

The Industrial Relations Significance of Unpaid Work

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Introduction

THE STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS begins with the study of work: how work is performed, by whom, under what conditions, and for which rewards ground researchers' analyses of labour-management relations and union activity. Yet, not all work is of equal significance. Work in its industrial relations sense is narrowly defined as paid work performed in the context of employment. By contrast, unpaid work, particularly unpaid work in the household, is not a legitimate subject of study.¹

If an academic discipline can be defined by what its professionals do, as Adams argues,² a review of the literature confirms that work is synonymous with paid work

¹Industrial relations is not alone in the social sciences in its narrow conceptualization of work. Armstrong and Armstrong note that "What has been called work in traditional approaches to theorization is that which is done for pay or profit in the market. Most explanations have focused on waged and salaried workers, owners, and bosses. Unpaid work done in the market has frequently been excluded, as has all unpaid and some paid work done in the home or on the streets." Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, *Theorizing Women's Work* (Toronto 1990), 13. The consequences of this fixation with paid work have been serious for women who historically have contributed to the wealth and well-being of their spouses by working, without pay, in the home and family businesses. The infamous 1973 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the Murdoch case, in which the court ruled that the divorced wife had no claim to a share of the assets of the family farm because she had made no financial contribution over the period of her 25 year marriage, is a forceful reminder to academics of the need to integrate the unpaid work of women into our analysis of work. *Murdoch v. Murdoch*, 41 D.L.R. (3rd) 367.

²Asking the perennial question, what is industrial relations?, Adams argues that "if psychology could be defined as whatever psychologists do professionally ..., then industrial relations theory might be defined as that which industrial relations theory teachers teach." Roy J.

Anne Forrest, "The Industrial Relations Significance of Unpaid Work," *Labour/Le Travail*, 42 (Fall 1998), 199-225.

in industrial relations. Since its emergence as a distinct field of study,³ paid work has been the exclusive focus of interest. Theorists, pluralist⁴ and radical⁵ alike, confine their inquiry to the paid workplace with no hint that this approach might be problematic. Even those who define industrial relations as encompassing "all aspects of people at work" quickly retreat to the more conventional "all employment problems" without, apparently, noticing the inconsistency.⁶

The systematic neglect of unpaid work is a troubling theoretical problem for researchers interested in the subject of women and work, most obviously because women perform many hours of unpaid work in the household every day even when

Adams, "Understanding, Constructing, and Teaching Industrial Relations Theory," in Roy J. Adams and Noah M. Meltz, eds., *Industrial Relations Theory: Its Nature, Scope, and Pedagogy* (New Jersey 1993), 1-16, 1.

³Giles and Murray identify the 1940s as the decade "in which the first generation of industrial relations scholars ... became established in Canadian universities, and industrial relations courses began to feature regularly in the curricula of university education." Anthony Giles and Gregor Murray, "Towards an Historical Understanding of Industrial Relations Theory in Canada," *Relations Industrielles*, 43, 4 (1988), 780-811, 791. This is roughly twenty years later than in the United States. Bruce Kaufman, *The Origins and Evolution of the Field of Industrial Relations in the United States* (Ithaca 1993).

⁴Thompson warns that industrial relations is "at risk of being marginalized in the broader communities of the academy and policy makers" unless the field is broadened but he does not include the study of unpaid work in his call for action. Mark Thompson, "Industrial Relations: The Mother of All Disciplines," in Lapointe, Smith and Veilleux, *The Changing Nature of Work, Employment and Workplace Relations*, Selected papers from the XXXIVth Annual CIRA Conference (Québec 1998), 3-14, 5. Texts by Craig and Solomon and by Gunderson and Ponak, written within the dominant, pluralist paradigm and widely used in Canadian universities, present industrial relations as the study of paid work/employment. Goddard, who adopts a more critical perspective, also excludes unpaid work. Alton W.J. Craig and Norman Solomon, *The System of Industrial Relations in Canada*, 5th ed. (Scarborough 1996); Morley Gunderson and Alan Ponak, eds., *Union-Management Relations in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Don Mills 1995); John Goddard, *Industrial Relations: The Economy and Society* (Toronto 1994).

⁵Hyman, who is well known for his critiques of the pluralist approach, calls on academics to challenge "the artificial division between 'work' and 'life'" yet he does not move beyond the study of paid work. Richard Hyman, *The Political Economy of Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice in a Cold Climate* (London 1989), xii.

⁶Kochan begins his text by defining industrial relations as "an interdisciplinary field that encompasses the study of all aspects of people at work;" however in the same paragraph he reduces the scope of inquiry to "all employment problems" without reflecting on the differences between the two approaches. Thomas A. Kochan, *Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations* (Homewood 1980), 1. This contradictory vision of industrial relations is adopted without comment by Adams. Roy J. Adams, "'All Aspects of People at Work: Unity and Division in the Study of Labor and Labor Management.'" Adams and Meltz, *Industrial Relations Theory*, 119-60.

they are employed for pay,⁷ but also because women routinely perform unpaid work on the job. Cleaning, caring, and serving others are tasks expected of women in the home and in the (paid) workplace whether or not they are part of workers' formal job descriptions. Some or all of this work is unpaid — indeed, much of it is invisible as work — despite its value to families and employers.

The standard industrial relations approach attaches particular significance to paid work on the assumption that it is essentially and self-evidently different from unpaid work. Misleadingly paired as opposites by a system of language that establishes what is by what is not,⁸ paid and unpaid work are not so distinct or separate as researchers generally suppose. In everyday life the boundary between them is fluid, not fixed: what is paid in some circumstances is unpaid in others and *vice versa*.⁹ Paid work is not distinguishable by its location or connection to employment;¹⁰ by the skill, effort, or responsibility required;¹¹ or by its health

⁷Data from Statistics Canada indicate that women who are employed outside the home perform anywhere from 3.7 to 5.3 hours of unpaid work per day. Women with spouses and children under the age of 5 perform more unpaid work than single women and women without young children. Marcia Almey, "Labour Force Characteristics," *Women in Canada: A Statistical Report*, 3rd ed., (Ottawa 1995), 83.

⁸Ngairé Naffine, *Feminism and Criminology* (Philadelphia 1996), 86-9.

⁹The obvious examples are house cleaning and child care. Family members who work in small businesses such as the corner store and the family farm may or may not be paid. Paid and unpaid work are often substitutes for one another depending on variables of price, income, and time availability. For examples, see Meg Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (Toronto 1980) and Meg Luxton, "Two Hands for the Clock: Changing Patterns in the Gendered Division of Labour in the Home," in Luxton, Harriet Rosenberg, and Sedef Arat-Koc, eds., *Through the Kitchen Window: The Politics of Home and Family*, 2nd ed. (Toronto 1990), 39-55.

¹⁰Both paid and unpaid work are performed in the workplace and in the home, inside and outside of the employment relationship. Leach's investigation of industrial homeworking reveals the deeply felt understanding that "real" work is paid work performed outside the home. Belinda Leach, "Industrial Homework, Economic Restructuring and the Meaning of Work," *Labour/Le Travail*, 41 (Spring 1998), 97-115.

¹¹Most unpaid work replicates some form of paid work with the same range of skills (mental and physical), effort, and responsibility. For a discussion of the complex demands of mothering — unpaid work that is often thought to come naturally to women — see Rosenberg and Luxton. Harriet Rosenberg, "Motherwork, Stress, and Depression: The Costs of Privatized Social Reproduction," in Heather Jon Maroney and Meg Luxton, eds., *Feminism and Political Economy: Women's Work, Women's Struggles* (Toronto 1987), 181-96; Meg Luxton, "'Nothing Natural about It': The Contradictions of Parenting," in Meg Luxton, ed., *Feminism and Families: Critical Policies and Changing Practices* (Halifax 1998), 162-81.

risks.¹² Nor is it the exclusive site of wealth creation¹³ or touchstone of personal accomplishment and self-worth.¹⁴

Paid work is privileged in the study of industrial relations, not because of its particular economic and social significance, but because paid work is the site of industrial conflict. Rooted in what many researchers critique as a management-minded fixation with industrial stability¹⁵ industrial relations as an academic discipline is primarily concerned with the sources, impact, and resolution of (paid) work-related conflict. The prevailing (pluralist) paradigm, which directs researchers' attention to labour-management conflict over rules and rule-making, assumes that conflict in the workplace is framed by a notional "industrial relations system" that is located entirely within the public sphere.¹⁶ Thus, although important figures like Kochan¹⁷ argue that industrial relations research should examine the

¹²The commonplace assumption that unpaid household work entails no health and safety risks is inaccurate. See Harriet Rosenberg, "The Home Is the Workplace: Hazards, Stress and Pollutants in the Household," in Luxton, Rosenberg and Arat-Koc, *Through the Kitchen Window*, 57-80.

¹³For estimates of the economic value of unpaid work in the household (and discussions of the methodological problems involved in arriving at these estimates) see William Chandler, "The Value of Household Work in Canada, 1992," *National Income and Expenditure Accounts*, 41, 4 (1993), xxxv-xlvi; Chris Jackson, "Measuring and Valuing Households' Unpaid Work," *Canadian Social Trends*, 42 (Autumn 1996), 25-9; Ish Theilheimer, "Unpaid Work — (How) Can You Measure It? Should You Even Try?," *Transition* (June 1994), 4-7.

¹⁴Nancy Zukewich Ghalam, "Attitudes Toward Women, Work and Family," *Social Trends*, 46 (Autumn 1997), 13-7. Walters, *et al.* argue that for women nurses (but not their male co-workers) family ties and responsibilities can act as a buffer against the demands and frustrations encountered in their paid work, despite the fact that the women in their survey reported having less personal time. Vivienne Walters, Barbara Beardwood, John Eyles, and Susan French, "Paid and Unpaid Work Roles of Male and Female Nurses," in Karen Messing, Barbara Neis, and Lucie Dumais, eds., *Invisible: Issues in Women's Occupational Health* (Charlottetown 1995), 125-149.

¹⁵See, for example, the thorough-going critiques of Hyman in Richard Hyman, *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction* (London 1975) and Hyman, *The Political Economy of Industrial Relations: Theory and Practice in a Cold Climate*. Canadian examples include Giles and Murray, "Towards an Historical Understanding of Industrial Relations in Canada" and Goddard, *Industrial Relations: The Economy and Society*.

¹⁶Craig and Solomon name as actors in the industrial relations system labour, government and private agencies, and management whose goals and values are shaped primarily by economic and political forces. Craig and Solomon, *Industrial Relations in Canada*, 1-36. See also Morley Gunderson and Allen Ponak, "Industrial Relations" in Gunderson and Ponak, *Union-Management Relations in Canada*, 1-20.

¹⁷"... students of industrial relations must be as concerned with what work does to the individual as they are with what the individual worker, or workers in the aggregate, contribute to their employer or to society" (*italics in original*). Kochan, *Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations*, 18.

interconnections between (paid) work and non-work, in practice this is a one-way lens which obscures more than it reveals about workers' lives off the job.¹⁸ Any systematic consideration of non-work/unpaid work is precluded by the exclusion of the household from all of the components of the industrial relations system.¹⁹

For industrial relations to do "normal science"²⁰ unpaid work must remain invisible. Any sustained investigation of unpaid work as work would destabilize the discipline (if not the workplace) by radically altering the accepted understanding of the employer-employer relationship as the pre-eminent source of industrial conflict. Insofar as employers and male employees wish to maintain their consumption of the cleaning, caring, and support services routinely provided by women without remuneration, they share a common interest (albeit for different purposes) in perpetuating the fiction that unpaid work is not work. But such a unifying expectation runs counter to the theoretical understanding of the employment relationship as fundamentally a source of employer-employee conflict. Dunlop's²¹ belief that employers and employees are bound together by a common ideology is accepted only as an overarching principle even by pluralists.²²

In this intellectual environment, sources of industrial stability (other than collective bargaining) attract little academic attention and are likely to remain of marginal interest, short of a collective refusal by women to perform their traditional roles. An analysis of unpaid work brings to light the potential for conflict between men and women that sometimes cuts across and sometimes reinforces the employer-employee polarity. Naming the cleaning, caring and support services expected of women as unpaid work unearths an unacknowledged entitlement to compensation and provokes questions about the fairness of the existing wage

¹⁸The exception to this rule is the occasional consideration of the effects of occupational injury and disease on workers' private lives. Never explored are the ways in which life off the job shape work relations.

¹⁹In their overview of the industrial relations system Craig and Solomon discuss the ecological, economic, political, legal, and social subsystems, the last of which includes a brief consideration of the socialization process by reference to the media and influential elites. Craig and Solomon, *The System of Industrial Relations in Canada*, 39-69. Gunderson and Ponak also name the sociocultural environment alongside the legal, economic, and political as a subsystem but say nothing about its workings. Morely Gunderson and Allen Ponak, "Introduction," *Union-Management Relations in Canada*, 1-20. Neither text considers the family or the household as institutions which directly affect industrial relations.

²⁰Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed (Chicago 1970).

²¹"An industrial-relations system creates an ideology or a commonly shared body of ideas and beliefs which helps to bind the system together." John T. Dunlop, *Industrial Relations Systems* (Carbondale 1958), 383.

²²Hyman describes the central themes of the pluralist perspective as "the reality of opposing interests in industry; the legitimacy of their organised expression; and the probability that from the organisation of competing interests would develop a stable negotiated order." Hyman, *The Political Economy of Industrial Relations*, x.

structure and distribution of income. Questions about who does what, under what conditions and for which rewards demand different answers when the frame of reference is broadened beyond the simple employer-employee model.

The exclusive focus on paid work and the central place of industrial conflict mark industrial relations as "malestream"²³ social science. From the start, the discipline has reinforced rather than queried the social construction of men as workers/breadwinners and women as non-workers/economic dependants.²⁴ It is men's relations with their employer, their organized challenge to managerial control, that underpin industrial relations as an academic subject. By contrast, women's employment has been seen as temporary and subsidiary to their responsibilities in the home and, consequently, of little relevance to industrial relations theory and practice. Yet, researchers claim a position of gender neutrality and remain unaware of the extent to which traditional industrial relations theories and concepts implicitly assume a male subject.

In this paper I challenge the prevailing theoretical framework that marginalizes women by examining how unpaid work on and off the job is and is not analyzed in the literature and by demonstrating its importance to issues as central to the discipline as wages, job allocation, and industrial conflict. In the section entitled, "Unpaid Work on the Job," I argue that the concept of the "effort bargain" — how unpaid work is currently studied in industrial relations — obscures pay discrimination against women because it is more likely to implicitly recognize as work the tasks associated with jobs traditionally performed by men than many of the tasks associated with jobs performed by women. Under the heading, "Unpaid Work in the Household," I argue that unpaid work in the home determines, in part, how paid work is allocated and, in particular, how the social construction of women as non-workers/wives and mothers by researchers naturalizes women's place in the secondary labour market and reifies men's access to "breadwinner jobs." Finally, I conclude by arguing that incorporating unpaid work into the study of industrial relations is necessary to move women from the margins to the centre of discourse.

Unpaid Work On the Job

STRICTLY SPEAKING, it is not correct to say that conventional industrial relations analysis ignores unpaid work altogether. Although not conceptualized as such, travelling to the job site and washing up after shift are forms of work — paid in some workplaces, unpaid in others — that are recognized as significant because they have been matters in dispute between workers and employers. Yet, because these issues are part of industrial relations by virtue of their place on the bargaining table, researchers have never asked what they are examples of. Consequently, they

²³ Mary O'Brien, "The Dialectics of Reproduction," in J. King-Farlow and W. Shea, eds., *Contemporary Issues in Political Philosophy* (New York 1976).

²⁴ Anne Forrest, "Women and Industrial Relations Theory: No Room in the Discourse," *Relations Industrielles*, 48, 3 (1993), 409-40.

tend to be lumped together with pay for various sorts of time not worked, for example, paid vacations and sick pay, when, in fact, the former are prerequisites for production and might reasonably be labelled work.

What constitutes work — that is, which activities should be paid — is contested, not settled. Employers have long sought to maximize profitability by imposing the narrowest possible definition of work as time and effort spent directly in production. In so doing, they have attempted to push onto workers responsibility for a wide range of activities necessary for production but subsidiary to the job from the employer's point of view. The incursion into workers' own time may not be trivial. In addition to travelling to the work site and washing up after shift, it is not uncommon for employers to expect production and service workers to set up their machines, clean their work spaces, learn new job functions, and perform warm-up exercises without pay.

Employees, for their part, have challenged their employers' narrow construction of work and pressed to be paid for as much time and effort expended on their employers' behalf as they could secure. In some workplaces, they have demanded and won portal-to-portal pay²⁵ and wash-up time before meals and/or at shift end;²⁶ in others, they have modified or defeated payment schemes such as piece work that load onto workers responsibility for set-up and clean-up without compensation. Workers have also sought to break the tie between pay and employer attempts to control time off the job. Challenging their employers' insistence that paid time is by definition work time, some employees have resisted employers' efforts to retain residual control over paid time off the job, for example, by demanding that workers be available for production during their coffee breaks and lunch periods.²⁷

²⁵The available data on the incidence of portal-to-portal pay and related activities for unionized workers are neither comprehensive nor up-to-date. As of 1985 portal-to-portal pay, etc. was most likely to be found in major collective agreements covering non-manufacturing workers in the forestry (9 of 10 agreements), mining (14 of 32), and utilities (9 of 27) industries. Labour Canada, *Provisions in Major Collective Agreements in Canada Covering 500 and More Employees* (July 1985). Unfortunately, this publication no longer exists. There are no data for non-union workers.

²⁶Paid wash-up time before meals and/or at the end of shift was provided in 88 of 276 major collective agreements covering manufacturing workers and in 66 of 618 agreements covering non-manufacturing workers. The manufacturing industries in which paid wash-up time was most common were transportation equipment (27 of 43 agreements), machinery (7 of 9), chemicals and chemical products (5 of 9), and metal fabricating (6 of 11). Labour Canada, *Provisions in Major Collective Agreements in Canada Covering 500 and More Employees*.

²⁷Discussion of this subject by Palmer and Palmer is cursory; however, arbitral jurisprudence appears to establish management's right to require unionized employees to work during their paid lunch period and failure to comply with such an order is evidence of insubordination. See *Lake Ontario Steel*, 19 L.A.C. 103 (Weiler 1968). Earl Edward Palmer and Bruce Murdoch Palmer, *Collective Agreement Arbitration in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Markham 1991), 335. Unfortunately, Brown and Beatty offer no guidance on this issue. Donald J. M. Brown and David M. Beatty, *Canadian Labour Arbitration*, 2nd ed. (Aurora 1984).

Workers have problematized the meaning of work most successfully in those industries which, historically, have been most widely organized, for example, forestry, mining, metal working, utilities²⁸ — that is, industries in which men predominate. Women, by contrast, have often lacked the organized means to challenge managerial prerogative, which appears to explain their inability to get their pay demands attended to.²⁹ However, unionization does not fully account for what is paid and what is not.³⁰ Over time, the practice of employers paying for production-related tasks that fall outside of workers' formal job descriptions has spread to many non-union firms, most notably, large firms in primary and secondary industries dominated by men.

From a conventional industrial relations perspective disputes over wash-up time and the like are not disputes over unpaid work. Lacking the concept of unpaid work, researchers rely on the concept of the "effort bargain." Described by Hyman as the "level of performance which is tacitly accepted by both employers and employees as a reasonable equivalent for a given rate of wages,"³¹ the effort bargaining is useful because it draws attention to the conflict of interest inherent in any definition of (paid) work and the permeability of the boundary between paid and unpaid work on the job. But these analytical strengths are offset by weaknesses

²⁸Unionized employees in these industries are also more likely to have negotiated reporting pay, call-in/call back pay, stand-by pay and breakdown or bad weather pay. Labour Canada, *Provisions in Major Collective Agreements in Canada Covering 500 and More Employees*.

²⁹Note, for example, the expectation that bank tellers will cash out on their own time after closing, that waitresses will set up tables before their shift begins, and that secretaries will work through their lunch and break times when asked. Unionization is no guarantee that job-related tasks will be paid for, however. Messing reports the extraordinary efforts of unionized telephone operators to be the flexible work force demanded by their employer. Operators have widely varying start times (e.g., 6 AM on Monday, 4 PM on Tuesday, 8 PM on Wednesday, and so on) for which many need to find child care or switch shifts. But because none of this can be done during working hours, they spend breaks, lunch time and family time trying to make the necessary arrangements. Over a ten day period operators made an average of 156 efforts to change their employment hours and another 212 to rearrange child care. Karen Messing, *One-Eyed Science: Occupational Health and Women Workers* (Philadelphia 1998), 122-3.

³⁰Even in industries in which union density is high, for example, forestry and mining, not all unionized workers are entitled to portal-to-portal pay or wash-up time. Labour Canada, *Provisions in Major Collective Agreements in Canada Covering 500 and More Employees*. Note as well that workers represented by the Canadian Auto Workers Union at CAMI Automotive in Ontario are paid for time spent doing the warm-up exercises required by the company; however, workers in similar plants, both union and non-union, elsewhere in Canada, the United States and Japan are not.

³¹Hyman, *Industrial Relations*, 25.

which become especially apparent when traditional women's work is the subject of study.³²

On the job women (like men) are conceptualized workers who have no gender. Yet, the concepts which underpin the study of industrial relations — ideas about the nature of work, effort, fairness and equality — have been developed by reference to industrial/men's work and so systematically ignore the gender-specific performance expectations applied to women by employers, co-workers, customers and clients. The "effort" entailed in most women's jobs is not the physical effort that researchers assume is demanded of manufacturing and resource sector workers; and the "bargain" is likely to be visible only when workers negotiate through trade unions at the point of production.

Researchers (or for that matter employers and employees) have little difficulty identifying effort/work when it is exerted by male blue-collar workers in industrial settings but are likely to stereotype women's jobs as "light" despite the fact that many are not.³³ Studies of child care workers,³⁴ sewing machine operators,³⁵

³²The concept of the effort bargain is weak in other respects as well. It is descriptive rather than analytical with little probative value and cannot be used to determine whether equal pay has been achieved or even whether greater effort is associated with higher pay. Because it offers no benchmark of entitlement the concept of the effort bargain obscures the extent to which workers perform unpaid work. By implication the bargain struck is fair, if only for the time being. In any event, it would be impossible for an outsider to assess the fairness of any bargain because they would never know all of the considerations and trade-offs that were taken into account.

³³Vézina and Courville compared the effort required (as measured by total weight manipulated in a work day) by male machine operators in a plastics factory and female sewing machine operators in a clothing factory as representative of "heavy" men's and "light" women's production jobs, respectively, and determine that the women worked much harder than the men. By contrast with the plastics workers whose jobs required the men to lift relatively heavy weights at irregular intervals with opportunities for rest in between, the sewing machine operators were required to "sew piece after piece, at a repetitive, non-stop pace [so] ... reach higher totals of dynamic forces." Nicole Vézina and Julie Courville, "Integration of Women into Traditionally Masculine Jobs," *Women and Health*, 18, 3 (1992), 97-118, 107. See also Messing, *One-Eyed Science*, 4-9.

³⁴Susan R. Stock, "A Study of Musculoskeletal Symptoms in Daycare Workers," in Messing, Neis, and Dumais, *Invisible*, 62-74.

³⁵Nicole Vézina, Daniel Tierney, and Karen Messing, "When Is Light Work Heavy? Components of the Physical Workload of Sewing Machine Operators Working at Piecework Rates," *Applied Ergonomics*, 23, 4 (1992), 268-76.

confectionary workers,³⁶ paramedics and nurses,³⁷ and laundry workers³⁸ demonstrate that, contrary to expectation, many forms of "women's work" require considerable physical effort in the form of lifting (usually light weights repeatedly) or pushing (often to avoid lifting). Also overlooked because it is not characteristic of men's jobs is the physical effort demanded of sales clerks, hairdressers, tellers, cashiers,³⁹ and factory workers⁴⁰ required to stand in one place for prolonged periods of time.

Finding the effort/work in what women do is particularly difficult when the tasks involved are thought to come "naturally" to women. Getting dressed is a good example of invisible effort/work that is routinely performed by women in conjunction with their jobs yet raises no legitimate claim for pay. "Looking good" is commonly assumed to be a matter of personal choice — even evidence of vanity — when, in fact, a "feminine" appearance is an explicit job requirement in many occupations, particularly when the job involves contact with the public.⁴¹ In occupations ranging from receptionist to air flight attendant to waitress, women employees' appearance is thought to be critically important to the success of the business. Receptionists and secretaries in many workplaces are required to adhere to a dress code (formal or informal) that stresses an appealing, but not too suggestive

³⁶Lucie Dumais, Karen Messing, Ana Maria Seifert, Julie Courville, and Nicole Vézina, "Make Me a Cake as Fast as You Can: Determinants of Inertia and Change in the Sexual Division of Labour of an Industrial Bakery," *Work, Employment and Society*, 7, 3 (1993), 363-82.

³⁷Daniel Tierney, Patrizia Romito, and Karen Messing, "She Ate Not the Bread of Idleness: Exhaustion Is Related to Domestic and Salaried Working Conditions among 539 Québec Hospital Workers," *Women and Health*, 16, 1 (1990), 21-42.

³⁸Carole Brabant, "Heat Exposure Standards and Women's Work: Equitable or Debatable?," *Women and Health*, 18, 3 (1992), 119-30.

³⁹Messing, *One-Eyed Science*, 6, 64, 158.

⁴⁰Karen Messing and Jean-Pierre Reveret, "Are Women in Female Jobs for Their Health? A Study of Working Conditions and Health Effects in the Fish-Processing Industry in Quebec," *International Journal of Health Services*, 13, 4 (1989), 635-47. Studies in Scandinavia reveal that women factory workers are more likely than men to work at jobs which limit their mobility and autonomy. See Marja-Liis Honkasalo, "Dead End — Views on Career Development and Life Situation of Women in the Electronics Industry," *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 3 (1982), 445-64; Hjordis Kaul and Merete Lie, "When Paths Are Vicious Circles — How Women's Working Conditions Limit Influence," *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 3 (1982), 465-81; Kaisa Kauppinen-Toropainen, Irja Kandolin and Elina Haavio-Mannila, "Sex Segregation of Work in Finland and the Quality of Women's Work," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 9 (1988), 15-27.

⁴¹See Adkins whose study of men and women employed by a recreation park and hotel illustrates how gendered assumptions about appearance impose higher standards on women from the point of hire. Lisa Adkins, *Gendered Work: Sexuality, Family and the Labour Market* (Buckingham 1995).

self-presentation;⁴² air flight attendants are required to maintain their weight within certain bounds and may have their make-up inspected by their supervisors;⁴³ and waitresses in bars and restaurants are frequently required to wear sexually suggestive uniforms which mark them as "available" to customers.⁴⁴

For many more women, maintaining a "look" that involves the careful application of make-up, the styling of hair, and close attention to the choice of clothes is an implicit job requirement and a vital component of workers' job performance. In their study of female administrative employees Rafaei *et al.* describe the work involved both in learning the style of dress appropriate for their place in the hierarchy and in planning, acquiring and maintaining clothes suitable for various functions and events.⁴⁵ Yet, the considerable time, skill, and effort that women routinely apply to their appearance is not conceptualized as work, resulting in the ridiculous possibility that women can be disciplined for not performing the beauty function for which they are not paid.⁴⁶

Attending to one's appearance is an example of "gender work" because it is generally expected that women can and should perform these tasks because they are women. Other examples of unpaid gender work performed by women on the job everyday include tasks such as getting coffee, tidying the lunchroom, and

⁴²Jane Gaskell, "What Counts as Skill? Reflections on Pay Equity," in Judy Fudge and Patricia McDermott, eds., *Just Wages: A Feminist Assessment of Pay Equity* (Toronto 1991), 141-59; Rosemary Pringle, *Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power and Work* (London 1989).

⁴³Paulette M. Caldwell, "A Hair Piece: Perspectives on the Intersection of Race and Gender," *Duke Law Journal*, 1991, 2 (1991), 365-96.

⁴⁴Catherine MacKinnon, *Sexual Harassment of Working Women* (New Haven 1979); Elaine J. Hall, "Smiling, Deferring, and Flirting: Doing Gender by Giving 'Good Service,'" *Work and Occupations*, 20, 4 (1993) 452-71.

⁴⁵Anat Rafaei, Jane Dutton, Celia V. Harquail and Stephanie Mackie-Lewis, "Navigating by Attire: The Use of Dress by Female Administrative Employees," *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 1 (1997), 9-45.

⁴⁶From time to time students report that they have witnessed an altercation between a woman and her supervisor over appropriate dress. In these situations, it is not unusual for the woman to dash home to change, in tears, after being criticized for her choice of clothes. Sheppard describes the difficulties experienced by managerial and professional women caught by the contradictory need to present themselves as both "feminine" and "business-like." Deborah L. Sheppard, "Organizations, Power and Sexuality: The Image and Self-Image of Women Managers," Jeff Hearn, Deborah L. Sheppard, Petra Tancred-Sheriff, and Gibson Burrell, eds., *The Sexuality of Organization* (London 1989), 139-57. The criteria for success are varying and not necessarily predictable or logical. Recently, I was told that women employees of a trust company in Windsor, Ontario are not permitted to wear socks to work, even when they wear pants, but must always wear hose. Wolf provides many examples of women who have lost their jobs over issues of appearance but no sense can be made of the demands placed on women. Thus, women have been disciplined or dismissed for not wearing make-up and for wearing too much or the wrong kind of make-up. Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (Toronto 1990), 24-33.

listening to the problems of customers and clients. Secretaries⁴⁷ and women faculty⁴⁸ in my university routinely listen to the personal problems of students, as do waitresses, hairdressers, bank tellers, and any other woman who deals with customers and clients in her job.

Women's jobs often require them to perform significant amounts of emotional work.⁴⁹ In the service sector in particular workers are often required to figure out and meet the unexpressed needs of patients, clients and customers and to remain courteous and attentive in the process. Air flight attendants are expected to manage their own emotions and those of passengers to create an aura of safety (no matter what the circumstances) and attract repeat business.⁵⁰ Hospital and nursing home cleaners apply considerable mental effort when they work carefully so as to avoid disturbing patients.⁵¹ Teleworkers are chosen because of their attentiveness to callers, persuasiveness and communications skills.⁵² Yet, these forms of work are typically unrecognized and uncompensated. When noticed at all, women's extra effort is dismissed as trivial or constructed as evidence of an out-going personality, not a job necessity, even in workplaces where "team work" and "customer service" are part of the managerial philosophy.

There are no significant theoretical or practical differences between the effort involved in getting dressed and travelling to the work site or washing up after shift. None the less, employers and employees alike would think it laughable if putting on make-up or fixing hair were labelled work and made the subject of collective bargaining. The significant difference is the gender of the worker performing the tasks. Gender is the difference that makes a difference, MacKinnon argues,⁵³

⁴⁷Mary Jane Wichroski, "The Secretary: Invisible Labor in the Workworld of Women," *Human Organization*, 53, 1 (1994), 33-41.

⁴⁸The belief that students expect attentive and nurturing behaviour from women faculty to a degree not expected of their male colleagues is commonplace among women faculty with whom I have discussed this issue. See Mary Famborough, "Great Expectations: Women PhD Students with Women Faculty," *Women in Higher Education*, 7, 2 (1998), 23; Shelley M. Park, "Research, Teaching, and Service: Why Shouldn't Women's Work Count?," *Journal of Higher Education*, 67, 1 (1996), 46-84.

⁴⁹Hochschild defines emotional labour as "the management of feeling to produce a publicly observable facial and bodily display ... for a wage." Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* (Berkeley 1983), 14.

⁵⁰Women flight attendants are required to do more of this emotional work than their male co-workers. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 171.

⁵¹*Harmatiuk v. Pasqua Hospital*, 4 CHRR 239, D/1177-81.

⁵²Ruth Buchanan and Joan McFarland, "The Political Economy of New Brunswick's 'Call Center' Industry: Old Wine in New Bottles," *Socialist Studies Bulletin*, 50, (October-December 1997), 17-40.

⁵³Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Making Sex Equality Real," in Lynn Smith, ed., *Righting the Balance: Canada's New Equality Rights* (Saskatoon 1986), 37-43.

because gender work is constructed as part of who women are rather than what they do.⁵⁴

What men do in conjunction with their employment is more likely to be labelled work and be paid than what women do simply because they are men. Whether or not time spent performing tasks such as travelling to the work site or washing up after shift is paid, the claim for pay is considered legitimate because male workers have made it so. Constructed as workers/breadwinners,⁵⁵ whatever their actual responsibilities,⁵⁶ men have an acknowledged right to maximize their incomes by demanding to be paid for as much of their effort/work as they can get away with. Breadwinners are also entitled to protect their non-work time/leisure as their rightful reward for their hard (paid) work.⁵⁷ Consequently, when employers intrude by imposing overtime, split shifts or call-in duty there is an expectation that workers will be compensated for their loss of "free" time. Indeed, one suspects that if there were a tradition of men packing their own lunches for work or washing their own work clothes, unions would try to negotiate pay for these activities and employers and researchers would take these demands seriously.

By this argument the value of "women's work" on the job is heavily discounted both because it is associated with women⁵⁸ and because it replicates the cleaning,

⁵⁴Jane Seymour, "'No Time to Call My Own': Women's Time as a Household Resource," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 15, 2 (1992), 187-92. See also Fishman who argues that women appear to perform gender work "naturally" because these tasks are mistakenly assumed to be part of gender identity rather than gender activity. Pamela A. Fishman, "Interaction: The Work Women Do," *Social Problems*, 25, 4 (1978) 397-406.

⁵⁵When asked to define the meaning of masculinity, the majority of American women and men still say, "good provider for his family." Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women* (New York 1991), 65. However, this definition may be somewhat less salient for African-American men whose earning opportunities have been limited by racism. Andre G. Hunter and James Earl Davis, "Constructing Gender: An Exploration of Afro-American Men's Conceptualization of Manhood," *Gender and Society*, 6, 3 (1992), 464-79.

⁵⁶Today the male breadwinner is now more the exception than the rule. Only one in three two-person couples is supported by a single earner and in one-quarter of those families the woman is the primary earner. On average, women's earnings make up almost one-third of family income in dual-earner households, a contribution that compensates for the losses in men's earning power experienced over the last twenty-five years. Abdul Rashid, "Women's Earnings and Family Incomes," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 3, 2 (1991), 27-37; Susan Crompton and Leslie Geran, "Women and Main Wage-Earners," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 7, 4 (1995), 26-9. But for wives' earnings the percentage of dual-earner families with incomes below Statistics Canada's low income cut-off would have been 15.7 rather than 4.1 in 1992. Nancy Ghalam, "Income and Earnings," Labour Canada, Ministry of Industry, *Women in Canada: A Statistical Report* (Ottawa 1995), 84-100, 88.

⁵⁷Seymour, "No Time to Call My Own."

⁵⁸Dale Spender, *Man-Made Language*, 2nd ed (London 1980).

caring, and serving functions women routinely performed at home for free.⁵⁹ Men in the workplace are assumed to be workers/breadwinners but the same cannot be said of women. Identifiers such as "the blond accountant" and "the cute bus driver" — my friend's mother calls me "the lady professor" — demonstrate that it is almost impossible for women to claim the "positive semantic space"⁶⁰ accorded activities such as paid work that have long been coded male. Even when women earn a substantial portion of family income⁶¹ or have been in the labour force for a long period of time⁶² they are cast — indeed, they often cast themselves — in the role of secondary earner. Only one in six of the women co-breadwinners interviewed by Potuchek⁶³ had redefined breadwinning as a shared, non-gendered activity. And Weiss⁶⁴ concluded that "insofar as the income from their wives' work is helpful to the family, [husbands] see it as a matter of their wives helping out — analogous to their own contributions to home maintenance."

When performed by men aspects of women's gender work are often noticed and rewarded. Although male waiters, bartenders and hairdressers are expected to be solicitous of their customers' needs and interests it is generally understood that not all men are suited to this kind of work. Those who succeed are regarded as exceptional men and rewarded by customers and employers.⁶⁵ By contrast, "excep-

⁵⁹"Housework was unpaid, hence it had no value, and its public equivalent could not be valued comparably to 'real work' and so was set at a 'woman's wage.'" Alice H. Cook, "Family and Work: Challenges to Labor, Management and Government," *Relations Industrielles*, 42, 3 (1987), 520-7, 522.

⁶⁰Spender, *Man-Made Language*.

⁶¹Not long ago, a woman auto worker explained to me that she earns more than 60 per cent of her family's income but would never press the point at home. She does not wish to embarrass her spouse who maintains his position as breadwinner by paying the mortgage out of his wages. But consider the contribution of the woman whose income was described as supplementary because, in her husband's words, her wages were used "just" to pay the mortgage. Jane C. Hood, "The Provider Role: Its Meaning and Measurement," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48 (May 1986), 349-59, 355.

⁶²The auto worker quoted in the footnote above, who is also a part-time union organizer, described her frustration with women who say they are not interested in union representation because they are only working temporarily — "until my daughter gets married" or "until we pay off the mortgage" are common responses in her experience — when, in fact, these women have been employed by the same firm for many years. The organizer then laughed and said that she, herself, started working full-time outside the home twelve years earlier thinking she would stay only long enough to pay off the family's debts and buy a dishwasher.

⁶³Jean L. Potuchek, "Employed Wives' Orientation to Breadwinning: A Gender Theory Analysis," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54 (August 1992), 548-58.

⁶⁴Robert S. Weiss, "Men and Their Wives' Work" in Faye J. Crosby, ed., *Spouse, Parent, Worker: On Gender and Multiple Roles* (New Haven 1987), 109-21, 114.

⁶⁵See Hall for examples of this in the restaurant industry. But note the complicating factor of job segregation by sex within occupations which tends to put men into jobs that require fewer nurturing skills. Elaine J. Hall, "Smiling, Deferring, and Flirting: Doing Gender by

tional" women are those whose behaviour is not nurturing or whose appearance deviates noticeably from accepted beauty standards. Judged wanting by these criteria women may find themselves subtly (or not so subtly⁶⁶) punished for their perceived lack of femininity.

Women's job functions are rarely taken into account in analyses of women's wages. Why women earn less than men is a question that has attracted considerable attention in industrial relations, but the answer is much more likely to be shaped by neo-classical than feminist economics. Researchers typically employ the "human capital" model which looks to differences between women and men, for example, differences in educational attainment, labour force experience, etc., to explain why women on average earn less than men. Job segregation by sex is also considered; however, it, too, is explained by reference to exogenously determined, gender-linked preferences and choices which are thought to push and pull women into lower-paying, lower-productivity jobs.⁶⁷

The issue of wage discrimination is rarely approached from a pay equity perspective in industrial relations. Looking through the major journals⁶⁸ for the

Giving 'Good Service.'" and Elaine J. Hall, "Waitering/Waitressing: Engendering the Work of Table Servers," *Gender and Society*, 7, 3 (1993), 329-46.

⁶⁶The case of Jan Waterman, a woman who was publicly humiliated and eventually fired because she insisted on her right to wear unfeminine clothing to work, is instructive on this point. Lynne Pearlman, "Theorizing Lesbian Oppression and the Politics of Outness in the Case of *Waterman v. National Life Assurance*: A Beginning in Lesbian Human Rights/Equality Jurisprudence," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 7, 2 (1994), 454-508.

⁶⁷See, for example, William J. Carrington and Kenneth R. Troske, "Sex Segregation in U.S. Manufacturing," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 51, 3 (1998), 445-64; Catherine J. Weinberger, "Race and Gender Wage Gaps in the Market for Recent College Graduates," *Industrial Relations*, 37, 1 (1998), 67-84; Susan L. Averett and Julie L. Hotchkiss, "Discrimination in the Payment of Full-Time Wage Premiums," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 49, 2 (1996), 287-301; Keith W. Chauvin and Ronald A. Ash, "Gender Earnings Differentials in Total Pay, Base Pay, and Contingent Pay," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 47, 4 (1994), 634-49; Barry Gerhart, "Gender Differences in Current and Starting Salaries: The Role of Performance, College Major, and Job Title," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 43, 4 (1990), 418-33. Exceptions to this approach are Michael P. Kidd and Michael Shannon, "Does the Level of Occupational Aggregation Affect Estimates of the Gender Wage Gap?" *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 49, 2 (1996), 317-26; Gregory Lewis, "Gender Integration of Occupations in the Federal Civil Service: Extent and Effects on Male-Female Earnings," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 49, 3 (1996), 472-93. Both of these studies assume that job segregation by sex cannot be explained by differences in personal characteristics between men and women.

⁶⁸The following journals were examined: *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, *Industrial Relations*, *Industrial Relations Journal*, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, *Journal of Labor Research* and *Relations Industrielles*.

years 1990-98 (that is, the years during which pay equity legislation was widely discussed in the press and implemented in a number of jurisdictions) I could find no studies which investigated the male-female wage differential by comparing the skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions of jobs typically performed by women with jobs typically performed by men, either within or between workplaces.⁶⁹ And yet, the concept of "equal pay for equal work" has a long been a bargaining goal for organized workers and recognized as a fair basis for determining wages by researchers. But the probative power of this approach has been limited because researchers have generally failed to move beyond the "formal equality" approach that rules out comparisons between the work of men and women on the grounds that "like must be compared with like."⁷⁰

Although researchers have been reluctant to name women's lower wages "discrimination," women's work has been systematically undervalued. Employers appear to know that business success often depends on women's unpaid effort and skills, even if they resist paying for them. Thus, despite the fact that gender work is rarely an explicit job requirement employers assume they are entitled to discipline women when the tasks entailed are not performed to their satisfaction. Caldwell⁷¹ describes the lengths to which airlines in the United States go to enforce their dress and beauty codes. In her view, the industry has attempted to maintain a chorus line image by excluding women, most notably black women, whenever their height or weight or choice of hair style or make-up does not conform to industry standards.

The pay equity exercise has revealed the extent to which employers have institutionalized low pay for women by refusing to acknowledge the value of their gender work. In its manual for members OPSEU⁷² identifies being pleasant and courteous as an overlooked skill when performed by public service workers but highly visible when performed by zoo-keepers. "Coping" and "covering" are invisible work when performed by child-care workers or secretaries who are generally expected to run the office efficiently in the absence of the boss and without his/her authority. Describing the secretary's predicament the OPSEU manual

⁶⁹During this period pay equity was the subject of articles which considered the implementation or impact of pay equity initiatives. See, for example, Lynda J. Ames, "Fixing Women's Wages: The Effectiveness of Comparable Worth Policies," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 48, 4 (1993), 709-25; Felicity Rafferty, "Equal Pay: The Evolutionary Process 1984-1994," *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 36, 4 (1994), 451-67; Felicity Rafferty, "Pay Equity: An Industrial Relations Anomaly," *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 33, 1 (1991), 3-19; Michael Jefferson, "The Effects of Equal Value Claims on Businesses," *Industrial Relations Journal*, 21, 1 (1990), 7-13.

⁷⁰Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Breaking New Ground," *LEAF Lines*, 3, 2 (1990), 1-2. Many of the studies cited above imply that women do not experience wage discrimination so long as they are paid the same wages as men performing the same narrowly defined job.

⁷¹Caldwell, "A Hair Piece."

⁷²Ontario Public Service Employees Union, *Equity at Work: A Pay Equity Manual for Practitioners* (Toronto 1987).

advises, "If she does her job well, work will flow smoothly — and unnoticeably; if the day goes badly, there will be chaos. She will get none of the credit and all of the blame."⁷³

Unpaid work leads a shadowy life in the study of industrial relations, often implicitly acknowledged but never named.⁷⁴ Whereas the concept of the effort bargain glosses over the distinction between paid and unpaid work, naming some work "unpaid," clearly identifies the underlying tension in the employment relationship over what constitutes work in a way that takes accounts of women's experiences as women. Long associated with women, the naming of unpaid work invites researchers to consider the particular contributions of women and "women's work" and links the workplace to the household by setting up unpaid work as the complement to, rather than the opposite of, paid work.

Unpaid Work in the Household

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS holds to a paid work/non-work model of daily life. Whatever their personal inclinations, industrial relations academics as researchers are deaf to the feminist argument that unpaid reproduction work is work. The ideology of women as non-working wives/mothers remains an unexamined yet vital undercurrent in industrial relations theory. No surprise, then, to learn that a leading Canadian text continues to employ the "income-leisure trade-off model" to analyze changing patterns of labour force participation and hours of (paid) work. With "leisure" defined as a "catchall word for all nonwork activities"⁷⁵ this model negates the reality of household labour which, by every conceivable measure, is work.

That women choose to perform unpaid household work is a firmly-held but uninvestigated premise in industrial relations. Readers of the literature will be familiar with the argument that women's affinity for and commitment to housework and family care explain their lower investment in "human capital," "preference"

⁷³Ontario Public Service Employees Union, *Equity at Work*, 79. See also Wichroski's detailed description of the invisible work entailed in the secretary's job. Wichroski, "The Secretary."

⁷⁴Spender argues that by appropriating the right to name the world in their own image men have profoundly shaped what it is possible to think about and experience. Spender, *Man-Made Language*. The importance for women of naming one's experience is underscored by Friedan whose description of "the problem that has no name" galvanized women in the 1960s to press for employment rights and by Farley whose exposé and naming of sexual harassment in the workplace led women in the 1970s to demand legal protections. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 10th ed. (New York 1973); Lin Farley, *Sexual Shakedown* (New York 1979).

⁷⁵Frank Reid and Noah M. Meltz, "The Economic Environment," in Gunderson and Ponak, *Union-Management Relations in Canada*, 23-52, 32.

for non-standard employment, and lower rates of unionization.⁷⁶ Without considering differences in circumstances among women or households, researchers believe that a division of family labour which allots housework and child care to women maximizes the household's return to its collective labour resources. However, the soundness of this hypothesis is never tested. The process by which families decide who goes out to work and who stays home is a "black box" which no one attempts to pry open.⁷⁷

The model of choice is problematic. Certainly, there is no choice about the work itself. The work of maintaining the family and reproducing the population — feeding, clothing, birthing, nurturing — demands to be done. The work is necessary and unavoidable; the only choice involved is who does it. But in a society which labels housework and family care "women's work" there is very little choice: in Seymour's words, "women carry out domestic tasks because it is part of the definition of what they are not what they do."⁷⁸ In the absence of affordable market alternatives women's unpaid work in the household is essential from the point of the view of the family and society as a whole.⁷⁹ When asked why they spent so much time attending to the needs of their elderly mothers, women teachers saw it as unavoidable both because it was expected of daughters (but not of sons) and because there was no one else to do it.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Industrial relations employs what Feldberg and Glenn have called the "gender model" to explain women's labour force participation and propensity to unionize. Researchers assume that women's decisions about paid work are determined by their personal characteristics or presumed family responsibilities; hence, they remain uninformed about the multiple ways that women modify their approach to child-care and housework when they are employed outside the home. Roslyn L. Feldberg and Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Male and Female: Job versus Gender Models in the Sociology of Work," *Social Problems*, 26, 5 (1979), 524-38.

⁷⁷According to Rees "the nature of decision making within households is not usually considered to be within the realm of economics," a point of view that has been adopted by industrial relations. Albert Rees, *The Economics of Work and Pay*, 2nd ed. (New York 1979), 4.

⁷⁸Seymour, "No Time to Call My Own," 188.

⁷⁹Government-downsizing is increasing the amount and multiplying the forms of unpaid work in the home. Armstrong *et al.* argue that both the amount of work and the skill level required of home-based care-givers are expanding rapidly as publicly-provided health-care contracts. Family members and friends (the majority of whom were women) trying to provide for the needs of people too ill to be left untended often reported that they would have been unable to provide the necessary care had they been employed outside the home. Others reported missing time from their paid work and experiencing extreme forms of guilt when they could no longer stay off the job. Pat Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong, Jacqueline Choiniere, Eric Mykhalovskiy and Jerry P. White, *Medical Alert: New Work Organizations in Health Care* (Toronto 1997).

⁸⁰Jane Aronson, "Women's Sense of Responsibility for the Care of Old People: 'But Who Else Is Going to Do It?'," *Gender and Society*, 6, 1 (1992), 8-29.

Adopted from economics, the income-leisure trade-off model is atypical in industrial relations, which generally favours structural over individual determinants. Employees' individual preferences are acknowledged by researchers but usually discounted as insignificant in relation to the structural realities of the labour market and the workplace. But the standard, institutional approach to work-related problems is not applied to questions of labour force participation and hours of work, leaving the impression that women choose their place in the labour market.

Few researchers have penetrated beyond the common sense social construction of women as the quintessential non-standard workers. In industrial relations terms women are non-workers/secondary earners appropriately matched with jobs that require nothing more than their household-based cleaning, caring, and serving skills that can be performed on flexible schedules, which explains why job segregation by sex appears in the literature not as an industrial relations problem that demands investigation but only as explanation. Treated as exogenously determined, job segregation by sex is often cited as one of the reasons why women earn less and are less well organized than men. However, other questions, for example, why sex-linked patterns of job-holding persist despite significant increases in women's education, labour force participation, and concern for equal opportunity, or the role of unions and collective bargaining in excluding women from certain jobs are rarely taken up.

The silence in the literature does not negate the reality that job segregation by sex is an industrial relations problem, that is, it is one of the agreed-upon labour market and workplace "rules" which underpin the industrial relations system. Smith⁸¹ argues that it is not women's preferences but employer-initiated changes in the organization of work designed to increase productivity and profitability that underlie the rapid growth in part-time and seasonal jobs in private-sector services where the bulk of the increase in women's employment has occurred. Increasingly,⁸² employers prefer to hire part-time both because the added flexibility in scheduling allows them to cover off daily and seasonal fluctuations in demand and because part-time workers almost always earn less per hour and have fewer claims for fringe benefits than their full-time counterparts.⁸³ Coupled with lower rates of

⁸¹ Joan Smith, "The Paradox of Women's Poverty: Wage-Earning Women and Economic Transformation," *Signs*, 10, 2 (1984), 291-310.

⁸² "From 1976 to 1995, 44.5% of the total increase in employment was due to the growth of non-standard employment, in particular part-time work, which alone accounted for 78% of this increase. In fact, between 1976 and 1995, non-standard employment rose from 25% to 30% of total employment (with part-time work accounting for 61% of this figure)." Human Resources Canada, Workplace Information Directorate, "Non-Standard Work and Canadian Legislation," *Collective Bargaining Review* (February 1997), 53-7, 53.

⁸³ Part-time workers have few protections under employment standards legislation. Human Resources Canada, Workplace Information Directorate, "Non-Standard Work and Canadian Legislation."

union representation⁸⁴ and frankly discriminatory clauses in many of the collective agreements which do exist⁸⁵ it seems clear that women are often non-standard workers by circumstance rather than by choice.⁸⁶ Smith⁸⁷ concludes that the availability of women to work scattered shifts and unpredictable hours permits employers to exploit them in these ways but says little about women's preferences. Their over-representation as part-time and casual workers may be shaped more by their lack of alternatives in the labour market and the shortage of affordable child care than by their presumed commitment to housework and family care.⁸⁸

The ideology of the non-working wife has been highly profitable for employers of men's labour as well. Companies such as Ford⁸⁹ have long understood the corporate value of a woman at home. Her multiple roles as service provider, organizer of family life, companion, and consumer directly benefit employers of the male breadwinner because she provides the physical and emotional care needed to refresh and replenish the paid worker and the motivation for him to work hard.⁹⁰ A woman in the home allows employers to treat men as workers first and foremost

⁸⁴Union density among part-time workers is 22 per cent as compared with 33 per cent for full-time employees. Ernest B. Akyeampong, "A Statistical Portrait of the Trade Union Movement," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 9, 4 (1997), 45-54.

⁸⁵Kainer reports that unionized part-time employees in grocery stores have lower wages and weaker seniority rights than full-time workers (who are mostly older men). Collective agreements in this industry afford part-time employees few opportunities to apply for full-time jobs. Jan Kainer, "Gender, Corporate Restructuring and Concession Bargaining in Ontario's Food Retail Sector," *Relations Industrielles*, 53, 1 (1998), 183-206.

⁸⁶Statistics Canada data indicate that one-third of the 26.1 per cent of women employed part-time in 1994 could not find full-time work. Almey, "Labour Force Characteristics."

⁸⁷Smith, "The Paradox of Women's Poverty." See also Jane Jensen, "Part-Time Employment and Women: A Range of Strategies" in Isabella Bakker, ed., *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada* (Toronto 1996), 92-108.

⁸⁸There is no evidence that women are less committed to their jobs than men. Even with their lower pay and poorer fringe benefits, women consistently report themselves to be as satisfied with and committed to their jobs as men. See Harvey J. Krahn and Graham S. Lowe, *Work, Industry and Canadian Society* (Scarborough 1988), 162 and Jo Phelan, "The Paradox of the Contented Female Worker: An Assessment of Alternate Explanations," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 57, 2 (1994), 94-107.

⁸⁹Wayne A. Lewchuk, "Men and Monotony: Fraternalism as a Managerial Strategy at the Ford Motor Company," *Journal of Economic History*, 53, 4 (1993), 824-56; Martha May, "The Historical Problem of the Family Wage: The Ford Motor Company and the Five Dollar Day," *Feminist Studies*, 8 (Summer 1982), 399-424.

⁹⁰May, "The Historical Problem of the Family Wage." It is the unpaid household worker, who "replenishes the labour power of household members again and again so that it can be re-sold the next day, the next year and in the next generation." Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*, 14.

whose family responsibilities are limited to earning a "family wage."⁹¹ Such employers assume that men/breadwinners are and should be available for long and unpredictable hours of paid work⁹² and prepared to attend fully to their jobs free of family responsibilities which "must not penetrate the shop or office."⁹³ Re-examined in this light, industrial norms such as long hours, unscheduled overtime, and around-the-clock shift work are not dictates of the market or the consequences of technological change in any simple sense, as researchers have generally assumed, but what employers can get away with. "Breadwinner jobs" are structured so that workers have no choice but to put their paid work ahead of their "non-work" lives,⁹⁴ but without women's unpaid labour in the home it is unlikely that employers could require men to be so unavailable to their families.⁹⁵

By policing the public/private divide employers have pushed onto households/women (and the state) the bulk of the cost of maintaining and reproducing the labour force. With some notable exceptions conceded to male workers (for

⁹¹"The worker to the extent that he could make demands upon his employer in the name of family, asked for a 'family wage,' enough to feed and clothe not only himself but his wife and children, for they were totally dependent on him." Cook, "Family and Work," 522.

⁹²"The daily rhythms of family life — what time the family eats, gets up and goes to bed — are usually set by the schedules of the wage earner's job rather than by family preferences." Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*, 16.

⁹³Cook, "Family and Work," 522.

⁹⁴It is almost impossible for production and service employees to set aside their employment obligations in order to accommodate family needs. Arbitrators agree that employers can discipline employees for lateness and absenteeism (which includes unauthorized absence from work or leaving work without permission). And a refusal to work overtime (up to the legislated maximum) is an act of insubordination which may lead to discipline, unless overtime is clearly voluntary by the terms of the collective agreement. Palmer and Palmer, *Collective Agreement Arbitration in Canada*, 345-54, 335-9. In considering the reasons why employees did not perform their assigned overtime shifts Brown and Beatty report that arbitrators have refused as reasonable excuses the following: did not want to work, a planned weekend pleasure trip, scheduled to participate in a bowling league or motorcycle race, personal business commitments, employer failed to guarantee overtime payments, and other employees on lay-off; but have accepted illness and a large family reunion. Brown and Beatty, *Canadian Labour Arbitration*, 456. See also 246-56, 353-68, 452-7.

⁹⁵Papanek's concept of the "two-person career" is helpful here. Papanek observed that "women often find the demands of their husbands' jobs to be a factor in their own reluctance or inability to develop independent careers at levels for which their education has prepared them." Although she was examining the lives of women married to professionals, a similar dynamic can be found in many working-class households. Particularly when men work rotating shifts, women often seek jobs which permit them to accommodate their spouses' (and their children's) comings and goings. Hannah Papanek, "Men, Women, and Work: Reflections on the Two-Person Career," *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 4 (1972), 852-72.

example, shorter hours, paid holidays and vacation, and retirement pensions)⁹⁶ employers have successfully avoided bearing the "private" costs of reproduction associated with family life. Even today, when women are almost as likely to be employed for pay as men, employers continue to insist that employees keep their lives off the job separate from their "work lives." Breadwinner jobs are "still based on the assumption that the worker — male or female — has no home responsibility or, that if she has, it must somehow be left outside the shop or office door."⁹⁷ Although women are no longer excluded from "good jobs" by virtue of their sex they are effectively denied entry because few can comply with the work rules without inconveniencing their families unduly.⁹⁸

Few employers do anything beyond what is required by law⁹⁹ to accommodate women's "double day." The "understanding employer" that offers flexible starting and finishing times is rare and more likely to offer "family-friendly" work arrangements such as flextime to men than women.¹⁰⁰ Caught between the overlapping

⁹⁶ All of which women in the labour force are less likely to benefit from because of job segregation by sex, low wages, part-time hours, and discontinuous employment. For example, employed women are less likely than employed men to be covered by employer-sponsored pension plans, less likely to be contributing to a registered retirement savings plan, and likely to draw less money on retirement. Monica Townson, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, *Women's Financial Futures: Mid-Life Prospects for a Secure Retirement* (Ottawa 1995).

⁹⁷ Cook, "Family and Work: Challenges to Labour, Management and Government," 523.

⁹⁸ Job segregation by sex remains a firmly entrenched feature of the economy. See Monica Boyd, "Sex Differences in Occupational Skill: Canada, 1961-1986," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 27, 3 (1990), 285-315; Monica Boyd, Mary Ann Mulvihill, and John Myles, "Gender, Power and Postindustrialism," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 28, 4 (1991), 407-36.

⁹⁹ Among unionized workers, where one would expect to see the most generous provisions, only public sector employees have maternity and family leave benefits significantly better than that provided by employment standards legislation and the *Employment Insurance Act*. Over ninety per cent of collective agreements in the private sector make no mention of pay during maternity leave and few agreements provide more than the required seventeen weeks off work. Only 6.5 per cent of these agreements provide for any family-related leave, with or without pay. (Note that only in Québec are employees entitled to leave — up to five unpaid days per year — for family responsibilities.) Human Resources Development Canada, Workplace Information Directorate, "Vacation and Other Leave Included in Major Collective Bargaining Agreements in Effect in 1996," *Collective Bargaining Review*, (July/August 1996), 131-6.

¹⁰⁰ Janet E. Fast and Judith A. Frederick, "Working Arrangements and Time Stress," *Canadian Social Trends*, 43 (Winter 1996), 14-9. A study by Osterman suggests that work-family programmes such as flextime are more likely to be offered by employers whose core employees are professional and technical workers than service, clerical or blue-collar. Paul Osterman, "Work/Family Programs and the Employment Relationship," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40 (December 1995), 681-700.

demands of their paid and unpaid work women restructure their jobs to accommodate family responsibilities whenever possible,¹⁰¹ a strategy which simply reinforces their social construction as disinterested, non-standard employees. As Hartmann long ago argued, women's subordinate position in the labour market reinforces their subordination within the family which, in turn, reinforces their subordination in the labour market.¹⁰²

The idea of home and family as rewards for hard (paid) work draws non-managerial men into complicity with employers insofar as both benefit from the public/private distinction. Luxton describes the sense of manly pride in miners who demanded care and attention from their wives and children in recognition of their place as family heads.¹⁰³ In this romanticized view, home is refuge from the workplace and associated with rest and relaxation; consequently, the effort expended by women in the home cannot be work but activities undertaken out of love or commitment. That these same miners some years later felt very resentful of their wives' demands for assistance with household tasks speaks to the loss of their breadwinner privileges that made mucking in the mine worth it. In the interval between Luxton's two visits to Flin Flon many miners' wives had taken paid employment which they were unable and unwilling to do without help in the household.¹⁰⁴

For women, home is a workplace and there is not much rest or relaxation to be had. In most two-adult families, women perform at least twice as much housework and child care as men.¹⁰⁵ Although younger and more educated men are more likely

¹⁰¹ Men's employment patterns vary little over the life-cycle of the family whereas women's schedules are affected by the number and ages of children in the home. Donna S. Lero and Karen L. Johnson, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, *Canadian Statistics on Work and Family* (Ottawa 1994), 13; Katherine Marshall, "Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 6, 1 (1994), 28-30. In their study of professional couples Karambayya and Reilly found that women were more likely than men to adjust their hours of arrival and departure or limit the amount of work for pay done at night or on the weekend to meet the needs of children, even though they were as committed to their careers but were less well established than their male partners. Rekha Karambayya and Anne H. Reilly, "Dual Earner Couples: Attitudes and Actions in Restructuring Work for Family," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13 (1992), 585-601. On average, women lost 6.4 days from paid work in 1994 due to personal or family responsibilities whereas men lost 1.1. Almey, "Labour Force Characteristics," 82.

¹⁰² Heidi Hartmann, "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex," *Signs*, 1, 3 (1976), 137-69.

¹⁰³ Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*.

¹⁰⁴ Luxton, "Two Hands for the Clock."

¹⁰⁵ Chandler reports that Canadian women in two-person couples perform two-thirds of the unpaid work in the household. Chandler, "The Value of Household Work in Canada, 1992." Marshall reports that women have primary responsibility for housework more than three-quarters of the time but the likelihood that men will share the burden increases with women's

to perform these tasks on a regular basis than other men,¹⁰⁶ women retain primary responsibility for both, whether or not they are also employed outside the home.¹⁰⁷ Livingstone and Asner¹⁰⁸ found that among male steelworkers and former steelworkers in Hamilton "there were fewer differences among married men generally, the most notable being the above-average housework times of men with spouses employed full-time. But, even in the most extreme case of dependent [i.e., unemployed] men with full-time employed wives, the woman was still doing about five hours [per week] more housework than the man."

That women perform "women's work" in the workplace appears natural or inevitable in an industrial relations system that foregrounds their responsibilities as wives/mothers despite the material realities which draw millions of women into the labour force. However employed — part-time, full-time, or not at all outside the home — the ideology of gender relations combines with the stubborn reality of housework and family care to deny women the status of "worker" in the full measure accorded to men. Industrial relations has no category for, no way of thinking about, women/workers whose relationship to paid work cannot be fully explained by their experiences in the labour market and the workplace.

Taking unpaid work into account reveals how gender relations shape the work of men as well as women. Researchers in industrial relations have implicitly defined men unidimensionally as workers/breadwinners and rarely questioned how or why work traditionally performed by men is organized and valued as it is. The long and unpredictable hours, shift work, and intense physical demands imposed by employ-

income. Most households also retain a traditional division of labour with women performing the day-to-day housework while men do repairs, maintenance and yard work. Katherine Marshall, "Employed Parents and the Division of Housework," *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 5, 3 (1993), 23-30. Statistics Canada data reported by Almey indicate that for every hour of unpaid work contributed by men in two-earner households women perform almost two. Almey, "Labour Force Characteristics." Coltrane found a traditional division of household labour between American women and men with women performing almost twice as much unpaid work as men. He also found that marriage had little effect on the amount of housework performed by men whereas, for women, marriage was associated with an additional 10 hours per week. Household labour time increased for both women and men when children were present but in the ratio of 2:1. Scott Coltrane, *Family Man: Fatherhood, Housework, and Gender Equity* (New York 1996), 163-4. Finally, Wharton and Erickson report that women perform more of the emotion work attached to family life. Amy S. Wharton and Rebecca J. Erickson, "Managing Emotions on the Job and at Home: Understanding the Consequences of Multiple Emotional Roles," *Academy of Management Review*, 18, 3 (1993), 457-86.

¹⁰⁶ Marshall, "Employed Parents and the Division of Housework."

¹⁰⁷ Almey, "Labour Force Characteristics."

¹⁰⁸ D.W. Livingstone and Elizabeth Asner, "Feet in Both Camps: Household Classes, Divisions of Labour, and Group Consciousness," in D.W. Livingstone and J. Marshall Mangan, eds., *Recast Dreams: Class and Gender Consciousness in Steeltown* (Toronto 1996), 72-99, 86.

ers on men have been understood as consequences of changing technology or competitive pressures. However, an analysis that includes an examination of men in relation to domestic labour indicates that the prevailing industrial norms are possible only to the extent that men are not responsible for the day-to-day physical and emotional needs of other family members. When men take on more household responsibilities they, too, find their access to the best jobs jeopardized.¹⁰⁹

The sharp conceptual distinction between paid and unpaid work/workplace and home in industrial relations is a false dichotomy. Unpaid work in the household does not exist separate and apart from the world of paid work but is "profoundly determined by capitalist production and functions at the heart of the social relations integral to the capitalist mode of production."¹¹⁰ The separate spheres ideology on which the discipline relies denies the multiple and intersecting ways that unpaid work in the household affects how paid work is organized and performed, by whom, under what conditions and for which rewards. As a result many questions pertinent to industrial relations theory and practice have never been asked or remain under-theorized.

Conclusion: Unpaid Work and Industrial Relations Theory

FEMINIST SCHOLARS in every branch of the social sciences have demonstrated that conventional approaches to research have defined what women think and do as outside of, or marginal to, the disciplinary frame of reference. Such is the case in industrial relations where the distinction between paid and unpaid work categorizes women's gender work on the job and reproduction work in the household as non-work and outside of the scope of inquiry. This approach fractures the discipline along gender lines: researchers implicitly understand the industrial relations significance of men's (paid) work while denying the economic and social value of work that most women perform most days of their lives.

Despite a subtext which stereotypes women as non-workers/secondary earners, industrial relations believes itself to be gender-neutral, even gender-free, in its approach to the study of work. The conventional view holds that conflict in the workplace originates from the hierarchical nature of the employment relationship and it is assumed that men and women stand in the same relationship to power in

¹⁰⁹ Studies of managerial employees in two-career families suggest that men with employed spouses are not progressing up the hierarchy at the same rate as men with wives who do not work outside the home. Alison M. Konrad and Kathy Cannings, "Of Mommy Tracks and Glass Ceilings: A Case Study of Men's and Women's Careers in Management," *Relations Industrielles*, 49, 2 (1994), 303-35; Kathy Cannings, "Family Commitments and Career Success: Earnings of Male and Female Managers," *Relations Industrielles*, 46, 1 (1991), 141-58; Jean-Yves Le Louarn, Roland Thériault, and Jean-Marie Toulouse, "Le Travail des Deux Conjoints, Effet sur la Progression de Carrière du Cadre," *Relations Industrielles*, 39, 1 (1984), 36-50.

¹¹⁰ Luxton, *More than a Labour of Love*, 17.

the workplace depending on their status as employers/managers or employees. Gender, insofar as it is considered at all, is associated only with women. The assumption which underlies the analysis of women and work is that, whatever women are doing, they are women first and foremost and driven by motivations uniquely female. Men, by contrast, are constructed only as managers/workers, never as men.

Though unacknowledged, industrial relations as academic discipline is very much "a man's world." It is men's experiences that define the meaning of work and union activity, even the meaning of industrial conflict; women's particular experiences of work are missing. Though formally present, women are sidelined by their gender "difference," a problem which, ironically, can be remedied by turning the volume of the subtext about gender up, not down.¹¹¹ Elsewhere in the social sciences feminist scholars have overcome the invisibility of women as subjects/actors by adopting gender sensitive¹¹² research strategies that take as their starting point the world as lived and experienced by women. In industrial relations terms this means analysing women's experiences as women workers, in particular, how and why work (paid and unpaid) is gendered.

Analyzing work from the standpoint of women¹¹³ means beginning where each day's work begins: in the household. From this vantage point it is easy to uncover the fissures in industrial relations thinking through which women fall. The assumption that unpaid work, particularly unpaid "women's work," is tellingly different from and less significant than paid work sets women up as non-workers preoccupied with home and family rather than "important" issues of job or career. But once work is defined inclusively women move from the margins of industrial relations discourse to the centre. Taking both paid and unpaid work into account women are clearly workers — on average, their work days are longer than men's¹¹⁴ — and the perennial research question, why don't women work?, loses its meaning.

¹¹¹ Sandra Lipsitz Bem, "Dismantling Gender Polarization and Compulsory Heterosexuality: Should We Turn the Volume Down or Up?," *Journal of Sex Research*, 32, 4 (1995), 329-34.

¹¹² Gender sensitive approaches to the study of work which foreground women's experiences as women are needed to counter the built-in bias against women of approaches that purport to be gender free. Barbara Houston, "Should Public Education Be Gender-free?" in Greta Hoffman Nemiroff, ed., *Women and Men: Interdisciplinary Readings on Gender* (Montréal 1987), 134-49.

¹¹³ Harstock calls for a feminist, materialist theory of knowledge grounded in an analysis of the sexual division of labour. She argues that the doing of "women's work" affords women a vision of social relations that is unavailable to men insofar as men (intentionally or unintentionally) benefit from the exploitation of women. Nancy C. M. Harstock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," Sandra Harding, ed., *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington 1987), 157-80.

¹¹⁴ Almey, "Labour Force Characteristics."

Approaching work as women do blurs the boundary between the paid and the unpaid. Whether by choice or necessity women are disinclined to separate their "private" from their "public" selves. In practical terms this may mean incorporating family responsibilities into paid work (for example, by choosing jobs that are close to home, provide an opportunity to shop during lunch, or allow for telephone contact with children after school) or modifying household responsibilities to make time for jobs (for example, reducing the amount of unpaid work performed in the home). In either respect women demonstrate the essential unity of their lives on and off the job, a perspective which prompts questions about the intersection of paid and unpaid work. How unpaid work in the household and paid work in employment are organized in relation to each other for both women and men are research issues which reflect women's holistic understanding of work.

The industrial relations significance of unpaid work derives from the challenge posed by its inclusion. Women's everyday experiences of paid work cannot be understood by examining the labour market and the workplace in isolation from the household. The persistence of job segregation by sex and low pay for traditional women's work result from the gender ideology that assigns to women primary responsibility for home and family. How gender relations influence who does what, under what conditions, for which rewards in the workplace are questions that rarely get asked in industrial relations. But once posed they reveal the extent to which job segregation by sex and pay discrimination are integral to an industrial relations system that reflects and sustains men's economic and social power over women.

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