

# Women's Work

## The Meaning of She-cession and Undersupplied ELCC

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**A** | ATKINSON FELLOW  
on the *Future of Workers*

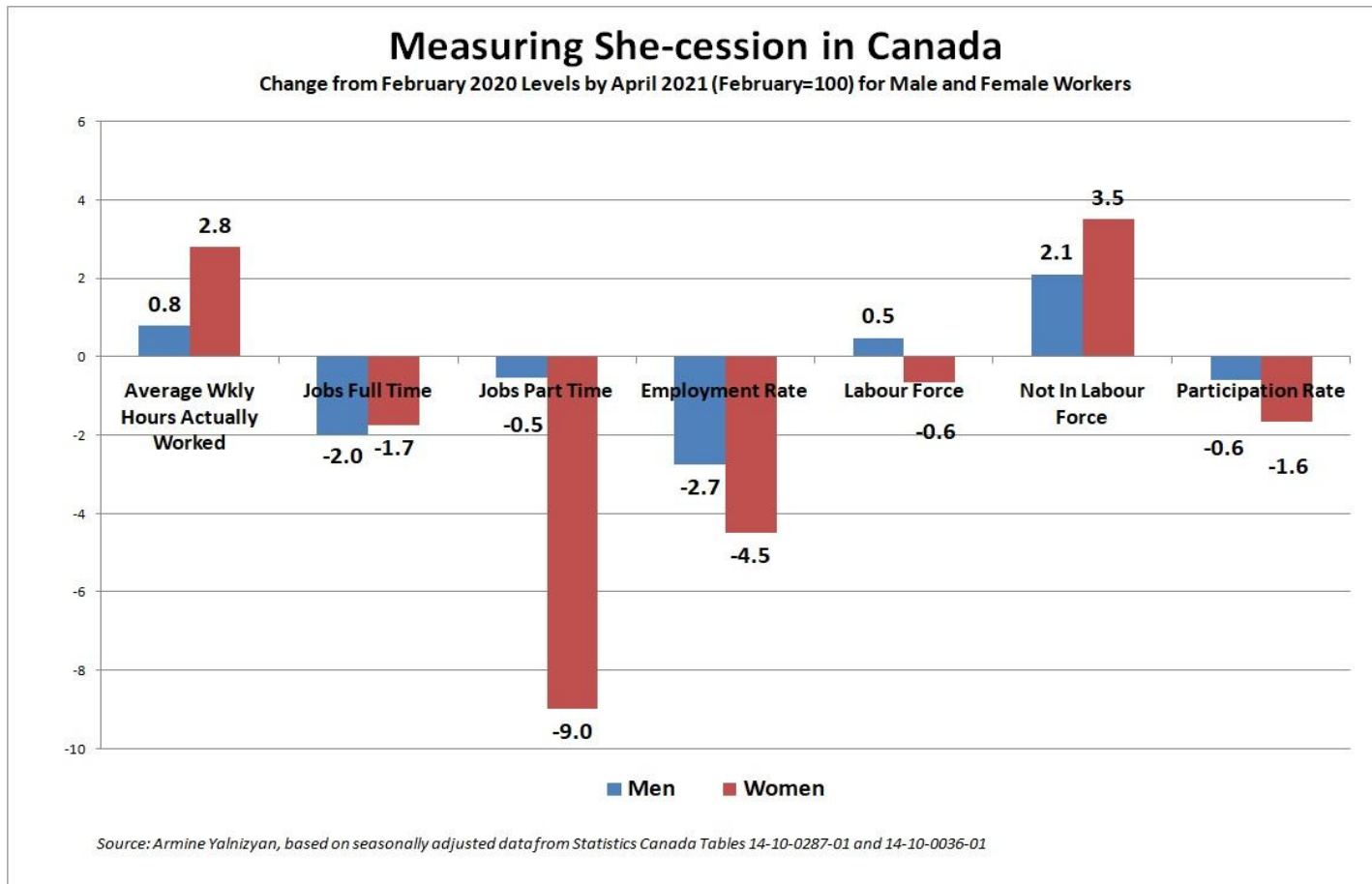
Atkinson Centre Summer Institute on Early Childhood Development  
**The Early Years: From Disruption to Recovery and Beyond**  
June 2, 2021

# 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

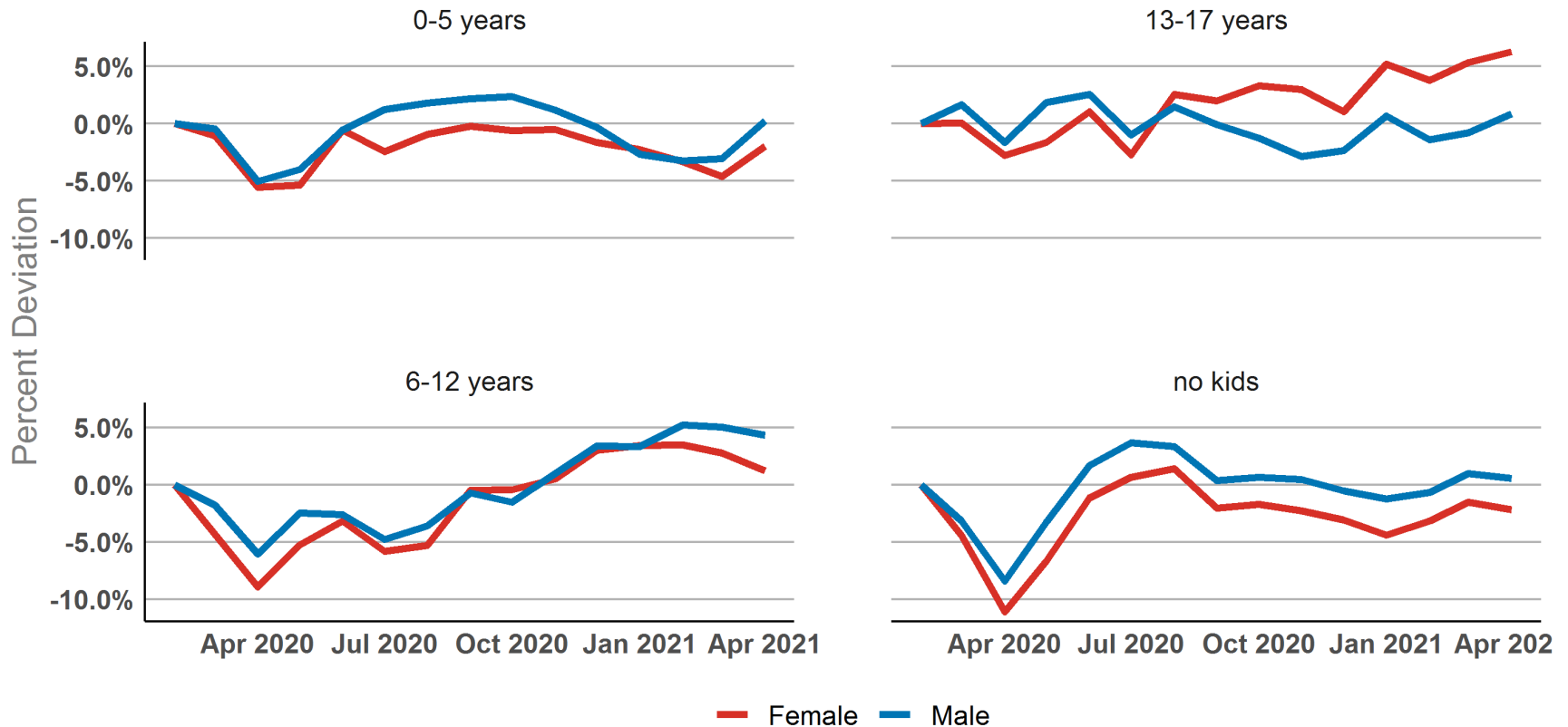
- 64% of jobs lost so far were lost by women (most low-paid, racialized)
- 61,000 women dropped out of the labour force; 53,000 men joined



# Biggest hit: young workers. But among prime-age workers Parents of pre-schoolers hardest hit, especially moms

## Labour force changes in Canada

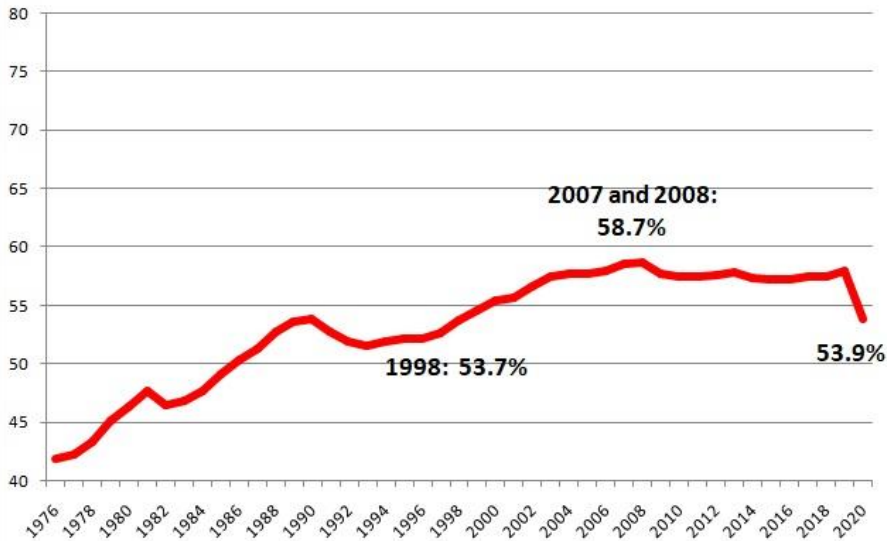
Cumulative Percent Difference from Feb 2020, by gender and youngest child age



LMIC; Labour Force Survey.  
LFS data from RTRA. Data are not adjusted for seasonality

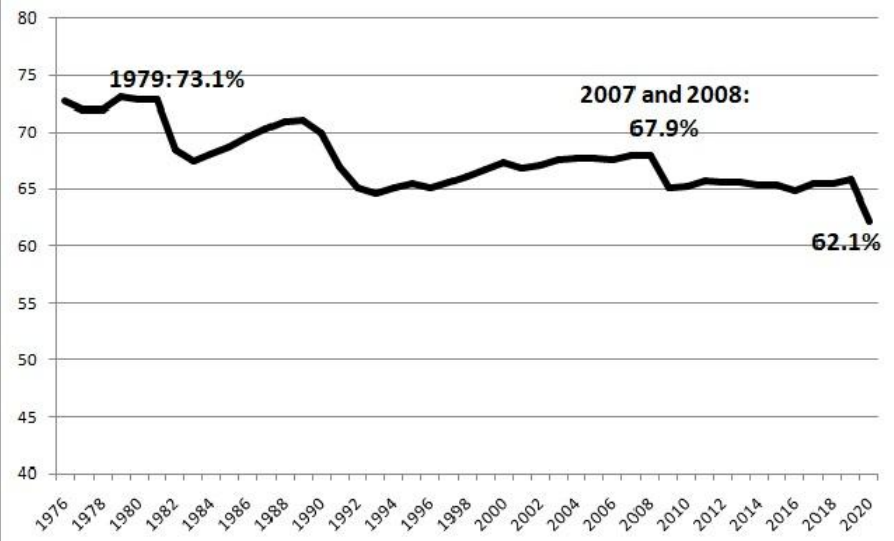
# Rolling Back Gains In Equity

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



Source: @ArmineYalnizyan from Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0327-01

**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?

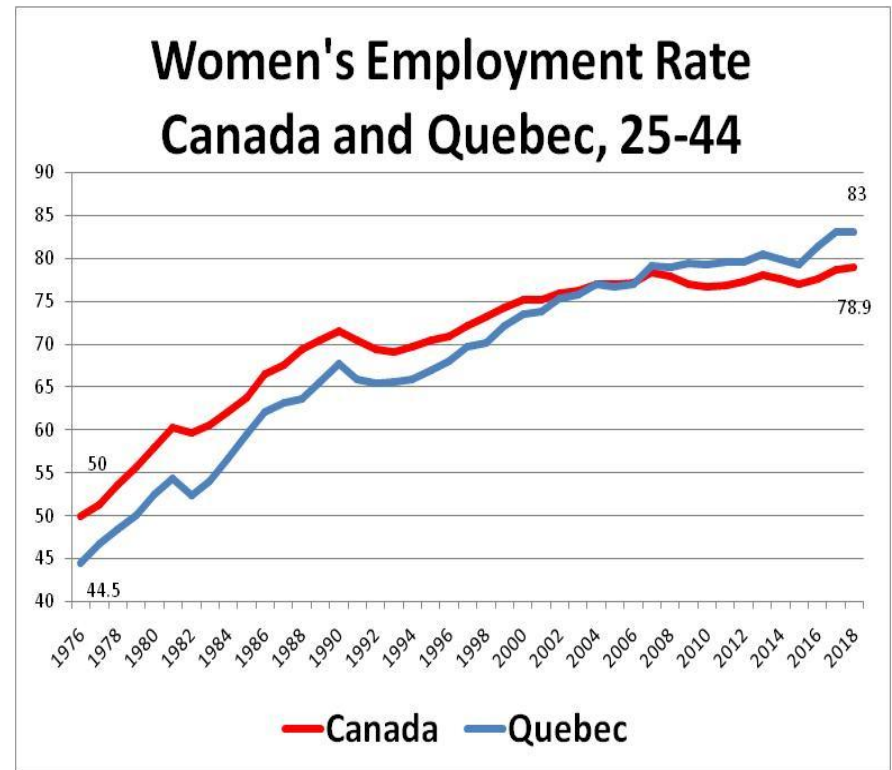
- GDP is driven by household spending (~57% pre pandemic)
- Biggest spenders among households – families with kids under 18
- Most of these households (~2/3rds) rely on two earners
- Women contribute ~40% of these incomes
- Falling out of the labour market because of undersupplied ELCC means unnecessary 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)



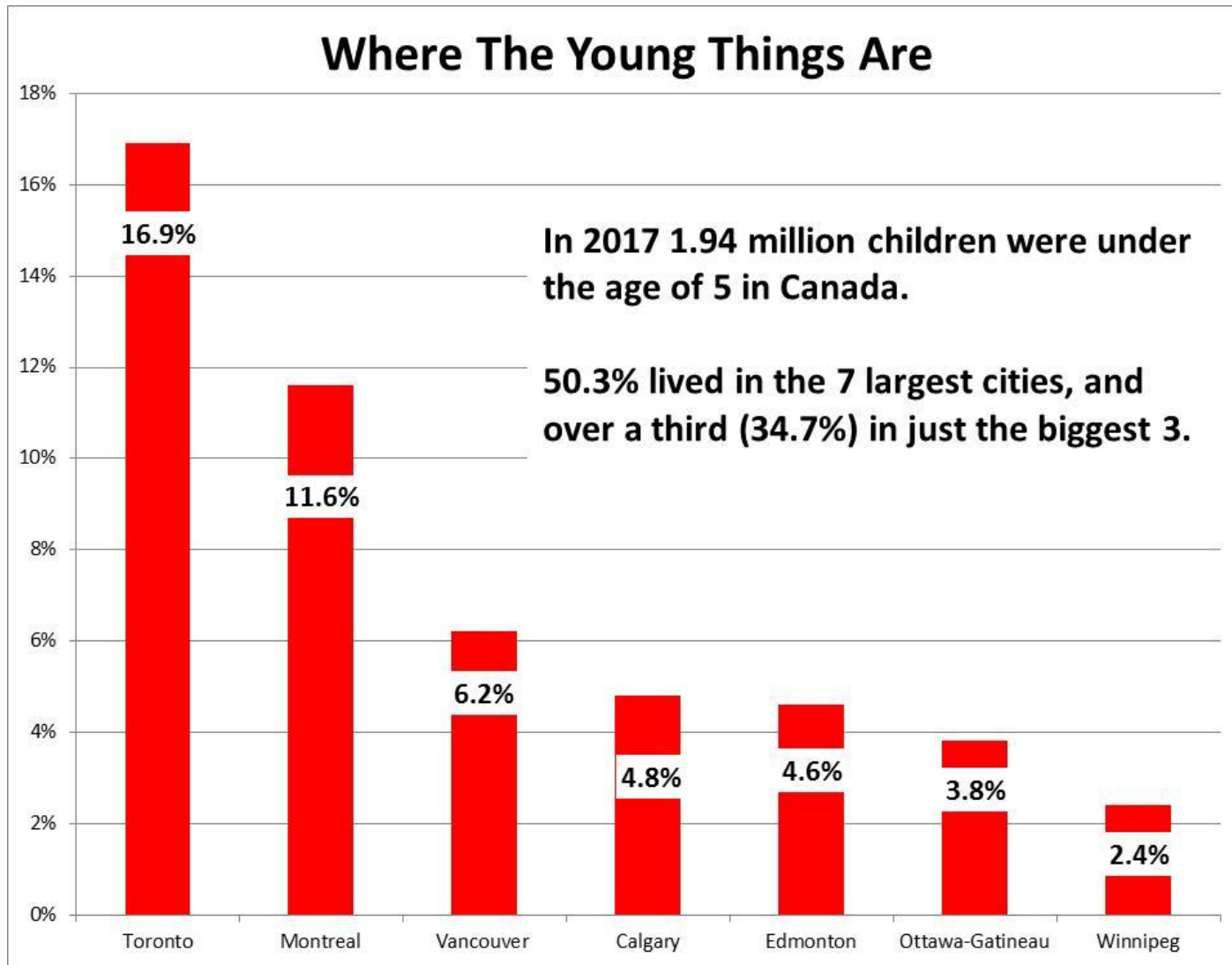


# Getting to Quebec

- 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)



# 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

**National Training Strategy? Care Standards?  
Better reporting? FPT table?**

# 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

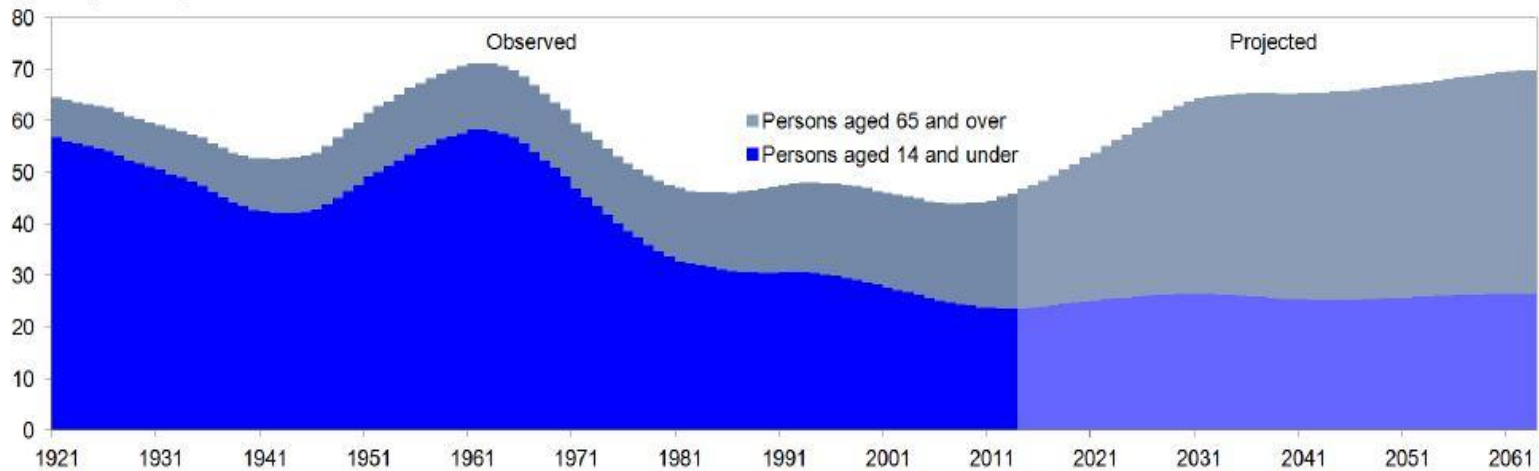
Approaching the same dependency ratio as in 1960s, \*BUT\* for longer, and with half the rate of GDP growth

Population Projections for Canada (2013 to 2063), Provinces and Territories (2013 to 2038)

Figure 2.7

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

per 100 persons aged 15 to 64



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.

# Key Message

**An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure**

*- Your Grandmother, and Benjamin Franklin*



**“Never confuse motion with action.”**

— Benjamin Franklin

**Thank you for your time.**

***Twitter @ArmineYalnizyan***