

The Effect of Domestic Labour and Gender on the Relationship Between Class and Political Attitudes

Janet McKee

ABSTRACT

The effect of the peculiar social position of women, and in particular domestic labourers, upon the relationship between class and political attitudes has not been adequately examined in the research. In the present study, the effect of gender and the privatization of domestic labour upon this relationship is examined. From a series of analyses of variance and comparisons of scores on three scales measuring class-related attitudes, it was found that, in general, neither gender nor the privatization of domestic labour influences class consciousness, consistency in political attitudes or class identification.

RÉSUMÉ

L'influence du travail au foyer et du sexe (homme/femme) sur le rapport entre une classe sociale et les attitudes vis-à-vis la politique. Dans le domaine de la recherche, peu a été fait concernant l'influence de la situation de la femme, surtout en tant que travailleuse au foyer, sur le rapport entre une classe sociale et les attitudes en matière de politique. L'auteure de cette étude examine de près l'influence du sexe et de la privatisation du travail au foyer sur ce rapport. Utilisant une série d'analyses de variance et établissant une comparaison entre les résultats des trois volets d'une échelle d'attitudes vis-à-vis une classe, elle en arrive à la conclusion suivante: De façon générale, ni le sexe, ni la privatisation du travail au foyer n'influent sur la conscience de classe, la fermeté des attitudes vis-à-vis la politique et l'identification à une classe.

Introduction

The Difficulty in Incorporating Domestic Labourers within a Class Analysis

Many researchers point out that sexual stratification has not been considered important or central in studies of class or stratification (e.g., Acker, 1973, 1980; Delphy, 1981; Garnsey, 1978; West, 1978). Women are often excluded from analyses, since "female workers are largely peripheral to the class system" (Giddens, 1980: 288). Housewives are excluded from most empirical studies of class and stratification (e.g., Blackburn and Mann, 1975; Centers, 1949; Kornhauser, 1965; Johnston and Ornstein, 1979b; Eulau, 1962; Wright, 1978: 86), and when included, their class is usually defined as that of the male head of household (e.g., Stevenson, 1977).

Several researchers are opposed to using the family as the unit of analysis and assigning to the housewife the

class of the husband (e.g., Acker, 1973; Delphy, 1981; Garnsey, 1978; Safilios-Rothschild, 1975; Watson and Barth, 1964; West, 1978). Using marital status to define the status of some women, and occupation for others is inconsistent (Acker, 1973: 938; Delphy, 1981). And the distribution of classes is inaccurately represented in studies which exclude housewives (e.g., Wright, 1978: 86), since housewives are less likely than employed individuals to be working class (McKee, 1982: 9-10).

The major objection to adopting the family as the unit of analysis and equating wife's class with husband's is that it obscures the hierarchical and oppressive relations which underlie the sexual division of labour in the family. It prevents comparisons between spouses (Delphy, 1981: 120-3), transforms the hierarchical relationship between spouses to a relationship between equals (Delphy, 1981: 127), and presents the sexual division of labour within the family as a natural rather than social institution (Delphy and Leonard, 1986: 61-2). This locates sexual stratification

peripheral to studies of social stratification and class, and serves to “neatly dispense with the necessity for considering the position of women in studies of social stratification or in considering the salience of sex” (Acker, 1973: 937). In contrast to the dominant view, many feminists identify the family as a locus of struggle (Hartmann, 1981a) in which members do not share unified interests or equal resources (Delphy and Leonard, 1986; Eichler, 1980: 109-10). For an analysis of political attitudes, such as the present study, an assumption of unified interests and shared attitudes is particularly significant.

The inequality of the sexes has not been a central focus for traditional Marxists, including traditional Marxist feminists (e.g., Reed, 1970; Guettel, 1974). These Marxists view male dominance as a by-product of class relations, “a weapon for maintaining capitalism” (Reed, 1970: 75). The secondary, sexual conflict, these Marxists predict, is to be resolved as domestic labour becomes socialized and women participate as wage-workers in the class struggle to promote socialism. The traditional Marxist view has been criticized for its assignment of domestic labourers to the *private* sphere of the home (e.g., Engels, 1972: 137), their class defined by the “real” workers who are directly engaged in social production.

The central position of unpaid domestic labourers in class relations was identified in the domestic labour debate (e.g., Benston, 1969; Dalla Costa and James, 1975; Coulson *et al.*, 1975; Gardiner, 1975; Morton, 1972; Seccombe, 1973; Fox, 1980), which explained that domestic labourers are involved in *social* production — the reproduction of labour power — which contributes to surplus value. There is, however, no agreement on how to apply Marxist concepts (e.g., class, productive labour, value, capitalist mode of production) and theory (e.g., law of value) to domestic labour. Most involved in the debate argue that neither women nor housewives constitute a class as Marx defines it, but “this does not dispose of the question of the possibly distinctive place of women within classes” (West, 1978: 228-9).

The debate has been criticized for the attempt to apply Marxist theory and categories originally designed to describe commodity production and market relations to the very different situation of the domestic labourer who reproduces labour power (e.g., Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985a: 2; Eichler, 1980: 100-16; Stacey, 1986). Since Marx defines class according to one’s relationship to the means of production, and social production does not include domestic labour, housewives are left peripheral to class relations by definition. The family is, according to Eichler

(1980: 106-7), a quasi-feudal institution, and therefore not amenable to analysis by a class model designed to describe the capitalist mode. Marx’s class analysis, therefore, is “incapable of categorizing women in a meaningful manner” (Eichler, 1980: 100).

Many feminists, consequently, identify the need to reconceptualize class such that it incorporates both domestic and wage production (e.g., Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985b: 66; Stacey, 1986: 222-3; Eichler, 1980: 115), and to “place the sexual division of labour at the centre, not the periphery, of marxist analysis” (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985a: 7). Class analyses have been androcentric and hence limited to the male experience: “What has been seen as not gendered is in fact largely an exclusively male arena of action and...from that viewpoint, gender relations are only present when women are” (Smith, 1985: 2). Gender relations may affect the position of women as much as or more than class. A woman’s control of resources may depend more on whether she earns her own income than on how much her husband makes (*cf.* Eichler, 1980: 105). Garnsey (1978: 231-6) explains how class categories are also influenced by gender relations: “The routinization and feminization of lower-level white collar work,” for example, “calls into question the appropriateness of taking conventional distinctions between manual and non-manual work as class demarcations” (p. 233). It is not clear, Garnsey explains, whether white-collar female workers are part of the new middle class, the proletariat, or a buffer between the working and middle classes.

Some feminists dissatisfied with the androcentric bias of Marxist categories but also attracted to the historical materialist method of Marxism consider both gender/patriarchy and class/capitalism central to understanding inequality (e.g., Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Sargent, 1983; O’Brien, 1981). They demonstrate how patriarchal dominance has a material base in men’s control of women’s labour power — her production and reproduction, including her sexuality. There is no agreement, however, on how to incorporate patriarchy (gender) and capitalism (class) in analyses, on the relative importance of the two systems, or on whether they are two separate but interacting systems (Hartmann, 1981b; Eisenstein, 1979), or part of the same system (e.g., Armstrong and Armstrong, 1985a: 23; Young, 1981). The term “patriarchy” is highly problematic, for it describes but does not explain gender inequality (see Beechy, 1979), but its use reflects the view that gender inequality — and the division into private (domestic) and public (wage) labour — is not merely a secondary effect of class relations, but, according to some (e.g., Armstrong

and Armstrong, 1985a; Smith, 1977: 17-18, 1985), an integral aspect of class relations in capitalism. These researchers, however, have not solved the problem of how to integrate gender and class in analyses. Burstyn (1985), in one attempt, broadens the concept of class, and argues that both *economic* and *gender* classes exist. Eichler (1980: 97-100) and Acker (1980: 27) are opposed to the multivariate approach to sex stratification, which attempts to add on gender as one variable within a model originally constructed to refer to men. The integration of class and gender is a continuing concern in the literature.

In some ways, this integration is less difficult for those not adopting the Marxist framework. Measures of stratification such as status, prestige, occupation, socioeconomic status, income and education can be more easily applied to the situation of the domestic labourer than can class. Eichler (1977), for example, found that the status (occupational prestige) attributed to the domestic labourer is determined by both her husband's and her own occupation, and that independent and derived status interact; sex also affected prestige. Nielsen (1979) explains that there are aspects of status other than occupation, such as the informal power of the domestic labourer. She suggests that aspects of one's domestic position, such as whether married or divorced, may affect education and occupation, and hence the status of women. The Marxist concept of class, as shown above, is more problematic.

Domestic Labour and the Relationship between Class and Political Attitudes

In considering the effect of domestic labour on political attitudes, one difference is reported in the literature and investigated in the present study. Domestic labour is privatized in the sense that it is performed in the private, isolated home rather than in the more socialized or cooperatively organized capitalist factory or business. It has been hypothesized that the isolation of domestic workers — the lack of collective organization of labour — retards the development of class consciousness (e.g., Blumenfeld and Mann, 1980: 273; Kaplan, 1974: 264). Marx and Engels (1963: 37) explain that the close contact characteristic of workers in large-scale industry facilitates unity of workers within the class struggle. In her study of working class men and their housewives, Porter (1983: 174) found that "the isolation of women in a separate sphere releases a huge potential of anger and criticism, and at the same time cuts them off from both the institutional and ideological means [sic] to develop that potential any further". She found that housewives were more "radical (in the sense of

challenging the structure behind the appearances) and more class-'loyal'" than men.

Gender and the Relationship between Class and Class-Related Attitudes

It has been argued that the political attitudes of women are tainted with emotional and moralistic considerations, while those of men reflect greater rationality, pragmatism and class orientation.¹ Almond and Verba summarize the prevailing view:

women differ from men in their political behavior only in being somewhat more frequently apathetic, parochial, conservative, and sensitive to the personality, emotional, and esthetic aspects of political life and electoral campaigns. (1963: 388)

Many researchers report that the domestic role of women leads them to be more conservative — that is, more supportive of the *status quo* — than men (e.g., Almond and Verba, 1963: 388; Tingsten, 1963: 129; Campbell *et al.*, 1954; Lazarsfeld *et al.*, 1968; Meisel, 1972), although the magnitude of the sex differences is very small. A convincing body of evidence contradicts this prevailing view (e.g., Taylor, 1984; Ekehammar and Sidanius, 1982; Sidanius and Ekehammar, 1980).² Reid and Wormald (1982: 197-8), for example, find no firm evidence from their analysis of the British literature that women are more right-wing than men. Moreover, the greater conservatism attributed to women has been shown to be a function of age rather than sex (Hills, 1984).

Conservatism is usually measured by voting choice: support for a Conservative (or Republican) as opposed to a Liberal (or Democrat) or National Democratic Party. Gender differences in conservatism are sometimes interpreted as reflecting *class* interests. Berelson and Steiner (1964: 573), for example, conclude from the research, as well as from their own study of voting choice for the major parties in West Germany in the mid-1950s, that "everywhere women tend to be more religious and to take a more 'conservative' political position than men, i.e., to follow the class lead less and the religious lead more." Lane (1959: 212-13) argues that the maternal and familial role of women leads them to emphasize "moral" rather than "political" considerations, although he fails to clearly define these terms, or to provide empirical evidence that women are more "moralistic" than men. Underlying the research is the assumption that women, because they are (allegedly) more moralistic, emotional and nurturant, express a greater selfless, humanitarian concern for their

world than do men, who act according to the rationality of self-interest and class interest.

The Present Study³

In the present study, the effect of gender and the privatization of domestic labour on the relationship between class-related attitudes is tested. A *gender* effect, suggested in the literature, is operative if women, compared with men (1) are less likely to hold political attitudes which reflect their class interests, (2) express lower levels of consistency in their political attitudes, (3) are less likely to identify with their class, or (4) are more likely to express greater humanitarian or moralistic concerns. A *privatization* effect exists if domestic labourers are less class conscious, less consistent in their political attitudes, and less likely to identify with their class than employed individuals.

There has been little research on consistency in political attitudes. Converse (1964) explains that ideas and attitudes are bound together to form a belief system by some form of functional interdependence or "constraint," which increases with the meaningfulness of the underlying issues to the individual. He reports that constraint, measured by the degree of association among various political attitudes, is higher for members of the elite than for the general public due to "unfamiliarity of broader and more abstract ideological frames of reference among the less sophisticated" (p. 231). A privatization effect may be considered to exist if domestic labourers express a lower level of consistency or constraint in their class-related attitudes than employed individuals because of their lack of direct experience in the cooperative labour process characteristic of wage labour, and their failure to perceive a meaningful link between their labour and class-related issues. A gender effect exists if constraint is lower among women than men because their gender defines political activity as less meaningful for them.

Research Design

The present study involves secondary analysis of 1979 data collected from interviews conducted as part of a larger study of the political, social and economic attitudes of Canadians. The three-stage stratified probability sample of the adult Canadian population included 2,392 respondents: domestic labourers (full-time housewives; N = 720), part-time women employed less than 20 hours per week (N = 107), and men (N = 889) and women (N = 676) employed at least 20 hours per week.

The class variables are operationalizations of Wright's (1976) Marxist class typology provided by Johnston and Ornstein (1979b).⁴ Class was measured by spouse's class for domestic labourers, in order to test the effect on political attitudes of class, as traditionally defined by Marxists, along with that of gender and employment status. It was defined by own class for other respondents.

Three interval-level political attitude scales were constructed from responses to close-ended questions. The scales were: support for social welfare, support for redistribution of income and support for worker rights. The construction of the scales is described in the Appendix.

The Analyses and their Results

(1) *The Relative Effects of Class, Employment Status and Gender on Political Attitudes*

An analysis of variance of the political attitude scales by employment status (as a domestic labourer or a labour force participant), gender and class indicates that neither gender nor employment status explains a statistically significant proportion of variance in support for social welfare or income redistribution, and each explains only .01 ($p < .01$) in support for worker rights. Women and housewives are slightly less supportive of labour rights than are men and employed individuals, respectively. These results suggest that women and housewives (proto-typical females) are not more moralistic than men and employed individuals, respectively, in their support for social welfare and income redistribution. Class explained .05 of the variance in support for social welfare and income redistribution, and .06 in support for worker rights ($p < .01$).

(2) *Employment Status, Gender, and the Concordance of Class and Class-Related Attitudes*

The class-sex interaction terms explain .01 ($p < .01$) of the variance in each of the three attitude scales, while the class-employment terms explain .01 ($p < .01$) of the variance in support for social welfare, and none in support for redistribution of income or worker rights. This indicates that, within each class, there are minimal or no differences in the political attitudes expressed by men and women, or by domestic labourers and employed individuals.

To test for differences in attitudes *within specific classes*, the deviation from the mean scores on the three attitude scales for women and men (and for employed individuals and domestic labourers), and the significance

of the contrasts between the two groups for each class were calculated. A privatization effect exists if domestic labourers belonging to the classes which act most directly in the interests of capital — the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and managers — express greater support for social welfare, redistribution of income and worker rights than employed individuals in the same classes, since these measures are in the interest of labour rather than capital. This effect is also present, conversely, if domestic labourers with spouses who are working class, supervisors or semi-autonomous — assuming that the interests of supervisors and the semi-autonomous are similar to those of the working class — express less support for these measures that are in the interests of their class than employed members of their classes. Similarly, a gender effect exists if females of each class are less likely than males to express attitudes which are in their class interests.

The contrasts indicate a very slight gender effect: in the bourgeoisie, women are slightly less likely than men to express attitudes toward social welfare and income redistribution which reflect their class interests; and in the working class, women are slightly less likely than men to hold attitudes toward redistribution of income which are concordant with their class interests. For supervisors and foremen, semi-autonomous workers and the working class, the attitudes of females toward worker rights are slightly less likely to conform with class interests than those of men. But females occupying the class position of managers are more likely than their male counterparts to express attitudes toward worker rights which are in agreement with their class interests.

Of the 18 contrasts between domestic labourers and employed individuals within each class, five are statistically significant, and the magnitude of the class differences is very small for each. Four of these contrasts suggest a privatization effect: bourgeois domestic labourers and domestic labourers with managerial spouses are less influenced by their class interests in their attitudes toward social welfare — and for the bourgeoisie, in their attitudes toward redistribution of income — than employed members of their class; and domestic labourers with semi-autonomous spouses are less likely than employed members of their class to express attitudes toward worker rights that are in their class interests. The fifth contrast, however, suggests that privatization may actually enhance class consciousness, for domestic labourers with managerial spouses are more likely than employed managers to express attitudes toward worker rights that are in their class interests.

(3) *Consistency in Political Attitudes*

One measure of attitudinal consistency was formed from the intercorrelation among the three scales for each respondent. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficients are generally between .15 and .40, indicating that the association among the three scale ranges from slight to moderate. Both when education — which Converse (1964) found to be positively associated with constraint — is controlled and uncontrolled, the three inter-scale correlations for men are slightly higher than for women, and those for employed individuals are slightly higher than for domestic labourers. This indicates that political attitudes are consistent to a slightly higher degree for men and employed individuals than for women and domestic labourers, respectively. Since the differences are generally small, this data provides little evidence of either a privatization or a gender effect.

A consistency variable for each respondent was constructed from the negative of the standard deviation of her or his score on the three standardized political attitude scales. An analysis of variance of the consistency variable by employment status, gender and education indicates that neither employment status nor gender is associated with consistency in class-related attitudes ($R^2 = .00$). Domestic labourers, that is, express as much consistency in attitudes as labour force participants, as do females as compared with males, even when the influence of the other variables tested — education, and gender or employment status — are not controlled.

The consistency scores for domestic labourers and for employed individuals within each of the classes were contrasted in turn. The results indicate that only one contrast is statistically significant: domestic labourers with semi-autonomous spouses express a higher level of consistency than employed members of their class. The prediction that privatization inhibits consistency, then, is contradicted by the one contrast which is statistically significant, and by the failure of the remaining five contrasts to attain statistical significance.

(4) *The Conformity of Class and Class Identification*

Class and class identification⁵ were crosstabulated with (i) gender and (ii) employment status, in turn. Zero-order gammas⁶ were computed for men and for women, and for domestic labourers and for labour force participants. The effect of the control variable — gender or employment status — on the relationship between class and class identification is indicated by the magnitude of the differ-

ence between the two gammas calculated from each three-way crosstabulation. Zero-order gammas were also computed for the two-way crosstabulations of gender (employment status) by class identification for each class.

The gammas for women and men were .220 and .226, respectively. The small magnitude of the difference between the two values indicates that the relationship between class and class identification is similar for the two sexes.

Gender differences in the class identification of members of each class are minimal (gammas range from .016 to .183). For only two class positions is a gender effect apparent: semi-autonomous (gamma = .183) and working class (gamma = .114) women are more likely to identify with the middle and are less likely to identify with the working and lower classes than men in these positions. For the remaining positions, men are not more likely than women to identify with their class.

The gammas for domestic labourers and employed individuals are .235 and .208, respectively, indicating that the relationship between class and class identification is similar for the two groups. There are only very small differences in the class identification of domestic labourers and employed individuals within each class (gammas range from .034 to .196). For only the petty bourgeoisie does privatization inhibit class identification: the employed petty bourgeoisie are slightly more likely to identify with the upper and upper middle classes, and slightly less likely to identify with the working and lower classes than petty bourgeois domestic labourers (gamma = .196). For the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, privatization appears to enhance identification with one's social position, since bourgeois domestic labourers are less likely to identify with the working class, and are more likely to identify with the middle class than employed members of their class (gamma = -.134).

Moreover, domestic labourers are less likely to identify with the class extremes — the upper and upper middle or working and lower classes — and are more likely to identify with the middle class than employed individuals. This suggests that the experience of privatization may mask, to some degree, class distinctions for domestic labourers in most classes, such that they consider themselves as belonging to a middle rather than an upper or lower class.

Discussion

Although the results indicate that privatization does not, in general, influence class consciousness, they provide some support for the traditional Marxist model: the variable most strongly associated with class consciousness is class; political attitudes tend to conform with class interests; and the political attitudes of domestic labourers reflect the interests associated with their husband's class.

The lack of a gender or privatization effect does not mean that the sexual division of labour has no influence on political attitudes. Many related variables such as the conditions of work faced by domestic workers, and the double burden faced by women in the home and workplace, may be more important. Study of the effect of structural characteristics of the work situation — such as amount of work performed, semi-autonomy and supervisory duties — on political attitudes have been conducted for the employed population (e.g., Johnston and Ornstein, 1979a). Similar studies for domestic labourers are necessary.

The measure of privatization employed in the present study could be further refined by identifying specific elements of domestic labour which are privatizing. Involvement in local clubs or groups, such as collective daycare centres, for example, may encourage interaction and inhibit feelings of isolation among domestic labourers.

The findings may also be influenced by the androcentric operationalization of political attitudes employed. Class-related attitudes in this and most other studies refer more directly to the situation of labour force participants than to that of domestic labourers. Privatization (and gender) may lead to greater differences in political attitudes related to the situation of domestic labourers or women in general — such as working conditions in the home, length of workday and financial security — than in political attitudes of more direct concern to participants in the paid labour force. Several researchers explain that attitudes and issues associated with males (e.g., greater enthusiasm for war) tend to be labelled political, while those of women (e.g., objection to war, domestic issues) are considered apolitical or moralistic (e.g., Goot and Reid, 1975; Bourque and Grossholtz, 1974; Siltanen and Stanworth, 1984; Randall, 1982). Gender differences may be obscured in the present study due to the omission of issues of direct concern to domestic labourers. It is important for future research to incorporate the situation of women, and more specifically, domestic labourers into class analyses.

This will become easier as the ongoing conceptualization of the relationship between gender and class is refined.

Notes

1. For a comprehensive review of the literature, see Goot and Reid (1975), Jacquette (1974: xxi-xxii), Bourque and Grossholtz (1974), Greenstein (1965: 107-14) and Bashevkin (1979).
2. For a review of the literature, see Jacquette (1974: xxi-xxii), Goot and Reid (1975: 18-25) and Randall (1982: 49-53).
3. The present study is described in more detail in McKee (1982).
4. The six classes are: bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, managers, supervisors, semi-autonomous workers and working class.
5. The four categories were: upper, upper middle, middle, and working or lower class.
6. In the computation of gamma, the two dichotomous variables, gender and employment status, could be treated as if they were ordinal.

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Appendix A1

Questions Used to Form Political Attitude Scales

I. Support for Social Welfare

We would like to know how much effort you think government should put into a number of activities. Please choose the answer on this card which comes closest to your opinion about the effort that should be made in each area. Remember that putting more effort into one of these areas would require a shift of money from other areas or an increase in taxes.

- (i) First of all, how much effort should be put into health and medical care?
- (ii) what about providing assistance to the unemployed?
- (iii) what about helping the poor?
- (iv) what about education?
- (v) and lastly, workmen's compensation?

[Response categories were: much less effort, less effort, about the same effort, more effort, much more effort]

II. Support for Redistribution of Income

- (i) There is too much of a difference between rich and poor in this country.
- (ii) The government should provide jobs for Canadians who want to work but cannot find jobs.
- (iii) People with high incomes should pay a greater share of the total taxes than they do now.

[Response categories were: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree]

III. Support for Worker Rights

- (i) During a strike, management should be prohibited by law from hiring workers to take the place of strikers. [Response categories were the same as II above]
- (ii) Some groups in Canada have more power than others to get the things they want. I am going to read you a list of groups and would like you to tell me if you think each one has too much power for the good of the country, too little power for the good of the country, or about the right amount of power. How much power do labour unions have? [Response categories were: much too much power, too much power, about right, too little power, much too little power]
- (iii) People talk about a lot of different things that cause inflation. In your opinion, how important are wage increases in causing inflation? Would you say very important, fairly important, or not very important?
- (iv) Now thinking about unemployment, in your opinion how important are demands for increased wages by Canadian workers in causing unemployment? Would you say they are very important, fairly important, or not very important?

Appendix A2

Questions Used to Form Political Attitude Scales

The *support for social welfare* scale reflected the degree of government effort the respondent indicated should be put into the following areas: health and medical care, providing assistance to the unemployed, helping the poor, education, and workmen's compensation.

The *support for redistribution of income* scale reflected the degree to which the respondent agreed with the following statements:

- (1) There is too much of a difference between rich and and poor in this country.

(2) The government should provide jobs for Canadians who want to work but cannot find jobs.

(3) People with high incomes should pay a greater share of the total taxes than they do now.

The questions used for the *support for worker rights* scale required the respondent to indicate:

(1) extent of agreement that management should be prohibited by law from hiring workers to take the place of strikers during a strike;

(2) how much power, for the good of the country, labour unions have;

(3) how important wage increases are in causing inflation; and

(4) how important demands for increased wages by Canadian workers are in causing unemployment.

no frills

ruffles collided with self-esteem
 when grandma stitched up a storm
 fashioned a flurry of sun dresses,
 so at six poor Faye was
 destined for butterflydom—
 yellow, pink, blue wings
 sprouted from her tiny shoulders
 producing no flight

“little owlet, purple owlet”
 she sang with her small friends
 “won’t you lend me your swift pinions,”
 but there was no escaping
 grandma’s fancy frocks
 or massive round body that threw
 such a warmth, it threatened to eclipse
 the great burning circle of her mother’s
 fierce loyalty and love

the two women fought on
 inside Faye’s head
 so when grown up
 she wore sleeveless blouses
 bought airline tickets
 despised ruffled anything
 and lived with a terrible fear
 of sunstroke

Comelia C. Hornosty
 Dundas, Ontario