on normalized ideals of femininity and masculinity in particular contexts. Social and behavioural norms dictate how men and women should think or act in a relationship. These are intrinsically linked to patriarchal ideology, which considers it appropriate for women to perform the childrearing duties while men are positioned as “providers” for the family. By not challenging these tendencies, the CP inadvertently upholds gender discrimination and helps undervalue social reproduction.

This effect is worrisome, especially given that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration produces an annual report on the operation of the IRPA that includes “a gender-based analysis of the impact of this Act” (IRPA 2001 :94(2)(f)). The report focuses on the number of female versus male applicants that become permanent residents, entered through the family or refugee class stream and entered as temporary residents (CIC 2014a). Although “gender considerations are documented and taken into account in decision-making processes, […] program management, communication, service delivery protocols, and research”, the GBA report either disregards the gender effects of the CP or cannot quantify them (CIC 2014a :para. 104). The importance of gender disparities under the program is unaccounted for.

The concept of gender order helps dictate how motherhood becomes a central concept in some women’s identity. Though socially and culturally constructed, the
gender order is powerful in institutionalizing relations of power and privilege organized around gender difference. The CP is a vehicle in which this process can occur. It is based on what Parrenas (2008:9) calls the force of domesticity, the “persistence of the ideology of women’s domesticity, in the labour market, the family, and the migrant community as well as in migration policies and laws”. Today, as before, various social, cultural, and political forces maintain women’s responsibility for reproductive labour.

Fox (2006) examines how gender ordering is developed via a new ideal of good mothering that is followed by intensified concerns about women’s devotion to social reproduction. For instance, women’s primary responsibility for childcare is fuelled by the hegemonic ideology of motherhood. The dominant discourse of mothering is a social construction that places responsibility for social reproduction on women (Bakker 2007). The lack of a paternal equivalent to the concept of maternal bonding only reinforces this notion (Baines et al. 1998). Motherhood ideologies also illustrate the intersecting relations of gender and class. Motherhood not only reproduces social class, but social class shapes mothering practices, both of which depend on financial resources (Fox 2006). Ultimately, it is a female class struggle, as long as care work is not institutionalized as male work (Daenzer 1993). This struggle is unfortunate because provisions of childcare benefit the family and the state.

Critical investigation helps explain the distinctions in how caring is experienced subjectively by women as an obligation, whilst for men it as an active choice (Aronson and Neysmith 2003; Bezanson 2006; Daly 2002). The gendering character of moral obligations highlights the contradiction within the dominant social ideology: privatization of responsibility does not mean choice for all, only for a select few.
The second wave of the women’s movement identified childcare as a basis for women’s full social citizenship, economic autonomy, and well-being (Dobrowolsky and Jenson 2004). Yet, the effect of segregating caring responsibility into the private sphere via the CP ensures care work is not recognized as an integral part of citizenship for women who care for children, including caregivers. Universal childcare facilitates social justice and gender equality because the responsibility for children’s well-being is no longer that of Canadian mothers or caregivers but that of the state. Although not all women experience these rights and obligations the same, the CP represents a step backwards in terms of gains made by the women’s movement. From this point of view, the CP does not adhere to the IRPA’s (2001:3(1)(b)) objective to “enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canadian society”. It is based on the neoliberal paradigm that has shifted focus from women’s issues, mothers and families’ need for adequate childcare and child poverty (Dobrowolsky and Jenson 2004). The CP was assessed in terms of its impact on families, rather than individuals within families given that what is good for the family may not be equally good for all of its members (Baines et al. 1998).

Gendered social norms and gender stereotypes enable the persistence of the division of care. This includes a diverse range of cultural, political, and economic incentives, based on patriarchal notions that encourage men to perform less caregiving than they would in the absence of the gendered division of care (Kershaw 2006). As Kershaw (2006) argues, men have a habit of free-riding on female care, which is a significant moral hazard. When men do not equally participate in childcare, it undermines the values of reciprocity and mutual advantage that inform our intuitive understanding of social solidarity. This concept will be expanded upon in section 5.3.1.2.
Unfortunately, the division of care also ensures that the balance of power between heterosexual couples within the home remains persistently unequal. Patterson, Sutfin, and Fulcher (2004) found paid and unpaid labour among lesbian couples who were parenting four to six year olds was more egalitarian compared to their heterosexual counterparts.

Gender inequalities are clearly intensified by the program. There is a simultaneous erosion and intensification of gender in social policy, including the CP (Bakker 2007). Under this idea, policy downplays and minimizes gender, resulting in exacerbation of gender inequalities in everyday life (Bakker 2007, 1996). Bakker (1996) refers to this as a gendered paradox based on restructuring in Canada. It is a complex matter that proves to be contradictory at times. For example, the CP legislation does not mention gender, yet women are still responsible. Female caregivers are preferred as they are believed to be more docile and better at caring for the children than males (Bakan and Stasiulis 1994), an ideological construction linked to the biological essentialist perspective discussed above. The transfer of care from affluent Canadian women to foreign women compounds this process by adding a racial/ethnic component to the sexist belief. Gender is evidently a determining factor in the political economy of childcare.

The gender-blindness of the CP illustrates the erosion of gender in neoliberal policy. As discussed in section 3.3 and 3.4, the omission of gender disregards the actual gendered effects of the CP. Treating gender as marginal or irrelevant (Abu-Laban 2008) within an area that so blatantly concerns women has gendered consequences, not to mention the inability of the program to fulfill the needs of most Canadian mothers. Upon examination of the CP, it becomes evident that policy makers are not responsive to the
needs, priorities, and real-life situations of Canadian mothers. Public priorities and decisions do not reflect the integral role that care and its distinct values play within our private lives (Hankivsky 2004). Hence, the CP falls short of what is needed to attend to basic human requirements, such as care. The neoliberal assumption that human needs are essentially universal (Hankivsky 2004), while in fact these needs are based on a masculine model, exacerbates this deficiency. The CP is limited in its capacity to capture and respond to issues of diversity and difference; after all, it is privatizing the responsibility of childcare. Neglecting the gendered effects impacts the usefulness of the program to all Canadians.

Reproductive work tends to be perceived as unproductive for the economy. In fact, care is not included in measures of national output such as GDP (Knijn and Kremer 1997). It is perceived as not adding value and is thus not as valuable as productive labour in the workforce. The gendered division of labour creates a polarization between workers, creating a disregard for the necessity of human reproduction in relation to commodity production (Arat-Koc 2005; Armstrong and Armstrong 2003; Bakker 2007; Gill and Bakker 2006). This is nothing new; reproduction and production have been historically separated (Bakker 2007). Consequently, the private sphere and childcare are not viewed as politically or economically relevant (Bezanson 2006; Daly 2002; Hankivsky 2004; McDowell 2006). The link between social reproduction in everyday life and market society, and thus capitalism, is ignored (Bakker 2007). Additionally, the disregard for the daily and generational maintenance within the household from productive waged work relegates women’s social reproductive work to the margins. The existence of the program has little influence on changing this situation. Unpaid
reproductive work in the private sphere continues to be negated, while increasingly relying on such work to subsidize upper-class female and male paid work.

Social reproduction via caring is in fact necessary, as it would be difficult for the economy to function without it (Anderson 2000; Armstrong and Armstrong 2003; Bezanson 2010; Bezanson and Luxton 2006; Luxton 2006; Newman and White 2006). It sustains work central to capitalism. As a process, social reproduction works together with capitalist production. It transcends the public-private split by linking the home with work. Labour power of the worker makes production possible, which is achieved via the unpaid care work at home to produce and help the individual become a useful worker (Anderson 2000; Bezanson 2006; Gill and Bakker 2006). Production and exchange rests on social reproduction.

As the economy cannot be separated from the social aspect (Bezanson 2006), the CP can be seen as an attempt to economize care work. Caring work is now seen as some form of economically productive work. This process aids in dissolving the dualism of paid productive and unpaid reproductive work (Ungerson 1997). However, this labour is relegated to a low status position in the labour hierarchy (Arat-Koc 1999a,c). The diminished status of caregiving work legitimizes its translation to low-wage occupations with limited benefits. The ESDC (2015:para. 4) helps demean it by referring to caregivers’ occupational classification as “lower skilled”, effectively making domestic work ideologically devalued as a form of real work, even when it is paid for. For these reasons, the social construction of caring work reduces women’s power within the greater society. This explains why many Canadian women do not want to partake in this occupation. This gendered domain now becomes an area of work for foreign workers.
Paid work in the labour market enables social reproduction to occur. For instance, families rely on access to particular items, such as food and clothing, available for purchase on the market, which depends on their income. Both social reproduction and the economy are mediated by the regulations and limitations that states place on capital. By regulating the labour market, the state is structuring the conditions for childcare for families, especially for working mothers. Following economic recessions, couples tend to opt for contraception, delaying childbirth until better times. Sobotka, Skirbekk, and Philipov (2011) found a GDP decline among OECD countries was associated with a decline in total fertility rates 81 percent of the time from 1980-2008. In fact, the CP takes the state’s role in social reproduction to a national and transnational level by having the program offered to Canadians and foreign workers, thereby blurring the boundaries of government involvement in private affairs (Bakker 2007).

Arat-Koc (2006) demonstrates how the conceptualization of caring labour is recognized by the state. The CP constructs a paid position for foreign workers to earn a living through care work. This demonstrates that caring is an acquired and learned skill (Leira 1994). These caring skills are generally acquired informally in the course of everyday life, yet there are specialized programs to help sharpen these skills. Unfortunately, this slightly elevated value is only rendered once the care is privatized and commoditized.

Both productive work and caring work are necessary for the state. Reproductive and productive “tasks associated with childrearing [are] very much a national priority, producing collective economic gains” (Daenzer 1993:9). Contributions of this indispensable work are felt not only in women’s paid work, but also politically and
economically. Care work constitutes between 10 and 39 percent of GDP if assigned a monetary value (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development 2010). In June 2015, Canada’s monthly GDP was $1.6 trillion (Statistics Canada 2015a). From these figures, unpaid work carried out by women in Canada translates to between $160 billion and $624 billion at fair market value. Accordingly, childcare should be regarded as valuable work, even if unpaid.

Social reproduction is not limited to the family, although it appears this way via privatizing the work under the CP. It is a reciprocal relationship between individuals, families, the market, and the state to ensure the daily and generational reproduction of workers. Bezanson (2006) highlights how a macro orientation moves social reproduction out of the micro level. This involves various actors and institutions such as the educational system, the public sector, firms and trade unions. It occurs on various levels in complex ways. These institutions interact and balance power so that individuals are produced and maintained. Social reproduction connects the entire economic system via wages and the labour market (Vosko 2002). This refers to the supply side of the labour market as stressed by feminist political economists. Neoclassical economics tend to focus on the demand side of the labour market. This is “where the production of goods and services for sale in the market occurs, where employers’ decision making and broader firm- and sector-based trends affect the type and quality of jobs on offer, and therefore the type of qualifications required amongst workers, as well as broader industrial and occupational structures” (Vosko 2002:51). Ultimately, all levels of society are involved in social reproduction, making it not merely a private matter or a labour of love (Luxton 2009).
The reorganization of social relations emphasizes the gendered division of labour. It is based on inaccurate arguments that devalue caregiving as well as reinforce gendered stereotypes and roles, leading to gender discrimination. It is rooted in a gender order that is linked to restrictive ideologies of motherhood. This way, the CP helps reinforce the notion that childcare is a duty for women and a choice for men. Restructuring has led to an intensification and erosion of gender. As a result, the program is structured by gender-blindness. Perpetuation of women’s invisible caring work is then continued, thereby ignoring that it is actually socially necessary for the economy.

4.2 Intensification of the Double Burden

There has been a dramatic rise in the participation of women in the paid labour force over the past few decades in Canada as shown in section 1.3. With mothers working, their added responsibility for childrearing has thus created the double-day burden (Arat-Koc 2005; Armstrong 1997; Luxton 2006; Newman and White 2006; Rice and Prince 2000; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003). It could even be a triple-day burden, if the mother has multiple jobs. Regardless of the name, mothers often work one shift in the paid workforce in the public sphere, and a second shift in the private sphere performing care work plus other domestic duties. Ambert (2012) outlines a third shift, whereby mothers soothe the hostility and tension of children and partners distressed about lack of family time. The prevailing division of labour traps mothers in a “double bind” within two separate “ghettos” (Luxton and Reiter 1997:198).

Mothers who work in the labour market experience a conflict between the two roles of mother/carer and worker, also known as public/private role strain (Newman and White 2006). It is based on the inconsistencies of women’s social and cultural
construction of their dual roles, both of which are influenced by gender ideology. Women are expected to adhere to traditional feminine gender roles by caring for children, whilst simultaneously challenging these dominant cultural norms by working in the marketplace. These conflicting roles create a dilemma for women. The roles of mother and worker hold contradictory demands with both requiring full commitment and which are sometimes in poor environments, such as the private home and low status jobs. Employed mothers have little personal time, are overworked, stressed and worried or feel guilty about their children (Ambert 2012). Based on the 2005 GSS both men and women felt stressed about not having enough time, regardless of length of workday or presence of children (Marshall 2006). However, women tend to feel more time-stressed than men. For instance, 55 percent of mothers felt stressed about the lack of time as opposed to 42 percent of fathers. Consequently, mothers may view their parental performance as inadequate compared to traditional standards of motherhood (Ambert 2012), especially when a focus on work might be seen as occurring at the expense of the child. Only 69 percent of women in dual-earning couples working full time feel satisfied with their work-life balance compared to 86 percent of women in dual-earning couples working part time (Marshall 2006).

It is worthwhile to note that men also face similar dilemmas of adhering to the rigid gender ideologies. Traditional male gender roles assume men work out of the home, causing men to face stigma when they prioritize caregiving over paid employment. However, as previously discussed, women continue to perform the majority of the caring labour (Milan et al. 2011).
The time-consuming nature of both roles means that women may have difficulty sustaining them adequately. For instance, employed mothers are far more likely than men to lose time from their jobs because of personal or family responsibilities (Statistics Canada 2006). Balancing work, caring for children and caring for others, such as chronically ill, disabled or aging family members, is difficult. Based on 2012 GSS, Sinha (2013) found 54 percent of women were most affected in terms of time taken off work, mental health, and time spent with spouse and children by multiple roles compared to all respondents, caregivers or not, aged 15 years and older. Sixty percent of caregivers juggled family obligations and personal commitments with paid work (Sinha 2013). Many found it difficult to cope, especially the 81 percent of caregivers who had children under 18 living at home (Sinha 2013). Forty-nine percent of caregivers with children less than 18 indicated that caring for others and working caused them to reduce the amount of time spent with their children (Sinha 2013). These figures increased among those spending a greater number of hours per week on their caregiving responsibilities.

These conflicting roles have a variety of consequences. The difficulty in sustaining two jobs adequately creates what Arat-Koc (2005:363) terms a “crisis in the domestic sphere”. This care crisis is compounded by the failure of governments to provide public childcare or comprehensive public services and programs. The double shift results in time crunch problems, given that mothers attempt to fulfill both roles (Rice and Prince 2000:189). Although other women and men can also relate to this issue, it is potentially more profound for mothers given that they tend to have more tasks to perform with the responsibility of caring for their children. Low-income women are especially vulnerable because they not only bear the gendered responsibility for
childrearing, but also have fewer buffers to mediate the conflict between this care work and waged employment. Spillovers from either work or family may depend on the number of children and the ages of the children. Families with young children may feel more stressed about their time, as younger children require more attention (Statistics Canada 2011). Secondary analysis of the 2010 GSS shows that 47 percent of people aged 25 to 54 reported not spending enough time with their family and almost 43 percent of the same age group were constantly under stress trying to accomplish more than they can handle (Statistics Canada 2011).

The dual role consistently disadvantages women. For instance, men typically do not leave their work to assume primary domestic responsibilities (Newman and White 2006). In 2012, 9.4 percent of recent fathers outside Quebec claimed or intended to claim parental leave, while 88.2 percent of recent mothers received maternity or parental benefits (Statistics Canada 2013). Men’s participation in care work tends to depend on their partners’ earning power and number of hours worked (Crompton et al. 2007). The more material resources women generate, thereby enhancing their economic power, the more men perform tasks historically seen as women’s tasks. This exemplifies the slow change in gender distributions of care and domestic work to match women’s increased paid employment (Arat-Koc 2005). Complete egalitarian division of childcare is still rare. Consequently, gender inequality is still sustained in family-oriented social institutions (McDonald 2006). Hochschild and Machung (2012) refer to the tendency of women exiting the home that is not followed by men’s entrance into the house as the stalled gender revolution. They argue that the way couples divide the emotional and physical work for children has not changed as rapidly or deeply as it should.
The double burden is more than just an issue of fairness; it also has other significant costs to women. For instance, it has profound consequences for women’s health, social relationships, current and future employment possibilities, levels of political engagement, and economic status (Armstrong 1994; Kershaw 2008; Ungerson 1997). Based on analysis of data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, Drolet (1999) found that gendered divisions of labour results in career penalties including wage losses for women with forgone earnings during interruptions, not to mention skill erosion, less experience, and lost seniority. Employers ought to be concerned, as the double burden lowers productivity and increases employee turnover (Armstrong 1994; Fox and Sugiman 1999; Rice and Prince 2000; Newman and White 2006). Although some social policies, such as EI, exist to mitigate some of these factors, they do not address all the issues and do not affect everyone equally. These costs become private troubles of individuals and families (Neysmith 1997). As long as children are viewed as a personal lifestyle choice rather than national assets and a social priority, children are a liability to developing women’s careers (Freiler and Cerny 1998). Accordingly, women’s health and employment equality and advancement are related to childcare.

The welfare-state paradigm was marked by an implicit acknowledgment that family life affects employment. This understanding increases the demand for caregivers, thereby creating a justification for the CP. The program becomes a strategy for enabling women to enter productive employment by balancing work and family responsibilities. Caregivers are presented as a solution to the current situation of childcare and to these burdens for all mothers, even though it does not do so in practice (Arat-Koc 2005).
By supporting working women, it can be said that the CP breaks down the sexist male breadwinner-female carer model. It helps challenge the stereotypical image of women as economically dependent wives and mothers by helping families reconcile the multiple and often conflicting demands of paid work, childcare, and domestic labour.

Women no longer work for supplementary income or “pin-money” (Newman and White 2006:201), but rather earn a salary for their family. This is important, given that the dual earner model is intrinsic to family survival nowadays (Bezanson 2006; Newman and White 2006). The total average household hours of paid work has increased with no corresponding increase in disposable income since the mid 1980s (Mahon and Phillips 2002; Phipps 2003). Thus, each member’s role is necessary, especially with work within the home being separated from other productive roles. With each member’s role being valued, the rigid sexual and gendered division of labour that relegates women to the private sphere (Brodie 2008a) and undermines women’s ability to enter the workforce is challenged. This gives the impression that women’s contradictory roles are solved.

Upon critical analysis, the implications of the program’s attempts to alleviate the work-family conflict become apparent. The short-term focus of the CP will not help Canada realize its long-term labour market needs and is unfair to the greater part of caregivers (Nakache and Kinoshita 2010), as well as most Canadian families. This is in part due to the split between those who benefit from the program and those who do not. Women in general still encounter the dual roles of mother and worker, especially low-income and middle-class women.

Women still encounter barriers within the workforce. Yet, women are now more likely to overcome disadvantages in the paid labour force, such as the limited chances for
promotion and advancement because of their gender (Newman and White 2006), and their position depends on education. Although men’s position also depends on education, women’s likelihood of employment increases dramatically the higher their level of educational attainment (Almey 2007). Higher educated women are then able to attain well-paid jobs. This provides them more financial means to reduce their caregiving responsibilities. Evidently, “the education, experience, and skills of these women to the paid labour force are valued, not their caring labour within the home” (Baines et al. 1998:204).

Not all women are afforded these benefits, however. Aiding wealthy women in the workforce furthers the neoliberal notion of the citizen as a wage worker rather than the citizen as a carer (Hankivsky 2004; Leira 1994). The CP aids highly educated women to compete alongside men for the professional jobs, in contrast to those at the lower end of the income scale (McDowell 2006). It directly illustrates the links between privilege and disadvantage. These women become more like men, by having less personal responsibilities at home, thereby elevating this working individual. Elite women, who are able to pay for education, are hence accommodated through the CP so that they endure less gender role conflict. The CP enables the perception of affluent women choosing to opt for higher-status paid employment rather than low-status reproductive labour (Anderson 2000). Accordingly, the CP perpetuates class division among women. This inequality is discussed further in the next section.

The double burden is not limited to Canadian women. In fact, the CP actually helps create this commonality between Canadian and foreign women. Section 1.2 mentions how the Philippines government encourages Filipino workers to work abroad
to send remittances for families back home. With the caregivers working overseas, the sending countries are left with a caring crisis (Parrenas 2008, 2005). In 2013, 1.8 million Filipino workers were deployed as land-based or sea-based workers overseas (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2014). Land-based includes household workers, which tend to be women. The demand for care has increased with parents leaving their children, yet the supply of care has dwindled. While conducting interviews with children of migrant mothers, Parrenas (2008, 2005) found they endured emotional hardship, including feelings of abandonment and jealousy of the employers’ children. This reality is further deepened by the many years some of these women must leave their families in order to attain these positions. This intensifies the double burden for these women on a transnational level.

Nowadays mothers experience a double burden with the conflicts of work within and out of the home. This shows that the lack of gender equality within the CP and society in general holds a significant cost to women. Although the program is proposed as solution to the dilemma, it only helps wealthy Canadian women in the workforce. While working abroad, caregivers also have a burden – that of transnational motherhood – harming the relationship between these foreign (mostly Filipino) mothers and their children.

4.3 Increase in Inequality

The CP reinforces inequality within Canadian society in several ways. One way is income based, as the CP accentuates economic inequality between women and families. This derives from the high cost of caregivers for families. As mentioned in section 3.2, caregivers earn a monthly salary. The salary includes room and board, if
applicable, but income tax, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and EI must be deducted, and does not include overtime (CIC 2011a). Many parents may need to pay overtime, given that they probably have to factor in driving to and from work on top of their eight or more hour workdays. However, caregivers may not receive this remuneration due to employers taking advantage of them (Arat-Koc 2001; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003). Employers may justify low wages and exploitation, arguing that the caregivers are better off earning low pay in Canada than in their home countries. The salary is not the only cost of hiring caregivers. Other costs families must consider are a one-time transportation fee, recruitment fees, provincial or territorial workplace safety insurance, and private medical insurance (CIC 2011a; HRSDC 2011b). Clearly, the CP is out of reach for many Canadian families as a program for childcare, even when including reimbursements through tax deductions or vouchers.

As a result, a two-tiered system of childcare is created. Those who can afford to hire someone to provide personalized privatized care utilize the CP (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997, 1994; Macklin 1992), while everyone else is left to find any other private means, including parental care. Consequently, the majority of Canadian women’s childcare needs are not met. This is an example of how women experience oppression in varying ways and degrees of intensity.

These unequal arrangements are based on the interaction of gender, race and class on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic injustice and social inequality. Crenshaw (1991) refers to this as intersectionality. Although she uses the term to explain black women’s experiences before the law, she emphasizes that multiple oppressions are not additive but mutually constitutive. The interlocking
dimensions of gender, race, class and other social indicators create unique experiences and opportunities for all groups. These socially constructed categories contain inherent power differences that are infused into every aspect of social life (Browne & Misra 2003). Intersectionality describes the “intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different” (Crenshaw 1991:1242). Sexism, racism and classism are forms of discrimination that interrelate and support one another. No single oppression can be analyzed on its own. From this, one can see how the CP operates under a system of oppression in which multiple forms of discrimination intersect to the benefit of a select few and play out in a variety of ways.

The program divides Canadian families by the ability or inability to afford certain types of childcare thereby reinforcing disparities within and among Canadian families. Not all women have adequate amounts of economic autonomy from their labour-market position or socioeconomic status to replace their labour in the home. These widening differentials have profound repercussions on the material and financial inequalities between families. A multidimensional conceptualization of gender, race, and class will help to describe and understand women’s experiences and position within society (Crenshaw 1991).

The CP sustains the social hierarchy within Canada by adhering to the neoliberal ideology wherein capitalism is a system that promotes expansion of wealth (Braedley and Luxton 2010). It starts with childcare being tied to the privatization and commoditization of work. This reality is unmistakable, seeing that income, working conditions, and job security all impact the ability to hire a caregiver. Access and entitlements to childcare under the program are framed according to income or ability to
pay (Gill and Bakker 2006). In other words, limits of one’s economic resources prevent one’s right to purchase this commodity.

Using financial resources, affluent women have their needs and wants met in the convenience of their own home. This partially alleviates their gendered division of labour on an individual level (Baines et al. 1998; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003; Parrenas 2005; Walia 2010) enabling them to pursue gainful employment and increase their assets. For instance, wealthy elite female lawyers with inflexible working arrangements and long hours (Kay 1997) may be assisted in their childcare duties. It provides them with the freedom of choice and the freedom to pursue capital at the expense of the care workers. Thus, the CP inadvertently privileges the work, economic and political positions of the women and men who are able to benefit from its use (Bakker 2007). Their ability to afford a caregiver is also aided by the larger proportion of tax deductions, such as the CCED, received by higher-income women that partially offset these private costs compared to other Canadian women (Baines et al. 1998). Accordingly, the CP may be perceived as a means to dominate, instead of empowerment and reconstruction. It widens the class and racial disparities between women.

Access to benefits and opportunities is unequal and variable according to race and class as they intersect with gender (Boyd 1997). The program creates a vicious cycle, as lack of access to wealth may diminish women’s market-place opportunities and their ability to survive in a changing labour market, consequently preventing them from having the finances to hire caregivers. This reality worsens with the increasing costs of living and the decreasing family income (Doherty et al. 1998), regardless of the dual earners working longer hours (Johnson, Lero, and Rooney 2001). Accordingly, the
increasingly precarious income and social realities of many Canadian families are ignored. Personal finances directly affect one’s ability to hire caregivers.

Due to the challenge of affording caregivers, poor women must find other private means of care. These women continue the dual role of earning a living while juggling their household and childcare responsibilities. With the program catering to affluent Canadian women, they are marginalized via the implementation of the CP. Indirectly, poor and working-class women are disadvantaged, making their situation parallel to the caregivers, though perhaps not as severe. Even though lower- and middle-income Canadian women have the right to have equal access to childcare, there appears to be nothing to prevent the perpetuation of this discrimination.

By instituting the CP, women are subtly informed of their place in society. Affluent women are perceived as worthy of aid, while lower-income families, who are often non-Caucasian, are not afforded the same rights. Based on the 2006 Census, racialized Canadians earn 81.4 cents for every dollar earned by non-racialized Canadians (Block and Galabuzi 2001). Hence, the entitlements of these groups are unequal, reflecting a two-tiered system for childcare. This program “treats women as a homogenous group, and does not address the fact that Caucasian middle- and upper-class women, because of their race and class, are more privileged than others and thus benefit more from these policies” (Schecter 1998:108). This is because the intragroup differences within and between women are conflated and ignored under the CP.

The problem is that the Canadian female employer status is elevated by hiring a caregiver, whilst the worker is concurrently degraded. It can be harmful to women in Canada in similar work environments and similar socioeconomic statuses, if the
caregivers are viewed as having a lower status. This is first due to the nature of the work. Caring work, as previously mentioned, is not accorded the importance it deserves. Accordingly, care workers are also not provided with elevated statuses. Domestic work is embedded in hierarchies of gender, race, class, ethnicity and nationality (Browne and Misra 2003). These categories act in ways that simultaneously marginalize caregivers. The positions of these foreign workers intersect to make their experience as caregivers qualitatively different from that of racially privileged white women (Crenshaw 1991). The overrepresentation of this marginalized group creates subcategories within gender, racial, and class struggles. The caregivers are situated differently in the economic, social and political worlds. They are foreigners living in Canada on an employment contract that may end at any time. The program re-establishes inequality and subordination of foreign women. Canadian women who employ caregivers can be indirectly contributing to their exploitation. Secondly, though the caregivers may be treated as one of the family (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997), they are still outsiders from a foreign country. Although the caregivers are often not physically separated from the Canadian family within the home, they are also not entirely part of the family. As long as the CP exists, the asymmetrical power relations within Canadian society are reinforced.

Class and racial differences are found in another avenue. As true as it was in the late nineteenth century, domestic service symbolizes class relations. Caregivers were and are still to a certain extent a status symbol of the ruling class, since the ability to employ a servant is an indicator of upward mobility and wealth (Anderson 200; Arat-Koc 2006; Armacost 1995). When contrasted, the differences between the two women emerge. Anderson (2000:2) concludes the domestic worker “is fulfilling a role, and critical to that
role is her reproduction of the female employer’s status (middle-class non-labourer, clean) in contrast to herself (worker, degraded, dirty). These two groups of women are seen along a hierarchy. The caregivers are at the bottom facilitating and sustaining the affluent women’s life-styles, including their ability to work and have leisure time.

Having a caregiver expresses and reproduces social relations. Certain individuals may want to appear wealthy enough that they do not need to perform the menial childcare work unlike those less fortunate. This illusion will help “affirm the status of the household, its class, its access to resources of finance and personnel, and the adequacy of its manager, almost invariably a woman” (Anderson 2000:14). This duplicates and accentuates the differences between individuals of various socioeconomic statuses. By having caregivers fulfilling the role of nanny, the female employers’ elevated statuses are maintained and perpetuated (Anderson 2000). The caregivers help facilitate order and dignity for upper-class employers.

The caregiver as a symbol of status highlights the difference between lower- and middle-class Canadians and those in the upper-class. It is purely based on access to the program or lack thereof, which is firmly rooted in social inequality. The four pillars of neoliberalism prominent within the CP create an environment where this reality is strengthened and perpetuated. Both the construction and stabilization of a servant class, and the inability of the poor- and middle-class to purchase this care, improves and reinforces the status of the rich. The nature of the program provides an advantage for some and a disadvantage for others.

Selectively benefiting a minority of individuals leads to division between the women of different classes and races, furthering societal pluralization. Pluralization
refers to the growing divisions between individuals based on social characteristics (Rice and Prince 2000). This increasing division among people may be based on socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age, all affecting increasing variation in work, education, and retirement patterns, the changing ethnic, linguistic, and racial composition of the population. Pluralization may lead to tensions between and within those groups. These discrepancies become compounded under economic globalization (Gill and Bakker 2006; Rice and Prince 2000). Unfortunately, the CP assists this process by differentiating between groups.

The program acts to mask women’s different lived experiences, because of the few that are content with the caring arrangements. The CP, like previous policies and programs, represents upper-middle and upper-class “bourgeois self-interest” (Armacost 1995:26). The exploitation of the foreign workers demonstrates merely one side of the class struggles emanating from the CP’s existence.

Foreign women are also left out of the discussion of childcare. That is because the master/servant relation of the nineteenth century is reproduced by the foreign caregiver/employer relation in the 21st century (Arat-Koc 1999a,b; Bakan and Stasiulus 1994; Daenzer 1993; Schecter 1998; Stasiulis and Bakan 2003; Ungerson 1997). These women, who are often racialized and members of the lower economic classes, are treated as a “second-class citizen” (Hankivsky 2004:110) and not given proper recognition for their work. Arat-Koc’s (2005) research shows how the program divides these women from the higher-income largely Caucasian-Canadian employers. Power inequalities between employee and employer become globalized (Macklin 1994). Issues regarding class and citizenship status become intertwined with gender equality, while their shared
subordination with Canadian women is ignored. Additional lines of social inequality such as race and class also intersect to create a deeper power imbalance. This deepens the analysis of the public/private split under capitalism, with regards to the ties of social reproduction and the racialized character of the international division of labour (Vosko 2003).

The systemic discrimination of these women within the CP presents a problem for the women’s movement (Arat-Koc 2005). This rift prevents collaboration between women to remedy the CP’s problems for Canadian women and foreign workers, the Canadian state of childcare in general, and the social expectations of gender roles. With all but the wealthiest of women retaining the primary responsibility for work in the household, caregiving becomes not the common burden shared by all women. By implementing the CP, it masks the critical need for a universal childcare program as a welfare state provision for all families (Baines et al. 1998; Walia 2010). With caregivers performing childcare duties, there is less pressure from Canadian citizens for the state to implement social welfare provisions that benefit all women and their families, as wealthy families have adequate means of care. The current dominant ideology emphasizing privatization, individualization and familialization is reinforced. In turn, dilemmas for women and their childcare concerns are also continually reinforced.

Individualization creates a division among Canadians, effectively rendering collective bargaining difficult. Under the neoliberal paradigm, individuals are pitted against one another because of their gender, race, and class differences. This division prevents individuals from creating change within their daily lives and society. Only affluent Canadian women’s experiences dominate discussion under the CP, thus the
others’ differences are erased (Lyshaug 2006). The other represents the marginalized groups of the lower socioeconomic status, including Canadian women and their families and the caregivers. If dominant women appropriate the others’ experiences, claiming them as their own, it distorts reality and denies the differences between these women (Lyshaug 2006). The needs of one are projected onto the other. Thus, individualism only further creates fragmentation and economic insecurity within society (Fox and Sugiman 1999; Harvey 1990). Differences among individuals are thus intensified while solutions are individualized. This individualistic solution prevents people from acting as a collective social entity (Bakker 2007) seeking the greater good. Individuals are simply looking to benefit themselves and their families.

In the process, feminists’ bargaining power with the state, along with the childcare advocacy communities’ influence, is reduced by the CP’s existence (Schecter 1998). Their ability to make demands is limited, thereby hindering true gender equality. Given that this privatized solution falls short of meeting all Canadian women’s needs (Arat-Koc 2005; Bakan and Stasiulis 1996), the program is damaging to the interests of women as a whole. The CP bars change, as it conceals the needs and dependency of employers for the workers. The divide created between individuals harms women by preventing their collaboration via the women’s movement (Arat-Koc 2005).

As a consequence of the intersecting oppressions of gender, race, and class under the CP, social solidarity among individuals is declining. Individualistic sentiments replace shared ones. This is because gender order is based on the intersecting structures of power and privilege. These structures perpetuate gender inequalities with intersecting inequality associated with race and class. To combat these complex inequalities, a
coalitional solidarity is necessary that brings together a wide spectrum of players representing a broad range of interests to challenge the “perceptions and practices of a neoliberal paradigm that portrays the complete subordination of the rights and claims to social citizenship to the ‘natural and inevitable’ forces of a globalized market economy” (Baines, Evans, and Naysmith 1998:19). This network attempts to arrive at more equitable solutions to the needs of all members of Canadian society. This alliance building would include creating an oppositional consciousness by engaging in campaigns and everyday resistance in the place of work and in the community at large. The more diverse the channels of communication, the more people it will reach. Childcare advocacy groups can actively lobby the government for immigration policy reform and make recommendations for proper working conditions and increased rights of caregivers.

An alliance of diverse groups to pursue the shared goal of childcare will enable them to act together without ignoring or suppressing the politically significant differences that divide them, while simultaneously illuminating the linkages between childcare concerns and exploitation of temporary foreign workers through immigration policies. Lyshaug (2006:79) suggests the cultivation of “enlarged sympathy” where a kinship across differences is claimed to facilitate political ties that accommodate and affirm important differences among women and the shared humanity that unites them. This attitude and disposition supplement and enable political deliberation and negotiation between women, men and the state. Men have a role in the alliance building, especially with regards to changing gender roles and gender order. This will be expanded upon in Chapter 5. Transformation is a slow process, since it will be challenge the existing status quo.
The CP exacerbates inequalities. The sheer cost of caregivers makes it difficult for lower- and middle-class Canadian women to afford this service. With a two-tiered system for childcare, the state disregards the needs of the vast majority of its citizens. It is an individualistic private solution to a social issue. Disparities are emphasized between genders, classes, and races, which leads to division in the population. Women and men are not able to band together for the common goal for childcare, since the program is an individualistic solution to a social issue.

The CP brings about changes in the nature and forms of social relations within childcare, which has fundamental implications for women and their families. In doing so, the program exacerbates gender, race, and class inequality. First, the gender division of labour is perpetuated. Second, though the program may be perceived as a support for women in reconciling the problem of work and family responsibilities, it simply prevents all women’s alleviation from the double burden. Less privileged women working within the labour market must generally continue to assume the bulk of responsibility for domestic labour and childcare in the home. Third, the restructuring enhances inequalities among individuals, advantaging some women, whilst disadvantaging others. Given that the program is only a viable primary care option for some families, there is a need for a major overhaul in Canadian childcare.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION: PATHWAYS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR CHILDCARE

5.1 Unfulfilled Promises and a Solution

The CP is proposed as another means to assist Canadian families with their childcare needs. This distorted view does not solve the problem. With every enacted domestic work immigration and market-based childcare policy, the governments’ social responsibility dwindled, shaping its current financial and policy implementation role. Under the CP, childcare becomes an objectified private individual family responsibility purchased on the market, rather than a public collective responsibility. The CP contributes to the privatizing of childcare while simultaneously reinforcing gender roles as well as racial and class divisions. Mothers, unfortunately, endure most of the negative impacts of these unfulfilled promises, as their choices for care may be limited given differing family structures and incomes. Only a limited number of women are able to reconcile their multiple roles by freeing themselves from the burden of child caring at the expense of foreign women who perform their childrearing duties, while the majority of Canadian families do not benefit from the program. Thus, the program reinforces the interlocking systems of oppression and the status quo.

Given that the CP perpetuates these embedded problems, the only option is to abolish the entire program. Before this occurs, Canada must initiate a national childcare plan focused on the development of young Canadian children. This family friendly framework would be based on state responsibility for care programs and provide benefits to parents. Making childcare a societal issue would help ease the public/private split and reduce race, gender, and class inequalities. Periodic reassessment and adjustments of the
plan are necessary to ensure the plan continually adheres to its goals. This way the plan can overcome previous recurring challenges.

Changing the current political arrangements is a complex process. Analysis of the changing tax regimes by Hansen (2003) unexplores how policies could be challenged by social forces over time, consequently calling practices and institutions into question. For example, commissions investigate specific groups’ views and preferred policy choices before reforming policy. Policy change is, after all, a complex process intertwined with questions of democracy, including “who determine[s] policy and how this is done” and the terms under which change comes about (Hansen 2003:11). Hansen (2003) contends that democracy is tied to public discourse. Embedded political theory, whereby political ideas have meaning yet simultaneously depend on how and by whom they are used, could influence citizens to embrace political action (Hansen 2003). Neoliberal principles, for instance, could be used to varying degrees depending on the government in power. This is because the meaning of these ideas reflects society’s structure and individuals need to achieve a meaningful and fulfilling life (Hansen 2003). Using these ideas, a government task force or special committee could be formed to see what Canadians feel is needed for childcare. For example, the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking was introduced in 2012 and has already aided the government in launching an enforcement team, providing funding and conducting research (Government of Canada 2015). The task force or special committee would also help articulate “the assumptions and commitments underlying the perceptions people have of what is at stake and what is to be done about it” (Hansen 2003:11). The state’s involvement with its citizens is crucial for this process. It would include providing political ideas that are
based on the findings from the committee. From there, a significant social policy paradigm shift may occur.

The programs and benefits outlined below are an important component of a social policy that is aware of gender, race, and class issues. These promote gender equality, remove individualized family care burdens, support work-life balance, and increase the range of entitlements available to mothers and fathers. A work-life balance refers to “finding and maintaining some degrees of workable and acceptable combination of these often conflicting spheres” (Thorntwaite 2002:3). Work and family are key considerations for both genders. Social policies that encourage gender equality are especially important with the diverse needs and wants due to different careers, lifestyles and caring choices. Good government policies ensure that women and men enjoy full rights as citizens. The following programs and benefits potentially create social cohesion and cooperation amongst Canadians. It must be noted that this is simply a proposal that lays the groundwork for possible improvements in the realm of childcare.

5.2 A National Childcare Framework

In order to de-privatize childcare under the CP, the government must take responsibility. This involves the federal and provincial/territorial governments working together to create a well-designed national childcare strategy to meet the needs of Canadian families. Within this framework, adequate and quality government funded childcare services must be a component.

5.2.1 State responsibility for childcare. The first step towards a national childcare system is the realization that childcare must be seen as a societal responsibility not just a private one. In Canada, children are currently viewed as a personal lifestyle choice rather
than national assets and a social priority. This causes children to be seen as a liability to developing women’s careers instead of a valuable source for growth and development (Freiler and Cerny 1998).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the impacts of childcare affect all citizens. Care work is an activity set in the intersection of family, market, and the state. Hence, the state’s responsibility is already embedded within childcare. Assuming public responsibility for social programs is a natural progression. This is imperative, because when childcare is organized, financed, and operated by governments, it is usually widely accessible and of high quality (Chandler 2009; Friendly 1994; Friendly and Prentice 2009; Friendly et al. 2007). Examples of government care are discussed below.

There are many benefits to state responsibility of care. State responsibility for children may help legitimize caring work and prevent patchwork care for individual Canadian families. Affordable, accessible childcare has been shown to help alleviate child poverty (Baker 2001). Based on data from Statistics Canada’s National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), Gagne (2003) found that childcare provides relief to families and helps break the cycle of poverty by improving academic abilities and school performance. According to the OECD, “equitable access to quality early childhood education and childcare can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children and support the broad educational and social needs of families” (2001:7). ECEC contributes to the public good by positively affecting the general health of the nation’s children, their future educational achievement, the labour market volume and flexibility, and social cohesion (OECD 2006). Thus, childcare benefits all citizens.
Canada should look to other countries for guidance in state responsibility. For instance, Sweden regards childcare as a responsibility of the public sector rather than a private responsibility of women or families. This progressive view was supported when Sweden became the first country in the world to replace maternity leave with parental leave in 1974 (Swedish Institute (SI) 2015). This change provided both parents the option to care for their children. Maternal and parental leave is further discussed in section 5.3.1. As a social democratic welfare state, Sweden is characterized by universal provision of high quality social programs. The Swedish government plays a key role in ECEC because it is tied to a greater picture of equality. By focusing on gender equality in childcare, childcare is perceived as a societal issue, not just a women’s issue based on classist and racist notions.

Gender equality is an important policy objective in Sweden and is something the country is constantly striving towards. Sweden focuses on an equal distribution of women in all domains of society. Sweden takes gender equality a step further by focusing on “qualitative aspects, ensuring that the knowledge and experience of both men and women are used to promote progress in all aspects of society” (SI 2015:para. 2). For Sweden, gender parity is of high importance. Since the first Global Gender Gap Report in 2006 by the World Economic Forum, Sweden has never finished lower than fourth in gender gap rankings (SI 2015). Canada should embrace the Swedish model of social responsibility for childcare and employ it as a framework for its social policy.

Upon recognizing the need for public responsibility, Canada must also recognize that it needs a childcare strategy. Since the late 1960s, childcare advocates and women’s groups have called for a publicly funded and universal childcare system (Chandler 2009;
The new system would need to focus on care, as well as other benefits. The government funded care would need to be based on important principles, with the most vital being universal entitlement (Chandler 2009). Every child in Canada should be entitled to childcare services. This care must also be of high quality governed by provincial regulations (Chandler 2009). The childcare must be inclusive so that the services are responsive to the needs of children with disabilities and Canada’s diverse population (Friendly and Prentice 2009). The care must also be affordable so that cost is not a barrier to participation (Chandler 2009). Finally, the government and service providers must be accountable to parents, children and the public. The main focus of this strategy would be on children under five, but school-aged children also require attention given that the need for childcare does not end once school starts.

A long-term agenda must be outlined to avoid a quick fix that does not benefit all families. The plan would include priority targets, benchmarks and timelines with guaranteed budgets to fund appropriate governance and expansion (OECD 2006). The agenda would involve the regulation of caring relationships, focusing on the rights of both carer and care recipient, as well as families and society. Social policy must treat childcare as a citizen’s right and a social investment, not as an expenditure. Childcare is a public good, not a commodity bought and sold in the market as the CP constructs it.

In order to accomplish this, Canada needs to redefine itself as a caring state (Leira 1994). These types of states offer a wide variety of social services to citizens of all socioeconomic groups. State intervention must be conceptualized as an extension of the social rights of citizenship. Childcare ought to be defined as a right for all citizens. For
instance, in Denmark, children of all ages have the right to childcare facilities (Knijn and Kremer 1997). Care provisions should not be perceived as a matter to be left to the discretion of the private family, as the state has a collective interest in social reproduction. Ultimately, policies and practices must be examined carefully to ensure that they are fair, effective, transparent, democratic and comprehensive.

States have the power to grant the status of citizenship, so it is part of their responsibility to outline citizens’ obligations to ensure all achieve full citizenship. Citizens are conceived as carers and wage workers all in one, as it is assumed all citizens are individuals with some sort of care responsibilities (Leira 1994). This transforms dominant gender roles, mitigating class inequalities and challenging the stigma associated with care work.

5.2.2 Federal and provincial/territorial involvement. Effective collaboration between the federal and provincial/territorial governments to produce a strong public policy framework is the next step. This would demonstrate how the state is able to uphold this responsibility, which is essential to the successful management of the ECEC program. A combined federal/provincial investment approach would involve detailed strategizing and planning to expand a large system efficiently and coherently. This publicly guided system, like in the Nordic countries, would lead to less fragmentation (OECD 2006).

Early childhood policy is a complex field. It entails many aspects including providing care and education to young children, women’s employment and equal opportunity, as well as poverty issues and social welfare. Consultation and co-operation between the federal and provincial governments has to be further developed, including
being transparent and accountable (OECD 2006). This would enable the federal and provincial governments to work together to organize a plan that would standardize childcare, whilst simultaneously providing regional or local necessities respecting the diversity of needs and childcare preferences of Canadian families. Aboriginals, children with special needs, ethnic minorities and other groups must be taken into consideration. The standards must be based on sound knowledge of child development and acknowledge the practices of minority groups and indigenous people to mitigate gender, race, and class inequalities. This could be accomplished by the development, and enactment of legislation and supporting agreements outlining service entitlement, standards, quality enhancement, as well as accountability and leadership responsibilities (OECD 2006). However, clear roles must be outlined for all governments involved.

Although this is a bold position, as education is under provincial/territorial jurisdiction, there would need to be one expert minister to head a federal ministry responsible for developing an early childhood education and care policy framework. While it may be difficult to amend the Constitution, the effort is worthwhile to serve the best interests of most Canadian families. This is not a novel idea. Nordic countries, Iceland, New Zealand, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom have all integrated their early childhood services under one ministry (OEDC 2006), although implementation in Canada’s highly decentralized federation may be more complex. The framework would involve development and enactment of legislation and supportive agreements that outline service entitlement, standards, quality enhancement, as well as accountability and leadership responsibilities. Quality enhancement targets would follow a scheduled timeline. This national standard would ensure families in every province have equivalent
rights and services. However, this new policy would be respectful of the different beliefs and values within Canada’s diverse population.

A strong and equal partnership with the childcare and education systems would help create a systematic and integrated approach. Integration of childcare and kindergarten education at the ground level, and at policy and management levels, would be more cost effective than implementing separate ministries. In addition, the accumulated knowledge about ECEC policy and programs gathered over the years would help the ministry make better decisions. For example, favourable staff-child ratios would be an important topic to examine. The ministry would ensure the legislated requirements are followed by encouraging and supporting the provinces’ work in childcare. Stable research funding for the provinces would also be legislated, for it is critical for monitoring and assessing quality and accomplishments (OECD 2006).

At the provincial level, a single department responsible for all young children could interface more effectively with federal initiatives, while still being mindful of regional disparities. This would make monitoring and evaluation of critical elements more efficiently undertaken. For instance, appropriate training and working conditions for staff would be a governmental responsibility (OECD 2006). Monitoring would assure quality service and safe work environments. Municipal government involvement may also be sought to provide local needs, leading to more efficient allocation of resources to children.

Based on the Constitution Act, Aboriginal communities fall under federal jurisdiction. Unfortunately, this structure has not been overly successful to date. Under the proposed plan, Aboriginal governments would govern their own community. This
would enable Aboriginal communities to lead and design their own effective childcare policies to ensure their needs are met while being respectful of their culture. The exact workings of the self-governing would have to be worked out at the federal level.

Involvement in the changes must include government officials, as well as those knowledgeable in childcare. OECD (2006) found that framework policy agreements negotiated between experienced government officials, researchers and the major stakeholders are more likely to be evidence-based and command public consent. These experienced managers with strong early childhood professional backgrounds ensure the policies are founded on reliable data and wide consultation on multiple perspectives. This inclusive and participatory approach would make the policy less likely to be subject to political change, relevant to all those involved, and successful in implementation.

5.2.3 Government funding. To be able to implement the pan-Canadian system, the programs would require a large investment of public funds. This includes pooling resources and cost sharing across ministries, social partners, local communities and users, in addition to increasing existing government funding. The funding system would need to be transparent and accountable to allow citizens to have access to crucial information about how the government operates and to judge whether the standard promised has been met.

Substantial public investment in services and the infrastructure is a key aspect of a solid childcare framework (OECD 2006). Currently, Canada is not spending enough on children’s services. OECD (2006) found that Canada invests about 0.3 percent of GDP in early childhood services, compared to 2 percent in Denmark. This includes the large expenses for the CCED and the UCCB revealed in section 2.2. The emphasis for this
childcare policy should be on facilities and parental leave provisions, not tax measures (Friendly 2006). To help increase funding, the CP, the CCB, and other tax benefits or credits would have to be scrapped. This scrapping would include the now eliminated UCCB and Family Tax Cut that are “expected to cost the federal treasury an estimated $4.6 billion in the 2015-16 fiscal year [...] $26.8 billion over the next six years” (Fekete 2014 para.3-4). Public financing ought to be delivered directly as a core program, not as tax breaks, vouchers or cheques paid to parents. These monies would be redirected to affordable, quality childcare for all Canadian children.

The cost of a national early childhood system would be high. Richards and Brzozowski (2006) suggest it would cost at least $8 billion annually to create a universal pan-Canadian childcare system for children between the ages of two and five, based on the extrapolation of the cost of Quebec’s system of childcare centres. However, there are many benefits to state investment in care. For one, public investment in care may introduce a professionalization of the work. Over time, childcare may be seen as a respectable occupation rather than relegated to the margins and deemed women’s work. Another advantage of state involvement in ECEC is strong returns to the public purse. In a study by Cleveland and Krashinsky (1998), they conclude that for every dollar spent on a national childcare system, two additional dollars would be produced in terms of better early childhood development outcomes and increased female labour force participation. Evidently, there are benefits to public involvement in care.

5.2.4 State-funded childcare programs. State-organized childcare is well in place in economically advantaged countries such as Belgium, France, Denmark, and Sweden. This may be due to the fact that kindergarten tends to be more valued, because it is
characterized by educational aspects rather than simply child minding in the parents’ absence (Friendly and Prentice 2009). Canadian childcare policy must include publicly financed care of pre-school children, provided primarily under the aegis of federal and provincial governments guided by national standards.

Using the progressive Quebec childcare system as a model, a national childcare approach could be implemented at an affordable cost to all families. On September 1, 1997, the provincial government of Quebec began offering childcare spaces at a reduced parental contribution of five dollars a day for four-year-old children (Fortin, Godbout and St-Cerny 2012). These childcare services were licensed by the Ministry of Family. The hours offered were for 11 to 12 hours a day (Fortin et al. 2012). Over the next two years, the program phased in children aged three, then aged two. By 2000, all children zero to five years old were eligible (Lefebvre and Merrigan 2005). In 2004, the fee rose to seven dollars a day (Fortin et al. 2012), accounting for 20 to 30 percent of the cost (Cleveland and Krashinsky 2004). Affordable care ensured every young child had access to this entitlement.

The growth of the Quebec childcare policy illustrates its popularity. The number of regulated care spaces increased from 78,864 in September 1997 to 245,107 in March 2012 (Haeck, Lefebvre and Merrigan 2012). Subsidized spaces in Quebec account for about 40 percent of regulated childcare places in Canada (OECD 2006). Direct public subsidies from the province increased from $288 million between 1996 and 1997 to $2.2 billion between 2011 and 2012 (Haeck et al. 2012). This financing increased subsidy per space from $3,832 to $10,210 during this same period (Haeck et al. 2012). Growing
interest and investment in the Quebec childcare regime demonstrate the importance of the program to families.

Quebec’s provincially subsidized childcare system has clearly affected the labour participation of Quebec mothers with pre-school aged children. In 2008, the program enabled an estimated 70,000 more mothers to hold jobs, accounting for a 3.8 percent increase in women’s employment (Fortin et al. 2012). Using Statistics Canada’s NLSCY, Haeck, Lefebvre and Merrigan (2012) found that Quebec’s program significantly increased the participation of mothers with children aged one to four in the workforce by 13 percentage points between 1998 to 2008. More mothers working longer hours may raise the household income. For instance, Haeck et al. (2012) found total family income for two-parent-families in Quebec increased from approximately $58,000 in 1994 to $77,000 in 2008. The disposable income of families with young children attending daycare may increase due to the low-fee care. Low-income families also benefitted. Using data from GSSs, Brodeur and Connolly (2013) found lower-educated mothers and fathers were positively affected by the care because it helped them reduce childcare fees and boost their ability to work, and in turn, increase their incomes. The positive effects on mothers’ labour force participation and family income suggest Quebec’s affordable childcare services support better balance of work and family.

The Quebec program is beneficial to the province and to Canada. The increased labour supply of mothers with young children amplifies the tax base for both provincial and federal governments. Tax credits and transfers may decrease with larger net incomes, so that less money is needed for individuals from the governments. According to Fortin et al. (20012), the program boosted Quebec’s GDP by $5 billion a year and
taxes returned to the governments from this investment significantly exceed the cost of the program. These tax advantages are in the form of tax revenues, including individual income taxes, indirect taxes, corporate taxes, and dividends from public enterprises, and decreases in family credits and benefits. This approach to childcare is profitable for the Quebec and Canadian governments.

Potentially, a national system could have a profound impact on the numbers of mothers in the labour force Canada-wide. This program could support parental labour market practices by enabling mothers with children to work full-time hours if they so choose, as the long hours of childcare availability ensures parents’ work schedules are accommodated. Such a program could create wealth for individuals and the country. Like Quebec, the incomes of households may increase, so that fewer people would be dependent on social services, and tax revenues would increase. With fewer mothers caring for their children, more children would be in need of care. Consequently, a care program may also have a positive effect on increasing the demand for labour. More workers would be needed to provide care of children while the parents are working. Overall, there are benefits to a national low-cost care program for the Canadian economy and individual families.

Similar to the Quebec model, federal and provincial governments do not need to entirely finance a pan-Canadian childcare program. The governments could cost share with families geared to income. For instance, the lowest income families could pay $10 a day, middle income families $15 a day, and families paying the highest marginal tax rate $20 a day. The ministry responsible for care would calculate the exact amount needed to adequately finance the program. By charging parents a small portion based on a sliding
scale according to income, it ensures the state is not financially overburdened. In
addition, parental contributions would increase the sense of fairness for taxpayers who
may not have children (Cleveland and Krashinsky 2004). A larger fee may also help
promote the quality of daycare offered and the status of childcare workers.

The goal of a low-cost, universally accessible ECEC program should be to
provide a healthy and safe environment to enhance children’s well-being and
development. Resembling Quebec, the federal and provincial governments should focus
on funding professionally regulated centres where children would receive quality care
(Fortin et al. 2012). These facilities must be available and affordable so that all families
may benefit. Caution must be employed so that a one-size-fits-all approach is not used.
Accordingly, these services must include not-for-profit centres, family-based childcare,
and for-profit centres, like Quebec, to provide services to suit every family’s needs
(Friendly and Prentice 2009). Full-day care would provide attractive indoor and outdoor
learning environments (OECD 2006). The cornerstones of these programs must be: a)
quality, b) universally inclusive, c) accessible and d) developmental for children
(Friendly and Prentice 2009). High quality programs require training and supports for
early childhood educators and childcare providers. As mentioned above, the provincial
governments would set, monitor and enforce these standards. Added parental fees would
enable the educational quality to improve. Potentially, more workers who are qualified
would be able to be hired, thus decreasing the care provider to child ratio. The more
personalized care would further raise the standard of care.

Once children are five years of age, they may attend kindergarten as mentioned in
section 1.1. The narrow age eligibility criterion restricts many younger children from
benefiting from learning in the early years (Friendly and Prentice 2009). When the care is part-time, mothers’ employment participation may be hindered. Kindergarten could expand to four-year-olds across Canada and could be lengthened to full-time care. If kindergarten were offered at a younger age, more parents would utilize it. In fact, 95 percent of children attend kindergarten when offered (Beach et al. 2009; OECD 2006).

The state should not only aim to provide a high-quality public service for all preschool children but also spaces for older children. This would involve before- and after-school care for school-aged children for a low-fee reflecting parental income. This is important given that 46 percent of Canadian parents used some form of childcare for their children 14 years old or younger in 2011 (Sinha 2014). In 1998, Quebec offered care to all children five to twelve before and after school within the schools themselves for seven dollars a day (Fortin et al. 2012). The age of the children who benefit from such an initiative would have to be decided by the ministry involved. Not only would these integrated programs provide children with more opportunities to learn and grow, but they would also provide fewer transitions for children and families. The option to enroll school-aged children in these programs would provide parents with greater flexibility. Although the exact time for these programs may vary by school, the care legislation must include a before- and after-school program to complement the regular school day.

With the federal and provincial governments taking responsibility, funding should focus on a low-cost early childhood care program. For pre-school aged children, the care would be based on the Quebec model. For children aged four to six, kindergarten would be available to children on a full-day basis nation-wide. For school-
aged children, before- and after-school care would be provided. This system would be beneficial for the children and help parents reconcile their parental and professional responsibilities.

5.3 Transform Current Benefits

As part of the national plan, there must also be a substantial EI and work related benefits system to complement the childcare programs. Currently, practices regarding benefits assume the separation between work and family lives. To challenge and modify these notions, the state must develop employment policies that support women and men’s caring responsibilities. This includes reframing benefits based on the interrelations of production and social reproduction by increasing payment amounts, focusing on men’s role in care and creating a family responsibility leave. The change in benefits would help dispel the split between the public sector, the market and the domestic sphere. Government intervention would also increase parents’ rights by making it easier for mothers to choose careers while still having children, and for fathers to choose to spend more time with their children. A national benefit system may also help legitimize care as work, with more individuals taking leave from employment to care for their children.

5.3.1 Reform EI benefits. The importance of care leave cannot be understated as it acknowledges the fundamental interdependence of citizens and enables women and men to continue their participation in paid work. However, benefits should complement, not replace, a national childcare program. This section discusses how revamping and enriching maternity and parental leave entitlements would help parents find a work-family balance. This includes implementing legislation that would encourage men to take
time off work to care for their children. Family responsibility leave may also be an option the government could consider implementing. The goal of all leave must be to bridge the gap between work and family.

5.3.1.1 Benefit payments. Eligibility to receive EI maternity and parental benefits depends on specific criteria, such as employment type, reduction of more than 40 percent of weekly earnings, and 600 or more hours of insurable employment (SC 2014). Once qualified, maternity benefits are paid to pregnant women for as many as eight weeks before the due date for a maximum of 15 weeks, while parental benefits are paid to parents who care for a newborn or newly adopted child for a maximum of 35 weeks (SC 2014). EI parental benefits could be used entirely by one parent or they could be shared between parents. Section 2.2.3 discussed Canada’s current maternity and parental leave entitlements in greater detail.

Sweden has an extensive welfare system promoting a healthy work-life balance. It is the most generous system of parental leave in the world that allows and even encourages both parents to spend time with their children. Swedish parents are entitled up to 480 days of paid parental leave when a child is born or adopted (SI 2015). Remuneration rates are 80 percent up to a maximum annual salary of $50,000 (Morgan 2005). Parents who are not employed are also entitled to paid parental leave (SI 2015). Swedish parental leave guarantees the right to come back to the same job and position if the parent returns within one and a half years (Saxonberg 2009). This makes returning to work much easier. Due to the generous leave, Sweden has one of the largest proportions of employed mothers of young children in the European Union (EU). In 2012, 76.8
percent of Swedish mothers with children under six were employed, making Sweden the third highest employment rate of mothers in the EU (EU 2015).

In Scandinavia, sharing of caring between women and men is an important political issue (Leira 1994). Sweden has parental leave reserved exclusively for fathers. This leave is based on the income replacement principle that ensures both parents care for their children. Of the 480 days of paid parental leave offered to Swedes, 60 days of leave are allocated specifically to each parent and cannot be transferred to the other (SI 2015). These daddy months would be lost if fathers do not make use of them. This policy helps create a generation of fathers for whom paternity leave is a natural part of parenthood. Swedish men account for one-fourth of parental leave on average (SI 2015). Although this is not split equally amongst both genders, the figures represent a significant increase compared to the number of fathers that take parental leave in Canada. In fact, less than 10 percent of Canadian fathers claim parental leave (Statistics Canada 2013). Scandinavia has much to teach Canada about parental leave.

Canada should mimic the Swedish model to improve our current benefit structure. Enhancement of our remuneration rates from the current 55 percent for both parents to a specified maximum would represent significant progress for parents to realistically take advantage of the program, especially middle- or high-income earners. The minimization of the financial loss that families incur when the higher earner withdraws from the labour force would go a long way to increasing fathers’ involvement. Parents who previously were concerned about taking time off due to financial reasons, or career interruptions, may see the harmonization of careers with parenthood. Leave
policies ensure women’s as well as men’s long-term labor force attachment by providing both parents with time off from work to care for their children.

Quebec currently utilizes this Swedish model. Since January 1, 2006, Quebec has been responsible for providing maternity, paternity, parental, and adoption benefits to resident through the Quebec Parental Insurance Program (QPIP) (Services Quebec 2015b). Wage earners or self-employed workers receive income replacement for 52 weeks when they stop working, or see at least 40 percent reduction in their usual weekly earnings. In some instances, the qualifying period may extend to 105 weeks if the applicant is unable to work and has not had other benefits, such as EI (Service Quebec 2015b). To qualify, the parent must have recently given birth or be expecting a child, earned at least $2,000 in insurable income, and to have paid (or be expected to pay) premiums to the QPIP during the qualifying period, regardless of the number of hours worked (Services Quebec 2015b). These requirements are less stringent than the national EI benefits, enabling workers who previously did not meet the requirements, such as seasonal and part-time workers, to be eligible to use these benefits. Similar to the national system, Quebec offers a supplement for low-income families with incomes less than $45,921 for the qualifying year (Service Quebec 2015b).

Unlike the rest of Canada, Quebec offers parents a choice of EI benefit plans (basic or special) to suit their needs (Service Quebec 2015b). Each plan differs in the duration of the leave and the percentage of income replaced. For instance, paternity leave provides fathers benefits for 3 to 5 weeks based on a 70 or 75 percent income replacement rate (Service Quebec 2015b). The leave is not transferrable to the mother and is not dividable between the parents. In relation to Sweden, Quebec’s income
replacement rate and total number of “daddy days” is still low; however, in comparison to the rest of Canada it is a significant change. In order to afford this benefit and other services, such as childcare, Quebec’s maximum yearly insurable amount in 2015 is $70,000 of income (Service Quebec 2015b), while the national income cut-off is $49,500 (Services Canada 2014). This model may receive resistance from taxpayers, but it would help many individuals and families who require the aid. Under the Swedish and Quebec model, these changes to the national EI program would transform the current status quo and support the caring responsibilities of Canadian men and women.

5.3.1.2 Men doing their fair share. In addition to the increase of benefit payments for maternal and parental leave, paternal leave must be included in the reform of the national leave scheme. Over the last decade men are engaging in childcare in growing numbers, yet the majority of men are not main carers and perform less childrearing hours than women as previously noted. In fact, 67.4 percent of fathers returned to work less than one month after the youngest child’s arrival (Beaupre and Cloutier 2007). To accomplish this agenda, a modified version of the gender-friendly social policy of Scandinavian countries, that is mindful of race and class issues, is required. Included in this plan would be an “aggressive” care obligation equally required for women and men (Kershaw 2006:344). This egalitarian approach involves modifying the current social conditions, including challenging patriarchal socialization and neoliberal ideals. It is important to note, not all families would follow the egalitarian route. Nevertheless, the policy has important implications for the social, economic, and political equality of women.
Canada should embrace the Scandinavian father quota model. Canadian fathers
could be entitled to three or four months of paternal leave. These months would also be
reserved solely for fathers. Although the details would need to be worked out by the
ministry involved, there would also need to be appropriate exceptions in leave policy for
parents who do not fit the policy, such as single mothers, divorced mothers, and lesbian
parents. Leave should be provided to these individuals equally as much as single fathers
or heterosexual couples. The newly elected Liberal government recently suggested that
there will be provisions dedicated exclusively to new fathers when the changes to EI
parental leave rules are unveiled (Muise 2016).

If fathers are still unwilling to take advantage of the daddy months, an increase in
economic incentive may be necessary. Linking participation in paternal leave with the
CPP may persuade fathers to fulfill their fair share of care. This idea is part of what
of maternity or parental leave taken, the total amount of employment one must perform
should be reduced by four months to qualify without penalty for CPP benefits.
Accordingly, six months of leave would qualify a parent for CPP two years earlier than
he or she would in the absence of taking this leave. Although some individuals may find
this program costly, governmental use of policy to address the gender division of labour
is a huge step forward in gender equality. Under this program, fathers may be
encouraged to claim their duties in the domestic domain. In turn, fathers become more
involved social citizens and have intertwined the roles of labour force participant and
unpaid caregiver (Kershaw 2006). This policy would make it explicit that care provision
is a social responsibility just as much as paid work. Effectively, masculinity would be challenged to incorporate caregiving as critical civic work.

Paternal leave does not necessarily induce men to change their behaviour and stay at home with the child, but it vastly improves the current leave policy. These suggested revisions to paternal leave would promote gender equality by providing incentives for men to take on care work and thus challenge gendered expectations in households and the market. The right for fathers to care for their children reduces the stigma placed upon those who do take the leave. These men would no longer be perceived negatively for wanting to care for their children. A new process of socialization would begin. In fact, it would also provide fathers with a stronger bargaining position with their employers (Saxonberg 2009). The men would be able to claim that their family cannot afford to lose several months of leave benefits. This new leave policy would ensure employers’ practices would not penalize those who assume family obligations, and that men and women have equal freedom and responsibilities in decision-making about who does what in caring. If men are encouraged to bond with their children in the same way women currently are, and if this is successful, this challenges the biological essentialist argument that often gets used to justify women’s disproportionate responsibility for childcare. Paternal care benefits the child greatly. In summarizing the research that examined the impact of father involvement on children’s developmental outcomes, Allen and Daly (2007) found improved cognitive development, positive emotional development and well-being, good social development, physical health, and decreased negative child development outcomes.
5.3.1.3 *Family responsibility leave.* As part of a broader care-friendly state, the implementation of a family responsibility leave could provide all Canadians ten days off annually due to family duties. The leave may be used at the discretion of the worker to care for sick family members or attend appointments (CCAAC 2004). Family responsibility leave would help parents and other caregivers reconcile their caregiving and professional responsibilities. This leave would help alleviate some stress on family life caused by the profound changes in the labour market that was discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. A national leave would ensure all Canadians are treated equally regardless province of residence. This eliminates any discrepancies between the provinces’ leave of absence under their own labour standards acts.

Family responsibility leave is more about caring for families, not just children. In December 18, 2007, Quebec enacted a family-related leave for ten days a year (Service Quebec 2015a). Reasons for leave include medical examinations related to pregnancy, birth or adoption, death or a funeral, marriage or civil union and other short-term or extended absences (Service Quebec 2015a). Some absences are without pay while others offer benefits. Regardless, the leave provides individuals the discretion to use the days as needed. Canada could offer a similar leave so that it benefits all families across the nation, not just families with children. A maximum of ten days would ensure individuals do not abuse the leave. The benefits of such a policy would be profound. For instance, the enactment of family responsibility leave would acknowledge the changing structure of families, such as lone parent families. This legislation would alter the role of the government in promoting healthy family life. Recognizing the need to celebrate, mourn
and multitask is part of everyday living; a government that cares for its citizens acknowledges the importance of and the need for family care.

5.3.2 Other work related benefits. Extended benefits should include the availability of various non-standard work arrangements (NSWA). The legislation of these benefits as part of the childcare framework would ensure employers are unable to remove their workers' rights. This may bridge the gap between work and family life. These work arrangements support the socialized services previously discussed thereby potentially reducing public costs. Instead of working full-time individuals may find some other arrangement while still caring for their children so that they do not need to collect unemployment benefits. These could include a variety of arrangements, such as part-time, shorter work hours, and flexible work arrangements. Use of these benefits would vary by family needs.

As mentioned in section 3.3., NSWAs are increasingly popular. NSWAs consist of part-time work, job sharing, homeworking and telecommuting. By including NSWAs in statutory regulation, the caring dimension of citizenship would be further supported. That is, regulating NSWAs may help synchronize work and care responsibilities. Parents would have some leeway in scheduling their work according to individual family needs. Some parents may be more inclined to use NSWAs as a means to balance work and family life. For instance, a survey conducted by the European Foundation found that men would prefer an average of 37-hour work week, while women would prefer a 30-hour week, which is a reduction of 6 and 4 hours respectively, to spend more time with their children (Thornthwaite 2002). Factors that influence usage of different types include
ages and number of children, number of employed parents, gender, class, occupation, career orientation and earnings level (Thornthwaite 2002).

NSWAs benefit both employees and employers. McNall, Masuda and Nicklin (2010) found employees using NSWAs experienced greater enrichment from work to home, higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions. Based on these findings, employee loyalty may increase by offering NSWAs, as employees are not as likely to leave their positions. Based on survey of American CPAs, Almer and Kaplan (2002) also found that employees with NSWAs reported higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions than those without these arrangements. These same NSWAs employees also had lower levels of burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization, and stressors, such as role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload (Almer and Kaplan 2002). If, in line with previous empirical research, NSWAs are associated with emotionally healthier employees, that would translate in employees taking less time off work. Reduced time off would benefit the employee financially and increase workplace productivity. NSWAs ensure the work is still completed yet provides flexibility for the workers.

With the casualization of the labour market and more women than men working part-time as discussed in section 3.3, part-time work is viewed negatively. However, part-time work and other NSWAs could be beneficial to individuals who require a flexible schedule. In Sweden, a high proportion of women use NSWAs. Part-time employment rates for Swedish women are 39.6 percent compared to 14.6 percent for Swedish men (EU 2015). These NSWA would have to provide better working conditions, including the benefits afforded to those working full-time, to make it a viable
option for families. These benefits would include “job security, protection of entitlements and equality in career prospects for those who use family-oriented benefits” (Thornthwaite 2002:5). This way, couples would still be able to have a modified dual earner household, which is increasingly necessary these days.

Shorter work hours are another option to remedy the work-family conflict. Given that individuals still need to earn a living to support their families, working shorter hours is an attractive alternative. Perhaps, if working hours were reduced, employees would be more productive while working, as long hours tend to be tiresome. Sweden has rights for parents under a reduced hour model. Parents are able to decrease their working time by up to 25 percent without using parental benefit days, until the child is eight years old or finishes the first year of school (EU 2015). For children born on or after January 1, 2014, this rule has been changed to a maximum of 96 days off, which could be claimed for the child after their fourth birthday until the child reaches twelve years (EU 2015).

Flexible work arrangements enable employee adaptability and provide some level of control over work and home lives. Flexible work arrangements refer to an agreement between employer and employee to “provide some degree of responsiveness and adaptability that help employees to combine the spheres of work and non-work” (Thornthwaite 2002:18). These work arrangements include flextime, compressed work week, term-time work, time banking, annualized hour schemes and employee choice rostering. Flexible work arrangements offer parents schedules that match school hours, in addition to greater flexibility and control over working time. Flexible work arrangements are especially beneficial for single parent families who may be less likely to have other care options as mentioned in section 3.3.
There are many different types of work related benefits. NSWAs, shorter work hours and flexible work arrangements are a few ways to reduce work-family conflict. The flexibility of work schedules would complement parental leave well. If the provincial/territorial governments endorse these work-related benefits as part of the childcare legislation, employers would have to follow these guidelines. That way, the rights of the worker as a parent would be enforced. Transforming the current benefits by increasing the benefit payments for parental leave, encouraging paternal leave, establishing family responsibility leave and introducing other work related benefits would produce a more family friendly policy.

5.4 An Attainable Future

An analysis of the CP from a FPE approach uncovers various issues with the program. As a solution, the CP must be abandoned in favour of a national childcare strategy coupled with an adequate structure of supporting benefits. A national childcare strategy requires the governments of Canada taking responsibility for its role in childcare at both the federal and provincial levels to produce a strong social policy. Together the governments would finance high quality, state-organized care for pre-school aged children based on the Quebec model, in addition to kindergarten and after school care for older children. As part of the national plan, there must also be a substantial benefits system to complement the childcare programs. Existing EI benefits would be transformed based on Sweden’s generous leave structure to support the caring responsibilities of Canadian men and women. A specific focus on fathers would be an important aspect to facilitate greater involvement of fathers in parenting. A family responsibility leave policy with at least ten days paid per annum would help parents deal
with family duties. The final aspect of the plan must include other work related benefits to bridge the gap between work and family life. This targeted approach to ECEC could potentially improve gender, race, and class equality, thereby benefitting families and society. Although the alterations proposed may take time and are not the whole picture, they are a start in the right direction to revolutionize the present state of childcare in Canada.

Further research is required on the impact of the CP on Canadian women. This would include empirical research that systematically analyzes the impact of the intersection of gender, race, and class on experiences of Canadians. An intersectional approach would combine all categories to create distinctive opportunities for all groups. It would provide insight into understanding inequality under the CP. This scholarship would revise and enrich our thinking about gender, race, and class within Canada. It would enable fuller and more effective analyses of childcare, as well as gender and socioeconomic inequality.

Finally, further research is required for implementing the Quebec model on a national scale. This does not mean that the Quebec model is best for all of Canada. Extrapolating the program to the rest of Canada helps initiate the discussion of a national childcare approach. After all, childcare is needed for most families with young children. Before putting a national childcare into practice, it is important that all interests are considered. That being said, the program must benefit families with all levels of income and of different ethnic backgrounds irrespective of their gender. Keeping this in mind, a national childcare policy would benefit all families in Canada as opposed to the current status quo under the CP.
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