Women’s Work
The Meaning of She-cession and Undersupplied ELCC

Armine Yalnizyan

Atkinson Centre Summer Institute on Early Childhood Development
The Early Years: From Disruption to Recovery and Beyond
June 2, 2021
Overview

• No, the she-cession isn’t over. No recovery without she-covery; no she-covery without childcare

• Yes, we don’t have enough [high-quality] ELCC. What could $30B buy?

• The Role of the Care Economy, post-pandemic
No, the she-cession isn’t over

- 64% of jobs lost so far were lost by women (most low-paid, racialized)
- 61,000 women dropped out of the labour force; 53,000 men joined

Source: Armine Yalnitzyan, based on seasonally adjusted data from Statistics Canada Tables 14-10-0287-01 and 14-10-0036-01

**Labour force changes in Canada**
Cumulative Percent Difference from Feb 2020, by gender and youngest child age

- **0-5 years**
  - Female
  - Male

- **13-17 years**
  - Female
  - Male

- **6-12 years**
  - Female
  - Male

- **no kids**
  - Female
  - Male

---

LFS data from RTRA. Data are not adjusted for seasonality.
Rolling Back Gains In Equity

Canada, Female Employment Rate
Aged 15+, 1976-2020

Canada, Men's Employment Rate
Aged 15+, 1976 to 2020

Source: @ArmineYalnizyan from Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0327-01
Pandemic Parade
Where does it hurt most?

By April 2021 back to
- Canada 55.4% (2000 level)
- Alberta 58.5% (1992)
- Ontario 53.8% (1997)
- Manitoba 57.4% (1999)
- PEI 54.6% (2000)
- Newfoundland 48.1% (2006)
- Saskatchewan 58.5% (2003)
- Quebec 55.7% (2005)
- BC 56.7% (2013)
- Nova Scotia 54.9% (2017)
- New Brunswick 54.2% (2018)
Who cares / Get men to work more?

• GDP is driven by household spending (~57% pre pandemic)
• Biggest spenders among households – families with kids under 18
• Most of these households (~2/3rds) rely on two earners
• Women contribute ~40% of these incomes
• Falling out of the labour market because of undersupplied ELCC means unnecessary drag on GDP recovery. There’s a policy fix for that.
Women’s Work: Boost the Economy

• Biggest “untapped”/ “reserve” source of economic growth

• Budget 2021 p. 54 impact of ELCC:
  – Estimated addition of 240,000 workers
  – Increase real GDP by 1.2 per cent over the next two decades
  – As significant as signing NAFTA (0.6% boost to GDP)

By increasing employment rate and *hours* of [*paid*] work (plateaued pre-pandemic, rolled back by pandemic)

• Child care could definitely make the difference: Exhibit A – Quebec. ELCC 1.7% boost to GDP (Budget 2021, p.99)
Getting to Quebec

• 60% “coverage” for kids aged 0-4 outside Quebec
  358K more regulated spaces, 71.5K more educators
• 60% for kids aged 5-9 (access to before-and-after-school resources and care):
  392K more spaces, 72.5K more educators

• Need double the estimated existing spaces outside QC
• Need 150K more early educators (60% growth).

IS THIS DOABLE?
Do-able: ½ of Canadians <Age 5 Live In 7 Cities (where you can predict poverty by postal code)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa-Gatineau</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2017 1.94 million children were under the age of 5 in Canada.

50.3% lived in the 7 largest cities, and over a third (34.7%) in just the biggest 3.
What Could $30B Buy?

New Fed Funds Still Mean Uncertain Outcomes

More of what we’ve got

• Fast-track affordability first, but how to expand access?
• Address shift-worker needs
• More regulated care (less reliance on informal/home care) but still a mix of public and private, within private for-profit and not-for-profit
• Expand the market(s), first

More and better quality

• Tackle childcare deserts first with high quality care
• Educate down (full day JK and SK), increasing publicly funded, publicly managed ELCC
• Provide pathways to improving qualifications of all (new and existing) ECEs; improve wages/benefits to reduce turnover
• Focus on quality of care, first

Pandemic Impact: What are we building on?

- Schools will come back to full capacity (statutory rights, publicly funded and publicly managed).

- ELCC is largely a market-provided service, vulnerable to pandemic economics (lower revenues, higher costs)

- We’ve lost capacity. How much? Guesstimates: between 30-50% in some communities. That’s huge.

- As we expand access, how do we avoid creating a new vector of care like LTCs, highly reliant on for-profit care...that cares for profit more than care.
The Care Economy

Reality
• An Economic Driver
• 12.3% of GDP pre-pandemic (rivalled only by real estate, at 12.7% of GDP)
• 21% of all jobs (unrivalled by any other sector)
• Not an afterthought; a foundation of the economy

Potential
• If decommodified, could unleash human and economic potential BUT
• For profit opportunities will grow as Care Economy grows
• Greater vigilance over what *our* money (not fed, or provincial $) is buying
• Conditional funding is tough
• Enforcement and penalties for bad actors is even tougher
Population Aging = Growing Care Economy

Approaching the same dependency ratio as in 1960s, *BUT* for longer, and with half the rate of GDP growth

Figure 2.7
Demographic dependency ratio, observed (1921 to 2013) and projected (2014 to 2063) according to the medium-growth (M1) scenario, Canada

Note: The demographic dependency ratio is the number of persons aged 14 and under or 65 and over per 100 persons aged 15 to 64 years.

Source: Statistics Canada, Demography Division.
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

- Your Grandmother, and Benjamin Franklin
Thank you for your time.

Twitter  @ArmineYalnizyan