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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Ida Rosenthal and her Maidenformidable Empire: Booming Business and Dreamy Advertising in  
Postwar United States

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

Natasha Synycia

Dissertation Committee:  
Professor Emerita Emily Rosenberg  
Associate Professor Sharon Block  
Assistant Professor Allison Perlman

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# CURRICULUM VITAE

## Natasha Synycia

- 2006            B.A. in Art History, California State University, Fullerton
- 2008            M.A. in Art History and Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies,  
University of Connecticut, Storrs
- 2011            M.A. in History, University of California, Irvine
- 2016            Ph.D. in History, University of California, Irvine

### Field of Study

Twentieth Century U.S. History

### Publications

“Strong French Heroine or Pious Maiden: Sarah Bernhardt as Joan of Arc”, *Sexing Political Culture in the History of France*, edited by Alison Moore, (Cambria Press, 2013), pp.98-119.

# **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

Ida Rosenthal's Maidenformidable Empire: Booming Business and Dreamy Advertising  
in Postwar America

By

Natasha Synycia

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Irvine, 2016

Professor Emerita Emily Rosenberg, Chair

The Maidenform brassiere company was an innovator in producing and disseminating expanded representations of gender around the world in the postwar period. By exploiting the important yet open-ended concept of American freedom during the early Cold War, Maidenform became the world's top brassiere manufacturer and producer of one of the most famous advertising campaigns of all time. This study uses the Maidenform company as a vehicle to study how gender, business, labor, advertising, consumerism, and nationalism intersected in the U.S. during the early Cold War. It was during this era that Maidenform became a symbol of modern American womanhood, a highly successful woman-led multinational company, the brand behind one of the most popular advertising campaigns of all time, and an early example of the movement to employ offshore labor forces. In multiple formats, Maidenform was an innovator in expanding upon the typical rendition of conventional early Cold War American femininity and projecting complicated gender representations in consumer culture. Yet the limits of this early version of female empowerment were met when Maidenform offshored to seek cheap labor in

Puerto Rico, where the company circumvented the largely female workforces' attempts to organize under a Puerto Rico-based union

# **INTRODUCTION:**

## **Ida Rosenthal's Maidenformidable Empire: Booming Business and Dreamy**

### **Advertising in Postwar United States**

Maidenform bras, the American company that produced them, and the Dream advertisements, which garnered them worldwide fame, were icons of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century life. When thinking of Maidenform, surely, brassieres come to mind, and although that is undeniably an important aspect, this study uses the Maidenform company as a vehicle to study how gender, business, labor, advertising, consumerism, and nationalism intersected in the U.S. during the early Cold War.<sup>1</sup> It was during this era that Maidenform became a symbol of modern American womanhood, a highly successful woman-led multinational company, the brand behind one of the most popular advertising campaigns of all time, and an early example of the movement to employ offshore labor forces. In multiple formats, Maidenform was an innovator in expanding upon the typical rendition of conventional early Cold War American femininity and projecting complicated gender representations in consumer culture.

Maidenform utilized the unstable representation of (gendered) American freedom in their marketing, business culture, and advertising to sell products in the U.S. and internationally. When the examination turns beyond the symbolic, as in the process of expanding American-style capitalism to Puerto Rico, the complications of this same Cold War rhetoric were reinforced, as freedom was arguably both expanded and limited economically and socially for Maidenform's primarily female labor force. This analysis argues that Maidenform, as a symbol and a producer

of American-style capitalism, shows the multiple interpretations and portrayals of “freedom” possible in early Cold War America and the way this unfixed concept of freedom allowed for expanded representations of gender in consumer culture. However, the example of Maidenform also demonstrates the limits of the early Cold War construction of freedom as it was disseminated within and without the borders of the continental U.S.

Building upon scholars including Jane Farrell-Beck, Colleen Gau, and Jill Fields, who have shown the cultural and historical importance of undergarments, this analysis connects that literature to larger discussions surrounding gender, American consumerism, and national identity. As Emily Rosenberg has shown, during the twentieth century, a connection developed between ideas of modernity, images of women, and American consumer culture.<sup>2</sup> While Lizabeth Cohen has demonstrated that during the early Cold War, freedom and ideas about the America Way became synonymous with consumerism and consumer abundance.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Elaine Tyler May has analyzed how the anxiety surrounding the early Cold War effected the ensuing “containment” of gender roles in the U.S.<sup>4</sup> This study expands upon this historiography by demonstrating the interaction between the gendered “domestic containment” and early Cold War ideas of “freedom” as manifested in consumer culture.

The Maidenform company was founded by Ida Rosenthal, a female Socialist-Jewish refugee from Imperial Russia who started the American capitalist venture in New York with her husband, William Rosenthal, and a fellow immigrant named Enid Bisset, in 1922.<sup>5</sup> Ida Rosenthal was the heart, brain, and face of Maidenform, and her public persona became the centerpiece of what I label the company’s Woman-to-Woman marketing strategy.<sup>6</sup> It was largely this Woman-to-Woman approach, which permeated throughout the company, its image and its actions, that

not only permitted but also promoted a (limited) expansion of gendered conventions. The Woman-to-Woman strategy emphasized a special, exclusive female communication—Maidenform products were projected as being made by women, for women, and as speaking to a multifaceted “female desire.” The underlying assumption was that women knew what other women wanted in a way that only they could really understand and deliver.<sup>7</sup> In some ways this strategy conformed with traditional postwar ideals of femininity, but in many more ways it pushed the boundaries of acceptable gender norms by skillfully integrating the traditionally “masculine” attributes of independence and forward sexuality within an image seemingly devoted to harmless fun and fashion. This unique marketing strategy gave at least the appearance of female empowerment by addressing women in non-traditional and respectful ways.

In an era when “traditional” gender roles were often emphasized and reinforced through consumer culture, Maidenform’s Dream campaign (1949-1969) created images that blended acceptable early postwar femininity with the more adventurous, aspirational, and radical ethos that would become more predominant after second wave and even third wave feminism became generally accepted in mainstream culture.<sup>8</sup> The Dream advertisements differed dramatically from prior advertising geared towards women—particularly for brassieres.<sup>9</sup> Typical brassiere ads before the Dream campaign featured abstracted illustrations of women in their underwear in private indoor locales, and they typically appeared in women’s publications. The vast majority of early Cold War ads focused on women’s roles as, or aspirations to become, devoted mothers, wives, and homemakers situated in the domestic sphere.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the Dream ads imagined a woman dreaming she was having a delightful adventure. Sometimes they were as mundane and traditionally feminine as shopping or attending the theater; other times they were more unusual,

showing women in traditionally all-male realms—one Dreamer won an election, one served on a jury, another played in a symphony. But what really made the Dream ads stand out was that Maidenform's Dreamers were always featured wearing only their bras from the waist up, living out their own rather risqué fantasies in the public domain.

Although not a single Dream ad ever referred to a woman's conventional role as a mother or wife, the campaign was not necessarily entirely subversive. On their own, displays of sexuality or states of female undress are not automatically transgressive. Indeed, the little scholarship that has dealt with the Dream campaign has discussed it as either representing sexism or as an early example of sex in advertising.<sup>11</sup> The ads did operate within the ideals of traditional white beauty culture in the pursuit of profit, perpetuating some gender norms while expanding certain others.<sup>12</sup> However, this analysis argues that one of the key elements that gave the Maidenform ads radical potential was that the dreams were female fantasies, which did not picture men in the ads and did not imply the male gaze. In fact, the opposite was the case. The ads implied a female gaze. The women were not embarrassed by their public exposure and they were not objectified à la the pinup. The Dreamers were active agents in their own fantasies.

That does not mean there was a complete rejection of a male gaze as Maidenform was unprecedentedly visible to the general public. Unlike prior brassiere advertisements, the Dream ads were featured in mainstream publications, on public billboards, in store window fronts, and even parodied in multiple genres. Even though the ads may have been targeting the female public, these same women were aware that men saw these images. However, the Woman-to-Woman approach as infused in Rosenthal's persona, the Dream campaign, and the marketing, were



contradictory and open to various interpretations, which obscured conventional ideas about object and subject, traditional and radical female gender roles.

The exceptional public nature of the ads themselves draws attention to the idea of being seen and the power of performance to reproduce gender or even to alter it. Judith Butler has remarked that feminine subjectivity is made visible through the repetition of performance. She writes, “[t]he act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again.”<sup>13</sup> In essence, Maidenform changed the script. While certainly continuing many normative gender ideals, Maidenform also produced new versions of femininity, possibly guiding different gender performances. The enormous visibility and cultural influence of Maidenform and the openness of the meaning provided by the Woman-to-Woman strategy had the potential to alter cultural ideas about femininity.<sup>14</sup> One could view them as reinforcing traditional ideas about women’s sexual objectivity or as liberating and gender fluid. Building upon Liz Connor’s analysis of the rise of the spectacular Modern Woman in 1920s Australia, this analysis argues that Maidenform also had the potential to direct women’s “gaze not only to products but back to themselves and their potential to be visually transformed through the use of goods.”<sup>1</sup>

While the Dream campaign is still relatively well known (if not well-studied)<sup>15</sup> in advertising history and amongst the general public by those alive in the 1950s and 1960s, Motivation Research, the psychoanalytically-influenced advertising technique, which influenced the campaign and contributed to its subversive potential, has been largely overlooked. Pioneered

by the Viennese refugee, Dr. Ernest Dichter, and practiced by Maidenform's ad agency Norman, Craig & Kummel, the controversial Motivation Research carried with it associations of Freudianism, secret sexual desires, and subconscious manipulation. New scholarship has delved into Dichter but has yet to connect Motivation Research in any depth to specific ad campaigns.<sup>16</sup> Practitioners of Motivation Research claimed that through analyzing consumer behavior they were able to get beyond the deceptive mask of the conscious to the dark world of the subconscious where the truth of human desire was to be found. To be able to identify consumers' hidden desires and apply this knowledge to marketing in order to increase sales was enticing to businesses in the increasingly competitive, consumption-focused postwar economy. However, the practitioners also claimed to be providing (female) consumers and the nation with a type of consumer therapy, which had the arguably radical and not entirely unintended result of expanding representations of femininity in consumer culture.

As an immigrant founded company, Maidenform proved its American bonafides during WWII by making war supplies, secret vests for messenger pigeons, and pin-up contests for the boys overseas. Maidenform was even able to get a wartime dispensation from rationing by convincing the government that their brassieres were a wartime necessity, especially for female laborers. The connection between Maidenform and America's foreign policy continued during the Cold War. The world's best selling bra was Maidenform's Chansonnette. The Chansonnette's circular stitch formed the conical shaped bosoms, which became the trademark of the exaggerated hourglass figure of the early Cold War. Yet Maidenform did not simply shape the figure of the American woman; it also personified her values through Ida Rosenthal and advertising. Rosenthal, once a Russian Socialist, became a Cold War warrior who traveled around

the world inspecting her “Maidenformidable empire” and participating in government sponsored exchange programs with the Soviets—all part of her effort to change the world, one uplifted bosom at a time.

Together, the Woman-to-Woman approach, the psychoanalytic advertising, and the All-American status of Maidenform, assisted in creating a personification of the Maidenform brand in the form of the Maidenform Woman. Maidenform, with its saturation of the U.S. market and its worldwide presence, contributed to a modern representation of American womanhood in the mid twentieth century. The Maidenform Woman, in essence, became a representation of the American Woman. The Maidenform Woman represented an embodiment of gendered American “freedom” centered in consumer culture. The Maidenform Woman was free to dream, to transgress, and to consume. The Maidenform Woman exploited the instability of “freedom” in consumer culture to project internationally an allegory of a new Cold War American womanhood which symbolized both the constriction of femininity under domestic containment and the possibilities of its subversion.

As Maidenform went around the world, increasingly, the women who physically created the Maidenform brassieres resided less in the continental United States and more in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This was arguably where the Woman-to-Woman approach bumped up against the realities of capitalism in practice and reached its limits. The expansion of Maidenform’s manufacturing to Puerto Rico was crucial to the success of Operation Bootstrap, which was a US program aimed at expanding US capitalism in the form of export-led industrialization and limiting the potential appeal of communism in a vulnerable, so-called third world nation close to the US border. As the second largest employer on the island, Maidenform

provided comparably good paying jobs to the women of Puerto Rico, arguably expanding their economic independence. However, Maidenform cooperated with its mainland-based union, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, to prevent the formation of Puerto Rican-based labor organizations, arguably limiting their freedom. This section builds upon work by labor scholars of Puerto Rico under Operation Bootstrap, and specifically Melanie Shell-Weiss and Vicki Howard who have written articles on working women and Maidenform.<sup>17</sup> The experience of Maidenform and the ILGWU with the Puerto Rican government and the primarily female Puerto Rican labor force, demonstrate the shifting relationships between labor, business, and government that took place with the formation of off-shore manufacturing environments and strategies to promote export-led development policies. The move towards off-shoring manufacturing to cheaper labor environments would continue to become a powerful force for change, especially for American labor, business and consumerism. Maidenform, an important player in this change, illuminates both the history of capitalism and labor history.

The structure of this analysis uses Maidenform as a central node in which to explore gender, business, economics, advertising, labor, and US-international relationships. Separately, each chapter explores an important sector in the early Cold War era. Together, this dissertation provides a window into this historical period, demonstrating the ways “freedom” in consumer culture could be interpreted in various manners, which had the potential to simultaneously reinforce and break free from conventional gender roles. The example of Maidenform shows the ways that traditional gender roles in consumer culture were challenged prior to the feminist movement, as well as the limits of freedom inherent in capitalism.

The postwar era ushered in the U.S. as a global power, militarily and perhaps even more importantly, culturally. In this time of change, Maidenform was a major international corporation that pioneered new marketing, advertising, and labor techniques, arguably influencing cultural norms. This analysis of Maidenform demonstrates the shifting roles, meanings and interaction among gender, consumerism, business, labor, and national identity during the early Cold War. By using Maidenform as a lens into American life between 1949-1969, it examines mid-century history across a broad spectrum — scaling down to examine the dimensions of an individual woman starting her own business and calibrating up to probe broad transnational themes in culture, national identity and international development.

## CHAPTER 1:

### I Dreamed I Sold Millions of Bras: Ida Rosenthal and Woman-to-Woman Marketing

When a nervous young man commented, “I understand you’re with Maidenform,” Ida Rosenthal swiftly replied, “I *am* Maidenform.”<sup>18</sup>



Figure 1: “Maidenform’s Mrs. R,” *Fortune Magazine*, July 1950.

A tactical gender flexibility was deployed in Maidenform’s marketing from the office of president Ida Rosenthal to the retail store floors—giving the impression of a brand made by women, for women. Capitalizing on the feminine character of the brassiere, the Maidenform

company and its founder Ida Rosenthal cultivated a “woman-to-woman”<sup>19</sup> marketing strategy that gave the impression of a direct relationship between the women who produced and the women who consumed.<sup>20</sup> The Woman-to-Woman strategy is an early example of what today might be labeled female empowerment in marketing. Elaborating on the scholarship of Juliann Sivulka and Denise H Sutton’s work on women in the advertising business, Roland Marchand’s analysis of corporate branding, and Jackson Lears’ study of consumer culture, this chapter’s analysis extends a consideration of the use of gender in marketing, specifically public relations, “scientific” research, advertising, and tie-in marketing in retail stores.<sup>21</sup>

In an era of male entrepreneurs, Ida Rosenthal built and ran the world’s top selling brassiere company.<sup>22</sup> Shrewdly working within the shifting and contested confines of twentieth century gender roles, Rosenthal crafted a flexible gendered persona as head and public representative of Maidenform, rendering an aura of authority and intimacy—she was both the savvy business tycoon and the sage matron. Likewise, Maidenform’s Dream campaign, contests, and fashion shows also promoted a fun female-friendly ambience open to various interpretations. Maidenform’s innovative self-serve “bra bar” gave the consumer a sense of independence by allowing them to bypass the traditional shopping assistant and choose their own bra from the variety provided on the shop floor. The largely female employees who created the bras also participated in and shaped the meaning of the Woman-to-Woman approach. Maidenform’s business culture promoted the celebration of a fun and sometimes transgressive female-centered environment. This chapter shows how the unique and influential gendered marketing approach practiced by Ida Rosenthal and Maidenform employees, implemented within department stores

and visible in various media, played with the pliable mid-twentieth century gender roles and generated the impression of a special link between a female brand and its female consumers.

The Woman-to-Woman marketing program employed an agile ambiguity that provided unfixed messages with multiple plausible interpretations. This openness was a vital component of Maidenform's marketing because it allowed for the presentation of potentially subversive messages, while simultaneously providing the coverage of the conventional. This was manifested in gender-blending, the mixing of the public with the private, as well as the progressive and the old-fashioned. An unreservedly transgressive marketing strategy would not have been prudent as it would most have likely been rejected as an unacceptable sales booster and social message. Therefore, Maidenform's Woman-to-Woman marketing strategy operated in the in-between spaces of femininity and masculinity, female empowerment and consumerism.

Maidenform's Woman-to-Woman strategy was a marketing device which strove to give the appearance of originating from the "woman's perspective."<sup>23</sup> This does not mean that it actually arose from a woman's point of view, as no single, "authentic" female voice exists. Although the Woman-to-Woman approach was a marketing strategy with the definitive objective of increasing Maidenform's market share, this chapter argues that it also attempted to address women's desires in ways that were respectful, insightful, innovative and went beyond the traditional view of women's social roles in consumer culture as mothers, housewives, and sexual objects. Maidenform's marketing did not condescend or attempt to make the consumer feel guilt or lower her self-esteem; instead, it used humor, eroticism, supple gender symbols, and at least the semblance of regard for female consumers in order to sell products. By working just within the boundaries of gendered propriety in consumer culture, the marketing campaign was able to



push the envelope of acceptable ideas of femininity. Ambiguity was key as it simultaneously provided Maidenform with the space necessary to cross gendered lines and potential cover for its transgressions. It is unknown whether this was an intention of the Woman-to-Woman approach. Certainly, the primary aim was to sell more products. Nonetheless, this innovative gendered approach did provide the tools, enabling diverse and even radical images and interpretations.

### “I am Maidenform”: Ida Rosenthal and the Creation of Maidenform

Ida Rosenthal stressed the image of a female-run company, and herself as a successful gender-blending businesswoman, as part of Maidenform’s Woman-to-Woman marketing strategy. Her public persona was essential in the establishment of this approach. Through public relations, Rosenthal presented herself as the Maidenform brand. As head of the company and the personality of the brand, Rosenthal used the media to publicize a particular femininity to promote Maidenform. Rosenthal was a wife and a mother, and the company was family owned and run, though none of this was emphasized. Rosenthal as Maidenform was self-made, dynamic, and savvy. The Maidenform brand, as articulated by Rosenthal, was embodied as a spirited, independent woman. The Maidenform Woman was in control, vibrant and free. She was not tending to children, cleaning a house, or taking care of a man. She was daring, imaginative, and it seems, a businesswoman. Unlike the Dream campaign and the related marketing, Rosenthal’s personality did not emphasize sexuality or youth. Rosenthal as Maidenform was a no-nonsense expert fortified by experience, tantamount to a matriarchal sage. While Maidenform’s Dream campaign and its attendant marketing tie-ins illustrated a variety of fantasies and aspirations intended to appeal to women, in many ways Rosenthal publicly

personified a concrete reality. This analysis will show how Ida Rosenthal equated her self-cultivated gender-blending image with one of the most private and gender specific consumer goods and in the process complicated a public image of femininity in the twentieth century.

Rosenthal's presentation as the gendered embodiment of her business is important as it relates to gender and business history. In an age generally characterized by male entrepreneurs, an analysis of one of the twentieth century's most successful businesswomen addresses Joan W. Scott's call in *The Business History Review* to make the distinctive contributions of women in business more visible and builds upon Kathy Peiss' important work<sup>24</sup> on female entrepreneurs. Like other publicly visible female entrepreneurs, the anomaly of Rosenthal's leadership was tempered by the gendered nature of the product.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps not as to proprietorship, but the traditional association of selling foundational garments was with women. In business, women flourished in traditionally feminine areas, as, for example, Madame CJ Walker with her African-American hair care line and Estee Lauder with her upscale cosmetic and skincare brand. Scholars like Regina Blaszczyk, Wendy Gamber, and Kathy Peiss have looked into the role women have played in business, particularly in fashion and beauty firms, but they give only slight attention to Maidenform.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, through an analysis of Rosenthal's gendered persona and Maidenform's use of gendered marketing, it will build upon the scholarship of Philip Scranton and Geoffrey Jones' work on gender in business history.<sup>27</sup> In particular, it addresses the creation of a particularly feminine brand. As Roland Marchand demonstrated, the public-be-damned attitude of big business in the early twentieth century did not suffice after the economic hardships of the Great Depression. To counteract the negative public perception of big business, companies used public relations to project a "good neighbor" image, eventually developing

individual personas by the postwar era.<sup>28</sup> Rosenthal's public persona and Maidenform's marketing worked together to create a "corporate soul," which was appealing to its consumer base, but unlike the examples that Marchand discusses Maidenform's "soul" was female.

However, commenting on the intersection of gender and business, Joan W. Scott warned that exclusive examinations of women's experience to the detriment of market structures risks reinforcing binaries and reifying gender. She stated that the scholarship must go "beyond the emancipatory impulses of women's history."<sup>29</sup> Scott indicated that pointing to women's involvement in economic ventures has the effect of highlighting the role of gender, pushing aside the curtain of neutrality and making evident the predominance of men in business. Additionally, she encourages studies that demonstrate that gendered adaptations by women, as well as men, were required to succeed in business.<sup>30</sup> In this spirit, this study seeks to point out the ways that gender was constructed in a business savvy manner within the particular historical and social context. The discussion of Ida Rosenthal as a businesswoman seeks not to show her "experience" but to analyze the use of gender in her public presentations, and in conjunction with market structures, to understand the way gender has been used to construct an image successfully in a particular historical time period.

The public story of Ida Rosenthal and the creation of the Maidenform Company were tied together to give the impression of an extraordinary, yet utterly possible American Dream. Rosenthal's biography embodies the idealized rags-to-riches convention perfectly—except that she was female. As a young woman, she escaped the persecution of her political and religious beliefs in Russia by immigrating to the United States where she worked hard and generated a multi-million dollar business. This traditional conception of the "American Dream" focuses on

“making it,” primarily in the form of financial success.<sup>31</sup> As business and the means of seeking significant financial gain has been traditionally centered in the realm of men, it is reasonable to state that the conventional American Dream is gendered male. So how did this particular woman negotiate early and mid-twentieth century gender roles successfully in the business world in order to achieve the masculine American Dream? In short, Rosenthal adeptly adapted historically contingent masculine business conventions and combined them with a marketing program aimed to “speak” to female consumers. This amalgamation was familiar enough to be acceptable, yet innovative enough to garner public interest and consumer affinity. Rosenthal’s narrative at once attempted to mitigate her “foreignness” and her gender.

Rosenthal’s immigrant-makes-good story started in Imperial Russia, which during her lifetime was rife with state-sanctioned anti-Semitism and violence. Ida Rosenthal was born Iteł Kagnovich in 1886 in Rakow, near Minsk in contemporary Belarus, which was then part of the Russian Empire.<sup>32</sup> This area of Belarus, including areas of present-day Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and western Russia, were designated the Jewish Pale of Settlement. Under the decree of Catherine the Great in the late eighteenth century, the Pale was the appointed area Jews were required to reside. As a segregated region with separate laws, the Pale was intended to limit Jewish economic interaction and competition with the gentile population and yet had the unintended consequence of creating a distinctively vibrant ethnic culture. At the time of Rosenthal’s birth, Jews comprised thirteen percent of the population of Belarus and over half the population of Minsk. Restrictions were eased under Czar Alexander II but after his assassination in 1881, in which Jews were suspected of involvement, they faced increased violence and discriminatory laws. Even as Nicholas II signed the October Manifesto of 1905, which granted

more freedom for Russians by ending the unlimited autocracy and ushering in a constitutional monarchy, Russian Jews experienced the most severe pogroms in history, occasioning many to immigrate to Western Europe, Palestine and the U.S.<sup>33</sup>

For Itel Kagnovich, the fear of violence against Jews was a real and serious danger. When she was seventeen years old, a gentile child was found dead in nearby Kishinev. Rumors rapidly spread that Jews murdered the youngster so they could use the blood to make Passover matzo. For three days, Jews were subject to barbaric violence—nails were driven into the heads of men, women were raped and had their breasts hewed off and their stomachs slashed open, babies were tossed from windows after having their tongues cut out.<sup>34</sup> This anti-Semitic violence profoundly affected the Jewish population in the Pale and caused many to leave their homeland in search of safer shores. Many others who stayed were radicalized. One of those radicals was Itel Kagnovich.

According to family interviews, young Itel Kagnovich was the revolutionary in a family of Jewish scribes and shop owners.<sup>35</sup> She met her match in Wolf Rosenthal, whom she encountered through their joint involvement in the Jewish Socialist Bund. The Bund was founded in 1897 and called for the overthrow of “those who rob and kill the poor,” supported the liberation of women, and espoused the belief that Zionism was a bourgeois self-delusion.<sup>36</sup> Kagnovich and Rosenthal embraced these radical principles and expounded Socialist ideology on street corners and trained with guns for a potential armed resistance.<sup>37</sup> But things quickly became too dangerous for the young lovers. Wolf Rosenthal’s brother and sister-in-law were arrested for their Bundist activities.<sup>38</sup> Then Rosenthal was conscripted into the Russian army to fight in the Russo-Japanese War, in which the Russians were soundly defeated. He decided it was time to

emigrate to the U.S.<sup>39</sup> Itel Kagnovich stayed behind with her family until the Rakov police chief told her mother that Itel Kagnovich would be arrested if she kept up her revolutionary antics.<sup>40</sup> Kagnovich joined Rosenthal in New York in 1905, where she Americanized her name to Ida Cohen.<sup>41</sup> The couple married a year later and she became Ida Rosenthal.<sup>42</sup>

As a new arrival, Ida Rosenthal did not read or write English and despite pressure from her family, she had no desire to work in a factory. Instead she purchased a sewing machine on installment and started making dresses out of her home in Hoboken, NJ. In 1912 she employed six workers, selling her dresses for up to \$7.50 each. After a particularly nasty New Jersey winter, when the four-foot-eleven Rosenthal was forced to shovel two feet of snow around her house/business, the spirited Russian native claimed that she “was not built for snow shoveling” and decided to pack up and move to the more urbane Manhattan.<sup>43</sup> There she found she could sell her dresses for more than triple the price. Business continued to improve when a couture dress designer, Enid Bisset, stopped a woman wearing one of Rosenthal’s creations and asked where she had gotten it.<sup>44</sup> Bisset, who was an English immigrant and former vaudevillian dancer, was selling her own dresses to socialites for \$300 and up. Bisset invited Rosenthal to become her partner. Combining Bisset’s connections and Rosenthal’s skills, the Rosenthals paid \$4,000 to partner in Enid Manufacturing.<sup>45</sup> Bisset would later become a silent partner and something of a company secret, long after her active involvement ceased. When *Women’s Wear Daily* asked about Bisset after the secret came out in 1965 following her death, Rosenthal “known for her congeniality and warmth responded tartly on the revelation, ‘This is a personal matter and nobody’s business.’”<sup>46</sup> The inclusion of Bisset, seemingly disrupted the public story of Ida Rosenthal as Maidenform.

The eventual foray into brassiere manufacturing in the 1920s was unintentional, as the women's dress business was prospering. However, the dramatic gendered cultural changes occurring during the "roaring twenties" provides the backdrop for the creation of Maidenform. Women had finally received the right to vote nationwide and women's fashion was becoming ever more "masculine," seemingly renouncing years of exaggerated "feminine" curves. Even though Rosenthal would go up against the strictures of conventional femininity to run her own multi-national company, she started by eschewing perhaps one of the most visible symbols of social change, the shrinking bust.

Fashion is ever evolving, enhancing some body parts while deemphasizing others. To varying degrees, undergarments shaped the female figure according to prevalent fashion trends, which scholars of fashion and gender have correlated with cultural attitudes.<sup>47</sup> Prior to the 1920s, most fashion trends emphasized the curves of the bust, hips, and buttocks while minimizing the waist. To achieve this look, fashion required items that pushed in the body, like the corset, or augmented, like the bustle, working together to give the illusion of dramatic proportions. The "boyish" look of the flapper era was a startling departure from decades of exaggerated curves. The move towards a sporty or pre-pubescent look emphasized linearity and de-emphasized the bosom, hips, buttocks and thighs. This ideal was influenced by the WWI appeal to women to donate the steel ribs from their corsets combined with the shifting status of women's social roles. Feminists and others cited health concerns and ease of movement as reasons to abandon or modify the restrictive undergarments of the time. While the 1920s ideal of the female body, rejected the corset in favor of loose fitting garments, it still dictated a particular body type, which

in many instances required modification by binding as well as an increased focus on diet and exercise to slim the figure.

While the fashion of the 1920s was arguably radical for its rejection of the restrictive fashion that preceded it and the embrace of a more gender neutral look, Rosenthal, herself a pioneer in gender-blending, rejected the supposed eschewal of “natural” femininity. According to the official story, due to the 1920s fashion for minimal bosoms, Rosenthal was unhappy with the way her expensive custom dresses fit her customers.<sup>48</sup> Rosenthal recalled her frustration stating, “Women wore those flat things like bandages. A towel with hooks in the back. And the companies used to advertise, ‘Look like your brother.’ Well, that’s not possible.”<sup>49</sup> Rosenthal and Bisset attempted to create a non-flattening breast support by modifying a bandeaux (one of the offending garments Rosenthal was referencing). William Rosenthal, a sculptor, saw their crude improvisation and offered to make a better one. Adopting William’s creation, they started offering them for free to their clients with the purchase of a dress.<sup>50</sup> As the bras became popular, Rosenthal would create readymade brassieres for \$1 and custom ones for a whopping \$25.<sup>51</sup> A slight variation on this story states that Rosenthal went to Paris after WWI where she was introduced to the fashion of upward pointing breasts. French brassiere makers reportedly created this provocative style in their efforts to woo women who faced stiff competition for the few remaining men left after the war. Rosenthal coined the term “uplift” and brought it to the US.<sup>52</sup> The voluptuous Ida Rosenthal trademarked the blatantly feminine name “Maiden Form” in contrast to the “Boyish Form” bandeaux made fashionable by the slim silhouette of the flapper.<sup>53</sup> Maidenform symbolized, emphasized and enhanced the “real” feminine figure. From the



beginning, Maidenform was promoted in gendered terms,<sup>54</sup> while balancing a sense of freedom with restriction.

Even though Maidenform positioned itself in opposition to the repression of curves, its “uplift” was no more “natural” than the wispy 1920s figure. Undergarments like Maidenform’s, continued to be restrictive but not to the same degree and in different ways. Doctors conveniently claimed that the “uplift” provided by Maidenform brassieres allowed for deeper breathing and better posture,<sup>55</sup> when compared to the offending bandeaux. Maidenform brassieres tended to focus on lifting and elongating the breasts, creating a more prominent and defined shape than had been present in prior fashion trends. Maidenform’s top-selling Chassonette brassiere in the 1950s, for example, featured cups that were stitched in a circular manner, which while providing support and lift also produced a pointed shape, widely remarked on for its conical or missile-like outline. This conspicuous shaping of the breasts became widely known as the “bullet bra” which filled out the tops of the celebrated “sweater girls” like Lana Turner, Jane Russell, Jayne Mansfield and Marilyn Monroe. Ida Rosenthal sold her product as a return to a “natural,” “feminine” shape but the idealized form created by her brassieres and epitomized by the buxom post-war starlets was every bit as manufactured as the fad for the “boyish” look she publicly derided.

While the women sewed and designed, it was the male family members who attempted to sell the risqué new undergarment to retailers in order to aid the women’s blossoming business.<sup>56</sup> Enid’s husband Joe Bisset, used his show business connections to get the mildly scandalous “uplift” brassieres into local shops. Moses “Moe” Rosenthal, William’s nephew and later Maidenform general manager, stated that those in “the acting trade were the first customers

because they were brave enough to uplift.”<sup>57</sup> Reportedly, Joe placed brassieres and counter cards touting the bra’s virtues in the swanky Hotel Astor and the Regina Shop next to the Palace Theater vaudeville house. Characteristic of the Bisset’s show business background, Joe liked drama. When a shop refused to place an order, Joe would hire a chorus girl to go in and demand a Maidenform bra and then storm out when they did not have any. That usually fixed that. “It was an extreme product but was accepted [in the theater district],” said salesman Jack Zizmor. He went on, “I would take it out, and when I showed them this little bit of bra, all hell would break loose. If it were the husband, he would call to his wife, ‘come over here and see what this crazy guy is trying to sell me!’” They would laugh and say it was a passing fad.<sup>58</sup> But it was no passing fad; Maidenform was here to stay.

Although Maidenform did not make the first brassiere, theirs became the most famous; a virtual byword for bras.<sup>59</sup> Journalist David Laskin stated, “[t]he Maiden Form bra was the quintessence of the 1920s—fun, novel, vaguely risqué, easy to mass-produce, perfectly promotable, seemingly frivolous but in fact eminently practical and instantly indispensable. No one had heard of a brassiere in 1920. By 1924, all the fashionable women had to have one...[Ida] had stumbled on one of the pure products of America.”<sup>60</sup> Rosenthal’s timing was fortuitous in that she started her business during the consumer boom of the 1920s. As President Calvin Coolidge stated in 1925, “the chief business of the American people is business. They are profoundly concerned with producing, buying, selling, investing and prospering in the world. I am strongly of the opinion that the great majority of people will always find these are the moving impulses of our life.”<sup>61</sup> In 1928, the brassiere business was going so well that Rosenthal and Bisset abandoned dress making to sell brassieres exclusively.

Although Maidenform was jointly owned by the Rosenthals and the Bissets (Enid became a silent and then secret partner in 1930, while her “unreliable” husband was pushed out), Ida Rosenthal was always put forth as the face of Maidenform. Rosenthal aggressively pushed for more advertising and expanded their market. Like other industries under the sway of the scientific management system of Fredrick Taylor, Rosenthal switched her employees over to piecework, which dramatically increased production and profitability.<sup>62</sup> Under Rosenthal’s adept leadership, Maidenform flourished with the fad for more prominent bust lines, despite the economic woes of the 1930s. Maidenform continued to do well, but it was not until the Dream campaign, which premiered in 1949, that the company became the preeminent bra manufacturer, not just in the U.S., but in the world.

While Ida Rosenthal was the president and treasurer of Maidenform for decades, the gendered structure of the company is illustrative of the duality of the woman-centric image and the more complicated reality. At the top, Maidenform had a matrilineal business structure. The presidency started with Ida Rosenthal, briefly went to her son-in-law, then succeeded to her daughter Beatrice Coleman and ended with her granddaughter Elizabeth Coleman, who headed the company until it declared bankruptcy and went public in 1997.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, the majority of Maidenform employees were women, contributing to the notion of an (intimate) female product created by other females. Yet, the vast majority of female employees were factory-level workers. The few women with elevated positions, other than those mentioned above, were primarily in the creative field, like design, though always under a male supervisor. As was the norm, men filled the majority of executive level positions and the entirety of the salesforce. Structurally, the very top and bottom of the company was primarily female. Yet publicly, the message was that the

heart and soul of Maidenform was female. Male family members filled the most senior positions in the privately owned company, yet they certainly were not given equal attention publicly, underlying the deliberateness of touting female operative dominance.<sup>64</sup>

Maintaining visible female leadership was most likely possible because Maidenform was privately owned and family operated. Not beholden to stockholders or managers, Maidenform was in a unique position to decide its own direction.<sup>65</sup> Maidenform competed with over 400 companies, and of those about 25 held the majority of the market.<sup>66</sup> Maidenform's biggest competitor was Playtex, followed by Warners, Formfit, Exquisite Form, Peter Pan, Lovable, Bail, and Vanity Fair.<sup>67</sup> Yet, no other company was structured like Maidenform. Maidenform itself claimed that part of its success derived from maintaining its privately owned company status, allowing it to maintain high quality, uphold its own marketing ideals, and set its own hierarchy and business succession. The company proclaimed that this structure struck the "correct relationship between business ethics and profit."<sup>68</sup> Its "business ethics" apparently involved projecting a visible female-headed persona, as long as it was profitable.

The image of Ida Rosenthal was promoted as "the public relations symbol, the personality, the voice of the company."<sup>69</sup> Rosenthal appeared in trade and popular magazines where her business acumen and personal appeal were touted as essential to the success of her company. *Fortune Magazine* credited both Maidenform's ascent over the 250 other brassiere manufacturers and the multiplication of Maidenform's "net worth about one thousand times," to Rosenthal's "competent, sensitive hands."<sup>70</sup> She was frequently characterized as industrious and in control, and immigrant-makes-good, constantly traveling around the world managing her "Maidenformidable empire."<sup>71</sup>

Rosenthal was consistently depicted as possessing a combination of conventional and unorthodox gendered attributes. It was unusual during this era to have a female created and headed business, let alone one with so public a persona. In this way, Rosenthal was emblematic of the new woman of the 1920s. She accompanied her business acumen with bobbed hair and fashionable dresses, all the while smoking four packs of cigarettes or “torches of freedom,” a day.<sup>72</sup> While Ida’s husband William was essential to the business, designing and obtaining patents, he was also the primary caretaker for their children, allowing Ida to focus on the business. William was frequently characterized as kind. While Ida was described as energetic, charismatic, and shrewd, she was never chronicled as kind.<sup>73</sup> The *New York Times*, noting her diminutive size added, “no one who knows her is likely to confuse size with helplessness. An astute business woman, she has caused more than one adversary to say admiringly, ‘When you deal with her, keep your hand on your wallet.’”<sup>74</sup>

Her short stature, stylish appearance and voluptuous figure were seamlessly paired with her “masculine” traits as a business tycoon and world traveler. *Fortune Magazine* described Rosenthal as, “a tiny (four-foot-eleven) lady from Minsk, who at sixty-four is still as bright as a Christmas sparkler and as nicely rounded as a bagel, sells more brassieres for more dollars than anyone else in the U.S.”<sup>75</sup> This particular description of Rosenthal is especially evocative as it notes her multiple dualities. It not only takes into account her feminine appearance and her masculine business astuteness, but also references to her status as a Jewish immigrant in a largely Christian America. The comment that she is “as nicely rounded as a bagel,” is particularly suggestive, since there was surely a surfeit of spherical items her figure could have been compared to, but bagels were specifically associated with Eastern European Jews.<sup>76</sup> It may be argued that

the analogy of her intellect to a “Christmas sparkler” could have either balanced the Semitic bagel reference or highlighted her difference even more.

Rosenthal surely strove to influence the way she was presented publicly to align with the Woman-to-Woman approach, however as these articles demonstrate, the media did not quite know what to make of her. The *Fortune* exposé continued by pointing out Rosenthal’s gender-blending demeanor in an admiring and yet simultaneously mocking manner. “One of Mrs. R’s greatest pleasures from Maidenform’s success is in exercising her right to be imperious, which comes out in such ways as a burst of femininity in the middle of serious business talk.” The article goes on to state that she will interrupt important business to baby-talk with her 3 year old grandson on the phone.<sup>77</sup> Media representations of Rosenthal, like the *Fortune* article, reminded the reader that she may be an astute business leader but she was still at heart a woman. Rather than being offended, considering Maidenform’s calculated Woman-to-Woman approach, Rosenthal was most likely pleased with this portrayal.

Rosenthal utilized her joint stature as a global tycoon and seasoned matriarch to proclaim herself an expert on gender and world affairs. Presented as a lamentation on the state of women’s bosoms all over the world, Rosenthal put forth her brassiere as a tool for global harmony. “The U.S. woman’s bosom is getting smaller,” Rosenthal sighed. “The French woman is sometimes underdeveloped, the Dutch woman is rather heavy, and the British woman needs a little help. Reality cannot always be beautiful.”<sup>78</sup> Rosenthal, through her worldly travels, had seen these “problems” firsthand and as a woman, she knew how to fix them. Yet Rosenthal did not project these as mere issues of feminine beauty; these were matters of world peace. She planned on giving “her own version of aid to underdeveloped countries” like the “bare-breasted” tropical

women and the “unsophisticated” European women, including in her homeland of Russia, where she claimed that if Russian women’s breasts were lifted by Maidenform bras, the Soviet Union and the U.S. might “get along better.”<sup>79</sup> Rosenthal would later act on this through her participation in government sponsored Cold War goodwill programs with the Soviet Union.<sup>80</sup> In this estimation, Maidenform was an active participant in U.S. capitalism and exemplified the positive effects that the American Way could bring to the world. Rosenthal presented herself as an expert and her product as the bearers of a civilizing femininity.

Even though Rosenthal’s gendered persona was carefully cultivated and her brassieres were designed to alter the natural shape of women’s breasts, she insisted that she was simply assisting nature. *Time* quoted her oft-mentioned motto, “[n]ature has made woman with a bosom. If nature thought it was important. Who am I to argue with nature?” Emphasizing the “naturalness” of the exaggerated shape created by Maidenform bras, Rosenthal reified the “inherent” femininity of the constructed female form and reinforced traditional ideas about gender roles. Even if Rosenthal knew not to argue with “nature,” that did not prevent her from striving to “improve” it. She made use of traditional gender stereotypes when it served her purpose and discarded them when they did not. Others noted Rosenthal’s influence. The author of the *Times* article quipped, “by helping nature, Ida Rosenthal has probably had a greater impact on the U.S. female form than all the couturiers in Paris.”<sup>81</sup> Rosenthal did not only sell bras—she sold images—images of herself, of her company, and of her style of femininity.

## Melding the Private & the Public: The Woman-to-Woman Marketing & the Dream

### Campaign

Ida Rosenthal's projection of a gender-blended persona as synonymous with Maidenform was the foundation of the Woman-to-Woman marketing. However, the most visible manifestation of the Woman-to-Woman strategy centered on Maidenform's famous Dream campaign. As interpreted in the Dream campaign, Maidenform's Woman-to-Woman marketing provided the following: a sense of empathy through the appearance that the product was made by women who knew what other women wanted; it made sensuality acceptable by adding playfulness and fashion; and it spoke to women's desires for increased independence in an era when they faced pressure to conform to conventional gender roles by alleviating traditional dependencies and veiling self-determination under the auspices of fantasy.

A 1949 Maidenform advertisement featured a stylish young woman in the latest Dior New Style skirt shopping at an elegant hat boutique.<sup>82</sup> She gazes admiringly at her reflection while trying on a chic black hat. This image is a quintessential representation of the new postwar American consumer society. Well, except for one thing. The woman is curiously under-dressed. In fact, she wears only a Maidenform bra from the waist up! This unorthodox ad was shocking but also incredibly popular. The Dream campaign (1949-1969) was one of the longest running and most successful advertisement campaigns of all time. It combined the postwar ideals of consumerism and the related idea of "traditional" femininity with unabashed and self-assured seductiveness. This provocative campaign, produced with an unusual amount of female advertisers from Norman, Craig & Kummel, heralded a different type of femininity, which attempted to balance the dynamic of the public versus private, a playful female sexuality and



sensibility, with an imagined dialogue between the female producers and the female consumers. Centering on their Dream campaign, Maidenform's marketing pushed the boundaries of acceptable female directed marketing through the use of the carnivalesque, cheeky double-meanings and subtle sexuality, made permissible because the Woman-to-Woman approach gave at least the illusion of an exclusively female realm. Like Ida Rosenthal's public persona, the multi-dimensional Dream-themed marketing combined the traditional and the vanguard, becoming wildly popular and decidedly influential.

Some have charged the Dream campaign with sexism, reminiscent more of a humiliating nightmare than a dream. These critics state that it perpetuated the stereotype of woman as sexualized object.<sup>83</sup> This criticism may have some validity. Scholars have debated whether to view consumerism as detrimental, empowering or both.<sup>84</sup> The following chapter, which deals with the influence of psychoanalytic marketing on the campaign, will address that issue. Instead of weighing in on that debate, this chapter seeks to compensate for the lack of comprehensive historical scholarship on Maidenform's campaign's relevance to the prevalent use of gender as marketing strategy in the postwar era.<sup>85</sup> What makes Maidenform's marketing worthy of study is not only that it produced one of the most popular and longest running ad campaigns of all time but that it devised an avant-garde marketing method that sought not to notify or to instruct, but to communicate with women in a way that gave at least the semblance of an exclusively female space.

The Woman-to-Woman approach, as manifested in the Dream campaign, brought "unmentionable" products out of the bedroom. This melding of the private and the public realms was possible because of the illusion of a new type of female-only space, which supposedly took

place in the female consumer's imagination. While the marketing of brassieres was traditionally limited to an abstract or domestically situated female-only space, the Woman-to-Woman approach was different. Brassiere advertisements were largely published exclusively in gendered media like women's magazines. The ads themselves never featured photographs of real women. Instead the models and the bras were illustrated. This distancing from the real created a safe mental separation. Even though the ads were illustrations, the sense of distance and privacy were heightened as they were typically set in a woman's bedroom or some other equally private and gender appropriate location. If the ads were not situated in a private female domain, they were drawn into an abstract space, which maintained decency by separating the bra from reality. This separation was even evident in the shopping locations. In stores, undergarments were separated from other departments, including women's clothing. To try on or purchase a brassiere, the shopper needed to ask a department attendant for assistance as brassieres were kept in the back, away from public view. This distancing indicates that the brassiere itself assumed much of the sensuality and forbiddenness of the female anatomy it was intended to mask.<sup>86</sup>

The marketing of undergarments has always necessitated a delicate balance between the private and the public. A brassiere was seen as an intimate item, tinged with female sexuality, which was rarely ever seen publicly. Yet as bras became everyday apparel for virtually all American women, their shaping effects were seen publicly. If bras were "unmentionables" yet ubiquitous, were invisible and yet widely visible, how should they be marketed to half of the American population who purchased them? How can something so private be advertised publicly? One marketing study commented on the private versus public predicament stating that while Maidenform was the "outstanding leader in the field" its product was not the type that

“establishes its market dominance by being visible to the public eye as in the case of Chevrolet automobile.”<sup>87</sup> In other words, even though Maidenform was the most worn brand, this did not equal visibility. Women did not cruise down the street showing off their shiny new Maidenforms. But could they? Well, not in reality, but perhaps in a dream.

The ambiguity inherent in the Woman-to-Woman approach provided the balance between the private and public realm. Part of this ambiguity was the placement of Dream ads in an unusually wide range of media outlets with mixed gender audiences. The Dream campaign featured real women (photographs not illustrations) exposing their bras in public spaces, and yet the implication that it was a dream made it not really public at all. Dreams were intimate and private by nature. And yet, these large, eye-catching Dream ads were in magazines and newspapers intended for general audiences, and billboards around the country.<sup>88</sup> This slippage between the private and public allowed Maidenform to expand the visibility of female bodies and female sexuality. Building upon Judith Butler’s idea that feminine subjectivity appears through the repetitive performance within a signifying scene, Liz Conor has argued that the visual is a privileged part of the modern signifying scene and therefore, the visual itself becomes a privileged constituent of gendered identity.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, Dream advertisements, widely viewed (by both men and women) could be influential in how people viewed femininity.

Dream ads were placed in a wide variety of media including radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines. According to a 1952 schedule outlining magazine placement, Dream ads were featured in women’s fashion magazines such as *Vogue*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Charm*, general women’s interests magazines like *Ladies Home Journal*, *Today’s Woman*, *McCalls*, *Quick*, and *Woman’s Home Companion*, as well as teen and Hollywood magazines like

*Seventeen, True Confessions, Modern Screen, and Photoplay*. Unusually, general interest magazines geared toward both men and women like *This Week, N.Y. Times Magazine, and Life* were also included.<sup>90</sup> The extensive range of outlets indicates that Maidenform intended that its campaign go beyond its targeted 18-35 year old female demographic. The audience for the Dream ads was young and old, male and female.

The ads may have depicted exclusively female imagery, but they were presented to the general public. This double-downed on the game. Maidenform could have easily restricted its advertising to female-only outlets, but it did not. This relatively comprehensive placement only served to heighten the ambiguity of the campaign. Maidenform could at once be a business run by a woman, selling a product made by women, worn by women, featuring a female-only space, from a “female perspective” and be made visible to men. A brassiere is traditionally worn under clothing and only revealed to men in private and yet, the Dreamer revealed it to the world. The audience, both women and men, were in on the game but everyone played along. There was enough ambivalence to at least affect decency.

In a way, the Dream campaign maintained the tradition of a female-only space. Because the ads took place in the private realm of the Dreamer’s imagination or subconscious, the campaign permitted, even celebrated, public female sexuality without the implication of the male gaze or male presence.<sup>91</sup> Only two ads out of over two hundred showed a discernible male and even in these they were part of a faceless crowd.<sup>92</sup> It was more common, although still rare, for more than one woman to be included in an ad.<sup>93</sup> When other people were present, they were actors in the Dreamer’s fantasy. The fantasies varied, sometimes the Dreamers participated in traditionally female activities, like sipping tea, modeling or shopping. Other times they were in

traditionally male positions as firemen, politicians or boxers. Frequently the Dreams were purely fantasy—a Dreamer was a mermaid, a figure in a painting, or a piece of a puzzle. Whether they were stopping traffic, swaying a jury, or working at a desk job, the women in the ads were representing a “female’s fantasy” and showing products for the consumption of women. The state of undress may have been public, but the dream itself was a private female space.

“I dreamed I took the bull by the horns,” is arguably representative of the average character of the Dream campaign (see Figure 2). The 1962 ad featured model Sara Dolley in a white ruffled skirt grabbing a bull’s horn in the middle of a green pasture. Dolley, standing in the signature three-quarter pose, confidently stared out at the viewer, her hair done-up in a coil of elaborate twirls. Like the bucolic setting, her hair was adorned with tiny white flowers. The startled bull also looked out at the viewer with its nose ring jutting forward. NCK employee Kitty D’Allesio noted in an interview that this particular ad was tricky because it required a model who was not afraid of the bull. Dolley’s confidence and control exudes from the image. With her long white gloves she “took” the formidable bull. There was no one else in her dream. She, with the powers of her Maidenform bra, literally and metaphorically seized the bull by the horns. NCK and Maidenform hoped the consumers would be encouraged to embody the potent sentiments of the ad by buying and wearing the up-lifting brassiere. Judging by the sales, which tripled under the campaign, it worked.

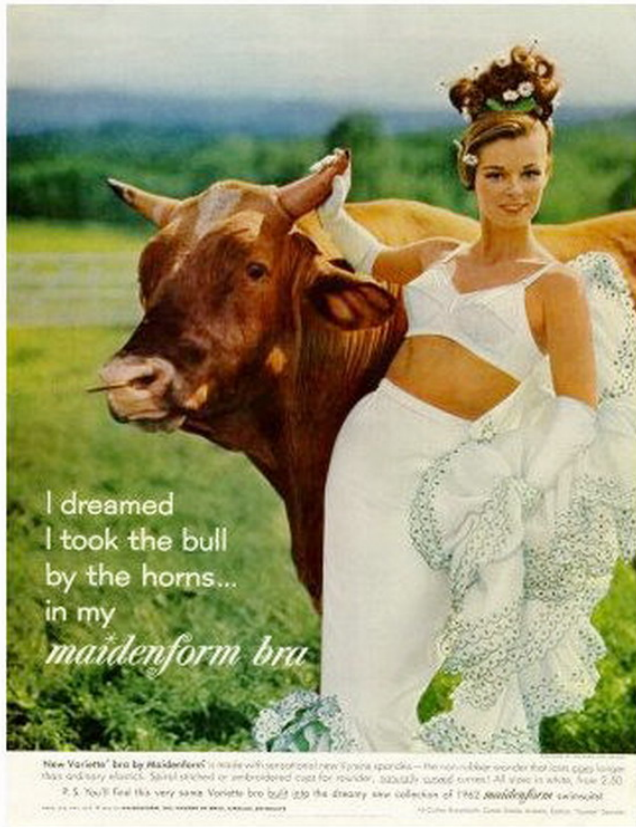


Figure 2

To understand the revolutionary nature of the Woman-to-Woman approach in the Dream campaign, it is helpful to situate the campaign within its historical context. Typical postwar advertisements geared towards women used various tactics. Many advertisements tended to center on the product and what it could do for the consumer. Cleaning products or household appliances would claim to get the house cleaner or shave time off tiresome chores.<sup>94</sup> Other advertisements targeted how the product might improve how the consumer was perceived and better fit their gendered social role. For example, advertisements for pre-made food reassured women that they would still be good mothers and housewives if they used these time-saving products.<sup>95</sup> Beauty advertisements continued the tradition of presenting a message that a woman's duty was to be pretty—it would help her win a husband and, if already married, keep

her husband happy.<sup>96</sup> And still other advertisements strove to make the female consumer feel that she and her designated duties were important. Many home goods advertised their products as glamorous: mop advertisements depicted posh women cleaning sparkling floors in high heels; women in pearls scrubbed copper pots; pretty housewives in cocktail gowns proudly showcased their space age appliances. The message was clear. Nothing could be more glamorous or fulfilling than the daily drudgery of housework. Of course, some products did not automatically indicate femininity, but producers still wanted them marketed to women. For instance, cars advertised towards men frequently symbolized freedom and wealth. However, when advertised to women, cars became devices for hauling groceries, again situating women in the home.<sup>97</sup> The Dream campaign was different. While the bra was undoubtedly a female product, emphasizing female attributes, and only seen in the privacy of the home, the Dream campaign went in a totally different direction and in the process pushed back against conventional ideas of how advertisements for women could be formulated.

Unlike many other consumer products geared towards women, there were no claims that a purchase of a Maidenform bra would make one a better mother or a better wife. However, the ads did insinuate a Maidenform bra could facilitate (at least the envisioning of) the embodiment of gender performances beyond what was seen as socially appropriate. With the purchase of a Maidenform bra, a female consumer could imagine herself partaking in conventionally feminine fantasies, such as becoming a queen or shopping for the latest fashions, but she could also visualize herself doing the more unusual like winning a political campaign or having a successful career as an editor. In fact, Maidenform explained the supposed appeal of the Dream campaign when it declared, “a woman sees a Maidenform dream [and] through a bit of delicious magic, sees

*herself* as the mischievously mad dream girl.”<sup>98</sup> By creating imaginary scenes where women acted upon their supposed inner most desires in a playful and safe manner, the Dream campaign could be seen as normalizing these unconventional desires. It is reasonable to presume that the Dream campaign recognized and possibly even encouraged the female consumer’s desire to see herself breaching culturally mandated gender boundaries.

The important role of Maidenform’s advertising agency, NCK, will be discussed in further depth in the following chapter. However, this chapter suggests that NCK’s high concentration of female involvement in the Dream campaign contributed to the Woman-to-Woman approach. Women were intimately involved in the creation of the campaign as adwomen, models, and clients. Adwoman Mary Fillius has been credited with creating the original idea for the Dream campaign.<sup>99</sup> Other women directly involved were Kay Daly (who later went on to run Revlon), Kitty D’Alessio (later president of Chanel), Ida Rosenthal’s daughter, Beatrice Coleman, and photographer Lillian Bassman who was responsible for the more hazily romantic photographs prevalent in the 1960s. It was unusual in the mid-twentieth century for such a high concentration of women to be working prestigious jobs in advertising and business—at least as anything other than low-level employees in clerical, service and manufacturing positions. In 1950, one-third of the advertising business consisted of women, many of whom were office workers.<sup>100</sup> However, there was a class of female advertisers who flourished in advertising for fashion and beauty products, as well as home goods. Adwomen were appealing for these jobs because they were believed to possess a “woman’s touch” and special knowledge.

In 1960 the industry magazine, *Printers’ Ink*, spoke with women in the advertising business and asked them about their past experiences and their prospective upward mobility.<sup>101</sup>



The “consensus of agency women” was that women had made gains during WWII but since then had struggled to retain them. The women interviewed claimed that the idea that women were moving into the upper echelons was a “myth,” and that their best bet was the creative route – but even that only took them so far.<sup>102</sup> Reportedly, only 7 of 132 vice presidents at the J. Walter Thompson Agency were women, 6 out of 100 at McCann-Erickson, only one at Young & Rubicam, N.W. Ayers, and Ted Bates, and zero at Leo Burnett.<sup>103</sup> The article is notably silent on the number of female presidents at agencies, presumably because there were none.

The *Printers’ Ink* article did remark that NCK was one of the few bright spots where “women are encouraged to develop and perform to their fullest potential.”<sup>104</sup> At NCK, where three of the eleven vice presidents were women, agency president, Norman B. Norman, stated, “Women play a leading role in our agency—and I mean leading, not following only where they are allowed to follow.” Still, Norman was convinced that women possessed different skill sets than men. Norman believed in women leading, “where only a woman can—on women’s products or products bought by women.”<sup>105</sup> Norman also claimed that women were better at communicating with the client. NCK’s Kay Daly, for one, viewed her gender as a potential asset. She stated that she “forgets” about the facts gathered on the product and just asks, “If I were a woman—which I am—what would make me want to buy the product?”<sup>106</sup>

However, Daly’s use of “women’s intuition” seemed to be backed by marketing data. Maidenform’s marketing studies demonstrated that the brassiere itself mattered less than the impact of the national advertising. Regardless of the varied ranking of Maidenform’s brassieres according to fit, material, type, design, etc, studies showed that Maidenform was consistently the top seller because of their Dream campaign and the enthusiasm it garnered from the public.

Independent polling by Gallup & Robinson found that the Dream ads were the most liked and well remembered of all foundational advertising.<sup>107</sup> Even at the time, it was recognized as one of the top ten advertising campaigns in all fields.<sup>108</sup> New Dream ads came out bi-yearly featuring the best-selling and newest brassieres, with over half of the ads in full color, many full page, a costly but worthwhile company expense.<sup>109</sup> By 1963 Maidenform's advertising expense was in excess of three million dollars per year, up from an average of \$100,000 in its pre-Dream days.<sup>110</sup>

Descriptions of the ongoing process of creating new Dream themes indicate that both men and women in NCK and Maidenform worked closely together. Both Maidenform's Coleman and NCK's Norman described a very close relationship between the two companies during the creation of the Dream themes. When recounting the process of the Dream campaign, Norman always used "we" because of their "personal relationship."<sup>111</sup> Coleman talked on the phone daily with Maidenform's Advertising Manager, NCK's account manager, and NCK's part owner and treasurer.<sup>112</sup> In addition, he spoke with Norman once a week.<sup>113</sup> Ida Rosenthal, Beatrice Coleman and Kay Daly joined these gentlemen in the regular bi-annual meetings to choose the newest themes. Ida Rosenthal and Beatrice Coleman focused on sales and design and brought the latest fashion, including new styles of bra; NCK's Vice President for fashion, Kay Daly, contributed her expert knowledge of the latest fashion trends.<sup>114</sup> Each theme was judged based on three sensible criteria: it must be reasonably topical, inline with the most recent fashion, and constructed to fit with the styles Maidenform was currently manufacturing.<sup>115</sup> The group apparently had a good deal of fun coming up with ideas together. Coleman claimed that it was while joking around that they developed some themes including, "I dreamed I was sawed in half"

and “I dreamed I was a real dish.”<sup>116</sup> Beatrice Coleman emphasized prudently, “we don’t mind double meanings, so long as they’re in good taste.”<sup>117</sup>

In an interview, Kitty D’Alessio described the process of making the ads and how they sought to make them memorable and appealing to their target consumer group.<sup>118</sup> She stated that they would first brainstorm many ideas, and then narrow it down to four ideas, two of which would be suitable for the black and white ads and two for the color ads. They would then present the ads to Maidenform’s Beatrice Coleman and Ed Kantrowitz for approval.<sup>119</sup> The choice of models was important to the process. The models were required to be twenty-six years old, slender with a flat stomach, unmarried, and wear at least a size 34B bra.<sup>120</sup> These requirements were rather precise and were chosen to fit Maidenform’s image and targeted consumer group. The age was well within the target consumer group (although a year or two older than the average customer) and 34 B was the most purchased bra size. The requirement to be unmarried fit in with company’s desires to keep the ads within the boundaries of propriety, as it would have been especially scandalous for a married woman to appear in such ads. Yet the requirement for an unmarried model may also be interpreted as aligning with the projected image of a figuratively and literally unattached/freedom-loving woman. The twenty-six year old models were also older than the typical married age of females (twenty) in the 1950s, adding further evidence that they were promoting an image of an attractive and independent woman.<sup>121</sup>

It is hard to say if the high percentage of women (as opposed to the normally male majority) working on the campaign had an effect on its style and message. When interviewed about her participation in the campaign, Kitty D’Alessio claimed that “all of us are feminists,” although she preferred her version of feminism to the more “militant” type, which she blamed,

along with competition of Playtex, as responsible for the campaign's demise in 1969.<sup>122</sup>

D'Alessio claimed that all of the women working on the campaign with her were feminists, but she stated, "The point is how you do it." The early women's liberation movement embarrassed her. She stated that women associated with the movement were, "sort of losers...I didn't identify with them. I identify with achievers...you can do a protest and can be an activist without being obnoxious. They were so unattractive to me. They were an embarrassment from my upbringing and the things I believe in."<sup>123</sup> D'Alessio's interpretation of feminism, which privileged high achieving women with a feminine veneer, was probably influenced by her experience as an NCK adwoman and later as president of the fashion house Chanel. Taking D'Alessio's claims, the formal analysis of the advertisements, and the marketing research together, it seems likely that the *intention* of the Woman-to-Woman strategy was relatively enlightened in its particular gender ideology. It seems that they genuinely endeavored to "see" from what they viewed as woman's perspective, even if it was from their own privileged perch. This does not make the overriding objective of selling products moot, in fact the opposite. These were women successfully working within the confines of a male dominated environment. To flourish, they needed to be excellent at their jobs, and their jobs were to sell brassieres. And yet, these ads were different. Maidenform's marketing was taking the calculated risk that by appealing to women's desires to dream of unconventional gender embodiment they could sell consumer goods. And perhaps the female consumers who purchased Maidenform were also able to believe in this possibility.

To cover the potential subversiveness of the campaign, the ads integrated elements of fashion, popular culture and humor. A special emphasis on fashion had the double role of

deflecting the possible negative reactions and stressing traditional femininity. As a “dream” campaign, it openly alluded to delving into the suppressed innermost desires of women’s psyche, which could obviously be seen as risqué. Therefore, part of what made it acceptable was the Woman-to-Woman approach and its connection to fashion. From the very start, the attention to fashion was evident. The first ad, in October 1949, showed a posh but barefoot woman shopping inside an illustrated grocery store filled with an abundance of goods wearing only her Maidenform bra from the waist up. That rather lackluster ad was re-figured that same year to feature an even more chic woman trying on the latest fashion in hats while donning a Dior New Look skirt (see Figure 4).<sup>124</sup> Dior’s New Look articulated post-war abundance. Antithetical to the spare masculine fashion for women of WWII, which featured minimal skirts reflecting fabric rationing, the posh New Look boasted an abundance of fabric made into full skirts, which emanated from a defined waist. This fit-in-flare fashion would become the quintessential look of the 1950s, communicating an ultra-feminine sensibility, traditional gender roles, and an abundantly wealthy consumer society. These ads connected fashion, consumerism, and femininity in a cold war capitalist dreamland.



Figure 3



Figure 4

The Dream campaign was often on the cutting edge of fashion. A significant portion of the Dream campaign was photographed by renowned fashion photographer Richard Avedon, which added to the campaign's fashion bonafides. The ads copied the latest trends and were influential enough to start a few of their own, such as the fad for fringed pants and the revival of cowboy hats.<sup>125</sup> Fashion was frequently included in consumer advertisements for women, but bra ads, as noted earlier, when they depicted women, typically featured them in their private interior space giving little opportunity to display recent fashions. Since Maidenform featured their models in public, there was more room for fashion...at least from the waist down and neck

up. Furthermore, Maidenform placed their ads in fashion forward magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, connecting the campaign with the premier fashion venues. The Dreamers were featured as fashion models, designers, and trendsetters. Kitty D'Alessio, who worked on the campaign from 1956 until its end, summed up their strategy thusly, "We tried to inject fashion as well as some humor, so that the ad would be fun. People looked for them because they were campy. They certainly stopped traffic, people looked at them and remembered them and looked for the next one. We tried to put that element into the ads."<sup>126</sup> The use of fashion helped bring bra advertisements out of the shadows and on to center stage.

Many of the Dream ads of the early to mid 1950s played with uncontroversial motifs pertaining to traditional femininity and pop culture. For example, Dream ads of this period featured women shopping, attending the theater, the opera, or elegant parties. They were "bewitching," a "queen of hearts," a "valentine," a chess piece, a "living doll," and the "Venus de Milo." The Dreamers also participated in rather banal activities like strolling, ice-skating, cycling, riding a streetcar, flying a kite, and attending a flower show. Incorporating the popular culture phenomenon that was the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, one ad featured a woman dreaming she was a queen equipped with a crown, scepter, and even one half of a bejeweled Elizabethan collar and a single puffed sleeve. The ad subtly included only half of the collar and one sleeve in order to fully reveal the model's body from the waist up. The addition of only a fraction of the sixteenth century attire served to draw further attention to the model's modern state of undress.



Figure 5

While many of the Dream ads of the 1950s relied on images of traditional femininity, some of the most provocatively gender-bending ads of the entire campaign appeared in this decade. This juxtaposition may seem surprising but it was right in line with the Woman-to-Woman approach. Perhaps the most subversive ad was, “I dreamed I won the election,” which appeared in 1952 (see Figure 5). This ad showed an ecstatic woman in a full red skirt, beaming as she stood in front of the capital building with fireworks booming in the background and multiple news microphones waiting to hear her acceptance speech. Other potentially radical ads include



the Dreamer awarded the key to the city, sleuthing as a private eye, swinging down a pole as a “fireman,” climbing the “highest mountain,” and throwing the first pitch in the World Series. In a sea of ads that portrayed women as domestic goddesses or as incompetent (Alcoa Aluminum’s 1953 ad demonstrated their new easy packaging with a surprised female stating, “You mean a woman can open it?”), the Dream ads show that even in the early 1950s Maidenform was willing to push boundaries in a manner that would not become more common until the rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

The ads of the late fifties and into the 1960s came into their own with added eroticism and a vaudevillian edge, all while maintaining ties to popular culture. This time period saw a rise in the content of sexuality in popular culture. NCK’s president Norman claimed that during the late 50s and early 60s the time was right for increased eroticism.<sup>127</sup> Word play and double meaning were often used to add sexuality with a nod to pseudo-Freudianism, while couched with aspects of the absurd. Humor was commonly employed to mitigate the increase of overt sexuality in the ads. A 1963 ad featured a woman in small red shorts wearing a fireman’s hat, hanging off the side of a fire truck, with the tagline, “I dreamed I went to blazes in my Maidenform bra.” Another ad featured a Dreamer swinging from a wrecking ball high above the city with the heading, “I dreamed I got a lift,” surely alluding to the hallmark uplift function of Maidenform bras. Sexually suggestive and campy ads were abundant; a Dreamer in a bowling alley “bowled them over,” a Dreamer playing pool “took the cue,” a Dreaming sailor was “decked out,” and a Dreamer in front of a train “stopped them in their tracks.” D’Alessio explained that an ad featuring a glamorous blonde in a boxing arena with the tagline, “I dreamed I was a knockout...” was meant to be a combination of the wrestler Gorgeous George and infamous sex

symbol Marilyn Monroe.<sup>128</sup> Demonstrating ties to popular culture, a 1961 ad launched on the heels of the blockbuster movies *Ben Hur* and *Spartacus* featured a laughing female charioteer with the heading, “I dreamed I drove them wild.” As these examples demonstrate, the gender-bending antics, shrouded by humorous word play, were in full swing from the late fifties into the mid sixties.

By the late 1960s, the Dream ads started to look quite different, indicating that the “woman’s perspective” had changed. They substituted narrative, sexy humor and subtle messages with the psychedelic, neon colors, and bold messages. They were evidence of both an increasing visibility and influence of the counterculture and youth movements as well as business’s cooption of “cool.”<sup>129</sup> The potent tagline “I dreamed I had the world on a string,” was used in two different ads. One featured a woman in a matching bra and slip in a bright yellow and pink design, holding an earth-balloon. Another showed a woman in pants wearing a sheer white bra (yet there are no discernible nipples visible) while dangling a yoyo made to look like the earth. Even though pants were not unheard of in the Dream ads, the first appeared in 1954, a skirt was more typical.<sup>130</sup> Another unusual element was the look of the bras themselves. It was standard for the bras to be opaque and white, yet in these ads, one is transparent and the other is colorful. The inclusion of colored and sheer bras, which was a sharp departure, may have been influenced by Dichter’s research, which suggested an incorporation of color and variety. These two ads also demonstrate the general move towards a sexuality that was less cheeky, more upfront, and self-possessed. Both Dreamers were rather restrained, but the model in pants possessed an especially self-controlled air. These two ads with their identical assertive taglines and unorthodox formal elements, might demonstrate an influence from the growing feminist

movement, which aimed at taking women more seriously. The sharp turn evident in these ads indicates that perhaps the bearded subversiveness of the Dream ads from the previous two decades was no longer necessary with the rise of the feminist movement in the late 1960s.

Other than the increase in sales, it is difficult to know if the Woman-to-Woman approach succeeded in “communicating” from the women who produced to the women who consumed. The evidence of the public reception that is available is limited but does suggest that the campaign was widely influential, impacting both other companies and the general public. Interestingly, this seems to be what Maidenform wanted from the very beginning. The *Maidenform Mirror*, an industry publication, wrote hopefully in 1949 that the Dream campaign might become a “part of everyday conversation, a running gag, a sort of everyday expression” giving it free secondary publicity.<sup>131</sup>

The Dream theme did become widely imitated and even something of a pop culture staple. The general public seems to have greeted the campaign with the same fun-loving spirit in which the creators intended. The highly rated WOR radio show “Breakfast with Dorothy and Dick” discussed the first Dream ad “I dreamed I went shopping in my Maidenform bra.” Dick stated, “Isn’t that an old nightmare, in the middle of Times Square with no clothes on?” Dorothy answered, “Yes. That’s a familiar nightmare. But most people consider it embarrassing.” Dick replied, “Not this girl.” Dorothy agreed, “No, she’s happy as a clam.” Dick countered, “Of course, she’s wearing her Maiden Form.” Dorothy seemed sold and replied, “I must investigate those... (laughs)...before I go shopping for broccoli.”<sup>132</sup> Recognizing the potential mischievousness of the theme, the radio personalities opt for the more playful meaning indicated by the untroubled expression shown on the models face in the provocative new ad.

Jokes and puns, ranking from the provocative to the silly, were numerous. The 1954 musical *Top Banana* also mentioned Maidenform, this time in a song. The lyrics went, “You’re so beautiful...that you put the oo in la-la...Without that Maidenform bra...I’d recognize you!”<sup>133</sup> The Dream ads were referenced in greeting cards, bawdy cartoons in publications like *Playboy* and military publications, jokes (“I dreamed I was an Irish Airline hostess in my Erin Go Bragh”), songs, costume parties, movies, radio, and comics, demonstrating its position as a pop culture phenomenon.<sup>134</sup> Some references were political. *Time* magazine titled an article about the Soviet Union “I dreamed I was a Marxist in my Maidenform bra.”<sup>135</sup> One of the most humorous versions was a Florida retailer who posted a sign with a Fidel Castro doppelganger that read “dreamed I ruled Cuba in my Maidenform bra.”<sup>136</sup> After the Dream campaign was over, Maidenform was even referenced in the classic feminist movie *The Stepford Wives* (1975).<sup>137</sup>

The Dreams ads were even copied by fans in public. Some young women took photos of themselves in mock Dream ads and mailed them to Maidenform. In 1949 Eileen J. Boecklen mailed a photo of herself in her Maidenform bra holding a pick with the quote, “I went digging in my Maiden Form Bra.”<sup>138</sup> Boecklen was not dreaming. She wrote that she took the photo while on an archaeological school trip to the Southwest. She shared that she and her fellow diggers occasionally went shirtless to obtain a better suntan. There was no indication whether Boecklen was on a girls-only trip. She goes on to say that Maidenform is her favorite bra for all occasions including “shoveling dirt all day, as well as for sports and dress wear.”<sup>139</sup> At least Boecklen and the students who accompanied her connected with the campaign to the degree that they actually acted them out in public, indicating a rather transgressive gender performance for the early Cold War.

The Dream campaign was very popular on college campuses. University of Rochester fraternity brothers created a large poster where the football touting, Maidenform sporting, woman dreams she “beat Vermont.”<sup>140</sup> Student publications featured numerous parodies that were a bit edgier. The University of Wisconsin echoed the “civilizing” effects of bras by featuring a mock ad with a bare breasted African woman with the heading, “I dreamed I went Strolling Without my Maidenform bra.”<sup>141</sup> The text below went on, “Loafing along and loving it! Why I never dreamed before I could look so lovely! And all because I forgot my Maidenform bra. No wonder people stare...so comfortable, so sure, so completely secure.” Yale’s *Record* also featured a mock Dream ad, this time with a man in tight underwear. The heading read, “I dreamed I went shopping in my manly form briefs.”<sup>142</sup> The short article below lamented the public outing in his underwear, stating that he was laughed at but people “didn’t understand that I was proud of my briefs.”<sup>143</sup> Other publications played up the negative results if you took the ad too seriously. UC Berkley’s the *Pelican* showed a shirtless woman in jail after she apparently tried to make her Maidenform dream come true.

The campaign also seemed to influence other businesses and advertising. Starting in the early 1950s, many competitors copied aspects of the Dream campaign by featuring real models in their brassieres and frequently in fantasy-like settings. Competitors Warner’s and Formfit essentially created knockoffs of the Dream ads.<sup>144</sup> Even companies unrelated to undergarments took up the theme. *Mad Magazine* featured a spoof with the heading, “I Dreamed I was arrested for indecent exposure in my Maidenform bra.”<sup>145</sup> While EC Comic’s *Panic* took the more licentious route with their spoof of a buxom woman surrounded by gawking men with the caption, “I Dreamed I Went to a Fraternity Smoker in my *Panic Magazine!*”<sup>146</sup> All the way in

India, Liberty Shirts combined Air-India's ad style with Maidenform's to produce an ad with the phrase "I dreamed I'm going Boeing in my Liberty Shirt." The ad also included an asterisk denoting the apology at the bottom of the ad to Maidenform and Air-India.<sup>147</sup> The Dream campaign was a worldwide phenomena indicating that the Woman-to-Woman philosophy exceeded its wildest dreams, succeeding in connecting with women in the U.S. and beyond. The unconventional and transgressive sensibilities of the Woman-to-Woman approach and the Dream campaign seemingly hit a nerve during the early Cold War era.

#### Marketing Research & the Woman-to-Woman Strategy

Maidenform's Woman-to-Woman marketing was not just backed by "women's intuition" but "scientific research" techniques and data analysis.<sup>148</sup> Maidenform rigorously gathered and analyzed detailed information that could assist their efforts to appeal to their target audience of 18-35 year old women.<sup>149</sup> Sarah Igo's *Averaged American* tells how the use of such social science methodology helped shape the modern idea of a mass population.<sup>150</sup> Maidenform used the concept of a mass population to its advantage by garnering information from a variety of outlets including Gallup polling, newspapers, and research firms.

A comparison of two reports, one from 1947 (two years before the Dream campaign), the other a decade later, shows the evolution of Maidenform's marketing research and their movement towards the Woman-to-Woman approach. In 1947, the Research Institute provided Maidenform with broad information regarding consumption and economic changes garnered from universities and federal institutions.<sup>151</sup> This report recommended focusing on sales and advertising to create demand and practicing restraint when ordering additional backorders in a

milieu where families were tightening their purse strings.<sup>152</sup> Additionally, this study brought attention to general trends like the rapid rise of new markets in the west.<sup>153</sup> By contrast, the marketing data in the 1957 report was far more specific.<sup>154</sup> Touting the “accuracy” of the “rapidly expanding field of so-called ‘market research’,” this report urged Maidenform to improve its sales department and diversify. One specific recommendation that they apparently incorporated was the reinstatement of girdles for sale, which had been discontinued during the WWII austerity.<sup>155</sup>

The same report pointed out the difference between Maidenform and its competitor Playtex was that Maidenform relied on the “pull” factor while Playtex leaned on the “push” factor.<sup>156</sup> The “pull” factor was Maidenform’s specialty and revolved around the Dream campaign. Consumers were “pulled” by the advertisements to buy Maidenform, whereas with Playtex, their brassieres were “pushed” by a more aggressive salesforce in communication with retailers. Maidenform’s bra bar (discussed further in the next section), which negated the use of a vigorous salesforce in retailing, would presumably be antithetical to a “push” approach. The marketing firm lamented the lack of “hard sell” in Maidenform’s advertising campaign and warned that the “Dream Theme,” already eight years old, might lose its luster as it aged.<sup>157</sup> But the “soft sale” was the heart of the Woman-to-Woman strategy. Maidenform pulled in its customers by appealing to their sense of adventure and the appearance of empathy with the modern woman. A more aggressive “push” approach would be at odds with a Woman-to-Woman approach. Therefore not surprisingly, despite the recommendation from the outside firm, Maidenform decided to stay with their strategy and their dreamy advertising lasted for an additional twelve years. Another study conducted six years later seemingly validated Maidenform’s response.

The study evaluated Maidenform's "image" and found that consumers rated Maidenform brassieres the highest out of eleven leading brands and responded very positively to their advertising.<sup>158</sup>

Maidenform's marketing studies amassed valuable information on their consumer base, which could be analyzed to discover their desires, helping Maidenform refine the Woman-to-Woman strategy. They commissioned questionnaires on women from all over the country, from differing age groups, and socio-economic positions.<sup>159</sup> Many of the reports pointed to the importance of the youth market. One study found that Maidenform customers, when compared to competitors, were spread fairly evenly through income categories and yet were a relatively youthful crowd.<sup>160</sup> Research also produced specific details about teen consumer preferences. For example, customers of seventeen years of age were the most prolific wearers of padded bras.<sup>161</sup> An explanation deduced from this finding was that, "at 17, a girl is dating moreso [sic] than ever before and because she is not yet quite physically mature, will want to wear a padded garment to be 'acceptable.' At 18, the girl usually has (or at least feels she has) become physically mature and no longer has need for a padded garment."<sup>162</sup>

Following the data, by 1958, Maidenform had started to specifically pay attention to the teen market, including their desire for breast enlarging brassieres. Dream ads targeted to teens were placed in *Seventeen* magazine and contained more muted puns. For example, "I Dreamed I was cut out for fun," featured a Dreamer on a blank background as a paper doll equipped with cut out clothing. The ad was innocent but lackluster. By the 1960s, Maidenform had amped up their teenage ads. The "I dreamed I was sugar and spice" ad featured a young looking model, whose youth was accentuated by pigtails and maryjane shoes. The script described the two



“delicious versions” of the Undertone bra, which included a “Pre-Shaped” bra with a “secret lining of light foam rubber, to add gentle new curves you’d swear were *all you!*”<sup>163</sup> As this ad demonstrates, Maidenform Dream ads to teens had a peculiar mix of the childlike and the precocious. In this way, the teen ads mirrored the adult Dream ads liminality. The adult Dream ads were between the feminine and the masculine realms, while the teen ads hovered amidst the child and adult stages of life. The Dream ads should be seen as transitional images between the conventional gender roles of the early Cold War era and the later post-feminist movement period; betwixt the innocence of youth and the experience of adulthood.

Maidenform interpreted its marketing data in both traditional and subversive ways. The most important data of all was on their target consumer group, 18-35 year old women. Reportedly in the US, there were twenty-one million 18-35 year old women who earned approximately twenty-four billion dollars a year.<sup>164</sup> This large amount of income was good news, especially as much of a woman’s income was seen as expendable because a female was believed to be economically reliant on a male and therefore her earned income was supplemental. Even more encouraging, their data suggested that even if a member of this highly desirable consumer did not earn an income herself, she would spend approximately 43% of her father’s or husband’s money.<sup>165</sup> Research found that three quarters of these 18-35 year old women were married. Married women, seen as the primary consumers for the household would presumably have access to their husband’s pocketbooks. That did not mean that Maidenform interpreted unmarried consumers as less attractive. The unmarried quarter reportedly had, “but a single thought—the right man.”<sup>166</sup> This was good news for Maidenform because the single women would supposedly be susceptible to product claims of increasing attractiveness, which was

believed to be one of the most important tools in getting a husband. This market research reveals the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, supporting feminist criticism by Betty Friedan that business was complicit in the repression of women.<sup>167</sup> Although another interpretation is also probable. Maidenform used the same agenda when advertising to married and unmarried women. When Maidenform presented their appeals of sexuality, playfulness and independence, they viewed all women in this age group as desiring and desirable. This was in contrast to the prevalent view of women as housewives and mothers. Maidenform promoted the idea that married and unmarried women should be seen as sexual and independent.

Furthering this interpretation, Maidenform looked at this data and recognized the myriad social roles of women as “motivated,” and “intelligent” members of a workforce. This is notable as historically, consumers, especially female consumers, have been derided as unintelligent and manipulatable.<sup>168</sup> Maidenform claimed the 18-35 age group was the most “upwardly mobile” group of women in history—they were three times as likely to have attended college as women over 35 and worked in more white-collar jobs. Maidenform noted that three and a half million of these women were “secretaries” and 300,000 were “bosses.”<sup>169</sup> The forward-thinking Maidenform desired to appeal to these “busy, fashion-conscious, intelligent, active” women whose roles as “working wife” and “part time mother” were described as “the norm rather than the exception.”<sup>170</sup> It is notable that even when the traditional role of motherhood was mentioned, it was only as a “part time mother,” much like Ida Rosenthal. Perhaps this enlightened view reflects the ideology of the women working for Maidenform, as Denise Sutton found of the adwomen at the J. Walter Thompson Agency.<sup>171</sup> Since scant archival material about these women is available, one can only speculate. Yet Maidenform’s marketing did gear their products

to women of marriageable and mothering age, but used the image of a single, free female. This demonstrates that their marketing sector viewed its core demographic—young women—as more than mothers and future wives. This more esteemed view of female consumers was consistent with the Woman-to-Woman approach. At least in this instance, it seems that the pro-female aura of the Woman-to-Woman marketing was genuine.

The Woman-to-Woman approach utilized in the Dream campaign and influenced by scientific research, set the tone for the rest of the marketing program. The Dream campaign maintained popularity for two decades by evolving with cultural shifts, using pop culture references, elements of conventional femininity, fashion, sex, and humor. A 1952 Gallop and Robinson poll found that 29 out of 100 women recalled a particular Dream ad and ten years later, 37 out of 100 could recall a specific ad—approximately twice that of any competitor.<sup>172</sup>

#### The Woman-to-Woman Approach Beyond Advertising: Window Displays, Fashion Shows, and Bra Bars

Combining the traditional and the unorthodox, Maidenform's marketing used extensive research and data analysis to integrate the Dream campaign with tie-in marketing programs.<sup>173</sup> Public programs were those that dealt most directly with the consumer, like advertising, window displays, fashion shows, and contests. These measures strengthened visibility and the brand-consumer relationship. Additional marketing programs took place inside retail shops. The most important of these was the “bra-bars,” which allowed women to pick out Maidenform brassieres without the assistance of a shop clerk and arguably increased female consumer independence.

The external aspects of marketing, like the fashion shows and window displays, fostered and promoted the Woman-to-Woman character of Maidenform through the use of interaction and a “carnavalesque” spirit.<sup>174</sup> Closely related to the national advertising, fashion shows and window displays at department stores used the imagery of the Dream campaign, while adding personal interaction with the consuming public. This style of marketing relates to William Leach’s *Land of Desire*, which focuses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the creation of the “landscape” of consumerism, particularly in department stores. According to Leach, this new “national dream life” decorated with color and glass, focused on the perception of goods as a source of enjoyment and identity.<sup>175</sup> Leach’s vibrant consumer landscape was the precursor to the recreated “Dream” themed window displays and fashion shows. By parlaying the exuberance of the national campaign, Maidenform’s public marketing was a continuation of Leach’s disappeared late nineteenth and early twentieth century carnivalesque consumer wonderland. The revival of the carnivalesque in Maidenform’s postwar marketing was combined with, and perhaps possible because of, the Woman-to-Woman approach. Similar to the female-only quality of the campaign, which allowed for more fantasy and sexuality, the external marketing also used the ambience of a female-friendly space, which allowed for the risqué and festive feel of the window displays and fashion shows.

Maidenform’s window displays brought the Dream ads to life. Featuring reenactments and new interpretations of the national campaign, the three-dimensional window displays allowed viewers to experience real-life interaction with what had previously only been viewable in two-dimensions. Unlike advertisements, which could be examined in the privacy of the viewer’s home, the window displays were publicly experienced. How might the meaning and

experience of the marketing change when moved from the two-dimensional and private to the three-dimensional and public? Maidenform provided guidelines and materials for the window displays but the independent retailers had the last say.<sup>176</sup> Retailers all over the world participated, filling the public landscape with creative Dream-scenes and in the process increasing the visibility of the Woman-to-Woman message.

In 1949, the first year of the Dream campaign, the Hub in Baltimore independently undertook the first window display.<sup>177</sup> One year later, the Independent Retail Syndicate launched a window display contest based on the Dream ads.<sup>178</sup> From this point on, there was an explosion of store windows vying for the best rendition of the Dream Theme. Maidenform's collaborative marketing was so popular that they boasted the largest ever cooperative marketing program in retail history with six hundred department stores signing up to participate in the Designing Woman themed window display.<sup>179</sup> The recreation of this ad was particularly fitting as it depicted a woman dreaming she was a fashion designer. These creative carnivalesque displays challenge Leach's assertion that the vibrant and outrageous consumerist style had been tampered down in modern advertising.<sup>180</sup> Playful window displays were popping up from the United States to Zimbabwe. The May Company in Cleveland, Ohio went rather traditional featuring the "I dreamed I went shopping" ad in their window, while in Seattle the Bon Marche had a new clever take with their personal consumerist dream, "Your dream wardrobe."<sup>181</sup> In faraway Singapore there was an elaborate window display of a cutout woman swinging from a vine, along with Maidenform bras on mannequin busts, and a sign that read, "I dreamed I had a swinging time in my Maidenform." Pickle's in Cape Town, South Africa, combined two Egyptian themed ads into one, displaying a Cleopatra-mannequin sailing down the Nile River.

The window was draped with many bras and reproductions of similar Cleopatra themed Maidenform ads.<sup>182</sup>

This zany atmosphere promoted by Maidenform's marketing efforts presented additional opportunity for female consumers to decently participate in the fantasy. The dreams had jumped from the two-dimensional pages of magazines and were now in their real three-dimensional space. Archival material is not available to inform us on how women (re)interpreted the window displays arrayed around the world. The reaction was probably as varied as each person's understanding of the Dream ads. However, there is no evidence available of any organized public backlash against the public displays, even with the added risk of making relatively private fantasies public. The possible perils associated with this experiential representation of the Dream ads were probably attenuated by the big-top atmosphere of the carnivalesque. Similarly to the use of fashion and humor in the Dream ads, the carnivalesque helped to foster toleration of the suggestive aspects of the campaign. In this way, the carnivalesque contributed to the Woman-to-Woman appeal in Maidenform's marketing.

The fashion shows were perhaps the most interactive example of the Woman-to-Woman marketing approach, combining cutting-edge fashion with the carnivalesque, in a female-only space. It could be argued that a live fashion show with real models strutting the runway and showing off their Maidenform bras to hordes of female on-lookers would be the most provocative of the marketing programs. Yet like all of Maidenform's marketing the potentially scandalous was balanced with the safe to create something palatable to mainstream society. The ads and shop windows gave the virtual feeling of gender exclusivity but men were not actually

excluded from looking. In contrast, the fashion shows had real women in public without their blouses on, but they were completely female-only events.<sup>183</sup>

Kay Daly of the Weintraub Agency, which would be later refigured into Norman, Craig & Kummel, hosted a relatively modest fashion show at Gimbel's in New York in 1949. Instead of imitating the bold confidence of the new Dream campaign, this show demonstrated in a restrained manner how Maidenform bras worked with the latest fashion.<sup>184</sup> Models sashayed down the runway, fully clothed in everything from evening gowns, to day dresses, to sports attire. Harkening back to the abstracted pre-Dream brassiere advertisements was a large box with a decorative frame cutout next to the runway, which showcased another model's torso, showing off the bra that the runway model was wearing beneath her clothes. Like the illustrated background of the first "I dreamed I went shopping" ad, this attempt at modesty did not last long.<sup>185</sup>

A year later, these demure fashion shows expanded into "Dreamatic" spectacles, where models acted out the ads, under the director of retail services, Beth Fagenstrom's management.<sup>186</sup> In cooperation with local store display directors, "Dreamatic" shows occurred in department stores in Los Angeles, Oakland, Seattle, and San Francisco. The multiple shows hosted at the Bon Marche in Seattle were shown to over a thousand women viewers. At the Emporium in San Francisco they got creative, making up their own themes that were San Francisco specific, like "I dreamed I rode in a cable car."<sup>187</sup> The popularity of the fashion shows demonstrates an unusual public connection to the Dream campaign and the Maidenform brand. The fashion shows offered a live three-dimensional experience of the fantasy and fashion offered in the advertisements but in a real, not imaginative, space for women.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the indoor fashion shows were adapted into elaborate outdoor dream themed festivals. One parade featured a live model in a chariot acting out the “I dreamed I drove them wild” advertisement.<sup>188</sup> Photographs from Puerto Rico and Trinidad show that these events were not exclusively female. The Dreamer in the chariot was joined by male “Roman sentinels” who were not featured in the original advertisement. It seems that unlike the Dream advertisements, which remained largely uniform throughout the world, the marketing hosted by retailers was sometimes altered to fit specific cultural norms. Maidenform may have had a “one world” policy in which they exported the same ads and the same bras everywhere, but they did not force this uniformity on their retailers. The retailers, like the individual consumers, were able to interpret the dreams for themselves.

Contests were another creative way to excite and involve customers using the Woman-to-Woman strategy. With contests, the female consumer could directly participate and communicate with Maidenform. In 1955, Maidenform initiated its “create your own dream ad” contest with prizes for adults like a trip to New York and up to twenty thousand dollars. For the teen consumers, an “honor students” program gave away desk sets.<sup>189</sup> Additionally, consumers and their salesperson could win \$500 each for their involvement in the purchase of the 30 millionth Chansonette bra.<sup>190</sup> But 30 million was just the beginning. After only five years that number almost doubled to 55 million Chansonette bras sold, making it the most popular bra in the world. Contests like these inspired consumers to feel more connection with and loyalty to Maidenform. Publicly interactive marketing strategies like the window displays, fashion shows, and contests helped facilitate the intimate aura of the Woman-to-Woman strategy in publicly acceptable, and at times, culturally appropriate arenas.



“Bra bars” were an innovation in the foundation garment industry and part of Maidenform’s Woman-to-Woman strategy within the internal marketing program. Bra bars were structures in retail department stores, which allowed bras to be left out for customer evaluation with pre-packaged bras available for quick shopping. Farrell-Beck and Gau claim in *Uplift* that in the mid 1950s Exquisite Form was one of the leaders in packaging bras.<sup>191</sup> Previously, they state of foundational garments, only Playtex girdles were packaged.<sup>192</sup> However, evidence shows that Maidenform experimented with packaged bras in 1952 at a Macy’s department store in New York.<sup>193</sup> After two years of “research and experimentation” the bra bars were available to retailers for \$104.<sup>194</sup> By 1954, they were at 4,000 locations.<sup>195</sup> This would indicate that Maidenform preceded its competitors with this innovation, or at least they were concurrent events, further demonstrating Maidenform’s pioneering attempts to empower female consumers.

Bra bars changed the nature of bra shopping. Prior to the bra bar, brassiere sales were handled in a more interpersonal and time-consuming manner. As mentioned earlier, an “expert” saleswoman would help the consumer find her ideal fit and design of bra. Individual bras would be brought back and forth through the saleswoman, leaving the customer under her control and reliant on her expertise. In contrast, with the bar bra, packaged bras contained all the necessary information (brand name, size, style, fabric, and price) directly on the box; very little interaction with a salesperson was necessary.<sup>196</sup> If preferred, this gave the consumer the choice of a quick no-nonsense shopping trip. Customers who did not like the personal interaction with the salesperson had the option to be independent self-shoppers. Additionally, women who were repeat shoppers and did not require assistance were no longer required to go through the unnecessary sales ritual. Still, the Maidenform literature for retailers emphasized that the bra

bars would be “extra” and were “not designed to replace the business that stores are doing now.”<sup>197</sup> If a customer preferred the personal service of a saleswoman, the traditional assistance would still be available. Therefore, the bra bars provided more options for the female consumer.

Bra bars, which would eventually become the norm in shopping, also changed retailers. Space and time saving tools like bra bars and counter top fixtures were placed in high trafficked areas, like on a department store’s main floor, replacing more traditional layouts which did not offer the selection and ease provided by these devices.<sup>198</sup> This meant that bras were more readily visible to the shopper, be they man, woman or child. But more than just changing the look of floor displays and supplementing a shopper’s experience, bra bars also had the potential to eliminate department store floor sales jobs traditionally held by women. So while the Woman-to-Woman approach had the potential to give female consumers more options and independence, it also held the prospect of decreasing employment of working women as they were replaced by more “efficient” means.

Bra bars and packaged bras were beneficial for the bottom line of both Maidenform and their retailers. They decreased the individual sales time, reduced the cost per action, promoted impulse buys, helped with reordering, limited markdowns, increased the frequency of multiple purchases, and created more areas in the store for the increasingly popular self-shopping.<sup>199</sup> Maidenform predicted that the new self-service bra bar would “conservatively” increase sales 20%-100%.<sup>200</sup> This was perhaps why retailers were willing to purchase the bra bars at their own expense.<sup>201</sup> The innovation of packaged bras and self-service units made the shopping experience more autonomous allowing for increased sales and cost reduction in sales staff for the retailers. The independence that self-shopping allowed can be interpreted as empowering individual

women, fostering and echoing the independent female aspect of the Woman-to-Woman approach suffused throughout Maidenform's business, advertising, and marketing.

### The Woman-to-Woman Approach & Maidenform's Business Culture in the U.S.

The Woman-to-Woman policy was intended as a marketing tool, and yet, the strategy behind it, progressivism semi-cloaked in the traditional, was also observable on the factory floor. The influence of the Woman-to-Woman strategy was visible in the commonly held activities, which sanctioned sexuality and gender-blending in Maidenform's business culture. Additionally, available evidence shows that Maidenform's business culture was relatively progressive in terms of its gender and ethnic relations. Since their business culture would not be something widely publicized, this arguably demonstrates the pervasiveness and authenticity of the Woman-to-Woman approach as passed down from administrators and taken up by Maidenform employees. This implies that the Woman-to-Woman approach as a whole, from the top-down, bottom-up, and inside-out, in practice and maybe even in intention, operated beyond purely economic motivations.

Vicki Howard has documented potentially empowering occurrences within Maidenform's business culture, which I argue aligns with the Woman-to-Woman strategy. Howard claims that Maidenform and the women working for the company participated in the creation of a "beauty culture," which she states was work culture. She uses Susan Porter Benson's definition of work culture as the "ideology and practice with which workers stake out a relatively autonomous sphere of action on the job," which allows for adaptation and resistance to working condition, and combines it with Kathy Peiss's definition of beauty culture as "a system of meaning that

helped women navigate the changing conditions of modern social experience,” which for women became a “culture of shared meaning and rituals.”<sup>202</sup> Howard claims that the advertising, the feminine form created by Maidenform, and especially the writing and activities surrounding the employee made publication, *The Maiden Forum*, influenced this postwar beauty culture. She claims this work culture fostered relatively harmonious management-worker relations while allowing employees to maintain class-consciousness.<sup>203</sup> Building upon Howard’s scholarship, this section shows how Maidenform’s “beauty culture” related to the Woman-to-Woman approach, which permeated Maidenform work culture and marketing, allowing for expanded expressions of a feminine sphere.

Evident in *The Maiden Forum* was a work culture that blended the traditional and progressive through its emphasis on Anglo-Saxon beauty standards, playful sexuality and gender-bending. This dynamic is evident in the monthly “pin-up girl” contest started during WWII, continued through the early 1950s and documented in the employee magazine.<sup>204</sup> The pin-up contests started as an activity that Maidenform’s female workers on the homefront could participate in to boost the morale of their former male co-workers deployed overseas. This arguably signifies a pro-(hetero)sexuality attitude that was not unusual during the war, as the images were of women intended for the visual consumption of men. However, after the war ended, Maidenform’s pin-up contest continued. Additionally, the intended audience was no longer “our boys overseas” but predominately women (and some men) who worked in the Maidenform factories. In essence, after the war ended and “domestic containment” commenced, a more prominent lesbian gaze emerged.

Arguably the postwar pin-ups became less overtly sexual but the audience was overwhelmingly female. The primary audience was not the only thing that changed. While the pin-ups continued to be predominately women, men and even families became pin-ups of the month. While the men were not sexualized to the same degree Maidenform's WWII pin-ups had been, they were still photographed for a predominately female viewership. This does not mean that the pin-up convention was wholly subversive. Like other aspects of the Woman-to-Woman strategy it was part of a balancing act between the transgressive and the conventional.

The pin-up girl was chosen amongst Maidenform employees and was featured in the employee magazine with a photograph and an accompanying write up. The photographs typically featured either glamorous three-quarters headshots or full body cheesecake images. The beauty of the woman was always mentioned and when a detailed physical description was given, her particularly feminine Anglo-Saxon appearance was always pointed out. For example, July 1947's pin-up, Irene Gudel, "a checker in Department 2C," was described as "blond, blue-eyed, curvesome...[with] a pink-and-white complexion." She was an example of "real feminine pulchritude" and "proof of the oft-repeated statement that 'Maiden Form is mostly pretty girls'."<sup>205</sup> The write-up underscored her desirability by describing her work as a poster-girl for the War Assets Surplus Property Division surplus sales, including an anecdote stating that after seeing one of the posters featuring Gudel, a Denver man called the surplus office claiming that, "he had no use for the cable wire and other articles for sale, but if Uncle Sam no longer needed the blonde, he'd be glad to put in a bid for her!"<sup>206</sup> Other pin-up girls heralded for their fair Anglo-Saxon beauty were described as a, "diminutive red-head," a pretty girl with "brown hair and blue-eyes," and a "slender, grey-eyed blonde."<sup>207</sup>

Even though there was significant emphasis on Anglo-Saxon beauty standards, the pin-ups were also a means of Americanization. Not infrequently, the magazine focused on the idea of the “American melting pot,” through the choice of recent immigrants as monthly pin-ups. One pin-up girl from Ireland praised Maidenform’s exciting work culture in contrast to her experience in Belfast. She particularly liked the employee magazine and the softball team but did miss the vigor of the Irish dancing culture, which she contrasted with the rather subdued, puritanical American dancing.<sup>208</sup> Another immigrant pin-up was from Toulouse in France. While the article did say that she was a “welcome addition to Maidenform’s growing list of pretty war brides,” it does not describe her physical features in detail, perhaps because of her darker coloring, evident in her photograph or perhaps because her personal story of wartime love was more riveting. However, the article does emphasize her Americanization. Upon her arrival in the US, she was astonished by the abundance of fashion and promptly realized to fit in she must buy new clothes. The article mentioned that her young daughter also helped by reminding her to speak English “because [we’re] Americans now.”<sup>209</sup> These pinups may not have been all-American beauties but, like Ida Rosenthal before them, they were enthusiastically becoming Americans.

Maidenform’s pin-ups were not only women of Northern and Western European-descent, however the difference (in particular what was left out) in the articles between pin-ups of non-European-descent and those women of European-descent, bolster the ideal of feminine Anglo-Saxon beauty. Analysis of an African American pin-up and a male pin-up demonstrate the discrepancies. April 1950’s winner was an African American woman named Artheree Brooks, who was described as affable, well-liked, and attractive. Like Irene Gudel, Brooks’ write up featured an anecdote to “prove” her sexual appeal. She recalled an offer she received to pose

in “flimsy” lingerie, which she turned down. She claimed she would rather work for Maidenform making lingerie than modeling it.<sup>210</sup> The authors of the article approved of her decision, stating that they were pleased to have her as a co-worker. Yet unlike Gudel’s write up, which made no attempt to establish her modesty or purity, Brooks’ accompanying article does so by informing the reader that she had the opportunity to model but refused. There are several plausible explanations. Perhaps because Gudel’s modeling work was done at the behest of the war effort, it was viewed as legitimate. The article relays that Brooks was asked to pose in “flimsy” lingerie with no other explanation, which suggests that the job was for a commercial venture featuring scantily-clad women. There was no patriotism to justify Brooks’ potential sexuality. Another explanation could be that Brooks’ reputation, as an African American woman, was more suspect than Gudel’s. Therefore, mentioning that Brooks was propositioned was necessary to express her desirability and eligibility as a pin-up, and yet it was equally as important to assert that she did not accept the offer, thereby proving her virtue, which would have been in a more precarious position as a black woman. It also could have been a mix between the two. Either way, the main focus was on Brooks’ likeability and modestly (vis-a-via her proven desirability) versus Gudel’s specifically mentioned Anglo-Saxon beauty and sexual desirability, which during wartime at least, needed no reaffirmation of decency. This comparison between the way a white pin-up and a black pin-up was presented again demonstrates the middle road walked by Maidenform’s Woman-to-Woman policy. Maidenform would take two steps forward by showing that “respectable” women could be sexy but it would take one step back, in that this female sexuality was still ultimately confined by gendered and racial cultural norms which could only be challenged if at the same time they were in some ways reasserted.

On at least one occasion, the pin-up of the month was male. While Maidenform may have been adventurous enough to have a male pin-up, an effort was made to assert that De Stefano, June 1950's pin-up, was masculine and therefore exempt from being a sexual object. Unlike the female pin-ups who posed solo, Dominick De Stefano posed with his two young daughters. A male "pin-up girl" may have been a surprising choice but the write up emphasized traditional gender roles. De Stefano's female relatives were described as physically appealing while he was defined as a Cold War male role model. De Stefano's wife was described as "very attractive" and his daughters as "beautiful," while he was described as an energetic war vet, devoted father and sportsman. Just in case there was any mistake about his masculinity, the article spells it out declaring that he was "a good provider...De Stefano typifies the American Father, the builder of our nation's future."<sup>211</sup>

The purpose(s) of having monthly Maidenform pin-ups is unknown. However, as *The Maiden Forum* was an employee run publication and the pin-up feature lasted several years, this indicates that the employees likely enjoyed this activity and the management sanctioned it. These examples of Maidenform's pin-ups demonstrate the mix of the traditional and subversive evident in Maidenform's business culture. The typical monthly pin-up was an attractive woman whose femininity and Anglo-Saxon beauty were highlighted. However, the pin-ups were occasionally outside of that norm, including at least one African American woman and one man (of Southern European-descent). While extra efforts were made to prove that the African American woman was decent and the man was masculine, the small ventures outside the conventional ethnic and gender boundaries are still notable. Additionally, the primary audience for these pin-up features were the majority female factory workers, signaling that Maidenform's



business culture celebrated a not entirely chaste female beauty for a female audience. While most likely Maidenform was not encouraging a lesbian gaze it was also not precluding it.

The male pin-up was not the only instance of gender-bending in Maidenform's business culture. Like Ida Rosenthal and the women in the Dream ads, Maidenform employees, both male and female, sometimes tip-toed over gendered boundaries. June 1946's female pin-up was featured with two photos—one of her dressed in men's clothing and the other showed her in traditional female dress. The photo on the left showed Helen Miskura striking a Popeye-esque pose with a pipe in her mouth, wearing her uncle's war-work clothing. The picture to the right featured the "real" Miskura, polished and demure.<sup>212</sup> Again, Maidenform's business culture allowed for playful transgressions but ultimately reasserted traditional boundaries, noting that the "genuine" Miskura was the feminine version. Another celebration of Maidenform's female employee's beauty, a "pulchritude parade," gave a male employee an opportunity to masquerade as a woman. The female contestants were separated into a single and a married group. "Miss 2A" and a "Mrs. 2A" were distinguished from each other by different colored flowers. The contestants walked through the cutting room (the higher-paid male dominated area) where they were judged by the length of the applause. Having some fun, a male employee decided to compete, but sadly, did not win.<sup>213</sup> In another instance of male employees cross-dressing, a group of male employees participated in a play where they all played women for a WWII bond drive.<sup>214</sup>

Both examples of males entering female terrain was done so in a spirit of fun, indicating that male gendered transgression was a joke. However, as shown with Helen Miskura, females parodying men were greeted with a similar degree of humor, suggesting a general culture that

sanctioned and even encouraged transgression and waggishness. It could be argued that the cross-dressing only further emphasized the subjects “true” gender, thereby reifying traditional gender standards. However, when the Woman-to-Woman strategy is examined as a whole, the preponderance of evidence, considered within the historical context, suggests that the predominate sentiment behind the strategy, and the limited evidence showing the ways the employees interpreted it, was one of gender and sexual empowerment.

In addition to gender-bending, light-hearted displays of sexuality were practiced by both male and female employees during work-sanctioned activities. For one performance, Maidenform employees put on an elaborate “vaudeville” show featuring “Mary Maidenform.” Popular songs were converted into Maidenform parodies, for instance, “Personality” (with the lyrics, “She’s got personality”) became “Bustability.” Even union officials took part. One scene took place at the general office where “anything is liable to happen and ...usually does.” Union head Pete Capitano showed up to conduct “strictly official business” (wink-wink) with the “office girls.”<sup>215</sup> Local newspapers covered some typical Maidenform antics. A ten-act Christmas show featured Christmas carols, comedy skits, and even a “strip tease” by Maidenform’s Eva Vilone.<sup>216</sup> At another Christmas party, the traditional party-game, pin-the-tale-on-the-donkey, was played “Maiden form-style,” which meant that the blindfolded participants were pinning a bra on a paper woman. A photograph documenting the event shows a white cut-out bra already on the image of a undressed paper woman, leaving the reader to speculate what was underneath.<sup>217</sup> Many of these antics would fit in well at a frat house, and yet, these were activities celebrating female sexuality seemingly enjoyed by a majority female workforce.

These incidences of spirited work-sanctioned sexuality mirror the Woman-to-Woman strategy employed in Maidenform's marketing. Instead of making the underwear business chaste, Maidenform seemingly embraced its eroticism. Therefore, like their bras, Maidenform shaped the work culture into something that simultaneously cloaked the erogenous, creating something new, which was sexy all on its own. Just as the bra modified the shape of the breast and gave it new meaning, Maidenform employees, permitted by the administration, created a work culture that was at once conventional enough to be acceptable but subversive to the degree that it allowed for flexibility of meaning. As the Woman-to-Woman strategy was foremost a sales strategy yet also allowed for transgression, Maidenform's business culture may very well have been a calculated strategy to give workers enough independence to be content and therefore productive. Even so, the relative freedom of expression hints at the radical potential available for Maidenform's primarily female workforce in the United States.

Little direct evidence is available as to the ethnic relations at Maidenform on the mainland. This may indicate generally harmonious relations, as problems were more likely to be recorded, or it may mean that it was not recorded or that the evidence was not saved. However, by reading in between the lines of the available evidence, a glimpse of the relatively progressive ethnic relations within Maidenform's work culture is evident. As mentioned previously, the immigrant and African-American pin-ups indicate an at least outwardly inclusive environment.

Additionally, photographs of the women working and at the company parties show female African-American employees posing amongst Maidenform workers of seemingly varied ethnic backgrounds. When Maidenform hosted Soviet groups at their factories, photographs show that African American female workers were included in the demonstrations. As will be discussed in

Chapter Three, this may have been a strategic Cold War strategy to show the Soviets that American society was not racist, despite evidence to the contrary. However, these photographs, like the images at the Maidenform parties, do not indicate an overt strategy behind the inclusion of African American workers. The photographs show that they were workers but also indicate that they were in the minority. The photographs at the parties are probably a better indication of normal business culture. Unlike the formalized photographs from the Soviet demo, the images from the parties, which would only be shown to Maidenform employees, are probably a less constructed representation of the working culture.

Adding to the evidence that Maidenform had a relatively inclusive culture is an examination of the religious accommodations which show that the Jewish-run company became more inclusive overtime, at least towards its presumably majority Christian employees. In 1942, the International Ladies Garment Worker's contract with Maidenform's Bayonne New Jersey plants shows that the factory closed for three days on the Jewish high holidays without pay. The agreement also stipulated that the company was within its rights to request that employees, Jewish or not, makeup for those days on the following Saturdays.<sup>218</sup> This provision seems to reflect that while the management was Jewish, the majority rank-and-file was not. This is evidenced by the fact that the factories shut down on Jewish holidays but workers were required to makeup for the holidays by working on the Jewish Sabbath, which presumably would not be acceptable if the majority of the employees were Jewish. By 1947, Maidenform agreed to pay employees for the Jewish holidays the plant shut down, even if they fell on a Saturday.<sup>219</sup> Additionally indicating that the majority of workers were Christian were the celebrated Christmas parties. Even the mostly Jewish management was involved in the holiday parties. In

New Jersey, the likely Jewish manager Eli Goldstein even played Santa Claus.<sup>220</sup> By 1960, the union contract indicated an expansion of observed holidays including the Christian celebration of Good Friday as well as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which if employees did work, they would be paid double time.<sup>221</sup>

Even if the work culture can be interpreted as relatively progressive and inclusive, the management structure and the factory worker wages were still relatively traditional. As mentioned earlier, even though Maidenform was founded by women and headed by Ida Rosenthal, management of the employees was handled by men. Ida Rosenthal seemed to be in control of the public side of Maidenform, including marketing and public relations, while her male relatives, particularly Moe and Ellis Rosenthal, handled the day-to-day on the factory floor. In the early 1950s, women held two out of the twelve executive jobs—those two women were Ida Rosenthal and her daughter, Beatrice Coleman.<sup>222</sup> Below that of the executives, numerous individuals were named who held positions of power within each department. Only two were women— Designer Betty Kaup and an M. Hammer of Quality Control.<sup>223</sup> The pay for everyday workers shows an even sharper gender discrepancy. A 1942 union agreement shows the vast disparity in pay between men and women. New male employees who were in training could not earn less than sixteen dollars per week, while the allotted minimum for women was one dollar.<sup>224</sup> There is no evidence, which reveals if a man and a woman worked the same job, they would receive different pay. What seems more likely, as indicated by the management and the cutting department being almost entirely male, was that jobs were divided between “skilled” well played men’s jobs, like cutter, and “women’s work,” like sewing, which was not as well compensated. It should be noted that this gendered pay gap was not at all unusual for the time.

Men were presumed to require higher wages because of their position as a family's main/only wage earner. On the other hand, women were assumed to be using their income to supplement their husbands, working on a temporary basis until they were married or perhaps until they reached a particular sum to purchase a non-necessity. Therefore, differential pay and opportunity was believed to be justified. Likely because this was the cultural norm, there is no evidence to suggest that female Maidenform workers objected to the pay gap or the discrepancy in female managers in a business created by and producing goods for women. The Woman-to-Woman emphasis, despite the company's many innovations, met its limitation in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century workplace culture.

### Conclusion

Maidenform's Woman-to-Woman approach created the impression that businesswomen, adwomen, and the female brand itself were directly communicating with their female consumers and workforce. Maidenform applied a holistic marketing program, which was ambiguous enough to allow gender-blending elements to be successfully deployed for two decades. The Woman-to-Woman strategy started at the very top. Ida Rosenthal, co-founder and owner of Maidenform, was its most visible *spokeswoman*. As a self-made woman in the model American fashion, she recreated her public gendered image to advance her business. She represented herself as both a traditional and an untraditional woman. She was a voluptuous woman who believed that the feminine curves nature gave women must be respected and therefore enhanced. Yet she was also a no-nonsense businesswoman who made it abundantly clear that she was in charge. Depending on the situation, either the conventional or the more radical version of womanhood was projected.

Frequently the orthodox was combined with the firebrand into a seamlessly digestible, yet arguably subversive package. The presentation of this dual femininity was a key aspect of the Woman-to-Woman approach. While the majority of the administrators were men, women like Ida Rosenthal and her daughter Beatrice Coleman were highlighted as the most prominent members, demonstrating the intentionality of the woman-run image. Rosenthal, as the spokeswoman and representative of the brand, presented a persona with both feminine and masculine characteristics, much like the celebrated Dream advertisements.

Echoing the strong independent female image of Ida Rosenthal and utilizing analysis from their “scientific research,” the Woman-to-Woman strategy was manifested in the Dream campaign by its female-only space created by adwomen at Norman, Craig & Kummel. This exclusive space designated for women permitted a sense of freedom and allowed for fantasy and experimentation with sexuality and gender roles. The perception of a female space was encouraged by connections with fashion, popular culture and female participation. The image of an autonomous female reverberated throughout the campaign with representations of the models as self-assured and single, contrasting with traditional images of femininity ubiquitous in consumer culture during the early Cold War era.

The Woman-to-Woman marketing was publicly visible not only in the Dream campaign, but also in the external marketing which infused the Dream theme into window displays, fashion shows, contests, and bra-bars. The external marketing brought the Dream campaign to life, further fostering the semblance of a female brand working for and communicating with women was Maidenform’s marketing in conjunction with retailers. This marketing created a realistic feeling of interaction and communication in the fantasy of the national campaign and with the

Maidenform brand's female strategy. The bra bar was created to give female consumers more autonomy in their shopping experience, freeing them from "expert" reliance. This reiterated the Woman-to-Woman approach by emphasizing the autonomous female with available opportunities, whether to dream or to shop.

Maidenform's marketing utilized both scientific marketing and the "carnavalesque" to create female-friendly environments and images. Maidenform's marketing applied research and data analysis to attract and cater to its target demographic of consumers, discussing them in unusually respectful ways as intelligent and modern women. The Woman-to-Woman strategy was able to successfully combine the private and the public, which is significant for an intimate apparel company that marketed its product publicly. The Woman-to-Woman strategy simultaneously portrayed an aura of female communication and camaraderie with recognition that brassieres not only shaped a woman's figure but potentially her feelings about femininity.

While "scientific research" in the form of data collection and interpretation furthered the idea that early Cold War women were intelligent and increasingly desiring independence, the business culture on Maidenform's factory floors demonstrates that the Woman-to-Woman strategy as practiced by real women (and men) working for Maidenform was not strictly an economic venture. The mostly female employees of Maidenform conveyed a relatively free sexuality and gender expression within their workplace environment. Even though evidence shows a gendered pay disparity at Maidenform, within the historical context, Maidenform's business culture does indicate that the Woman-to-Woman marketing was taken up by the rank-and-file and sanctioned by the management, implying that the Woman-to-Woman approach extended beyond a purely profit making strategy.



Maidenform's business structure, advertising campaign, and marketing programs show innovation in gender usage in postwar consumerism. Maidenform resisted the postwar movement towards representations of traditional femininity and instead combined innovation with conventional ideas of womanhood. Women were shown shopping, interacting with fashion, and manipulating their bodies with brassieres into artificially feminine forms. Paired with orthodox femininity are unconventional ideas and images like that of the successful businesswomen, female single-hood, self-sufficiency and sexual temerity. The ordinary and the exceptional were combined to create a new message to women. It should certainly not be forgotten that the motive behind this strategy was profit. Marketing strategies are tools meant to manipulate, to convince, to elicit desire, for the goal of selling. Maidenform did not attempt to revolutionize women's status in society. There is no evidence of intentional designs to contribute to women's liberation. Yet the Maidenform Woman-to-Woman strategy allowed the female consuming public to receive and decipher gendered messages in their own ways. The Woman-to-Woman approach allowed for myriad meanings, some which transgressed postwar gendered social structures even as some others supported traditionalism.

## CHAPTER 2:

### Advertising Desire: Advertising History, Psychoanalysis & Maidenform's Dream

#### Campaign (1949-1969)

Maidenform explained the appeal of the Dream campaign thusly, “[when] a woman sees a Maidenform dream, through a bit of delicious magic, sees *herself* as the mischievously mad dream girl.”<sup>225</sup>

As Elaine Tyler May has shown, women's early Cold War gender roles were intertwined with concerns about containing communism.<sup>226</sup> As American women were once called upon to serve their country during WWII through wartime work,<sup>227</sup> many experts suggested that women in the postwar era had a patriotic duty to resume more conventional gender roles and to rebuild and maintain strong nuclear families. Rosie the Riveter should become June Cleaver.<sup>228</sup> June Cleaver was the archetype of the American housewife from the classic show *Leave it to Beaver*, which premiered in 1957 and featured a quintessential America family. Like the Cleavers, the ideal American family should be headed by a bread-winning father and husband, a faithful housewife and mother with well-adjusted children. This model family would live in a new suburban housing development and furnish their lives with consumer goods purchased by the woman of the household, “Mrs. Consumer,” supporting capitalism and therefore bulwarking the American Way.<sup>229</sup> By upholding “traditional” American values, the ideal family would protect the U.S. from dangers from without as well as within.

As the rhetorical Cold War drumbeat beckoned women home to a life of containment, Maidenform's advertising encouraged them to dream of something outside the proverbial box.

Since women were seen as key to the preservation of the American Way, their conventional roles as stay-at-home wives and mothers were glorified. Unsurprisingly, popular imagery geared towards women, especially within consumer culture, frequently depicted women as earnest or aspiring custodians of the home.<sup>230</sup> While Maidenform's Dream campaign (1949-1969) was aimed at women in the marriageable age category of 18-35, it prominently featured unmarried women in their twenties, fantasizing about the decidedly undomestic. In fact, there was nary a husband or child in sight. And of course, the dreaming women were always gleefully and publicly exposing their Maidenform brassieres for the world to see.

Analysis of early Cold War advertisements targeting women illuminate our understanding of contained gender roles; but the widespread popularity and general acceptance of a campaign which showed women in their bras in public points to the complicated messages that consumer culture disseminated, as well as the type of messages that seemed to resonate with many midcentury women.<sup>231</sup> This chapter examines the development of this important advertising campaign and argues that its unique and ambiguous representation of women was at least partially a result of the mid-century craze for psychoanalytically-influenced advertising, popularly known as Motivation Research (MR).<sup>232</sup> It also argues for a nuanced look at those associated with the Dream campaign. While certainly circumscribed by their historical context, these creators were economically motivated not to "systematize desire," but instead, to attempt to understand women's desires and how they were affected by their complicated roles in postwar consumer culture.<sup>233</sup> The creators and contributors to the Dream campaign did not seek to create appetites where none existed, but instead strove to unravel and bring to the fore yearnings, which were suppressed.

Maidenform's Dream campaign was produced by the advertising agency Norman, Craig & Kummel (NCK) in accordance with their Empathy philosophy, and was influenced by Ernest Dichter, the self-proclaimed "father of Motivation Research." Dichter, the Austrian psychologist, is credited with creating MR by combining European psychoanalysis and intellectual practices with American enthusiasm for consumption. NCK's Empathy should be viewed as a subset of Dichter's transnational MR. An examination of the Dream campaign illuminates MR, a blossoming sector of consumer culture which attempted to harness, understand, and utilize the "subconscious" desires of the female consuming population to both sell products, and, presumably, to improve society.

The creators and contributors to Maidenform's Dream campaign reframed the question "what do women want?" by applying psychoanalytic techniques to advertising, which had the effect of re-imagining the representation of women's desires beyond the domestic realm. While the previous chapter analyzed the influence of Maidenform's Woman-to-Woman strategy on the gendered tone in Maidenform's marketing and business culture, this chapter examines the effects the application of psychoanalysis had on the Dream campaign. In many ways, it can be seen as a continuation of the Woman-to-Woman strategy. This chapter argues that NCK's association with MR allowed it to re-imagine what women wanted and how that related to brassieres and larger cultural gender roles. This innovative and provocative marketing pushed the boundaries of what was considered acceptable representations of female sexuality and what was tolerated in advertising. The creation of the ads and the surrounding controversy is symbolic of the simultaneous shift towards "traditional" femininity after the war and the reality that not all

women wanted to be “June Cleaver.”<sup>234</sup> The ads show that this historiographical debate was visualized in the popular and consumer culture of the postwar era.

This chapter analyzes how the Dream campaign offered American women alternative images of femininity outside of what was typically presented in consumer culture. The creators of the Dream campaign designed advertisements that focused primarily on the female consumer and strove to see the world from the so-called female consumer’s point of view. The creators of the Dream campaign supposed, and the extraordinary success of the Dream campaign suggests, that the early Cold War female consumer was not inspired by the uniqueness or quality of a product and more importantly did not necessarily desire to imagine herself within the confines of conventional gender roles. Therefore the creators of the Dream campaign created advertisements which focused on the female consumer’s supposed subconscious yearning to imagine herself participating in unconventional situations, thereby pushing the boundaries of traditional female gender roles. This re-imagination of women’s desires was possible through the use of and association with controversial psychoanalytic advertising techniques like MR and NCK’s Empathy, which attempted to understand and interpret women’s “inherent” desires in order to discover effective ways to get them to consume.

This analysis does not presume that the Dream campaign’s transgressive potential was necessarily a conscious effort with progressive or feminist motivations.<sup>235</sup> Most likely this was an advertising endeavor primarily intended to find a novel and effective approach to reach the all-important female consumer demographic and boost profits. However, economic motivation does not preclude the apparent recognition that early Cold War women had unfulfilled desires that did not correlate with their prescribed social roles. This analysis does not frame the Dream campaign

as altogether feminist, as reasonable arguments could be made that it was in fact exploitative of women's particular vulnerabilities during this time period. Rather, this is an examination of the symbolism made available, as well as the people and methodology which contributed to the campaign that was unique for its time period because of its noncompliance to important aspects of conventional early Cold War era sexual and gender roles.

To date, only minimal discussion of the Dream campaign exists in academic studies and has primarily focused on the campaign as an example of the propagation of sexist views towards women in postwar consumer culture or in a limited fashion as an early example of the use of sex in advertising.<sup>236</sup> Yet, previous analyses of the campaign that condemn it as demeaning to women neglect to address the possible reasons behind the campaign's mass appeal to women. By focusing on the open-ended nature of the campaign, this study broadens the understanding of how consumer culture formulated and depicted gender roles during the early Cold War. Unlike previous studies of the Dream campaign, this analysis argues that the use of psychoanalysis applied to marketing reframed the way Maidenform communicated with the female consumer. This innovative way of addressing the consumer gave the campaign transgressive potential, which differed from other advertisements geared towards women in the early Cold War (even though ironically the brassiere would become a symbol of patriarchal repression by the end of the campaign, perhaps contributing to its demise).<sup>237</sup>

MR peaked in the 1950s but after a steep decline in the 1970s it became virtually unknown, although its influence is still evident today. It is only in the last decade that historians of consumerism and practitioners in the marketing field are rediscovering the impact psychoanalytically-influenced advertising techniques, like those employed by Dichter and NCK,

had on postwar consumer culture.<sup>238</sup> So far, minimal research into MR has primarily focused on Dichter. This nascent research has indicated the necessity of a reevaluation of the genealogy of the study of Consumer Behavior and postwar consumer culture.<sup>239</sup> Recent scholarship from the US and Europe has argued that Dichter revolutionized postwar marketing, advertising, and consumer research in the U.S. and Europe.<sup>240</sup> This chapter addresses the influence of Dichter, connecting his ideas to NCK's Empathy under the larger umbrella of psychoanalytically-influenced research and the Dream campaign, which played an important role in the application of MR in postwar marketing.<sup>241</sup>

However, Dichter was not just tangentially connected to the Dream campaign through his development of MR. Dichter was also hired by NCK and Maidenform as a consultant. Therefore, by examining Dichter's research on Maidenform brassieres, this chapter will also give a glimpse into how the leading psychoanalytic marketing consultant viewed female consumers through one of the most intimate and symbolically-layered consumer products.<sup>242</sup> A focus on the Dream campaign bridges studies on Dichter to studies that examine gender and sexuality in advertising, thereby advancing a more nuanced understanding of MR's gendered role in consumer culture, which may impact the study of gender and sexuality in postwar advertising.<sup>243</sup>

While addressing the influence of Dichter, this research goes further by emphasizing the importance of NCK and the Dream campaign to the application of MR in postwar marketing. While not one of the top advertising agencies, such as J Walter Thompson, that have been studied extensively by scholars, NCK has unexplored historical importance.<sup>244</sup> In addition to Maidenform, some of its most notable clients were Colgate-Palmolive (household products), Revlon (cosmetics), Chanel (perfume and fashion), Pabst (beer), and Handi-wrap (plastic wrap

for food). And yet, no comprehensive study has been published on NCK, most likely due to the dearth of archival materials. This study attempts to piece together information from a variety of sources in order to illuminate NCK's role in both the Dream campaign as well as the mid-century vogue for marketing that sought to tap into the consumer's subconscious.<sup>245</sup> This chapter demonstrates the important role this relatively forgotten advertising agency played in postwar consumer culture and advertising history.

Advertisements play a substantial historical role as symbols of gendered behavior and frameworks of cultural ideals. According to James Twitchell, we are living in an age where advertising is “not just a central institution but *the* central institution,” and that it is “the dominant meaning-making system of modern life.”<sup>246</sup> The postwar period was consequential to the development of what he calls the “adcult” society.<sup>247</sup> Spanning from 1949 to 1969, the Dream campaign extended over the postwar economic boom, the early Cold War, and the immense cultural changes that ensued. This timing alone makes the Dream campaign an exceptionally rich lens through which to analyze the intersection between consumer culture and gender in the postwar period. Maidenform's Dream campaign straddled the overlapping contradictions of early Cold War American culture—fear and hope, sexuality and domesticity, containment and freedom—which enmeshed gender roles and consumerism with geopolitics.

#### Psychoanalysis in Advertising: Ernest Dichter's Motivation Research

Dichter believed that the answer to creating a captive consumer public lay not in marketing analysis but in tapping into the consumer's inner most desires. “Whatever your attitude toward modern psychology or psychoanalysis,” Dichter wrote in *The Strategy of Desire*,



“it has been proved beyond any doubt that many of our daily decisions are governed by motivations over which we have no control and of which we are quite often unaware.”<sup>248</sup> As a child in Austria, Dichter dreamed of American-style abundance, which he believed caused American-style greatness. Dichter used his European techniques to find and use these mysterious motivations to improve the world by boosting American-style consumerism. And of course Dichter would also make lots of money, which was also very American.

Dichter was wildly famous during the early Cold War but has been virtually forgotten today. The omission of the prominent advertising consultant and the high-profile contributions of MR was probably due to the controversial nature of the man himself and the psychoanalytical basis of MR’s marketing practices.<sup>249</sup> The same controversy surrounding psychoanalysis that contributed to the meteoric rise of Dichter and MR in the 1950s and 1960s also contributed to their rapid fall from fashion in the 1970s and the resulting elision.<sup>250</sup> However, recently, scholars have argued for the historical importance of Dichter to postwar consumer culture. Marketing and Business professor, Barbara Stern, states that Dichter was pivotal to significant postwar consumer culture trends. Dichter led a turn from the focus on the marketer’s perspective to that of the consumer, a move away from quantitative towards qualitative methods, and the application of Freudian insights into the business world.<sup>251</sup> Stern further argues that Dichter “changed the very grammar of marketing,” which remains ingrained in the fabric of contemporary marketing even though his name may be forgotten.<sup>252</sup> Dichter consulted for large companies such as L’Oreal, Dupont, and Ford, as well as big advertising agencies like Ted Bates & Co., and Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc. He even worked for government institutions in Canada and Germany.<sup>253</sup>

Even though Dichter and the Dream campaign received plenty of press, they were not the first to use theories of consumer behavior for commercial profit. Although not controversial until the mid-twentieth century, psychology, if not Freudian psychoanalysis, has been used in advertising since at least the early twentieth century. But the use of psychology in advertising began even earlier. *Publicity* wrote in 1901 that, “[t]he time is not far away when the advertising writer will find the inestimable value of a knowledge of psychology.”<sup>254</sup> Indeed it was not. Professor of psychology, Walter Dill Scott, wrote the first book applying psychology to advertising in his 1908, *The Psychology of Advertising: A Simple Exposition of the principles of psychology in their relation to successful advertising*.<sup>255</sup> Scott stated that about ten years prior to his book, advertisers had started to discuss the usefulness of psychology. Since the primary function of advertising was to influence the mind, Scott explained, the only applicable scientific practice was psychology. In his book he gave advice to make the consumer suggestible by targeting the memory, eliciting joyful emotion, and appealing to the consumer’s personal interests. To activate the human instinct for material possession, he discussed things like beauty and repetition but recommended that advertisers avoid humor unless it is particularly adept.<sup>256</sup>

Close ties to MR are also evident in the 1920s with Freud’s nephew, Edward Bernays, and his pioneering efforts in the field of public relations.<sup>257</sup> Bernay’s applied his uncle’s theories, then relatively unknown in the U.S., to a variety of industries and government interventions. One of his most famous triumphs was convincing women to smoke cigarettes. Working for American Tobacco, Bernays made the primarily male habit attractive to women by making it seem modern. He convinced a group of chic young women to smoke while marching in a parade and meanwhile tipped off the press. The newspapers ran photos of the women with their

“torches of freedom,” prompting the connection between the modern woman publicly seeking gender equality and smoking cigarettes.<sup>258</sup> Even though Bernays was utilizing Freud, the fad in the advertising business was for “hard” scientific approaches reminiscent of Taylorization, which involved market research techniques like the use of surveys and statistics.<sup>259</sup> Sarah Igo goes into depth about the creation of a mass society through the social sciences, which she traces from the famous Middletown studies in 1929.<sup>260</sup> It was not until after WWII that the advertising business began to take a renewed interest in consumer behavior.

The precise origins of MR are still debated. Most argue that the core ideas originated in Europe, particularly among Viennese academics, but were first applied practically to the business realm in the U.S.<sup>261</sup> MR is perhaps best known as a derivative of Freudianism as it relates to unconscious desires, symbolism, dreams as wish fulfillments of repressed desires, and sexual inferences. In addition to psychoanalysis, MR also borrowed from psychology, sociology, and anthropology.<sup>262</sup> In addition to Freud, Adler, Jung, and sex researcher Alfred Kinsey were also influential to the development of this approach. Schwarzkopf and Gries claim that the methods grouped under MR “blend the holistic philosophy of Bühler’s Gestalt psychology, which assumes that human beings perceive objects and events in images, as an amalgamated whole (Gestalt), with Freudian psychoanalysis, and Lazarsfeld’s social and market research methodology.”<sup>263</sup> Dichter studied under the famed psychologists, the Böhlers’ at the University in Vienna, trained with Freud’s rejected disciple Wilhelm Stekel, and worked with Lazarsfeld in Austria and in the U.S.<sup>264</sup> MR owes much to the influx of European Jewish intellectuals, like Dichter and Lazarsfeld, fleeing the Nazis and settling in the U.S. Essentially, MR was birthed out of the combination of European scholarship and American capitalism.

Dichter's background helps explain his interest in human motivations, as well as his enthusiasm for American-style consumer abundance. Growing up impoverished in Austria, he derided his destitute father and admired his successful uncle, for whom he worked as a window dresser in the latter's department store.<sup>265</sup> Studying at the University of Vienna, Dichter earned his PhD in psychology in 1934 but found it difficult to make a living as a psychoanalyst.<sup>266</sup> He supplemented his income by conducting market research into the milk drinking habits of the Viennese for the *Wirtschafts Psychologisches Institut* at the University of Vienna. This research ended when Nazis arrested him in 1937 as, unbeknownst to Dichter, the Institute was involved in the socialist underground. After his arrest, Dichter fled to Paris and then to New York in 1938.<sup>267</sup>

Daniel Horowitz notes that unlike many immigrants fleeing Hitler who remained aloof from America popular culture, such as those in the Frankfurt School who choose instead to draw on European high culture, Dichter embraced it.<sup>268</sup> Upon arriving in New York, Dichter reached out to his former professor and fellow Viennese refugee Dr. Paul Lazarsfeld, and began working at the research firm Market Analysts, Inc with Lazarsfeld's famous wife Dr. Herta Herzog. In less than two years, Dichter gained notoriety through his work with *Esquire*, Chrysler, and at the ad agency J. Stirling Getchell, Inc. Dichter combined the psychoanalytic practice of depth interview, where consumers were asked multiple questions to ascertain their "true" feelings about products and their "real" reasons for buying, with a talent for copywriting and personal charisma. After finding success through his application of MR, Dichter set up his own consulting firm, the Institute for Motivational Research in 1946, where he hired specialists in psychology, sociology, anthropology, mathematical statistics and marketing.<sup>269</sup> Dichter and MR thrived during the

1950s and 1960s when he developed some of his most famous work including “put a tiger in your tank” for Exxon, “bet you can’t eat just one” for Frito-Lay, and enabled the introduction of the colossally successful Barbie doll.<sup>270</sup> He was also exceedingly forthright and prolific with his philosophy, writing multiple books and articles printed around the world.<sup>271</sup>

As Lawrence Samuel argues, since most academics viewed the study of consumption as beneath them, MR filled the void.<sup>272</sup> MR claimed to see through the emotional baggage the scientific approaches ignored.<sup>273</sup> Maidenform’s Ida Rosenthal suggested the growing (gendered) connection between marketing and psychoanalysis when she asserted that woman, “is a very funny creature...Not only do you have to be a designer; you have to be a psychologist.”<sup>274</sup>

Launched in the 1940s in the United States, MR gained legitimacy by 1953 with *An Introduction to Motivational Research*, which listed five hundred books and articles on the subject.<sup>275</sup> While Dichter was the most famous and commercially successful, other practitioners of MR in the U.S. included Dr. Steuart Henderson Britt and Dr. Dik Warren Twedt at Needham, Lewis, Brorby Advertising in Chicago, Dr. Burleigh B. Gardner and Dr. W. Lloyd Warner at the University of Chicago, Social Research Inc., Dr. Herta Herzog, Pierre Martineau, and William Stevens at McCann-Erickson, NY, Chicago Tribune, Young and Rubicam, NY, and Louis Cheskin of Chicago-based Color Research Institute.<sup>276</sup>

Like Ida Rosenthal, Dichter was a self (re)made individual in the American vein. He was also a Jewish immigrant who came to the US to pursue the “American Dream.” In an effort to be more “American,” Dichter changed his name from “Ernst” to “Ernest” and took speech lessons to lose his accent for fear people would be suspicious of his foreign background.<sup>277</sup> He also consciously gave his children the distinctly American names of Susan and Jane.<sup>278</sup> Dichter’s fears

were not unfounded, as he reportedly faced discrimination from the primarily WASP advertising industry.<sup>279</sup> Despite this, Dichter whole-heartedly embraced Americanism and believed that his marketing philosophies would help the U.S. reach even greater heights.

However much Dichter embraced America, he knew that his European aura could bring him publicity. As a savvy self-marketer, Dichter chose to align himself with Freudianism because it was fashionable and controversial. Lazarsfeld, who combined qualitative and quantitative methodology in his own research, reportedly told Dichter that because of America's love of empiricism, they would never accept his theories since they were too European. "Luckily," Dichter wrote, "he was wrong."<sup>280</sup> According to Steiner and Cudlik, he knew that only Einstein eclipsed Freud's reputation and that consequently affiliating with the famous fellow Austrian was his ticket to fame in the U.S. In so doing, he identified himself with the qualitative "depth boys" in opposition to the quantitative "nose counters."<sup>281</sup> Dichter noted, "I have often been accused of being a Freudian. I don't see quite why this should be an accusation rather than a compliment. In reality I am not; I am much more of an eclectic. By popular opinion Freud is always associated with sex."<sup>282</sup> He saw himself as using sex when appropriate but claimed that it did not apply to everything.<sup>283</sup> In fact, he claimed that Dr. Margaret Mead informed him that what he was doing was actually cultural anthropology.<sup>284</sup>

Even so, MR was popularly associated with sex and mind control. Unsurprisingly then, Dichter's most famous exploits were associated with the sexual appeal. While working for the men's magazine *Esquire*, Dichter convinced wary businesses to advertise in the reputedly licentious periodical. Advertisers were skeptical of the magazine's publication of "girly" photos and the negative reputation around such media. Dichter informed them that the images of

scantly dressed women were exactly why they should advertise in *Esquire*. He claimed that men's pupils grew when viewing the scandalous photos and would therefore absorb the advertising messages more intensively.<sup>285</sup>

A glowing review in *Time* on his work for Chrysler's Plymouth garnered him national recognition.<sup>286</sup> Dichter had pointed out two heretofore unrecognized aspects of car shopping. First, in direct opposition to conventional wisdom, he claimed that women played a large role in the purchase of automobiles. Consequently, he suggested cars be advertised in women's magazines. Second, he asserted that for men a convertible symbolized youth, freedom, and temptation—a mistress in metal form. A sensible sedan, on the other hand, represented a wife. Therefore, Dichter maintained, men would be lured to the car lot by the convertible/mistress but the couple (women played a key role as he previously asserted) would end up purchasing the sedan. In order that the male customers feel like they could have the cake and eat it too, he gave Chrysler the idea of the hardtop, combining the sex appeal of the convertible with the sensibility of the sedan. Chrysler's sales reportedly increased 30%.<sup>287</sup>

Dichter's view of the consumer was complicated, which would later contribute to the subversiveness and ambiguity of Maidenform's Dream campaign. In some ways, Dichter championed the consumer as sophisticated and central, recognizing their agency, yet in other ways he implied that the consumer was ignorant and susceptible. Dichter claimed, contrary to popular sentiment, that "the average shopper is far more knowledgeable, discriminating and sophisticated than most manufacturers realize. This characterization applies to lower socioeconomic, as well as high-income and high-education groups."<sup>288</sup> The tone of this view seems at odds with MR's reliance on the knowledgeable researcher to convert what the consumer

says into what the consumer really means. Prior to the 1930s, consumer research largely indicated that consumers were passively receptive to stimuli. In contrast, Dichter viewed the consumer as having an active role in the marketplace; he believed that it was the consumer who imbued products with a “soul” and treated these products as an extension of their identity.<sup>289</sup> The projection of human qualities onto objects or brands gave consumers a feeling of power, security and self-confirmation. This process of projection also worked in reverse as identification. The consumer object or brand’s personality could then be transferred to the people who owned them, displaying the consumer’s status and affiliations, influencing others perception of the individual consumer’s image.

At the same time, Dichter contended that consumers were not consciously aware of why they bought what they did and indeed often held misconceptions. If the consumers were not self aware then it was up to consultants like Dichter to find out their true desires and use this information to get them to consume. For example, most people would contend that the purpose of soap was to clean. Dichter “discovered” that people perceived soap as a symbolic means of cleaning immorality and personal impurities. This (spiritual) cleanse gave consumers a clean slate. In response to this research, he suggested that Ivory soap use the slogan, “Be smart, and get a fresh start with Ivory soap.”<sup>290</sup>

Advertising had long been geared towards women, who it was believed made eighty percent of the total purchases, but after WWII the “type” of woman that advertisers sought to reach and who they taught she should be changed.<sup>291</sup> The female consumer was no longer encouraged to be the modern woman of the 1920s and 1930s or the stalwart homefront patriot of the 1940s.<sup>292</sup> The postwar woman was first and foremost supposed to be a wife and mother; a



builder and defender of the American Way. Countless advertisements featured perfectly coiffed housewives happily doing domestic labor with un-chipped red nails, smiling with their glossy red lips at their wholesome families in their identical suburban homes.<sup>293</sup> However, when advertisers applied psychoanalysis to advertising in the form of Dichter's MR and NCK's Empathy, the appeal to female consumers went far beyond promoting traditional femininity and life in the domestic realm. Practitioners claimed to be able to tap into the consumer's subconscious in order to get past what women said they wanted to unearth what they *really* wanted (and were maybe too embarrassed to reveal to market researchers or were even not consciously aware of themselves).

Dichter was not the first to seek out the so-called woman's point of view, but MR was different. According to Kathy Peiss, by the early twentieth century advertisers and manufacturers saw the female consumer as the primary shopper and the way to reach her was through her "natural" feminine instincts.<sup>294</sup> The female consumer was driven by emotions and attracted to appeals that emphasized universalized female inclinations towards beauty, fashion, flattery and family. Even though Carl Naether stated in 1928 book *Advertising to Women* that when "selling to women, nothing succeeds like a woman's point of view," his definition was not the same as that utilized for the Dream campaign.<sup>295</sup> When he recommended that advertisers use "woman's own language," he was referring to the "feminine touch," which meant affecting copy with pretty images that utilized intimacy, sentimentality and delicacy with a flair of continental sophistication.<sup>296</sup> However, Naether did not believe that women themselves made good advertisers.<sup>297</sup> In short, Naether advocated for the utilization of things that were widely perceived to be feminine, not an actual "woman's point of view."<sup>298</sup> And while MR certainly

essentialized the female population, it differs in that the practice called for interviewing women about their feelings by asking open-ended questions in order to discover the way cultural norms impacted their sensibilities and caused shame, which dangerously resulted in inhibitions to consumption. In addition, as mentioned previously, NCK and Maidenform hired a significant number of women in essential roles, unlike most organizations. MR ultimately sought to increase consumption but the method involved was not the embrace of the feminine but the understanding of women's role in society and how their gendered embodiment influenced their life experiences and view of the world.

Dichter believed in the importance of psychoanalysis and its application to the business world because he saw it as a tool to improve the individual. Much like a regular trip to a therapist, Dichter believed that his methodology would encourage people to improve themselves and better society. The importance of MR lay in that it supposedly raised people's aspirations by directing their desire.<sup>299</sup> Advertising, he claimed, was a form of "education," "applied psychology," and "behavioral engineering."<sup>300</sup>

Dichter recognized a difficulty in increasing consumerism, which was related to what he believed was a contradiction in mass consumption—people wanted lots of things cheaply but they also wanted to attain a sense of individuality.<sup>301</sup> Therefore, how could advertiser persuade this conflicted public, "often against its will?"<sup>302</sup> Dichter answered by creating a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo, therefore encouraging change.<sup>303</sup> Even though Dichter was openly irreligious, he used biblical examples in support of advertising.<sup>304</sup> He claimed that the apple and the tree of knowledge were the earliest form of advertising, as they were sources of unhappiness.<sup>305</sup> True happiness was "constructive discontent." It should encourage hedonism

and create an attitude of anti-fatalism. People should strive to defy nature and destiny. For example, women should not passively accept the aging process, it should displease them so that they push themselves to change. By creating constructive discontent and motivating consumers, advertisers, he argued, had transformed the nation's habits. Advertisers, Dichter believed, had a bad reputation because they were not honest about human desire. However, Dichter argued, advertising was only truly immoral if it instilled "static and stale contentment" which "results in eventual maladjustment."<sup>306</sup> Therefore, by "engineering desire," advertisers were creating a better, happier society.<sup>307</sup> Dichter believed that advertising made people raise their aspirations and was therefore a means of progress for civilization. He stated that the job of advertisers was to "persuade mankind to push the big ball actively up the hill of human history."<sup>308</sup>

Dichter believed MR could have a significant positive impact on the economy and America's position in the Cold War. After the economic collapse of the Great Depression and the scarcity of WWII, the American public wanted to enjoy the good life—new suburban homes, big flashy cars, shiny new appliances, and sumptuous fashions. As a result, advertising became increasingly important and sophisticated in order to compete in the busy marketplace and stimulate the consumer-driven economy. Stefan Schwarzkopf, a lecturer in Business History and Marketing at the Copenhagen Business School, and Rainer Gries, a professor of History and Communications in Germany and Austria, argue that in an era when corporations faced a more powerful consumer, they turned to Dichter and other practitioners of MR who reached them by focusing on the consumers' active participation in the marketplace.<sup>309</sup> By convincing the buying public that the use of a particular brand of soap made them sexy or smoking represented independence, they could dramatically boost sales and diminish economists' worries about

postwar over-production. The postwar economic boom caused a shift of focus from production to consumption and ushered in fears of a flailing economy due to under-consumption. Dichter believed MR could help the economy by assisting the American people in overcoming their so-called ingrained puritanical nature, which inhibited self-pleasure resulting in limited consumption. Dichter argued that it was good to shop—for the individual, the country and the world.

Dichter believed his consumer ideology would benefit his new country economically, culturally, and globally. Seeing a direct connection between Americanism and consumer abundance, he was convinced his theories regarding consumer motivations would strengthen capitalism by encouraging Americans to embrace pleasure and spend more freely.<sup>310</sup> Dichter saw robust consumerism as an essential element in bulwarking freedom and fortifying the American way, which felt was threatened during the Cold War. He believed American democracy was strengthened through consumption and it was this capitalist-democracy that would save the world from fascism and communism. In short, Dichter believed that his work on consumerism would fortify the American way of life, which was the bright light in human civilization.

Part of this world outreach and uplift was the distribution of American consumer products abroad. Dichter argued that this was essential not only to the prosperity of U.S. but also crucial to the future success of the world, and yet American products and America itself faced a backlash. According to Dichter the whole world wanted to be like the U.S. but America's negative reputation abroad was damaging this objective. Americans, he declared, were future and youth oriented, impatient, pragmatic and self-sufficient.<sup>311</sup> But Americans were also naïve and insecure about their cultural inferiority. They were considered by other countries as chauvinistically patriotic, arrogant, and insulting.<sup>312</sup> He claimed that he had interviewed several

hundred Europeans (apparently the stand in for the rest of the world) about America.<sup>313</sup>

Through these interviews he deduced how the admittedly “contradictory” U.S. should try to sell itself to the world. The U.S. needed to show more humility, reawaken a “frustrated love for America,” do great deeds to prove its greatness, stress individuality and take pride in its materialism and high standard of living.<sup>314</sup> Everyone wanted the American way of life; they just may not want to have it called American.<sup>315</sup>

Dichter claimed that it was the responsibility of business as much as that of the State Department to repair America’s image abroad.<sup>316</sup> In a 1957 speech to the Overseas Press Club, Dichter told his audience he had sent out two hundred letters to business leaders urging them “to act as true citizens of a democracy by accepting the same kind of responsibility for America that they would accept if their product or their product image had been in difficulties.”<sup>317</sup> At a speech the following year on “The Psychology of International Marketing,” he reiterated his point.<sup>318</sup> He stated, “American goals are the goals toward which the whole world strives, and American businessmen must understand the importance of their products abroad. At the same time they must avoid the kind of ‘psychological imperialism’, which imposes our advertising and merchandising techniques on a different cultural climate. The truest Americanism is to think non-American and globally.” He added that his business now operated in fifteen countries around the world. His ambition was to help American businesses succeed abroad and to break down barriers to “psycho-economic enlightenment,” which would bring the world towards “a psychological United Nations.”<sup>319</sup>

The use of something close to psychology in advertising has arguably been used for centuries. However, Dichter’s creation of MR, which spawned other versions including NCK’s

Empathy, was different. Dichter combined elements of European psychoanalysis with an American independent optimism. Psychoanalysis was based on the principal that individuals had deep and complicated psyches and their past life experiences effected their future decisions. To find out what was underneath all of these layers would require a professional to suss it out. He blended this European intellectual sensibility with an upbeat patriotic confidence that progress was possible and the way forward was capitalism. Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, "the father of Public Relations," seems to be most closely aligned with Dichter. However, Bernay's did not seem to have the same drive to improve humanity through his work that Dichter possessed. Dichter combined his sense of duty as a doctor with the likely just as attractive prospect of personal wealth. This was the foundation of MR, which was key to NCK's Empathy and the creation of the Dream campaign. Additionally, Dichter would consult on the Dream campaign and provide useful input that NCK and Maidenform would utilize. Now, it is necessary to examine the advertising agency that would produce the Dream campaign.

#### NCK, Empathy, & the Creation of the Dream Campaign

As recently as 1999, *Ad Age* labeled the Dream campaign number twenty-eight out of the top one-hundred advertisements of the twentieth century, and with good reason as it was one of the longest running and most popular ad campaigns of all time. Like Dichter, NCK was one of only a handful in marketing that utilized psychoanalytic research and applied it to the business world.<sup>320</sup> While Dichter developed the original concept of MR and consulted for various businesses, NCK put the psychoanalytic approach into practice by developing full-blown advertising campaigns. For Maidenform, NCK would use what it called Empathy to speak to

American women's desires to transcend the confines of traditional gender roles accompanied by conservative views of female sexuality. NCK ventured that early Cold War women would be so enticed by their fun and fantastical "dreams," which allowed them to see images of women doing the untraditional, that they would purchase Maidenform's rather plain white brassieres on mass—and NCK was correct. Building upon the discussion in the previous chapter about the Woman-to-Woman marketing approach utilized in the Dream campaign, this section will demonstrate how NCK's Empathy also sought to utilize the "woman's point of view" from a psychological perspective. An examination of NCK, its charismatic president Norman B. Norman, and its agency philosophy Empathy, allows for a more in-depth understanding of the importance of gender as well as a stronger foundation on which to understand the Dream campaign and its production of innovative gender representations in the early Cold War.

Receiving less publicity than Dichter, Norman B. Norman, himself a trained psychologist, originated NCK's version of Motivation Research called Empathy.<sup>321</sup> While Norman was not the first to utilize psychology in advertising, he was the first to formalize it as an agency's philosophy.<sup>322</sup> Empathy, with its focus on gender and sexual desire and its connection to the Dream campaign and other significant advertising campaigns, should be recognized as significant to the larger study of MR in postwar consumer culture. The importance of NCK to postwar advertising is evident in its production of popular and innovative campaigns for some of the country's leading companies, including Ajax's White Knight and Hertz's "Let Hertz put you in the drivers seat."<sup>323</sup> The larger-than-life persona of Norman was an integral part of NCK's self-promotion and identity, and he should be acknowledged as an important figure in advertising history. The eccentricities and audaciousness of the firm extended to its relatively high rate of

female employees in high-ranking positions, which make it stand out amongst its historical competition.

NCK is relatively forgotten today but during the era of the Dream campaign it was small to middling in size but extraordinarily innovative.<sup>324</sup> Individual agencies had distinct advertising philosophies, which they used to differentiate and market themselves. Ted Bates & Co. had the “unique selling proposition” or “USP,” which aimed at promoting what differentiated their product from the competition. Ogilvy, Benson & Mather had “brand image,” which focused on creating and reinforcing the symbolism of a specific “brand.” NCK took a more risqué route. If the traditional advertising method focused on the four “P’s” (product, price, promotion and packaging), Norman utilized the three “S’s” (sex, security and status).<sup>325</sup>

Norman’s concept of Empathy took the focus from the product and placed it squarely on the consumer. Norman stated, “We like to think of it as emotional advertising or emotional reason-why. We contend that advertising begins and ends with people.”<sup>326</sup> Norman explained his philosophy which he expressed with the acronym P-E-O-P-L-E, which stood for, “Put people in the sell; Exciting different look and sound; Open the way through the heart-not the head; Put in an important reason why; Living visuals people will talk about; Eliminate any non-preemptive selling proposition.”<sup>327</sup> Putting it simply, Norman explained, “the theory of it is, the manufacturer is saying to the customer, ‘I know all about you.’ And the customer thinks, subconsciously, ‘What a nice guy, he understands me; what a nice product...’”<sup>328</sup>

NCK’s Empathy and other versions of MR, went beyond traditional marketing research and methods, which were known as “quantitative marketing” and instead utilized “qualitative marketing.” Traditional advertising relied on quantitative marketing techniques, like large-scale



surveys, which as the name suggests, focused on quantity. Typically, quantitative marketing frequently relies on statistics gathered from studies using a large number of participants and relatively superficial information. This type of marketing was aligned with “harder” sciences and indicated “objective” analysis of information. In contrast, Empathy utilized qualitative marketing, which focused on quality, or smaller scale interviews, which strove for in-depth insight into consumer desires. Qualitative marketing more often uses data garnered from a smaller pool with more extensive information and was influenced by the “softer” sciences or humanities which gave it an air of subjective analysis. However, enthusiasts claimed that this approach came much closer to the root of why people buy and was therefore far more powerful.

NCK marketed itself on the mystique of its president and his Empathy marketing philosophy.<sup>329</sup> In 1948, Norman was hired to work for William H. Weintraub & Co., and seven years later he and two other executives, David Kaplan and Eugene H. Kummel, bought out Weintraub and renamed it after two of them, Norman, Craig & Kummel. The “Craig” came from Walter Craig, who was recruited and supplied with a nominal job, in exchange for the use of his Anglo-Saxon sounding name.<sup>330</sup> Norman, who had Anglicized his own name, believed that Norman, Kaplan & Kummel sounded “too Jewish.”<sup>331</sup> The same year the men purchased the company, NCK broke into the top ranked ad agencies in radio and TV, billing at number thirty-five.<sup>332</sup> This achievement was without the help of Maidenform, which primarily advertised in print media. The partners proceeded to expand overseas, making NCK the fourth largest agency in Europe.<sup>333</sup> NCK also continued to grow in the US until it was absorbed by Foote, Cone & Belding in 1983.

Norman has been described as a “pioneer” and an “industry icon,” as well as “the perfect huckster.”<sup>334</sup> At six-foot-six, he was reportedly imposing, brilliant, charismatic, and imperious.<sup>335</sup> He was actually born Norman Bernstein on the Lower East Side of New York but remade himself into the memorably named—and less Jewish sounding—Norman B. Norman. One of the creative people at NCK described him as looking like “a cross between a sick parrot and a Jewish Abraham Lincoln.”<sup>336</sup> This ungenerous portrayal may have been a result of Norman’s notoriously mercurial behavior. Some supposed he was paranoid and insecure because of his background.<sup>337</sup> It was said, “Norman is the best friend you can ever have in adversity and your worst enemy in success.”<sup>338</sup> Demonstrating his competitive nature was Norman’s comment that “being complimented for coming in second in this new business pitch is like winning a prize for being the world’s tallest midget,”<sup>339</sup> when NCK came in second for the American Motors account.

Like a good adman, Norman was innovative and tenacious. After his wife discovered a wonderful South African face cream in Miami, he shopped it around to several of his clients until Vick’s finally bought it. This face cream became Oil of Olay, and NCK produced its provocative tagline, “Does your husband look younger than you?”<sup>340</sup> Under his presidency, NCK also became a leader in global marketing through his tactic of buying minority interests in European agencies and then gaining majority control. This tactic was low-risk as they were able to progressively gain control over already established businesses as opposed to building fresh from the ground up in a foreign country. This expansion allowed them to promote their clients successfully overseas.<sup>341</sup>

The people at NCK were risk takers in other ways as well. NCK developed the famous TV quiz game show “The \$64,000 Question” in 1955 for their client Revlon. This was the first time an agency had purchased a TV program using its own funds and with only a single sponsor. The TV show quickly went to number one but almost as soon as that happened, Revlon dumped NCK for the more prestigious Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn (BBD&O). NCK felt betrayed and subsequently viewed BBD&O as their nemesis. The following year, NCK accepted the Democratic National Committee as its client in order to avenge themselves against BBD&O, who had been retained to represent the Republican Party. While many ad agencies were afraid to work for the Democrats for fear of alienating Republican businessmen, NCK apparently felt retribution, and probably also the publicity, were worth the risk.<sup>342</sup>

For the 1956 Presidential campaign pitting Democrat Adlai Stevenson against Republican Dwight Eisenhower, NCK created the very first political attack ad on TV.<sup>343</sup> They directly assailed Eisenhower’s reputation with ads like “How’s that again General?”<sup>344</sup> They also berated the admittedly easier target, Vice President Richard Nixon, taking advantage of the fact that, “an amazingly large segment of the population, and even of his own party, seem to dislike and mistrust him instinctively.” Adlai Stevenson, perturbed that he was being sold like a box of goods, stated, “The idea that you can merchandise candidates for high office like breakfast cereal, that you can gather voters like box tops—is, I think, the ultimate indignity to the democratic process.”<sup>345</sup> Perhaps it was an indignity, but it was also the future. NCK’s client Adlai Stevenson lost the election but NCK still had the lucrative and prestigious Dream campaign to fall back on.

Like Freudian psychoanalysis and Dichter's MR, NCK's Empathy was gendered and in particular focused on the psyche and motivations of women. Revealingly, Norman claimed that the "first" ad to use the Empathy technique was Listerine in 1921.<sup>346</sup> This campaign essentially created a medical-sounding condition called halitosis (bad breath), which the mouthwash could cure. Halitosis, according to the ad, which featured a distraught woman with the caption, "Often a bridesmaid but never a bride," ruined many an otherwise charming young woman's chance at romantic bliss.<sup>347</sup> Empathy utilized techniques based on psychoanalysis-like in-depth interviews where potential consumers (usually female) were asked open-ended questions supposedly producing answers from which the skilled analyst could decipher their "true" feelings.<sup>348</sup>

Unsurprisingly, NCK's philosophy concluded that consumers did not base their decisions on logic. The process of choosing among numerous, almost identical goods was based primarily on irrational emotion. What brought consumers to want what they didn't need and to need what they merely wanted, was done by eliciting desire through the consumer's subconscious. Using Empathy, NCK believed that they were able to better communicate with the consumers because they could see through what they said they wanted to what they *really* wanted. Freud famously asked and was unable to answer, "What does woman want?" Norman and NCK seemed to believe that they had the "dark continent" pretty much figured out.<sup>349</sup>

NCK took these insights into the female consumers subconscious and applied them to advertising. For example, Norman did not think that the typical way of selling laundry detergent to women—that it was an excellent cleaning product at a cheap price—was the best way to go. Norman explained how his technique differed from others: "[o]f course the housewife wants a white wash. But what she really wants is no laundry at all. She'd like someone to make the

problem disappear.”<sup>350</sup> It seemed logical to Norman that armed with this new knowledge the way detergent was advertised should be drastically changed, resulting in more effective ads. For Ajax laundry detergent, they developed the White Knight who saved the damsel/housewife-in-distress from her grueling housework. In the ad, the White Knight touched the pile of dirty laundry with his lance and it magically became clean and neatly folded. This literal knight on a white horse was, as the tagline claimed, “Stronger than dirt.” If a business had this invaluable information, provided by NCK’s Empathy, they would be able to reach consumers on an almost psychic level, surely undermining their competition. NCK upped the Freudian ante with its marketing for Handi-Wrap brand cling wrap. This plastic wrap, meant to keep food fresh, became a way for a wife to win her husband’s approval. Norman stated that a wife “doesn’t want [her husband] to open his lunch at work and find it dry as a bone. She doesn’t want him to be disappointed in her.”<sup>351</sup>

This strategy extended to teens. NCK had originally made the perfume Chanel No.5 iconic with the tagline, “Every woman Loves Chanel No.5.” To gear the fragrance to teens they placed ads in *Seventeen* with the suggestive copy, “If the exciting things of growing up are happening to you, you’re ready for Chanel.” This ad campaign played on teenage girls’ eagerness to grow up and enjoy the fruits of their burgeoning sexuality. Empathy, NCK claimed, could produce similar epiphanies on any product, although they admitted, it was easier with female than with male consumers. Norman declared, “let’s face it. It’s easy to make a girl sexy, but a man—the only way is roughness. Men have to fight, that’s how they win dames, it’s fundamental. But it’s ugly in print.”<sup>352</sup>

NCK did create ads targeting men but it always seemed to come back to women. By comparing two Hertz car rental ads, one for men and the other for women, it is evident that NCK's understanding of the consumer's subconscious desires were both conventionally gendered and also ahead of its time. NCK empowered the male consumer with the tagline "Let Hertz Put You in the Driver's Seat!" The ad featured a man driving away in a convertible, symbolic of the postwar male's supposed desire for independence and freedom, at odds with the traditional home life promoted after WWII. Kay Daly, NCK's vice president and creative director (and later head of Chanel), used the same tag line but geared it for women. This ad featured a smiling woman with overflowing maps in her arms. The copy above her reads, "I just discovered how easy it is to rent a car from HERTZ (underline original)." While the ad could be read as overtly sexist—the harried woman overwhelmed with the difficulty of travel—the ad may also be viewed as promoting independent female travel. After all, the woman is the one renting the car, not her husband. Arguably, this addition to the ad was addressing fears surrounding women traveling with out a male companion. Speaking to the female consumer, the ad suggested that Hertz could relieve the potential female consumer of travel anxiety by reassuring her that the process would be carefree. The additional line could also have been playing to men, reassuring them that their inexperienced female loved-ones would be safe in Hertz's hands. Even so, considered with in the time period, NCK's use the same tagline for men and women, one that emphasized control over one's own destiny, should be considered rather revolutionary.

With the Dream campaign and NCK, Maidenform went from a small but important account of about \$100,000 a year to a multimillion dollar account that, according to insiders, pioneered a "historic shift in fashion marketing" in the soft goods business and created the first

real national brand in the bra business.<sup>353</sup> Dr. Joseph A. Coleman, the husband of Ida Rosenthal's daughter Beatrice and an executive at Maidenform, credited NCK with pushing Maidenform further, convincing Maidenform to run its first full-page color ad which thrust the company into the global spotlight. By 1960, Maidenform had launched the largest consumer magazine advertising schedule in the history of the lingerie business.<sup>354</sup> Coleman stated he believed that the campaign was responsible for "taking brassiere advertising out of the hush-hush area and into the ranks of general advertising acceptable to the whole public."<sup>355</sup> It was seemingly common knowledge that the Dream campaign had blurred the boundaries between the public and the private as mentioned in the previous chapter.

There are multiple versions of the genesis of the Dream campaign that demonstrate the gendered tensions behind the scenes. Most accounts of the campaign's creation credit NCK adwoman Mary Fillius.<sup>356</sup> A *Madison Avenue* article from the early 1960s noted that the Dream concept was first brought to a different "unidentified lingerie firm" who turned it down, "despite all the research into motivation, marketing and whatnot," making a blunder of "historic" proportions.<sup>357</sup> The article speculated the gaffe was based on concerns that the idea was too "Freudian" to be acceptable and was at least partially inspired by "an uncomfortable dream most people occasionally suffer—the dream of walking around without any clothes on."<sup>358</sup> Fillius and NCK then took the idea to Maidenform. A different article, which notably came out after Fillius' death, claimed that she was not responsible for the idea at all.<sup>359</sup> The article's author, Joe Sacco, a former NCK man, claimed that his friend, Herman Davis, the art director of Cadwell-Compton, came up with the idea. Steamprufe, apparently the "unidentified lingerie firm," rejected it and so Davis passed it along to mutual friends Sacco and Fillius. Fillius and NCK then sold the idea to

Maidenform. Reportedly, Davis was told after the fact and he was ostensibly amiable about the situation.<sup>360</sup>

Sacco was not the only man who sought to shift the credit for the successful campaign. Rosenthal's son-in-law, Dr. Coleman, took partial responsibility for the launch of the Dream campaign, despite his "humble" insistence that he could not claim credit.<sup>361</sup> In an interview with *Madison Avenue*, Coleman described his version of how the Dream theme came to be. Trained as a medical doctor, Coleman decided during duty in WWII that he wanted to work for his in-law's business. Being surrounded by brassieres seemed like a better gig than blood and guts. During his apprenticeship at Maidenform, he fell in love with advertising and became their first advertising manager. Prior to Coleman, Ida Rosenthal was in charge of advertising, among many other duties. Coleman implied that his mother-in-law wasn't up to the job as she already had too much on her plate. He even relayed to the magazine that an "executive" confided in him that Ida "lets her desk pile up with papers till she can't see over it."<sup>362</sup> This insinuation that Ida was not up to the task and that Coleman had to come in and save the day should be viewed in light of the article's general tone of male congratulations. For example, also included in the article is the aside that businesses like Maidenform, make women feel more beautiful and therefore make them "easier to get along with."<sup>363</sup>

According to the article, Coleman was something of a natural. He won a silver medal in an ad class he took at the Advertising Club and solved an advertising crisis, which ultimately resulted in the Dream campaign.<sup>364</sup> Apparently, the Rosenthals were on an extended trip to Europe when Arthur Rosenberg, the President, Vice President and Account Executive of their longtime advertising firm, died. With the Rosenberg Agency unraveling, Coleman decided to call



the William Weintraub Agency (later to be bought out from Weintraub by existing agency executives in 1954 and renamed NCK in 1955). Coleman recalls that, “[i]t was brash of me, but I had to do something.”<sup>365</sup> When the Rosenthals returned from their trip, Dr. Coleman, Ida Rosenthal, and Beatrice Coleman all decided that Weintraub was the agency for them, especially as they appreciated their prior fashion work.<sup>366</sup> After presenting three “not inspired” ideas, the group finally hit on the Dream idea.<sup>367</sup>

### The Influence of Dichter

As this chapter contends, the influence of MR on the creators of and contributors to the Dream campaign was at least partially responsible for the complex portrayal of female sexuality from a purportedly female perspective. An analysis of Ernest Dichter’s work for Maidenform shows his influence and bolsters the argument of a nuanced interpretation of female sexuality in the Dream campaign, as well as a recognition that those involved in the campaign were at least attempting to take into account a woman’s perspective as they recognized and endeavored to address the conflicting messages and feelings women held about their sexuality. NCK’s Norman was a fan of the “father of Motivation Research” and NCK consulted with Dichter on multiple projects,<sup>368</sup> including at least three studies for Maidenform in 1958.<sup>369</sup> An analysis of these studies demonstrate that Dichter ventured to ascertain the female perspective and integrate it into marketing. Several examples show that Maidenform adopted Dichter’s recommendations suggesting that they earnestly endeavored to reach female consumers through the use of the “woman’s perspective,” which had the effect of producing unusual and progressive gendered advertisements for the era.

When consulting for Maidenform, Dichter felt it was best to start with the basics.

Therefore he believed it was important to discover the meaning of breasts. One of his studies pointed out the mixed feeling early Cold War women had about their breasts and what they represented culturally and how this effected their view of their bodies. The study concluded that,

“[o]ne of the main purposes of a bra is its role in sexual display. Among Western women the line of the breast is the most obviously displayed sexual characteristic. This can be a source of ambivalence and even anxiety. At one and the same time there is the woman’s need to feel sexually successful, and yet there are whims and inhibitions about too blatant a display of sexual power and attraction. Moreover, because of the more or less conscious realization of the biological function of the breast, the breasts are associated with the animal rather than specifically human aspects of her body. The display of the bust-line is therefore, in the woman’s eye, a more animalistic level than that of say, the legs. This can give rise to feeling of social disapproval and cheapening in self-esteem. A full understanding of the relation between the need for sexual display and success and the inhibitions associated with it are therefore fundamental for the successful design of Maidenform promotion policy and advertising themes.”<sup>370</sup>

Dichter and his researchers identified the cultural contradictions for women inherent in sexual display. The analysis has an objective-scientific tone but it also shows empathy with the women who were interviewed. He recognized that women wanted to express their sexuality and feel desirable and yet they contended with societal degradation, implying the role that culture played in teaching women to internalize shame about their bodies. Whatever the considerable reservations that might be leveled at his conclusions, his study does show that Dichter was attempting a view from the female’s perspective. The European-born psychologist made no secret that he sought to erase the stigma surrounding women’s sexuality. He had long claimed that shame was a deterrent to consumerism and happiness and that therefore he sought to eliminate this particularly “puritanical” American impulse. Dichter believed that one solution to expel these feelings of mass ignominy was through advertising. In short, advertising could teach

American women to indulge in their natural impulses without embarrassment. The result of losing this remnant of Christian guilt would be a population of women—the primary consumers after all—who would increase their shopping. Dichter, as the enthusiastic Cold War warrior saw this as a crucial measure to crush Soviet-style communism.

In order to create compelling marketing, Dichter's researchers interviewed women at length and analyzed their habits and feelings about bras. A majority of the respondents reported that they wore and preferred Maidenform. They claimed the reason was that Maidenform brassieres fit well, were flexible, and comfortable. The researchers clearly did not believe what the women said on face value instead finding that the 33% of respondents who admitted to buying Maidenform because of the ads were actually being more forthright.<sup>371</sup> This interpretation was not unusual. According to MR "experts," what women said and what they "really meant" at times did not coincide.<sup>372</sup> This perceived equivocation on the part of the majority of women was not seen as a problem. Quite the contrary, it was an opportunity, and not just for the necessity of expert advice. After all, for MR to work it needed secret, subconscious yearnings to discover and interpret. The expert interpretation could then be translated into advertising that stimulated the subconscious while simultaneously giving the consumer a "proper" excuse to buy.

Unsurprisingly then, when asked about bras, the researchers found that women frankly expressed their utilitarian functions but were far more reticent about their potential erotic role. The report stated, "[a]lthough women constantly insisted that bras are purely functional and that glamour is unimportant because bras are not seen, they contradicted this indirectly."<sup>373</sup> The report contended that the women repeatedly asserted that fit and comfort were the most important factors when choosing a bra, yet, the women also stated that they wanted a bra to "do

something for me.”<sup>374</sup> The sensible assertions about how the bra felt when worn were pushed aside. Instead they claimed that women wanted the bra to enhance their figures, but not give exaggerated or unnatural contours that might call attention to the bust.<sup>375</sup> It was up to Dichter to parse this conundrum and use it to Maidenform’s advantage.

Dichter’s study labeled this dilemma where the consumer needed to justify the purchase of a bra based on its functional performance and yet the real desire was for the bra to improve the shape of their bosom, the “Bi-Polar Problem in Bra Advertising.”<sup>376</sup> Dichter claimed that this contradiction was a serious hurdle for bra advertisements but one that the Dream campaign seemingly surmounted. According to Dichter, women sought practical excuses to cover up their “real,” subconscious reasons for buying a bra, which if made conscious they would reject (damn that shame). The researchers reported, “as you know [these fantasies have] a major influence in motivating consumers...women do not like to admit even to themselves, the full extent to which these phantasies influence them...For this reason consumers search for and need some justification rationales for purchase.” This subconscious reason was a “narcissistic enhancement,” or the use of a product to experience a “forbidden,” often romantic fantasy. In addition to the “dream,” the female consumer supposedly sought reassurance through some rational vehicle that helped make purchases “sensible.”<sup>377</sup> The practical justification they recommend be given for purchasing a bra was called a “guilt remover.”<sup>378</sup> “Guilt removers” could be things such as comfort, fashion, or the ability to make the wearer feel attractive. But at times, the researchers indicated that even the desire for fashion should be covered up.<sup>379</sup> Therefore, the report suggested that practical features be blended into the ads to “justify the ‘romantic’ and ‘fashion’ motivations of the consumer.”<sup>380</sup> In response to the call for “guilt erasers” to give the

impression the purchase was sensible, Maidenform began listing more information about the bra and the practical things it could do for the wearer on the bottom of ads.<sup>381</sup>

Dichter's team also pointed to the duality existing between the sexy image projected in Maidenform's advertising and the utilitarian appearance of the bras themselves. They called this binary Maidenform's "contradicting personality."<sup>382</sup> One London based respondent illustrated the less enthralling functionality of Maidenform's bra when she asserted, "It probably does the job, but really it's the sort of bra I expect to get issued in the WAAFS."<sup>383</sup> Many respondents had the impression that Maidenform was old because the company was—it was many of the respondent's first bras. One half of non-users surveyed stated that they associated Maidenform with "mature" women and figures.<sup>384</sup> When viewing the Dream ads, 40% of the respondents "scarcely noticed the bra" at all, prompting the researcher to press home the differential between the glamorous ads and the simple bras. Simply put, Dichter claimed the ads overshadowed the product.<sup>385</sup>

Regardless of these issues, according to the depth interviews, the Dream ads had a level of recall unmatched by other brands.<sup>386</sup> One respondent was recorded as stating, "The minute you see the words dreamed, you know it's Maidenform because I've always read the ad. The impression is that Maidenform bra is out of this world, is dreamy, is lovely, or smart, clever, colorful, attractive."<sup>387</sup> In comparison to other brands, another respondent claimed, "It's far superior. It's superb, interesting. From the point of view of advertising, of purely advertising, it's one of the best ads in any field."<sup>388</sup> When asked her opinion of Maidenform ads prior to the Dream campaign, one interviewee responded, "I don't remember the Maidenform ads before the one about I dreamed."<sup>389</sup> This particular response must have been music to NCK's ears.

The researchers congratulated Maidenform on the insightful Dream campaign, which they believed touched on the subconscious desires of women without risking rejection with blatant eroticism. The ads reportedly made women feel more alluring, “which in turn is going to get for her romance, travel, glamour, excitement.”<sup>390</sup> The researcher added that “[t]hese ads were not as far fetched as they might seem because I think they appealed to the subconscious daydreams for many women.<sup>391</sup>” The “potentially objectionable sexuality” the researchers reported was displaced for most women by the ad’s “whimsical” nature that bordered on abstraction or symbolism.<sup>392</sup>

However, Dichter’s team did warn Maidenform about over-doing the sexuality. Overt eroticism evoked strong interest but not identification in the female viewer. The goal was for the female consumer to imagine herself as the Dreamer. If “obvious sexuality” was not accompanied by a guilt eraser or otherwise couched, the consumer would reject it.<sup>393</sup> For example, Maidenform’s “Spring Fever” ad (1956) was reportedly too blatantly erotic, lacked sufficient guilt erasers, and had therefore offended the respondent’s sense of propriety.<sup>394</sup> This objectionable ad featured the model lying in a grassy field in a pose and with the satisfied expression reminiscent of a very private moment or an image one might expect to see in a girly magazine. Other ads had included sexy puns, but the report determined that the “Spring Fever” ad had not sufficiently softened the sensuality with humor or cutting edge fashion. They warned Maidenform not to make this mistake again. It did not.

Dichter’s research contended that issues like female competitiveness and the influence of men also affected women’s feeling about Maidenform and the Dream campaign. A report found that conventionally attractive models in advertisements were useful because they “represent

images with whom our respondents identify vicariously,”<sup>395</sup> and yet, the models also had the potential to cause the viewer to “admit to themselves that ‘I couldn’t be that beautiful no matter what I wore.’”<sup>396</sup> This comparison might have caused resentment. The tension was apparently heightened when husbands were present because the models were viewed as competition.<sup>397</sup>

The speculation that women viewing bra ads saw themselves in competition for men with the models, prompted researchers to explore the dynamic of women’s awareness of being viewed and how it might effect their attitudes towards the Maidenform brand. This led to speculation about the appropriate type of bras based on a woman’s relationship status. Under the headline, “the influence of men,” one report claimed that women drew a distinction between the type of women men lusted after and the type of women they married.<sup>398</sup> Referencing the well-endowed actress Jayne Mansfield, the report stated, “[a]lthough men look at Jayne Mansfield—they marry the woman next door and they don’t expect the woman they marry to look like Jayne Mansfield.”<sup>399</sup> Along with defining the look of “marriageable women,” the report assumed that a bra producing noticeable lines would be more suitable to a single woman as it drew attention to her sexuality, where as married women or those in committed partnerships would desire a bra that gave them an inconspicuous bra line and a more conservative form. The report continued, “[t]o what extent are women sensitive about this and feel that undue prominence of the line of the bra, while attracting attention—is more suited during a girl’s period of flirtation rather than in deeper emotional relationships.”<sup>400</sup>

The report went on to call for more research on the influence of men on female bra buying habits, how women wanted to look for men, their husbands, and perhaps most interesting, how they wanted to look for other women. This conclusion demonstrates that the researchers were

cognizant that women were often attentive to how other females (not just men) viewed them and would like to cultivate a particular image in relationship to their breasts that would be pleasing to or would elicit approval from other women. Considering MR's Freudian bent and the acknowledged sexual angle of the Dream campaign, it is not out of the question that they could have been referring to the homosexual gaze. After all, as has been noted in the previous chapter, Maidenform did employ the lesbian gaze in their business culture.

Dream advertisements for teens were complicated. Considering that teens were mostly unmarried, the researchers also intimated that teenagers were an especially good audience for a sexual appeal but propriety needed to be attended to and therefore the teen ads required a slightly altered message. They recommended more attentiveness to age differences and research into how to better appeal to teen customers.<sup>401</sup> Later teen ads paid heed to this advice. For instance, Maidenform's ads targeting the teenage market were never overtly erotic. A typical ad featured a youthful model dreaming she "charmed the spots off a leopard." This 1962 ad featured a far less curvaceous model than usual, sitting upon a stuffed toy leopard that was partially denuded of its spots. The text below emphasized the innocence of the "Undertone teenage bra" with its "gently rounded" cups that provided "the most natural curves [underline original]." This tone reflects the notion that teens were not to be excessively sexualized. Yet, the ads were not completely chaste, since like the Dream ads for adults, every teen ad exhibited a flesh and blood, seemingly adolescent model, without her top on. It should be noted that even though the teen models were exposing their brassieres, unlike the adult Dream ads, the teen dreamers were never in a public space. This juxtaposition seems to give credence to the deliberately risqué intentions of the



partially undressed models in the public realm. The teen dreams took place exclusively in the imagination, supported by the fact that the backgrounds were always abstract.

A look at the toned down versions of the Dream ads for teenagers highlights the subversive potential of the regular ads. As indicated by the above example of the Dreamer charming the spots off a leopard, the teen ads were abstracted fantasy, often playing with innocent idioms. For example, one famous ad for teens with the theme, “I dreamed I was sugar and spice” featured two blonde girls in pigtails, one in ruffled bloomers encased in a sugar container, the other with striped pants in a spice container. Another Dreamer who was “cut out for fun” was depicted as a paper doll. As these rather innocent ads indicate, teenaged consumers were not considered ready for adult dreams. It was not just the sexuality that was muted, in addition, the teen dreams do not challenge traditional gender roles. Perhaps, a teen girl was deemed not to have the requisite life experience to be able to appreciate the more subversive adult ads where the female consumer could imagine herself as a private eye, a sailor, a lady editor, or a politician. Perchance, these were the dreams appealing to seasoned women who already understood, experienced, and perhaps resented their limited gender role in society.

The medium in which the Dream advertisements were displayed held particular issues involving female eroticism, women’s awareness of social mores, and the public - private divide. Maidenform dabbled in television Dream ads, but Dichter’s research demonstrated that it was better if they stuck with magazines. The respondents reportedly felt that bras and the associated fantasies were personal and that in contrast, TV was a social activity.<sup>402</sup> The female respondents were reportedly embarrassed to see such eroticism displayed in front of men and children.<sup>403</sup> Since a TV commercial was deemed a social experience, the viewer felt subjected to social

pressure. Indeed, the report claimed the female viewer feels “exposed,” as if others can read her mind. The report continued, “[s]ince in our culture it is difficult for most women to accept these [f]antasies and desires readily, the intensity of guilt in relation to the commercial under social conditions increases...conscious rejection when this theme [eroticism] is over emphasized on TV.”<sup>404</sup> Taking this into consideration, Dichter recommended that if Maidenform did choose to run “erotic” TV commercials, they be aired in the afternoon, when women tended to watch TV alone, or later in the evening when the children were asleep and any social company had left.<sup>405</sup> Advertisements in magazines, on the other hand, allowed women to take their time and closely inspect the ads.<sup>406</sup> As the report explained, “[t]he magazine ad represents a more personal—subjective—uncensored experience. It is completely private. A respondent can indulge her phantasy without the fear of being ‘discovered.’ The experience remains private and personal [underline original].”<sup>407</sup> Presumably, in print Dream ads could acceptably and ably exploit this “eroticism” allowable in the private experience that the magazine fostered.

Maidenform also produced at least three television commercials that complied with the report’s various recommendations.<sup>408</sup> Although the exact dates of the commercials are not recorded, judging by the themes used and the bra styles featured, a relatively accurate year can be deduced. The first TV ad, probably produced shortly after the MR research was conducted, presented one woman approaching another chicly dressed woman and remarking, “Darling, what a marvelous dress! Was it made in France?” “No,” the woman replies, “Maidenform.” The friend is confused and astonished. The stylish woman answers again, “Maidenform.” Then she makes reference to a print Dream ad, “Like I dreamed I was best dressed in my Maidenform.” This response seems to satisfy the friend. This television commercial adhered to the

recommendations that TV promotions be subdued. The woman was fully dressed, adhering to Dichter's warning that eroticism should not be emphasized on the communally viewed TV. The commercial was most likely referring to the 1957 ad "I dreamed I crashed the headline in my Maidenform bra." This ad featured a woman literally breaking through a newspaper with the headline, "Voted Best Dressed Woman of the Year." This particular theme also follows another of Dichter's recommendations, which urged Maidenform to emphasize newness.

A second TV commercial, aired circa 1959, was particularly Freudian even as it skirted the issue of eroticism. This ad directly reenacts the Dream theme, "I dreamed I got a lift in my Maidenform bra." Like the print ad, the commercial featured a model swaying above a city skyline on a wrecking ball. It might even be the same model as featured in the print ad. Like the print ad but unlike the other TV commercial, the model was not wearing her blouse. However, this state of undress was only in the beginning of the ad and for just a split second. Then it is the same scene, only now the model was fully dressed. The image of a partially undressed model was so brief that viewers might wonder if they had just imagined the partially dressed woman. This approach hints at the uproar over subliminal advertising that flared with Vance Packard's *Hidden Persuaders*. (This public anxiety over consciously imperceptible advertising messages believed to covertly influence opinion, will be discussed in a later section). It is likely that this apparent similitude with the controversial subliminal advertising was cultivated. The commercial reminds the viewer of the popular magazine Dream ads they are used to observing in private while flirting with the suggestiveness of partial public undress as viewed on TV. Maidenform's brief stint on television lasted only a couple of years and Maidenform only returned to TV commercials in the 1990s after the privately owned family company went bankrupt and was

sold. While Maidenform momentarily ventured into the new medium, it eventually followed Dichter's advice to preserve the potentially sexy dreaming to the private print format.

Dichter's research informed Maidenform and NCK what female consumers supposedly wanted—and the companies listened. Many if not all of the suggestions were implemented. In addition to previously listed recommendations, Dichter also made suggestions, which reached beyond advertising. For example, Dichter argued that women wanted bras that were differentiated by occasion. An everyday bra, for example, might be one a consumer could wear while cleaning the house or lounging around.<sup>409</sup> A few years later, Maidenform premiered its Sweet Dream line, which was advertised as so comfortable one might sleep in it. At Dichter's suggestion, the Sweet Dream line also supplied color-coordinated undergarments in a wider selection of colors.<sup>410</sup> Dichter also recommended that Maidenform expand its line, and in 1959, Maidenform started producing bathing suits. This was perhaps one area where Dichter misled Maidenform. The bathing suit line ended up being a complete failure, and Maidenform halted manufacturing in 1963.<sup>411</sup>

Dichter's studies for Maidenform demonstrate, that while imperfect, a key goal was to discover Cold War women's inhibitions and feelings about their bodies and sexuality and utilize this knowledge to relieve feelings of shame in order to encourage women to purchase Maidenform's brassieres. While economically motivated, the presentation of the so-called woman's point of view was more than just an unintended consequence. As shown, Maidenform and NCK adhered to Dichter's advice and altered the Dream marketing accordingly. To present and show empathy with the "woman's perspective" was seen as key to flourishing sales.

## Sex Sells: Self-Possessed Female Sexuality and the Dream Campaign

Pre-Dream campaign, Maidenform's ads were everything brassiere ads were supposed to be—straightforward, utilitarian and as chaste as an advertisement for women's undergarments could be. Typical Maidenform ads featured colorlessly illustrated women (sometimes the whole figure was rendered but more often just the bust or the torso and head) in their bras posing or participating in humdrum activities with the signature tagline, "There's a Maidenform for every type of figure." These rather generic ads focused on Maidenform's sensible prices while striving to be banal, sexless, and un-embarrassing. Virtually nothing about Maidenform's ads from the 1920s to 1948 distinguished them from the competition, and Maidenform's sales numbers reflected that fact.

The Dream Campaign would change all that, rocketing Maidenform to the top of the industry by playing off the early Cold War era's seemingly contradictory attitudes about female sexuality—satisfying conjugal relations within marriage were increasingly encouraged while premarital sex was ever more discouraged in order to cultivate "healthy" American families which were thought to be the backbone of a strong nation. The bosoms brassieres shaped were ideally large and prominent; a key element of the simultaneously erotic, fertile and maternal hourglass figure so popular during the early Cold War. Similarly, brassieres as symbolic objects were ambiguous—they had the obvious sexual association with breasts and yet were blandly ubiquitous among American women; they were erotic as they enhanced and yet prudish as they contained and constrained. Considering these multiple meanings, what balance should be struck to entice consumption and yet prevent offending the female consumer's supposedly delicate (conscious) sensibilities? Surprisingly, Maidenform and NCK decided to produce a campaign,

which portrayed a positive rendition of independent female sexuality unrelated to marriage or reproduction. Possibly even more unforeseeable, the daring campaign was a hit.

This section examines the Dream campaign's historical context in regards to sexuality in advertising and the uniqueness of the Dream campaign's particular approach of self-possessed female sexuality. Both the way female sexuality was depicted in the campaign and the practice of MR as applied to Maidenform support the argument that the campaign intended to display a "woman's point of view" in a way that primarily attempted to empathize and not objectify. It should be reiterated that this chapter does not argue that the Dream campaign truly represented the "woman's perspective," as no single such perspective exists. Even so, this analysis contends that the effort to empathize with potential female consumers was significant. Those involved in the Dream campaign assumed that early Cold War women were not sufficiently understood and were not having their desires met, and they therefore attempted to comprehend those needs and make them visible in the advertisements.

Sexy advertising was certainly not invented by NCK and Maidenform but the Dream campaign should be viewed as a turning point in the representation of sexuality in advertising. Perhaps the first ad that used both sexuality and psychology was for Woodbury Soap in 1911 with the slogan "A skin you love to touch." Created by adwoman Helen Resor Lansdowne at the J. Walter Thompson Agency, the ad featured a romantic embrace and appealed to the female consumer's supposed impulse to be sexually and romantically desired.<sup>412</sup> The illustration featured a respectable and finely dressed Edwardian couple drawn in a gracefully linear style characteristic of the era. Nudity in advertising premiered in the 1930s, but was modeled after "fine" art in order to be seen as decent and appeal to middle and upper class tastes.<sup>413</sup> Jacqueline

Lambiase claims that the 1940s-50s saw a shift from erotic ads aligning themselves with “dignified” art to utilizing humor.<sup>414</sup> Certainly the playfulness of the Dream campaign aligns with Lambiase’s contention. More interestingly, the postwar era with its “return” to traditional values saw an increase in sexuality in advertising.

Primarily arising after 1950, this swell in erotic advertising is essential to what historian Paul Rutherford calls “the Eros project.” Rutherford argues that the Eros project was a process where a segment of the economy was eroticized and “the libido was commodified.”<sup>415</sup> As an agent of modernity, the Eros project promoted transgression, the hedonist, the “streamlined body,” and the “carnival of sex.” The focus on transgression, Rutherford claims, makes Freud the “reluctant founder of the Eros project.”<sup>416</sup> The “hedonist” was the formation of the self as modern sovereign who knows what one wants. The “streamlined body” was an assemblage of parts that made the body perfect but required outside things to make it complete. The “carnival of sex” indicated an alternate realm where people could escape the everyday.<sup>417</sup>

Certainly elements of Rutherford’s Eros project coincide with the Dream campaign. In fact, Rutherford names the Dream campaign as an example of the Eros project. He claims the campaign was responsible for popularizing the eroticization of the brassiere in consumer culture by sanitizing pornography for a mass audience. He also claims that the Dream campaign made use of escapism and the “carnival,” as it depicted the Dreamers “posing, pretending to be whatever”<sup>418</sup> since, Rutherford claims, women “were ready to laugh at such impossible dreams.”<sup>419</sup> Furthermore, stemming from Rutherford’s alignment of the campaign with exhibitionism, he claims that even though the campaign was geared toward women, it still implied

(an unseen) audience, encouraged female competition, as well as the desire for women to be glamorous for one's husband.<sup>420</sup>

While this study affirms some of Rutherford's conclusions—the association with escapism and the absurd, as well as the psychoanalytic connections—this analysis argues that the campaign use of psychology allowed for a more three-dimensional take on the “women's perspective” than has been recognized, which in practice normalized and encouraged the transgression of gender roles and proper female sexuality. Considering the goal of appealing to women's subconscious, it is unlikely that the creators of the campaign sought to entice women by mocking their limited gender roles (good-heartedly or not) as that would be antithetical to the coveted psychological advantage, which as Dichter noted, saw shame as a barrier to consumption. Secondly, there is more evidence that contradicts Rutherford's suggestion that the ads encouraged female competitiveness and grooming for a spouse, which was common in other campaigns. While it was true that the campaign depicted conventionally beautiful women (per the mainstream standard of heterosexual males) and such inclusion arguably encouraged the female viewer's desire to be seen as attractive in the so-called “beauty pageant of life” championed by consumer culture, it should be noted that it was the norm to feature beautiful (white) women in mainstream advertising; to feature unattractive or non-white women would have been virtually unthinkable. While there is little doubt that the Dream campaign continued to uphold many standard cultural ideals of misogynistic white supremacy, this analysis argues for the significance of the campaign's divergence from gendered (albeit not racial) norms.

When contrasting the campaign against other contemporary advertisements, what is remarkable was the depiction of femininity that was not domestic or demure—the Dreamers are



liberated, confident and daring. The advertisements seek not satirize women's suppression, instead they encourage possibilities (however improbable) through the purchase of their product. More importantly, the ads attempted to depict how women might have wanted to imagine themselves, not how a woman thought a man wanted her to be. It could be argued that the campaign depicted how a man thinks a woman would imagine herself, and to an extent it did. The campaign played with an ambiguous gaze, which included not only the so-called woman's perspective of herself but also tackled the female viewer's knowledge that she is always seen in a society which objectified the female figure. While this attempt at Empathy was certainly a ploy to get women to consume, some might even say a tool of manipulation, the campaign's evocative symbolism was so ambiguous that the interpretations were impossible to fix and therefore gave the intended female viewer the power to ultimately control the meaning to a greater degree than other advertising of the era. The previous chapter discussing the Woman-to-Woman strategy, examined the less explicit and perhaps more blatantly liberating ads (by second wave feminism standards), while this section focuses on the way female sexuality in the Dream ads was seemingly imagined as empowering by the creators and contributors to the campaign.

Expressions of self-possessed female sexuality in popular culture were not unheard of in the late 1940s and 1950s, but in order to be acceptable they needed to be limited to the encouragement of sexual relations within marriage, and even then were usually formulated as a way to keep a husband happy.<sup>421</sup> Couples were encouraged to marry young and have more children and therefore sex within marriage became increasingly important. However, female sexuality outside of marriage became ever more taboo as it was seen as counterproductive and even destructive to the nuclear family concept.<sup>422</sup>

Whether encouraged or discouraged, sex and sexy imagery were seemingly ever more ubiquitous. However, the vast majority of brassiere companies played it safe and advertised their wares as utilitarian necessities (even if the daily functional indispensability was created), distancing themselves from the eroticized flesh they contained. But not Maidenform. Maidenform's Dream campaign played on the Cold War contradictions related to women's gender roles and sex to create the celebrated Dream campaign, which showed happily unmarried young women exposing their bras, most of the time in public. These were not the type of dreams (future) American housewives were supposed to have. As Norman, wryly stated, "[e]verybody dreams, many people dream of running around naked; but they can't talk about it...we make our copywriters talk about it," and apparently NCK also allowed women (to an extent) to visualize it.<sup>423</sup>



Figure 6

The degree of eroticism in the Dream campaign varied from tamely suggestive to blatantly sexual. Some of the overtly sensual Dream ads made use of the image of the historical femme fatale—a figure of self-possessed, powerful, and even dangerous sexuality. Cleopatra—the powerful Egyptian queen who dared take on the Roman empire—appeared in the campaign no less than three times in 1952, 1955, and 1962. Perhaps surprisingly, the most explicit was the first version. With the 1952 re-release of Cecil B. DeMille’s film *Cleopatra* starring Claudette Colbert, Maidenform debuted their ad “I dreamed I played Cleopatra,” featuring a model fashioned after Colbert’s Cleopatra (see Figure 6).<sup>424</sup> The movie premiered in 1934, the first year the puritanical Hays Code was enforced, and yet, the film opened with a nude woman veiled only by shadows.<sup>425</sup> Colbert’s costumes were very revealing and, as requested by the actress herself, highlighted her breasts. Somewhat ironically, it is fairly obvious to the viewer that Colbert as Cleopatra does not wear a bra. Nonetheless, a bared Maidenform brassiere transformed the Dreamer into Cleopatra proudly lounging on a tiger pelt. She was heavily adorned in gold jewelry and little else. Her paneled skirt had side slits up to her waist and was tucked between her legs, exposing the entirety of her long smooth limbs. This particular ad avoids the oversight of some ads (as discovered by Dichter’s research) where the bra recedes from focus, outshined by the ads’ provocative themes. Here, the bra’s bright white coloring contrasts with the ad’s warm gold tones, and while appearing to be made of a luxurious satin, its characteristically 1950s bullet bra design was decidedly anachronistic in ancient Egypt.

The ad invites the viewer to imagine herself as the daring and dramatized Egyptian queen or perhaps as an audacious 1930s film star. Either might be exciting and maybe even liberating to the early Cold War woman. This Cleopatra themed ad certainly evoked the sultry and cagey

female sexuality prevalent in Depression-era popular culture. Frequently manifested in the “gold digger” type, which has been widely interpreted as reflecting the loosening of sexual mores, the rise of a pragmatic and even callous female sexuality, as well as the representation of male angst over the perception of an increase of female power coinciding with the decrease of male dominance as significant unemployment lingered.<sup>426</sup> Within the context of the early Cold War, such blatant and dangerous female sexuality may have been a reflection of male suffocation reflected in “momism” and Playboy.<sup>427</sup> The dangerous woman was also conspicuous in the weaponization of the female body evident in such terms as the “bikini” and the “bombshell.” Yet since the Dream campaign was from the so-called woman’s perspective, the Dream ads featuring dangerous women were likely striving to tap into the mid-century woman’s presumed longing to imagine herself as a femme fatale. In this way, the Dream campaign was harnessing a generation of women’s urges to be more powerful through the employment of their sexuality—a quality social structures at once increasingly attempted to contain and yet was one of the few potential sources of power available to women.

In order to underscore the Dream campaign’s innovations, it is helpful to place the Dream campaign in context by examining another contemporary campaign that also utilized female sexuality. The same year that the Dream campaign premiered, Elliot Springs, owner of Springmaid Fabrics, delivered a particularly risqué ad. The ad featured an illustration of a Native American chief lying in a hammock made out of a white sheet with a scantily clad Indian woman departing with the tagline, “[a] buck well spent on a Springmaid sheet.”<sup>428</sup> Another notorious Springmaid ad featured an illustration of two older men sitting on a bench in the park excitedly watching a female ice-skater as she lifts her leg in the air, flashing her undergarments. Many, if

not the majority, of the ads featured upshot illustrations of women's underwear similar to WWII pinups. The description below informed the reader that they could avoid "skater's steam" with their innovative scent-blocking fabric. The fabric, the ad goes on, was developed during WWII to block the wearers' "jungle smells," allowing US soldiers to proceed undetected by the Japanese. Another ad mentions avoiding a ballerina's "bouquet," again with a view of an illustrated woman's underwear, demonstrating the campaign's puns if not their subtlety. Like most early Cold War images of sexualized female bodies, the Springmaid ads largely presented women as erotic objects of the male gaze, essentially presenting sexy women from a supposed heterosexual male perspective.<sup>429</sup> In contrast, Maidenform's Dream campaign presented images of partially clothed women that were intended to present women's fantasies without regard to marital status, while primarily appealing to a female audience.

While the Springmaid ads (1947-1951) and the Dream ads (1949-1969) were concurrent for three years and were both targeting primarily female consumers, there are several notable differences. While the controversial Springmaid ads were also profitable for their company, surveys found that the Springmaid ads, which were not produced by a national ad agency but in-house by Springmaid Fabrics, generated far more recall than any other ad during their run including Maidenform in those three overlapping years.<sup>430</sup> However, Maidenform's Dream campaign lasted far longer, looms larger in the public memory, and is arguably more significant to advertising history.

While the Dream ads were not as explicit as the Springmaid ads, they were arguably more risqué. First, while the images of women in the Springmaid's ads were illustrations, the Dream ads featured photographs of real women. Second, women's uncovered bodies in the Springmaid

ads were viewed without the implied consent of the women and instead were frequently viewed as a titillating accidental encounter, evoking the voyeur's gaze. However, the Dream ads did not objectify women as mere visual objects of erotic pleasure, but as an interactive fantasy aimed at female consumers created with the impression that they were largely by and for women (see chapter 1 for further discussion of the Woman-to-Woman strategy). Since almost all ads were devoid of any male figure, the female viewer who was invited to imagine herself as the daring Dreamer chose for herself who might be, if anyone, viewing her. This does not mean that viewers never perceived the Dream ads as seductive imagery of scantily clad women. However, the ads were created in a way that allowed for the possibility of seeing women as self-possessed subjects, debatably far easier than in the Springmaid ads.

Like the Springmaid campaign, the Dream ads also paired racy themes with puns and cheeky humor, albeit far less crude humor. However, an examination of several Dream ads demonstrate the key difference in tone, which indicates the endeavor for the "woman's perspective." A 1960 Dream ad featured a wild-west style "wanted" sign with a desperado in a particularly pointy brassiere (see Figure 7). The model sported a cowboy hat, which brashly tilted forward, shadowing part of her face as she brazenly stared and composedly pointed her revolver at the viewer. The wanted poster reads, "I dreamed I was WANTED in my Maidenform bra." She is desired but on her own terms. In a different ad, another dreamer leads a pack of Roman charioteers while she dreamed she "drove them wild." She was dressed as a Roman soldier with a gold helmet topped by long red plumage and a matching red cape, which billowed out behind her. With her eyes closed and mouth open, she was overcome with the thrill of the race. Trailing her were galloping horses, but notably, no other charioteers were visible.

Purposefully no male audience was visible, leaving the possibilities open and therefore allowing the viewer to direct the scene. In a third ad, a Marilyn Monroe-esque model posed under the bright lights of a boxing arena. She spread open her red cape, to reveal her voluptuous figure in silver hot-shorts with matching high heels and boxing gloves. This model was dreaming she was a “knockout.” Again, no audience was visible and instead the only figure was that of the Dreamer. This was her dream, which created for the female viewer an invitation to be objectified or not, it was her choice.



Figure 7

These three ads seemingly show the rather traditional take on the female viewer's inclination to be physically desired, and yet all are paired with the subversiveness of cross-dressing, which was not unusual in the campaign. The Dreamers dressed as men are not being mocked—they are not failing as “pretend men,” they are thriving as provocative, transgressing and daring women (albeit permissible only with the privilege that attended traditionally attractive Anglo women). Whether as the queen of Egypt, an outlaw, a Roman charioteer, or a boxer, the women in the ads were in control of their sexuality and their situation. Along with a bra, the campaign was selling women the self-confidence to imagine their wildest dreams and perhaps even command their own destinies.

The Dream campaign was not revolutionary simply for using female sexuality in a widely seen, decades long advertising campaign. What makes the Dream campaign unique was the presentation of female sexuality for women and from an attempted woman's perspective. The Dream ads show images of fashionable, beautiful, and free women acting out various situations, which arguably psychologically broadened the horizon of the viewers. The ads were wide open to interpretations to allow for the exploration of subconscious desires but they also provided the cover of “guilt erasers.” The campaign left open numerous possible and ambiguous gazes making the reception of the ads as numerous as the individuals viewing the ads. Not all of these gazes were liberating, especially from a twenty-first century perspective. From an early Cold War perspective, however, they sparked robust debate less around their liberating potential than around the possible dangers of tapping into the subconscious of American women—a topic that deserves fuller attention.



## Dreams or Nightmares? Controversy Surrounding the Dream Campaign and MR

The mid-twentieth century fad for psychoanalytically-influenced advertising techniques simultaneously titillated and worried the public. Maidenform's emphasis on dreams may have been a reflection of the hope of a newly affluent postwar American society, and yet, dreams also had the obvious association with psychoanalysis. Actually, dream analysis and sex were the perhaps the most well-known components of psychoanalysis—and the Dream campaign made use of both. Dream analysis supposedly gave the MR practitioner insight into a subject's true desires and fears by analyzing the subconscious through dreams. Could knowledge of a person's unguarded inner-workings leave the public vulnerable to unscrupulous or greedy people who could then persuade them to do almost anything? Just as a communist could infiltrate the American Dream and twist it into a Soviet nightmare, could not some marketing "expert" take advantage of the American woman's openness and freedom by exploiting her desires? Some of the era's best selling authors like Vance Packard and Betty Friedan thought so. Both wrote sensational books that were highly critical of MR and especially of Dichter. In 1957, Packard wrote the bestselling book *The Hidden Persuaders* that "exposed" the manipulative and possibly dangerous techniques of advertisers. Friedan's 1963 *The Feminine Mystique* lampooned Dichter and the sexist consumer culture, which she argued, reinforced women's subordinate position in society.<sup>431</sup>

Even before Packard's and Friedan's books, many advertisers did not believe in MR's legitimacy and avoided the new fangled advertising technique—but not NCK and Maidenform. Instead of disowning the questionable methodology, those involved with the Dream campaign followed the adage, "there is no such thing as bad publicity" and exploited the controversy to

their advantage. NCK and Maidenform utilized the controversy surrounding MR with all the attendant associations with sex, desire and duplicity, as a marketing tool to promote themselves and the Dream campaign by both cultivating and downplaying the Freudian connection as it suited their needs.<sup>432</sup> The same use of and association with psychoanalytic tactics, which contributed, to the campaign's potential to subvert female gender norms also tangled the campaign in the postwar controversy over the potential of advertising to manipulate the public.

The public had long been wary of advertising and this latent skepticism only increased during the postwar era. Books, like the dramatically written *The Hidden Persuaders*, fed into the pre-existing skepticism about advertising that had been around since at least the 1930s.<sup>433</sup> In popular culture, the advertising business was frequently portrayed as rapacious, dishonest, and manipulative. The adman was often seen as a smooth and cocky confidence man. In 1947's *The Hucksters*, Victor Norman (Clark Gable) played a wily but lovably redeemable adman who gives up his high-paying but disreputable ad job for a lovely socialite (Deborah Kerr).<sup>434</sup> In a memorable scene, Gable's boss, angry that Norman didn't go through with the plan to sexually objectify Kerr's character for the purpose of creating a racy advertisement, articulates his advertising philosophy by spitting on his desk and declaring, "You have just seen me do a disgusting thing. But you will always remember it!" Sloan Wilson's book *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, also criticized postwar materialism and the yes-men of American business. Made into a film in 1956 starring Gregory Peck as a ladder-climbing PR man, Peck/Wilson's protagonist discovers that he will not find happiness by keeping up with the Joneses.<sup>435</sup> Seeking a happy-ending, Hollywood movies redeemed the schemers as long as they were willing to relinquish their wicked ways.

Dichter was no redeemable huckster. He was content to be known as the clever inventor of illusions and the decoder of desires. Insider books like Martin Mayer's *Madison Avenue, U.S.A.* (1958) reveled in the glamour, materialism, and wit of the advertising business. Mayer also revealed the distaste and suspicion that even many people within the industry felt for Ernest Dichter and his ilk. As Mayer's book indicates, many in the advertising industry did not buy Dichter's psychoanalytic hype, believing instead that he was solely an exceptional copywriter. Mayer claimed that Dichter was "widely regarded in the trade as the greatest copy idea man of our time—a veritable Claude Hopkins of the world of repressed symbolism."<sup>436</sup> Even NCK's Norman commented more on his talent than his psychoanalytic insight. "He could quit what he's doing and get fifty, sixty thousand dollars a year as a copy chief at any agency in the country. He can predict what people will answer. He doesn't know where half his ideas come from, but he's right."<sup>437</sup> Many others simply thought Dichter was a charlatan. The popularity of exposés and movies with duplicitous admen showed that advertising in general, and specifically those who made use of emotional appeals, were widely viewed with skepticism and even alarm.

The controversy surrounding MR in the early Cold War can be better understood in the context of the general divide of advertising techniques into "rational" and "emotional" appeals in twentieth century advertising history.<sup>438</sup> The rational advertising ideology viewed the consumer as rational, and as a result, straight-forward information and repetition were utilized. Rational appeals were associated with scientific management, brand recognition and reason-why copy. For example, a commercial for X brand vacuum may look something like this: "X brand vacuums suck up the most dirt! Buy X brand vacuums! Buy X brand vacuums!" The more traditional

agencies, which tended to disdain MR practitioners, focused on techniques like promoting the brand image and the unique selling point. These agencies frequently found a phrase that promoted the product and repeated it over and over again so it stuck in the minds of the consumer. A famous example is the Ted Bates Agency's commercials for Anacin headache reliever. Every commercial repeated the same phrases; "fast, fast, fast" and "like a doctor's prescription," accompanied by an illustration of a tension headache including a hammer, a spring, and a lightening bolt. Rosser Reeves, head of Ted Bates, claimed that the Anacin campaign, which changed very little over the years, was "the most hated...in the history of advertising." However, within a year and a half of airing, the campaign boosted Anacin's sales by two hundred percent.<sup>439</sup> While these types of commercials may be viewed as bland or annoyingly repetitive, they were not controversial.

Unlike the rational appeal, the emotional appeal tended to view the consumer as irrational and therefore techniques appealing to "hidden desires" were employed. However, the emotional appeals should be viewed on a spectrum. On the lower end of the spectrum lied the benign emotional appeals. Using X brand vacuum again, such an ad may feature a happy, healthy tot smiling at his pretty mother as she cleans her spotless house with the X brand vacuum. This ad would elicit an association of happy, healthy, clean families with X brand vacuum and would purportedly therefore increase its sales. On the extreme end of this spectrum lurked the sinister so-called subliminal advertising. This dreaded technique might feature the same relatively benign ad as before, but this time it would contain an almost imperceptible flash on the screen with the phrase "buy X vacuum!" or perhaps a flicker of an image of a happy face. These split second images would not be recognized consciously by the viewer but would still register

subconsciously, denying the viewers their rational defenses, and at worst, leaving them blindly adherent to the hidden message.

The mass media generally linked Motivational Research to subliminal advertising and viewed both as menacing for their supposed subconscious manipulation of the consumer. While the use of subliminal advertising was extremely rare (some suggest it did not happen at all), a misunderstanding of Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* made it a legitimate menace in the public's mind.<sup>440</sup> Packard's book briefly mentions an instance at a New Jersey movie theater where an embedded message was briefly flashed across the screen in a test to see if the theater could sell more refreshments. However, Packard clearly thought Dichter's practices far more dangerous as he primarily focused on MR's research techniques, such as depth interviews and qualitative research, which he claimed exposed and focused on hidden desires in order to bypass the conscious mind.<sup>441</sup> One may argue that the two techniques have similarities, although practitioners of MR would contend that they persuaded rather than manipulated.<sup>442</sup> More precisely, MR techniques used emotional associations that were buried beneath cultural mores and sought to bring them to the surface, whereas subliminal advertising tried to divert willful thought and instead install new ideas. Regardless, the two became synonymous in the public imagination.

Packard used the Dream campaign as an example of the Freudian hijinks advertisers were up to and the way they anticipated the campaign to read to female consumers.<sup>443</sup> He notes a split in the way the creators of the campaign believed women would interpret being partially undressed in public. Packard writes that some believed that "after talking to their psychological consultants" the advertising would produce anxiety in women as it called up a common

nightmare, which itself was a representation of female neurosis. The other advertisers, however, heard from their psychological consultants that the idea was fantastic because it was a “wish fulfillment” of the desire to be an exhibitionist.<sup>444</sup>

*The Hidden Persuaders* was a bestseller for a year straight, was translated into twelve languages, and sold three million copies by 1975.<sup>445</sup> NCK was mentioned several times but Dichter was the real target. Dichter was already famous but the publication of Packard’s sensational exposé in 1957 made him a household name.<sup>446</sup> Packard described Dichter as “the most famed” of the hidden persuaders who manipulated people into a life of mass consumption. Dichter reveled in the publicity, writing *Strategy of Desire* (1960) in response to “puritanical” books like Packard’s. While Packard’s book itself was met with criticism, the repercussions on the public imagination had long lasting implications. Additionally, the public’s awareness further spurred self-reflection within the advertising industry resulting in a push towards more “scientific” (quantitative) research and techniques.<sup>447</sup> This emphasis on the empirical, which occluded and resulted in the forgetting of the MR techniques and their heritage, lasted until recently, with the field of Consumer Behavior, Consumer Culture Theory, and interpretive consumer research “rediscovering” Dichter.<sup>448</sup>

While *The Hidden Persuaders* warned the entire public against covert manipulation, Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which is widely credited with kicking off second wave feminism, altered a primarily female audience to the particular way advertising sought to influence women. Friedan’s chapter, “The Sexual Sell,” was largely based on her research at Dichter’s Institute for Motivational Research.<sup>449</sup> Demonstrating Dichter’s appetite for publicity, he warmly granted Friedan access to his papers for which she thanked him in her

book's acknowledgement. In the text of the book she doesn't refer to Dichter by name, but instead as "the manipulator" and "the hidden persuader." Friedan used the commercial studies she found in Dichter's Institute to support her argument for the complicity of advertisers and consumerism in perpetrating and sustaining the postwar "feminine mystique." She argued that this "problem that has no name" was the widespread unhappiness of American women who had been convinced that the ideal form of femininity was the "happy housewife." The ideal of the "happy housewife," which was primarily derived from the theories of Sigmund Freud, was partially disseminated through consumer culture. Dichter, with his psychoanalytically-infused marketing, was doubly complicit.

Friedan argued that Dichter essentialized and exploited women. She based much of this theme on Dichter's rather simplistic categorization of the female public. In 1945, Dichter developed a stratagem that separated American women into three groups; the "career woman," the "true housewife type," and the "balanced homemaker."<sup>450</sup> The "unhealthy" "career woman" hated traditional domesticity, held high expectations of household goods, and was therefore often unsatisfied with her purchases. Reportedly, this type of woman was so unhelpful that he stopped interviewing her altogether. On the other hand, the "housewife" was so absorbed in being good at her domestic duties that she preferred to do everything herself, buying few products. The "balanced homemaker," however, was the ideal consumer. She had some experience outside of the house but was also happy within the domestic sphere.<sup>451</sup> This type of woman would be willing to use products to help her run an efficient household without the hang-ups of the previous two.<sup>452</sup> For example, when General Mills was having difficulty selling their just-add-water ready-made mix called Bisquick, Dichter saw the problem through lens of the

“balanced homemaker.” He informed General Mills to remove the powdered egg and milk. According to Dichter, this would allow the woman to add the extra ingredients herself, which would relieve her guilt over not making a homemade meal, and would make her feel as if she were really cooking the dish.<sup>453</sup> As anyone who has gone grocery shopping in the last half decade knows, Bisquick is ubiquitous, suggesting Dichter was on to something. Dichter’s “ideal” female was an avid consumer, who found purpose through her role as a creative homemaker, which required her to purchase consumer goods. Dichter and his ilk simultaneously attempted to persuade women through marketing that products could increase their sense of fulfillment, but at the same time, they did not seek to boost women’s self-esteem to the degree that they might become independent “career women.” Friedan objected to Dichter’s categorization of women into types and to his suggestion that advertisers should teach women to be “balanced homemakers” because it was good for business.<sup>454</sup> Friedan argued that Dichter exploited women’s unhappiness to sell products.

While Friedan’s critique of Dichter may be justified, Dichter seemingly had a more nuanced view of women’s roles in society than has been previously considered by both critics and academics, which gives credence to his role in making the Dream campaign potentially transgressive. It is notable that Dichter used the term “homemaker” as opposed to “housewife” when describing his ideal “balanced” woman. A “homemaker” indicates a person who actively makes or creates the home, while the term “housewife” signifies a woman whose main identity is that of a wife contained within the domestic sphere. Unlike “homemaker,” the term “housewife” does not connote creation. As Dichter believed the “housewife” wanted to do everything herself in the traditional manner, she does not consume as much and is therefore in Dichter’s mind not as



“creative” as the “homemaker.” The term “housewife” does not imply agency while arguably, in Dichter’s estimation of creativity and agency, the label “homemaker” does. Dichter wanted to encourage American women to be spendthrift “homemakers,” albeit not the spartan “career women,” and not just because an increase of “homemakers” would spur the American economy, but also because he believed this would create a “satisfied” and more hedonistic population. Dichter was certainly sexist and his ultimate goal was to stimulate consumption, and yet, his underlying methodology recognized the culture’s impact on gender roles. The type of advertising MR helped to produce was far more malleable to women who dreamed of an existence beyond that of the traditional housewife.

Dichter’s three-part categorization of the female consumer continued to be important, but it is significant that he modified his gendered classification with the changing times. This adaptation supports the argument that Dichter had a relatively complex view of women’s culturally determined positions.<sup>455</sup> Three years before *The Feminine Mystique*, Dichter began urging people to accept the cultural evolution of gender roles. He wrote, “the competition between the two sexes is being gradually replaced by co-operation and equality....[r]ather than worrying about what new type of woman is emerging now, we may have to contemplate the fact that instead of dealing with women, we are dealing with persons.”<sup>456</sup> He proclaimed that an “acceptance of this fact could bring about a major revolution in our outlook on everyday life.”<sup>457</sup> The “revolution” that Dichter was primarily concerned with pertained to consumer society – business would have to start catering to women in new ways and advertisers would need to recognize that women were not just buying for the family but also for themselves.<sup>458</sup> The modern woman, Dichter reported was the “balanced type.” She was happy to make a home but

also had wider horizons. She may very well be employed, he asserts, but even if she was not, “she’s capable of holding down one.<sup>459</sup>” Men, Dichter implied, were part of this gender revolution. After the uncertainty of the first half of the twentieth century, he claimed, men no longer wanted “a sweet little creature who is just cute and helpless.” Instead, men wanted a woman “who can chip in, who can take a job, who can drive a car or can drive a truck, if need be—who can be a partner.” The American woman, he contended, had risen to this challenge.<sup>460</sup>

Considering the social context, Dichter’s perspective seems rather liberated. However, if viewed with a critical eye, Dichter’s reasonably sophisticated understanding of the complicated role of post-war women may also support Friedan’s assertion of Dichter as a conniving “mass manipulator.” He well understood the challenges women faced and yet used this information to make a buck. But, as has been indicated, Dichter maintained that consumerism and women’s role within it was healthy for the individual and beneficial for society.

Dichter also had a nuanced view of the gendered pressures in a modern consumer society. He told the Corset & Brassiere Association of America (of which Maidenform’s Coleman was twice the president and once the director),<sup>461</sup> that bras, like other elements of fashion in US society, were symbols of social status and social relationships, as well as tools used to communicate awareness with world social developments, and not just instruments of physical enhancement.<sup>462</sup> In a study for Playtex brassieres Dichter alluded to the contradictory pulls of modern femininity when he stated that, “...modern women in spite of what is regarded as considerable ‘emancipation’ exhibit—even among sophisticates—a surprising degree of reserve about the problems and shapes of their bodies.” He continued, they exhibit “...a rather intense anxiety over the degree to which their own figures, and specifically their busts, differ from the

many 'ideal' shapes with which they are constantly confronted."<sup>463</sup> Likewise, in a study for Flexees brassieres, he speculated that "[i]t is possible that no woman is ever quite satisfied with the kind of bust she has...[a]t the same time, the bust is the most visible sign of her womanhood. The process of purchasing a bra therefore, may mean to a woman that she is not only being measured physically, but also psychologically as a woman."<sup>464</sup> Consequently, he concluded, this act may cause embarrassment and a sense of exposure.<sup>465</sup> This shame, Dichter believed, partially stemmed from Americans' "residual Puritanism."<sup>466</sup> But it was not only this Christian legacy – women, he claimed, had a gap between their expectations and their reality. He implicitly admitted that consumption played a role in this dynamic. The act of purchasing a new brassiere, he warned, could cause women to examine themselves closely, with the effect of damaging their self-image.<sup>467</sup> While not above using such information to sell bras, Dichter and his philosophy also dictated that this shame should be lifted from American women so that they might embrace pleasure and consumerism.

Most examinations of the Dream campaign note that feminists were furious with the campaign.<sup>468</sup> However, I have found no direct evidence that feminists of the 1960s and 1970s railed against the Dream theme, although a brief reference in the 1975 feminist classic, *The Stepford Wives*, may point in this direction. The two main characters in the film, Joanna (Katherine Ross) and Bobbie (Paula Prentiss) are discouraged and dumbfounded by the beautiful, immaculate, but vacant housewives of a posh Connecticut suburb. What the characters don't know is that the Stepford husbands have replaced their wives with robots. Independent newcomer, Joanna, reveals her frustration to her only ally, Bobbie, when she states "I told you I messed around with women's lib when I was in New York...I'm not planning any Maidenform

bonfires but they could certainly use something around here.”<sup>469</sup> This dialogue indicates that in 1975, six years after the end of the Dream themes, Maidenform was a symbol of both bras and female repression. Later in the movie, when Bobbie has been replaced by an almost identical but bustier robot, Maidenform’s classic claim of “uplift” was also referenced. “How about the shape? Padded uplift bra. It’s true what they say in the ads.”<sup>470</sup> Here, Maidenform was part of the costume that was literally replacing modern, feminist-minded women with machines resembling nostalgic images of voluptuous 1950s housewives.

An *Ad Age* article from 1967 referred to a possible growing discontent with the campaign, which corresponded with the end of its duration in 1969. Although the reason the article gives for this disaffection was not that it was demeaning or sexist but that the Freudian exhibitionism was embarrassing. The *Ad Age* article by art director Stephen Baker gleefully declared the Dream campaign “one of the most controversial series of ads in the history of advertising.”<sup>471</sup> The article entitled, “Is Maidenform Bra Gal Having Dreams or Nightmares,” played off the aura of Freudianism that clung to the campaign. The author asks: Since women have objected to the ads and they are the ones who buy them, should not we listen to them? He answers his own question with a resounding “no.” He declared that the “sad, or happy, truth is that any woman worth her sex is basically deep down a born exhibitionist.” Most females will deny this, he asserts, and “[t]his is why the feminine reaction to the Maidenform campaign can be overtly at least, misleading.” Any women with “average social instincts will flatly refuse sanctioning indecent exposure...The fact that Maidenform permits women readers to act out their most inner desires in the form of a ‘dream’ is of course one of the shrewdest selling maneuvers ever performed by bra salesman. Anything goes in a dream.” Women, he argued, put their ideal selves in the place

of the models for a much needed, if temporary, reverie. They “can display their little tummies and their lovely white shoulders to a make-believe audience. They can arouse man’s interest in a manner, which for centuries has proven to be by far the most effective, i.e., sex. And most of all, Maidenform dreams allow the eager females to take a brief but meaningful excursion into the wicked land of violent and base emotions, uninhibited men and ‘bad’ women.”<sup>472</sup> To make women more appealing to themselves and to their observers was, he contended, the role of apparel and advertising. In this way, Maidenform succeeded, for it lifted “not only the female anatomy but her spirit as well.”<sup>473</sup>

As this article indicates, much of the debate surrounding the Dream campaign dealt not with the denigration of women but rather with issues of propriety. Maidenform and NCK repeatedly, yet coyly, defended the campaign’s decency in the press. Beatrice Coleman, Ida Rosenthal’s daughter, emphasized prudently, “we don’t mind double meanings, so long as they’re in good taste.”<sup>474</sup> Norman iterated the campaign’s innocence when he asked *The New York Times* rhetorically if archly, “after all who doesn’t dream and who doesn’t think of romantic situations[?]”<sup>475</sup> All involved repeatedly commented that they were very concerned that the ads should remain in good taste, which meant “no lascivious puns, [and] no men in the ads.”<sup>476</sup> Dr. Coleman claimed that they never felt they were doing anything wrong since they had always featured women in bras in their ads. He stated they had even shown women in girdles (albeit they were exclusively illustrated women—or parts of women—in private situations or with blank backgrounds).<sup>477</sup> Despite reassurances, critics found the ads scandalous, but evidence seems to indicate that NCK and Maidenform may have liked it that way.

Maidenform relished in the Dream ads association with psychoanalysis. At a joint fashion show and cocktail party at the Waldorf-Astoria, Maidenform had a “singing psychoanalyst” interpret his patients’ dreams as corresponding models acted out the “dream scenes.” The “patients” dreamt they were a “cigar store Indian,” “lived in a house of mirrors,” were a “femme fatale” and “a living doll.”<sup>478</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, a publication produced by Maidenform and sent out to retailers and buyers reprinted a cartoon from the *Journal of the Student Medical Association*, which echoed the psychoanalytic connection. In the cartoon, a horrified female patient tells her (male) psychiatrist, “I keep dreaming I’m walking down Fifth Avenue, but without my Maidenform bra.”<sup>479</sup> Norman claimed that his “pet series” was “striking, blatant, voluptuous.”<sup>480</sup> According to Norman, *The New Yorker* wanted to censor every ad. When Maidenform and NCK balked, they refused to print them at all. Norman thought this hypocritical since, in his opinion, they were publicizing some of “the most lascivious cartoons at that time.”<sup>481</sup> Despite the rhetoric, Maidenform and NCK probably knew they were walking a fine line, evidenced by their payment to models of double the hourly rate, likely in order to compensate for the less than respectable job of posing in their bras.<sup>482</sup>

Unsurprisingly then, Maidenform and NCK themselves hinted at the potentially scandalous nature of the ads in a rather tongue-and-cheek manner. More than ten years after the campaign began, Coleman stated, “the sight of these very active dreams might not be good for teenage girls. Even 50-year-old women might get ideas.”<sup>483</sup> Coleman also stated, “we don’t let the girls dream in their girdles,” (even though at one point they did).<sup>484</sup> Impishly, Norman “worried” about the effects of the ad’s “Freudian appeal.”<sup>485</sup> Conveniently, NCK rival The Leo Burnett Agency conducted a study of three different fashion ads and found that Maidenform’s

was rated the lowest.<sup>486</sup> The women who participated in the study said the ads went “too far.” Maidenform and NCK could have ignored this study but instead, a pleased Kay Daly with NCK responded, “housewives should think those ads are shocking. That’s the point.”<sup>487</sup>

Even today, renditions in the popular press and academic studies claim that the Dream campaign emerged from the notion that women were born exhibitionist and would therefore be attracted to ads that allowed them to fantasize about being undressed in public.<sup>488</sup> Although there is no available archival evidence that directly links the campaign with research specifically on women’s exhibitionist fantasies, the association predominates likely due to the campaign’s use of psychoanalytic techniques. Although a paper trail does not exist proving that the campaign’s creators were inspired by women’s supposed exhibitionist tendencies, it does not necessarily mean there was no link. However, that this rumor is still alive and well today, points to the successful cultivation of the dangerous and seductive allure of psychoanalysis applied to advertising as well as Maidenform and NCK’s skillful use of the association.

The Dream campaign remains controversial as it connects to a web of interrelated questions surrounding gender, sexuality, agency, power, manipulation, reception, identity, business and advertising in postwar consumer culture. Wendy Burns-Ardono suggests that the Dream campaign “quite possibly provides the first glimpse of women’s sexual empowerment in advertising.”<sup>489</sup> Yet she also notes that while the ads might show women how to live out their dreams, they also promoted stereotypes and failed to demonstrate how women could experience their own lives in a more satisfying way.<sup>490</sup> Other scholars have criticized the Dream campaign as sexist.<sup>491</sup> Barbara Coleman argues that while at first the campaign may seem liberating, it is in fact condescending. She mentions in particular, that they “disregarded or parodied women’s

unrealistic occupational aspirations,” as well as made its model “the brunt of a sexual joke and an object of prurient gaze. She continues, “Maidenform’s ads denied women their autonomy as productive and professional beings within the public sphere.”<sup>492</sup>



Figure 8

Coleman singled out “I dreamed I went to work in my Maidenform bra” which premiered in 1964 as particularly offensive (see Figure 8).<sup>493</sup> The ad combines elements of the workingwoman and the pinup. The model, a Jackie Kennedy look alike, sits on top of her pink desk answering the telephone with a big smile and a hand on her slender waist. She is styled as a secretary with a pencil tucked into her dark flipped-out hair, her yellow and pink Chanel-esque



skirt matches the pastel background. She is surrounded by tools of her trade; a typewriter, two telephones, and a pink in-out shelf. The cheesecake element is apparent in her classic three-quarters pose, which shows off Maidenform's best-selling Chansonette bra with its "famous 'circular-spoke' stitching" producing the iconic canonical shape of the bullet bra.

This chapter does not deny that the ads, like the "I dreamed I went to work" may be interpreted as containing qualities that are sexist, especially to the contemporary viewer. However, when viewed within its historical context as a whole, the Dream campaign is quite remarkable. The ads are open to seemingly antithetical interpretations because they combine contradictory elements. The ads may be seen as aspirational or demeaning, sexually liberating or objectifying, Freudian or manipulative, essentializing womanhood or gender-dynamic. The goal of this analysis is not necessarily to give an interpretation of the campaign (from a 21<sup>st</sup> century woman's point of view), but to argue that from 1949-1969, the campaign may be seen from the producer's stand point as part of the Woman-to-Woman strategy that involved Maidenform's larger marketing efforts all the way up to the President, Ida Rosenthal, as discussed in the prior chapter. As befitting this strategy, the campaign's use of psychoanalysis (and absurdist humor) in advertising provided multiple interpretations, many of which were subversive and some of which were not.

Although some historians have seen the postwar boom in consumerism and the push for a "return" to traditional gender roles as complementary phenomena, I propose that a potentially precarious balance between consumerism and "proper" gender roles characterized American culture in the postwar period. The Dream campaign reveals the tension between imagining (unmarried) female desire in order to stimulate female consumption and the resulting implicit

disruption this acknowledgment of female sexuality potentially had on the imagined gendered status quo.

The ads are multilayered. The public exposure was duplicate in nature—in the ad the Dreamer was exposing her bra in public, in addition, the ads themselves placed in mainstream magazines, newspapers and sometimes even billboards, were widely and publicly viewed. Should the spectacle of a woman being partially undressed in public, readily available to the gaze of both women and men, be viewed as an uninhibited dream or a Freudian nightmare? Should this be interpreted as a subversion of strict gendered and sexualized boundaries or a reinforcement of the objectification of women's bodies? This double viewing could have encouraged heterosexual male viewing pleasure. In addition, since the female viewers would have likely been aware of this male gaze, this may have reinforced the gendered societal norm that women know they are always being surveyed and therefore always survey themselves. However, the ads were almost exclusively printed in periodicals and probably viewed within the home, which lends itself to an opportunity of relative privacy for the female viewer. Additionally, the Dream campaign should be credited with normalizing images of real women in brassieres as opposed to the typical advertisements that were exclusively drawings and were rather abstract. This may be interpreted as part of the much lamented cultural inundation of the sexualized and objectified female body. And yet, it is also indicative of an increased tolerance and normalization of female sexuality. The Dream campaign was not only about the erotic undressed female body, it was also about women taking risks and imagining the incredible. While the ads may not have been free from the objectification of women's bodies and individual interpretations undoubtedly widely varied, this study argues that the campaign should be seen as an early example of the use of self-possessed

female sexual expression and gender subversion utilized as a (limited) form of female empowerment within consumer culture.

### Conclusion

Cultural Critic Raymond Williams defined advertising as “the official art of capitalist society.”<sup>494</sup> He claimed that advertising was a “major form of modern social communication” and that we can understand our society in new ways by analyzing advertising and its connections between the economic, social and cultural.<sup>495</sup> How does this analysis of the Dream campaign and its various connections help us see the early Cold War era in a new light? The Dream campaign communicated to post-WWII women alternative images of femininity from the conventional gender roles that dominated popular culture. The Dream campaign suggests that the “official art of capitalist society” both worked with and against the status quo. In this way, the campaign is demonstrative of the seeming contradictions of post-WWII culture—the importance of wholesome “traditional” gender roles versus the obsession with female sexuality; the rise of the omnipresent consumer culture with its supposed power to save the capitalist-democratic world, as opposed to the mass-consumer-culture’s potential to control free-thinking citizens. The Dream campaign exhibits the intersectionality between hope and fear during the 1950s and 1960s that manifested in increasingly ubiquitous gendered imagery in popular culture. The people behind the Dream advertisements created visual “social communication” which attempted to boost sales by speaking to the postwar woman’s multifaceted desire to walk the line between the seductive and the wholesome, the free and the permissible.

## CHAPTER 3:

### Shaping the Cold War American Woman

“J’ ai rêvé que j’étais en Amérique dans mon Maidenform” — Dream ad in French, c.  
1960  
(“I dreamed I was in America in my Maidenform”)

Maidenform’s Dream campaign debuted in 1949, a watershed year of the Cold War—the Soviet Union successfully tested its first atomic bomb, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed, and a communist government came to power in China. America’s foreign policy of containment, designed to prevent the spread of communism both geographically and ideologically, rippled through domestic as well as foreign policy. As Elaine Tyler May writes the “cold war ideology” and the “domestic revival” of the postwar era were “two sides of the same coin.”<sup>496</sup> As suppression of communism abroad was believed to limit its insidious goal of world domination, the containment of the domestic realm would supposedly secure the American homeland. What Tyler May has labeled “domestic containment” equated democracy, capitalism, and freedom. The domestic arena, especially the realm of gender, family, sexuality and consumerism, would be an ideological processing ground. American women were purported to be the freest in the world and this freedom was associated with their prolific consumer habits. As consumption driven by material abundance came to be viewed as the silver bullet to rid the world of the scourge of communism, consumer culture was a ripe sector for symbols that connected consumerism with symbols of the United States, freedom, and women’s roles. The “Maidenform Woman” became one such symbol.

What I am calling the “Maidenform Woman” was the amalgamation of the Maidenform company’s public relations, advertising, marketing, and other public aspects of the business that constituted their brand and was intended, like other marketing, to appeal to its target consumer group.<sup>497</sup> For Maidenform’s marketing to successfully entice potential customers, it needed to communicate to the public in terms that resonated with a particular segment of the population and within a specific historical and cultural context. This chapter analyzes the significations and ambiguities inherent in the Maidenform Woman as a cultural text that both reflected and shaped its historical context.

The Maidenform Woman was the personification of the Maidenform brand during the Dream campaign’s twenty-year run from 1949 to 1969. The Maidenform Woman was projected as representing the freedom loving American Woman and by extension, the United States. As a symbol of freedom and the American Way, the Maidenform Woman was everything the U.S. Cold War rhetoric stated the Soviet woman was not.<sup>498</sup> If communism made the Soviet woman unattractive, gender-neutral in appearance and behavior, over-worked, deprived, restricted and unhappy, democracy connoted an American woman who was attractive, fashionable, gender-appropriate in appearance and behavior, domestic, able to enjoy leisure-time, free and hopeful. The Maidenform Woman was optimistic and independent. She reveled in conspicuous consumption and dreamed about her boundless opportunities. Her prominent pointed bust symbolized American prowess and a flexible femininity, a reflection of the interaction between America’s Cold War foreign policy and its domestic culture. The Maidenform Woman should be viewed as a symbol of American freedom embodied in female form.

But the Maidenform Woman also demonstrated that “freedom” was not a fixed concept. She was free to consume while also free to push conventional gender boundaries and should, therefore, be viewed as a symbol of the cultural effects of domestic containment on the representation of femininity in consumer culture *and* the limits of that same phenomenon. This case demonstrates that female sexuality outside of the domestic sphere may not have been seen as inevitably dangerous to the domestic order.<sup>499</sup> The Maidenform Woman in some ways seems an extension of the World War II pinup—projecting female sexuality as a symbolic weapon against a wartime foe. During WWII, for example, a woman’s image was painted on a bomb; in the Cold War she was the “bombshell.” The Maidenform Woman represented the varied, contested, and shifting meanings of freedom inherit in American democracy; she was free to dream and to consume, and also to transgress and reveal her power.

Unlike other ads of the era, the Dream campaign in many ways did not reinforce the proscribed white middle-class gender norms prominent in mid-century consumer and popular culture. The Maidenform Woman may be seen as more “mammary goddess” than “domestic goddess.”<sup>500</sup> Though past the average postwar age of marriage, she appeared single and child-free. While she used this freedom from domesticity to imagine herself in conventionally feminine ways—as a movie star, the center of attention, or a shopper, she also dreamed of herself in unconventionally feminine roles—as independent, occupying traditionally male professions, and openly sexual. In this way, the Maidenform Woman potentially symbolized an expanded idea of femininity. She was part of Maidenform’s Woman-to-Woman strategy, a marketing maneuver designed to (appear to) empower women, influenced by Maidenform’s powerhouse leader Ida Rosenthal. It was this stratagem (perhaps genuinely pushing gender equality, a callously prudent

marketing strategy, or a mix of the two), that made the Maidenform Woman progressive in its representation of gender (See chapter 1).

This chapter argues that the Maidenform Woman should be considered an allegory of a new Cold War American womanhood which symbolized both the constriction of femininity under domestic containment and the possibilities of its subversion, as influenced by the idea of American freedom in opposition to communism's supposed subordination of its people.<sup>501</sup> The analysis of this visual metaphor and its manifestations can be separated into four parts. First, the symbol was developed through the marketing of Maidenform as an all-American company, which was accomplished by Maidenform's wartime efforts under the leadership of Ida Rosenthal during WWII and the Cold War. Second, the physical structure of Maidenform's brassieres created the uplifted, separated, and canonical breasts of the voluptuous ideal postwar woman. This duality of femininity in the Cold War symbolized both a "return" to an ultra feminine figure promoted by domestic containment, as well as a representation of the U.S.'s aggressive militaristic Cold War posturing in the form of the female "bombshell" with her signature missile-shaped bosom constructed by Maidenform's "bullet bra." Third, Maidenform's Dream campaign at home and abroad projected an image of the Maidenform Woman as embodying the ideals of both the "American spirit" and a particular American femininity shaped by Cold War containment policies. Fourth, the transgressive potential of the Maidenform Woman will be further elucidated through a comparison to another famous scantily-clad Cold War woman, the *Playboy* bunny.

## Maidenform USA: The Making of an American Company

Before the Maidenform Woman could become an international symbol of the American Woman, the immigrant founded company needed to construct itself as all-American. Ida Rosenthal, who was born in Russia and created the company in 1924, is largely responsible for fashioning Maidenform as a patriotic American company through contributions to the war efforts of WWII and the Cold War.<sup>502</sup>

Historically, the United States involvement in war has been a catalyst for great cultural change. World War II was an especially dynamic force which altered society's understanding both of the role of women and of who could be an "American." As American men were sent to fight abroad, American women were called on to fill the employment vacancies. It was not the first time American women had worked, of course. Working class women had labored in the public sphere for decades. However, this "total war" called not just for young single women or working class women, but all classes of women in their twenties and thirties who already had families to nurture and the accompanying heavy duties of domestic responsibilities. In order to accommodate these workers, a few companies and a government program began offering childcare. It soon became patriotic for women to work, and lucrative as well. Wartime wages were high and, with rationing, individual savings rose. These nest eggs would help spur the postwar economic boom when workingwomen were told that their duties were done and they should make room for returning male soldiers.

World War II highlighted both inclusion and exclusion. The attack of the Japanese military on Pearl Harbor made all peoples of Japanese descent residing in the U.S. suspect. Thousands of Japanese-Americans residing on the west coast, mostly citizens, were shipped to internment



camps for the duration of the war. It should be noted that similar large-scale efforts were not taken against most individuals of German or Italian descent. On the other hand, wartime service and the atrocities committed by the Axis helped to inform who was now a full-blown American. As the so-called “New Immigrants,” which included peoples from Eastern and Southern Europe who arrived before the restriction acts of the early 1920s, served in the American armed forces, they were able to escape decades of prejudice to become “white.” The horrific ethnic genocide of European Jews by the Nazi’s helped Americans define themselves in opposition to Nazi racism. Largely in reaction to the Holocaust perpetrated by America’s enemies, American anti-Semitism mellowed, allowing for the possibility that Jewish-Americans, even those often-despised groups from southern and eastern Europe, were real Americans too.

Ida Rosenthal used this wartime cultural shift, which helped render female workers patriotic and Eastern European Jewish immigrants authentic Americans, to position her company as All-American. As Roland Marchand argues in *Creating the Corporate Soul*, big businesses in this era found it necessary to transform their images from self-serving, immoral behemoths, to friendly, socially responsible and patriotic institutions.<sup>503</sup> Rosenthal’s Maidenform, while never associated with an overtly negative public image before the war, still followed the prevailing trend and sought to achieve a red, white, and blue “corporate soul.” Maidenform accomplished this by emphasizing the necessity of bras to workingwomen, supporting the war effort by producing war supplies, training women for new jobs, raising war bonds, and even creating their own rousing pin-ups for the troops.

The company energetically proclaimed that foundation garments were imperative for workingwomen. This claim would demonstrate that their primary product was essential to the

war effort—making Maidenform essential and profitable. The argument generally emphasized how female health intertwined with the war effort—that a lack of effective undergarments would lead to a weakened and fatigued female workforce when one-hundred percent effort was needed on the home front to win the war. *Hygeia*, the health magazine of the American Medical Association, printed an article in August 1942 lauding the positive health effects of women’s foundational garments and assuring its readers that the War Production Board would not be restricting or diluting the quality of their undergarments because, “Uncle Sam certainly does not want American women to wear garments that would menace their health or hamper their efficiency, especially during wartime when every ounce of energy and effort is needed.”<sup>504</sup>

The Corset & Brassiere Association petitioned the U.S. government with evidence from medical professionals and even “safety engineers in war plants.”<sup>505</sup> A report titled, “Why Corsets and Brassieres are Essential,” argued that all women, not just female factory workers (this is prior to recruitment of women into the armed forces) needed brassieres. The report began by claiming that, “[c]ompletely impartial evidence and expert opinion prove that unless women in homes, in business and in war plants can obtain the corsets and brassieres they vitally need, a great deal more than nation-wide dissatisfaction and protest will result – the health and efficiency of millions of women will be seriously impaired.”<sup>506</sup> The article continued its push for the necessity of brassieres by pointing out that although some men who were influenced by advertising might assume that women wanted foundation garments for superficial vanity, that motivation could not be further from the truth. Women, they claimed, were biologically weaker than men and if women were to “take over man-sized jobs,” they would need the proper support.<sup>507</sup> The report cites *Hygeia* as well as news reports claiming that England had realized

the error of denying proper foundation garments and was now happily accepting these necessities from the likes of the Red Cross amongst others.

Multiple statements from various medical professionals and factory managers echoed the indispensability of undergarments. Especially with the influx of “soft” women not physically accustomed to factory work, these “experts” claimed a multitude of potential maladies were possible, including constipation, prolapsis, nervous tension, varicose veins, decreased morale, backaches, muscle fatigue, and even displacement of the organs requiring surgery.<sup>508</sup> The most frequent worry concerned breast injury. A statement from a “Metal Stamping Manufacturer Producing Ordnance” from Warren, Ohio claimed that prior to the war the company hired “factory type” women who were between 21 and 28 and were “restricted as to bust, height and weight for top efficiency.”<sup>509</sup> But because of the war, they were now employing older women who were “generally heavier bodied than was formerly considered desirable.” These newer employees with their larger busts ran a higher risk of breast injury as they came into contact with metal machinery, making the requirement of sturdy brassieres even more crucial.<sup>510</sup> A Detroit “Automobile Manufacturer Now in War Production” worried about the men too. “Brassieres are essential not only for protection of the breasts but also as a safety precaution because of the sex angle, where men and women work together; a roving eye is not conducive to safety around machinery.”<sup>511</sup>

Maidenform sent the U.S. War Manpower Commission an application for a “Declaration of Essentiality.”<sup>512</sup> The brief listed the top five reasons given by medical authorities why brassieres were a wartime prerequisite. Three of the five reasons generally echoed the Corset & Brassiere Associations petition, which stated that most women require breast support and

ceasing such support would result in “fatigue and strain physically and psychologically.”<sup>513</sup> Maidenform added that breast support by bras was more important than support of the abdomen provided by girdles or corsets. The two remaining reasons given by Maidenform related to the interference caused by female sexuality. They claimed that bra-less breasts would be a “distraction to male associates,” and to the women who would have to experience “friction of the outer clothing” to “an erogenous area” that would be “disturbing.”<sup>514</sup> Maidenform’s application also included statements from multiple doctors and apparel stores from around the country which reported an urgent need and scarcity of bra supplies.<sup>515</sup> Maidenform apparently received their declaration of essentiality as they opened a new plant in Bayonne, New Jersey in 1941.

A wartime Maidenform ad specifically targeted females working in the new war industry by emphasizing the necessity of brassieres. The ad featured a slender, broad-shouldered female worker clad in a jumpsuit, her hair pulled back with a bandana. The worker appeared strong and determined as she left one of the bustling factories seen in the distance. The ad’s text warned that strain to the breast from hard work might not be readily apparent but damage would ensue. To prevent injury, female workers should wear a Maidenform bra that was scientifically designed to protect their breasts. The message was as clear as the advertisement’s heading—Maidenform bras were “a necessity to women at work.”<sup>516</sup>

In addition to producing its usual products, which was in itself an “important contribution to the defense of women’s figures!” Maidenform was also contracted by the government to produce products that were “aimed to contribute to the comfort of our soldiers, and in that way to the discomfort of the enemy.”<sup>517</sup> Maidenform produced over two million

wartime goods including tents, parachutes, bush shirts, mattress covers, mosquito nets, bras and garter belts for female members of the armed forces, and even vests for the feathered patriots.<sup>518</sup> Maidenform's pigeon vests, a well kept secret during the war years, were essentially modified bras that were used to safely secure messenger pigeons to paratroopers. The vests were skillfully designed to protect the birds' delicate wings as its human-ride jumped out of airplanes and into enemy territory. The soldiers would then give the (hopefully) unscathed birds a secret message detailing what they saw behind enemy lines, which the homing pigeons would then deliver to their home base.<sup>519</sup> Maidenform's support resulted in a military commendation for its extensive work towards the war effort.<sup>520</sup>

Maidenform supported both its current female employees and former male employees who were fighting abroad. With male employees leaving behind high-skilled and high-paid positions as mechanics, stretchers and stockers to serve in the military, Maidenform filled these jobs by training and promoting their current female workers.<sup>521</sup> One article featured a photograph of a young man, soon to be shipped out, with three women who would be replacing departed men in the Stock Room. To be certain readers did not get the erroneous impression that three women were necessary to replace one man, the article goes on to list the other war-related activities the three women performed in addition to their new positions, including knitting for the Russian War Relief and lending a hand to the American Women's Voluntary Services.<sup>522</sup> Maidenform also sent women to a technical high school to train to fill vacancies left by enlisted male mechanics. Although they noted that one trainee found she was "bothered" at first by some of the suggestive technical terms including "male" and "female" plugs and "bastard" files, her interest in mechanics was soon "nurtured" and she was fixing machines in no time.<sup>523</sup>

Maidenform employees enthusiastically raised funds in numerous war bond drives. As of January 1945, Maidenform employees from Bayonne and New York had purchased enough bonds to pay for twelve ambulances.<sup>524</sup> To honor this accomplishment, the army included a sticker in each vehicle recognizing their purchase by Maidenform employees. The bond drives included entertainment such as a rendition of “Love Comes to Violet Winchpus,” which was performed by male leads in drag. Amazingly, about fifty employees paid the enormous sum of one hundred dollar bond or more, which earned them a photographic portrait. In one drive the highest bidder was a cutter who proffered one hundred and fifty dollars and was awarded a nylon brassiere, which he said he intended to give to his mother-in-law.<sup>525</sup> Another particularly meaningful fundraiser honored the first Maidenform employee to join the war, Samuel “Sammy” Cohen, who was killed in action. The bond drive was set up with the goal of raising enough money to fund a Light Armed Forces tank, which would bear Cohen’s name.<sup>526</sup> The management also sent yearly Christmas packages to former employees serving abroad.<sup>527</sup>

Maidenform also encouraged their current employees to boost the morale of their former male co-workers who were now fighting abroad by creating a pinup girl contest. Former male employees serving in the 978<sup>th</sup> Engineer Maintenance Company stationed in Germany requested that the Bayonne factory hold a competition in which they would choose the winner from submitted photographs of female employees. The winner of the contest would be given five dollars by management as well as her choice of a week of free cafeteria lunches or a carton of cigarettes.<sup>528</sup> One of the men wrote in, “Never was the morale so high like it was the day I put the paper on the bulletin board! They just went nuts!” As the photographs of female Maidenform employees vying for the top spot made their rounds of the barracks in Germany,

the decision of who should win was hotly debated and reportedly the soldiers even came to blows, sending two men to the hospital.<sup>529</sup> Finally, the men choose the lovely Shirley Levine who was described as “typically the American Girl” and “well stacked.”<sup>530</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One, the pinup contests continued well into the 1950s and a variety of people received the honor including young African American women, white men, and even whole families.<sup>531</sup>

World War II gave Maidenform the opportunity to shape its image as an all-American company by participating in the war effort, but interaction with distant countries also allowed it to define itself against the foreign. Reportedly numerous importing countries around the world gave Maidenform brassieres “a priority rating almost as high as war materials,” allowing Maidenform to ship their products to places such as India, Ceylon, the Congo and the East Indies.<sup>532</sup> A former Maidenform employee, serving as a sergeant in the South Pacific sent home a cartoon featuring a sweaty-looking white soldier nervously peering at a topless dark-skinned “native” woman with pendulous breasts. The caption directed at Moe Rosenthal, a Maidenform executive, reads, “BOY, MR. MOE – YOU SURE COULD USE A SALESMAN DOWN HERE. HE WOULDN’T HAVE TO DO MUCH HIGH PRESSURE TALKING EITHER!”<sup>533</sup> In “before” and “after” Maidenform photographs, one article documented the change in women from the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>534</sup> The center photograph included several stoic looking women sitting in traditional clothing which resembled a cloth snugly wrapped around the breasts, “in a manner which makes their bustlines appear flat.” Two larger photos flanked the “before” image and showed individual women proudly standing and showing off their new “vastly improved...properly supported and rounded” breasts clad in uncovered Maidenform bras with traditional skirts wrapped around their waist. This “civilizing” or to be more exact,

“Americanizing” impulse would also be apparent during the Cold War. Overall, Maidenform’s efforts during WWII positioned it as a patriotic company ready to expand its global reach.

As a Russian immigrant and a former active socialist, Ida Rosenthal might have detected a sea change in her fortunes as the Cold War commenced and Soviet Russia switched from being an ally to the ultimate enemy. Anyone believed to be even tangentially associated with communism or the U.S.S.R. could be suspect. Rosenthal had developed her American bonafides during WWII but as the Cold War began, she may have felt the need to reinforce her Americanism. She became a Cold War warrior, traveling around the world inspecting her “Maidenformidable empire” and participating in government sponsored exchange programs with the Soviets. She articulated her actions and those of her company as part of an effort to change the world, one bosom at a time.<sup>535</sup> This change, of course, was designed to make over the world in the image of the U.S. by spreading American-style consumerism. This American-style consumerism became an ideological tool in the Cold War representing, amongst other things, abundance, freedom (especially for women), and modernity. Ida Rosenthal positioned herself and her company as components of America’s Cold War arsenal through the public relations surrounding her international travels and efforts to expand her company around the world, as well as through her participation in State Department exchange programs with the U.S.S.R.

Ida Rosenthal’s promotion of Maidenform around the world should be viewed within the history of consumerism, which was defined as particularly American. Charles McGovern’s concept of the “consumer as citizen” and Lizabeth Cohen’s idea of the “purchaser as citizen” show the evolution of how the U.S. was defined as a culture of abundance, and how consumerism became associated with patriotism in the twentieth century U.S.<sup>536</sup> Emily Rosenberg has



demonstrated how American consumer culture, which spread around the world in the “American Century,” propagated the relationship between the “American way of life,” consumerism, abundance, modernity and freedom. Rosenberg has also discussed how American consumerism at home and abroad targeted women with the message that consumer goods could “free” them.<sup>537</sup> Rosenberg has written about Rosenthal and Maidenform, in particular about her trip to Moscow as part of an exchange program through the State Department. This section will build upon Rosenberg’s scholarship by showing how Rosenthal promoted herself and the products made by her company not only as an attractive face of the U.S. in the ideological Cold War, but also as part of the solution to the war. Could anything be more American than helping the U.S. win the Cold War?

Through public relations, Rosenthal insinuated that Maidenform could be part of a solution to the Cold War. Numerous newspaper articles discussed her plans to expand her brassiere empire into the Soviet Union. In a *Time Magazine* article “I Dreamed I was a Tycoon in My...” Rosenthal stated that she spent half of her time traveling around the world inspecting her “empire.”<sup>538</sup> After her multiple trips, Rosenthal felt qualified to weigh in on the state of women’s breasts around the world and came to the conclusion that the women of the world could improve by using Maidenform. *Time* stated that Rosenthal, “has her own version of aid to underdeveloped countries. Her fastest growing market is overseas, where traditionally bra-less European women are becoming more sophisticated, and women in many lands have newly emancipated themselves into Western dress. Maidenform is opening accounts even in the bare-breasted tropical islands...Mrs. Rosenthal plans to personally invade Russia, where she was born. ‘I’d like the Russian women to wear Maidenform bras...They’ll look better, they’ll feel

better, and maybe we'll get along better."<sup>539</sup> Maidenform's bras had appealed to women in numerous foreign countries already, so why not in the U.S.S.R.? The implication was that by helping improve the busts of women, Maidenform brassieres made them happier, which in turn benefited the whole country. A less direct implication was that the American form of consumerism that entered these various countries via Maidenform, improved the nations as well. Capitalism, joined to democracy, was a major defining difference in the great ideological divide of the Cold War.

Her public relations, as well as the media, positioned Rosenthal as a liminal figure—Russian and American, industrialist and female. She was born in Russia but became a thriving business owner in the U.S.—a real American success story. This national origin, along with her Russian language skills, made Rosenthal a choice go-between.<sup>540</sup> Rosenthal was not a government official but instead a less threatening business owner. She was not even a businessman but a *businesswoman*, which in the gender stereotypes of the time would make her a softer, more approachable messenger of the gospel of capitalism, better capable of influencing the women of the world, who were understood as the potential principal consumers. The year after the Cuban Missile Crisis, reportedly the closest that the two superpowers came to nuclear war, Rosenthal went to Russia.

Rosenthal's dreams of expansion into the Soviet Union were paired with her participation in a widely reported official State Department exchange program.<sup>541</sup> The Department of Commerce sponsored her three-week visit to the U.S.S.R. in 1963 as part of a delegation of manufacturers of soft goods. While in the U.S.S.R., she visited both manufacturing plants and retail stores. The *Oakland Tribune* reported on Rosenthal's activities with the usual flare that

accompanied stories on the “half-pint tycoon,” stating that she was “cheerfully looking about for new worlds to conquer and confidently planning an invasion of Russia.”<sup>542</sup> The article goes on to note that Rosenthal was both the only female member of the U.S. Department of Commerce’s mission to the U.S.S.R. and the first woman to meet with the Russians from American industry. The reporter stated that in doing so, “Mrs. Rosenthal fluttered the iron curtain like organza in a spring breeze.” Perhaps that statement was less exaggeration or rhetorical flourish than one might assume. For it was also reported that Rosenthal constantly fielded questions about Maidenform bras from Russians and in answer she took the intimate route, “she’d have to retire to whatever private room was available to allow inspection by females in the Russian delegation.”<sup>543</sup>

While Rosenthal could apply the personal, “womanly touch,” she was more frequently a creature of “manly” business. Even though she described her trip to Russia as more of a “diplomatic mission” than a business expedition, she still laid out her plans for the future in her characteristically straightforward manner. If a commercial treaty with the U.S.S.R. was installed, Rosenthal stated, Maidenform would export to Russia with prices competitive in the Soviet Union.<sup>544</sup> Or as a *New York Times* article put it, “by 1964, the Russian woman may be dreaming of going to the Bolshoi in her Maidenform bra.”<sup>545</sup> Rosenthal openly discussed the potential openings in the Soviet market. Russian women had brassieres, but she believed the quality was inferior. Russian bras, which upheld a body part whose size shifted frequently with changes in weight and hormone levels, had no elasticity. The bras only came in four sizes and did not correlate to letter sizes as did the American system. The Soviet woman, she bluntly claimed, “is badly in need of help.”<sup>546</sup>

Even though Maidenform's presence in over a hundred countries worldwide did not penetrate the iron curtain, Soviet women were still aware of Maidenform. Rosenthal informed a reporter that even before she had left on her trip to Russia she had received a letter from a woman in Omsk asking for a Maidenform bra.<sup>547</sup> Rosenthal recalled that the woman wanted it so that her "girls" would "be more comfortable." Rosenthal agreed to send her a bra in her size even though the woman informed her that she was going to take the bra apart so that she could replicate it.<sup>548</sup>

Soon after Rosenthal's trip abroad, Maidenform would successfully host Soviet visitors to the U.S. As Rosenthal had visited apparel factories in Moscow, Lviv, Kiev, Kishinev, and St. Petersburg, the Russian delegation visited Maidenform's plant in Bayonne, New Jersey.<sup>549</sup> In one image, a group of foreign visitors, with Rosenthal in the background, "marvel at the skillful fingers of Irma Peterson," a smartly dressed African American employee bedecked in pearls, working on a Maidenform bra. Strategic or not, the choice of Peterson in the factory tour, might have been a response to the Soviet attack on the dismal race relations in the United States. In a more sustained and formal way, Penny von Eschen outlined how Jazz musicians, especially African American males, were part of a Cold War propaganda tour sponsored by the U.S. government.<sup>550</sup> "The purpose" of these state sponsored exchanges Rosenthal stated, "is to get to know them and for them to understand us."<sup>551</sup> It was hoped that the development of mutual empathy based on experience rather than rhetoric, would go a long way toward establishing a rapprochement between the two governments.

After both exchanges were over, Rosenthal received a personalized letter of appreciation from the State Department.<sup>552</sup> The letter noted that her delegation "was especially effective in reflecting the proper image of our ideals and way of life to the Soviet people." Additionally, the

letter informed her that after the Soviet delegations visit to her New Jersey factory, they were “profoundly impressed not only with our industrial development but also with the hospitality of the American people and their overwhelming desire for peace.” The letter concluded that Rosenthal had “indeed demonstrated a commendable public spirit and have performed an important public service. This exchange...is a splendid example of effective cooperation between the United States Government and private industry, and I am grateful to you for your fine part in it.”<sup>553</sup>

Maidenform also received a commendation for allowing representatives from multiple foreign countries to view their production. Under the direction of the Foreign Operations Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), representatives from France, Denmark, Germany, England and Indonesia visited Maidenform facilities in order to observe a demonstration of the way an American industry worked. The goal was for these countries to take “American” skills back to their own countries and implement them successfully. This program was related to the Marshall Plan in that it intended to build up the infrastructures of war-decimated countries as well as present the U.S. as a “good neighbor.” As with the Marshall Plan, the motivation was to prevent the spread of non-democratic regimes that could cause instability and future war. For its efforts, Maidenform was awarded a U.S. Foreign Operations Administration’s Certificate of Cooperation for “...significant contributions to the achievement of the purposes of this program by furnishing technical assistance to selected representatives of cooperating countries.”<sup>554</sup>

Maidenform also hired war refugees fleeing from communist violence. *The Maiden Forum* published an article showing two women training Beatix Kesseru in the Perth Amboy factory in

New Jersey.<sup>555</sup> Following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, in which Hungarian insurgents unsuccessfully rose up against Soviet forces who crushed them and strengthened their hold over Hungary, many Hungarians like Kesseru and her family fled. Kesseru, her doctor husband, and their two children “borrowed” an ambulance to escape the turmoil. The article reported that the family was settling into their new life in the U.S., with Dr. Kesseru interning at a local hospital, the two youngsters attending public school, and “Mrs. Kesseru is with us.”<sup>556</sup> Maidenform demonstrated that they did their part officially and unofficially to encourage the success of democracy and the American Way.

Rosenthal’s efforts supported the Cold War rhetoric that the U.S. was a land of freedom built on consumer plenty and the U.S.S.R. was a less free place, especially for women, because they lacked robust consumerism. It is possible that Rosenthal’s actions led to greater understanding between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. She likely understood her role as a tool in the U.S.’s ideological arsenal that positioned the U.S. as superior to the Soviet Union because of its higher “quality of life.” This juxtaposition equated the availability of consumer goods and an attainable middle-class affluence with “real” freedom and equality. In the media, Rosenthal crafted herself a possible part of the solution to the Cold War because of her unique position as a Russian-speaking immigrant, a proven American patriot, and a flourishing international businesswoman.

Maidenform and Rosenthal’s activities during WWII and the Cold War established and reinforced the All-American status upon which the Maidenform Woman would become a symbol of the American Woman. During WWII, Maidenform contributed to the war effort by manufacturing “essential” goods, producing specialized products for the military, and supporting

current and former employees involved in the war effort. Only a brief respite was obtained between the end of WWII and the start of the Cold War but Maidenform was up to the task. The company continued its patriotic service during the Cold War through Ida Rosenthal's State Department exchanges with the U.S.S.R. As a former Russian national and a successful American businesswoman, she was a shrewd capitalist cheerleader. For the mutual benefit of her company and her adoptive country, she positioned her brassieres as a part of building a better world.

### “A Brassiere For Every Figure”: How Maidenform's Brassieres Shaped and Shifted the Meaning of the Female Figure

The construction of Maidenform's bras altered the visible outline of millions of women's physiques, participating in the creation of the symbolic American Woman's body during the early Cold War. Maidenform's Chansonette, the world's best-selling bra, with its circular stitched and conoidal shaped cup, created the prominent and pointed breast—a trademark of the postwar exaggerated hourglass figure. This voluptuous form dually represented the revival of a “traditional” female figure as well as a symbol of American vigor.

The study of brassieres and the way they mold the female figure provides an insightful way to examine the shifting meaning of women's bodies in twentieth century U.S. history. Jill Fields explores intimate apparel as historical and cultural signifiers, examining foundation garments “both as manufactured objects and cultural icons, intertwining their fabrication and distribution as mass-produced goods and objects of material culture with their construction and circulation as representations of the female body and producers of meaning.”<sup>57</sup> Brassieres are

particularly symbolic in that they shape breasts, historically perhaps the most visible and symbolic indicator of the physical difference between men and women.<sup>558</sup> Therefore, breasts and the way they are pulled up, pushed together, separated, enlarged, diminished, and enhanced by the changing fashion of brassieres is one of the most evocative ways to examine the meaning applied to particularly fashioned female bodies, reflecting the relationship between women and the larger culture they are so often seen as representing. Doubtlessly, individual women have also contributed their own meaning to their bodies, reinforcing but also often altering producer's designs. This study, however, focuses primarily on the less individualized and more institutional creation of meaning—the intersection between business, consumer culture, and national identity. This intersection provides an important component in understanding the cultural meaning of women's bodies.

Maidenform has participated in the construction of the American woman's figure throughout much of the twentieth century. As stated earlier, the name "Maidenform" was a reaction to the fashionable so-called boyish form of the 1920s. However, that youthful and boyish figure of the flapper was in itself a major shift from the "monobosom" of the earlier twentieth century. The first Maidenform bras were reportedly "little more than a piece of cloth with a few well placed darts," which did not uplift but held the breasts in place instead of flattening them. The construction of Maidenform's brassieres would change over time.

Maidenform's signature "uplift," which hoisted and separated the breasts, began in the Depression era and continued through the Cold War. Uplift was a reaction to the perceived masculinity of the 1920s figure with its suppressed bosom. Maidenform's style of uplift, which came into its own during the economic woes of the 1930s, gave greater emphasis to a larger more



rounded breast shape. Maidenform described its efforts in the form of uplift as “encourag[ing]women to be feminine rather than boyish in appearance and actions.<sup>559</sup> This was certainly much more natural and realistic than attempting to become a masculine duplicate.”

Reportedly, the original uplift bra, the Maidenette, was too radical and needed to be modified. Thereafter ensued a “slow process” of “education” to convince women they needed uplift. In 1934, Maidenform hit it big with the Holdtite, which was “extremely accentuated for the thirties, though not by today’s [1952] standards.”<sup>560</sup> After the Holdtite came the Overturn in 1935, which put Maidenform at the top of the brassiere industry, with competitors reproducing its designs. Adrienne Berney and Jill Fields explain why the uplift fashion took off in the 1930s. Fields argues that breasts in the Depression era were streamlined like the modern automobile, in that they “promoted form and disguised function.”<sup>561</sup> Fields claims that this more “feminine” shape was perhaps an attempt to assuage the injured masculinity precipitated by the large-scale male unemployment accompanied by the increased importance of women’s income.<sup>562</sup> While Maidenform promoted its brassieres as bringing back a “natural” feminine shape, Fields argues that uplift incorporated the fashion for youthfulness in the 1920s and the restoration of womanliness in the 1930s. The uplift created perkiness associated with youth by pulling the breasts up, thereby visually slimming the waist, and yet a “womanliness” was emphasized in the more mature look of larger, more prominent breasts.<sup>563</sup>

The drastic social upheavals resulting from total war influenced women’s fashion in the 1940s. Women wore pants more routinely as they took over deployed men’s jobs, but the substitutional practicality of trousers was not the only shift—pads broadened shoulders but hips remained slim, while breasts shifted from the softer shape of the 1930s into larger, pointed, and

arguably more aggressive “bazookas.”<sup>564</sup> If the 1930s bosom was stylized and standardized like a Ford fresh off the assembly line, the breasts of the 1940s were firm and bellicose like a torpedo or a fighter jet. Historian of the breast, Marilyn Yalom, stated that Maidenform’s cone-shaped Chansonette or “torpedo’ brassieres made each breast look like a projectile about to be launched.”<sup>565</sup> Fields suggests that these more prominent breasts were a way to deflect the more masculine wartime position of women by emphasizing the sexual difference above the waist.<sup>566</sup>

The simultaneous emphasis on sexual difference and military prowess as represented by the breasts, I argue, continued after WWII and into the early Cold War. Multiple scholars have noted the change in fashion in the postwar years as representing a return to the “traditional” feminine role as women were expected to give up their wartime work and return home. The celebration of the “homeward bound” female continued through the 1950s to the mid 1960s and was manifested in women’s fashion which emphasized a fertile hourglass figure and a kittenish sexuality. This was also evident in the fashionable shapes created by Maidenform. While postwar femininity was synched with domestic containment, this ultra-femininity also became associated with consumerism, democracy and freedom. Yet also discernible was a continuance of a version of the more martial femininity of WWII, this time related to America’s pugnacious Cold War stance.

#### Dream Girls: How Dream Ads became Symbolic Weapons in the Cold War

As Maidenform’s Dream campaign went abroad, it presented a multifaceted representation of Cold War American femininity, which simultaneously reinforced and challenged domestic containment. The Dream campaign, in its role as a symbol of the American Woman,

can be divided into the American Dream Girl and the American Amazonian. The American Dream Girl encompassed Cold War American femininity, embodying the relationship between gender, consumerism, and freedom. The American Dream Girl was a reflection of the “American way of life,” which was styled as proof of the U.S.’s superiority. Conversely, the American Amazonian was more closely related to the representation of the nation in the form of a woman than a personification of an ideal of actual American women. She was an embodiment of America’s superpower status and its determination to limit and diminish communism. The American Amazonian was a descendant of the WWII pinup—one not conforming to hegemonic gender roles and strictures on female sexuality. The American Dream Girl expressed the “American standard of living” in the form of an ideal but recognizable woman, whereas the more abstract qualities that made up the American Amazonian represented America’s superpower status. If the American Dream Girl was Miss America or a Hollywood starlet, the American Amazonian was Wonder Woman or a pinup painted on the nose of a Mustang fighter jet. Both troupes existed in the same Maidenform Woman. Although some images were more American Dream Girl than American Amazonian and vice versa, they overlapped to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore, the Dream ads may be viewed as representations of the relationship between America’s Cold War foreign policy, its domestic culture, and the porous way this dynamic was manifested in the image of the American Woman.

The Maidenform Woman emerged from the historical use of the image of women in consumer culture to represent the U.S. domestically and abroad. Images of women in fashion and advertising represented both the ideal American Woman, as well as the personification of the nation and its “way of life.” Emily Rosenberg has argued for the central role of women’s images

in the process of Americanization and modernization from 1900 to the 1960s.<sup>567</sup> The image of the “new woman” in American advertising featured idealized women who were slim, mobile, independent, consuming and enjoying their leisure time; in other words, the modern female consumer. The message was circular—the images of this modern woman showed that America was modern, and modernity meant consumption, and consumption was equated with freedom, which equaled the modern American woman. The Maidenform Woman continued this metaphor, yet also revealed the fluidity of these concepts.

With the onset of the Cold War and the ideological battle between communism and capitalist-democracy, this message of the American Way embodied in the image of a pretty young white woman gained even greater currency. Rosenberg has discussed how the American Look was used to woo over women across the globe. The American Look turned what was typically seen as gauche about American consumerism—casual, mass-produced fashion—into its greatest asset. The American Look was represented by active, young, pretty, Northern European-looking women, replete with the physical conditions produced by abundance and wealth—good nutrition that yielded long legs attached to slim, healthy figures and open smiles featuring straight white teeth.

The American Look was a fashion of women’s clothing and also a representation of American women. The American Look could be purchased—it was not a result of biology and therefore was ostensibly attainable by anyone. After all, America was a land of immigrants with a culture of (assimilation through) consumerism, hence Americans (and the American Way) were made, not born. Consequently, Rosenberg argues, the attractions exemplified in the American Look challenged communist’s claims that women were oppressed by capitalism.<sup>568</sup> Rosenberg

also points out that in an era of hyper-masculine rhetoric, America's representation in the form of a woman is intriguing and that "historians should recognize the America-as-woman trope as perhaps America's most attractive face during the early Cold War years."<sup>569</sup>

Maidenform's Dream campaign, featuring beautiful, fun-loving, independent young American women certainly put forth an appealing image of America and questioned communist assertions that Soviet women were freer than American women. The 1959 International Trade Show in Moscow is famous for the "Kitchen Debate," which pitted American-style consumerism as beneficial to women against Soviet-style gender-equality. At the U.S. Exhibition, Vice President Richard Nixon argued that the American woman was better off than the Soviet woman because of America's labor-saving household consumer goods and spacious middle-class homes. Nixon told Premier Nikita Khrushchev that, "In America, we like to make life easier for women."<sup>570</sup> Khrushchev scoffed at Nixon's consumerism of planned obsolescence and the purported benefits it granted housewives. Khrushchev biting retorted (as translated into English), "Your capitalistic attitude toward women does not occur under Communism." Khrushchev continued to defend the U.S.S.R.'s version of freedom, versus the Americans' rhetoric of choice. "In Russia, all you have to do to get a house is to be born in the Soviet Union. You are entitled to housing...In America, if you don't have a dollar you have a right to choose between sleeping in a house or on the pavement. Yet you say we are the slave to communism."<sup>571</sup> Khrushchev may have made some persuasive points but the U.S.'s display of televisions, cosmetics, fashion, and glossy automobiles dazzled the Russian visitors. Earlier the same day at the Ampex Corporation booth, another heated discussion between Nixon and Khrushchev was taped on a new American color television. Khrushchev uttered the fateful

words, “Let’s Compete! Who can produce the most goods for the people, that system is better and it will win.”<sup>572</sup> Khrushchev’s statement seemingly gave some legitimacy to American-style consumerism and entered the U.S.S.R. into a contest it could not (and arguably as supposedly communist system should not) win.

Maidenform had been exporting products abroad since 1930 but it was not until the postwar period that it started making significant profits through its international sales. Exportation began in Latin America and then went into Northern Europe in 1934 where exports totaled a meager \$56,000. During WWII Maidenform’s exports expanded, ranging from \$278,076 to \$564,080, and by 1947 they were over a million. By 1951 they were over two million, and in 1954 exports were almost three million with the number of foreign markets having doubled over the preceding eight years.<sup>573</sup> Perhaps more important than the monetary figures and the quantity of brassieres exported abroad, was the ideological message Maidenform was selling to its foreign customers. The message was that the American Woman, and by proxy the U.S., was glamorous, adventurous and free. The U.S. and its women were able to attain these qualities through consumerism. Maidenform wanted to give the women of the world the same opportunity. Rosenberg has noted that the Dream ads were popular internationally because they showed a certain playfulness, featured women who were confident in their bodies, had an elasticity in meaning which allowed women to dream, and many of them “seemed gender blind in a very gender-sighted era.”<sup>574</sup>

Maidenform did not deem it necessary to change the product nor the message for foreign consumers. Maidenform advertisements, like the actual brassieres, were tailored very little, if at all, to its over one-hundred foreign markets. Usually, only the language would be changed, if even

that was altered. If the subject or wording of an ad did not translate well, the ad might be omitted or slightly modified; but as Maidenform was keen on maintaining its ads as “universally uniform,” all creative material and modifications were done in the United States.<sup>575</sup> This meant that around the world, the Maidenform Woman, dreaming with her bra exposed, provided a very consistent symbol. Some of the more risqué ads went abroad right along with the more conventional representations. For example, in Belgium, the Maidenform Woman dreamed she was a 1930s style Hollywood vamp. In Italy, she was a Wild West outlaw who dreamed she was “wanted.” And in Latin America, the Maidenform Woman leading the pack in a Roman charioteer race dreamed she was “driving them wild.”<sup>576</sup>

Maidenform and Rosenthal had a “one-world” philosophy that deemed that the American Way was, or would become, the standard. Sol Rubenstein, head of Maidenform exports wrote, “[w]e are often asked whether we make special bras or special adaptations for our foreign market. The answer is ‘No!’ By supplying and catering to the great range of American figures, we are catering and supplying to the great range and varieties of figure types that exist in different parts of the world.”<sup>577</sup> To Rubenstein, American women’s figures were representative of the women of the world as well as deemed the best figures on Earth. He explained, “Bras are essentially an American development and are associated with the figure and shape of the American woman which is considered to be the best in the world.”<sup>578</sup> After all, the American woman’s figure was associated with American prosperity. After a visit to a post-Marshall Plan Europe, Rubenstein was “impressed with the growing consciousness on the part of European women with regard to their appearance.” This increased attentiveness to their physical beauty, Rubenstein believed,

was a direct result of women's increased economic situation that allowed them to be able to afford and desire American goods.<sup>579</sup>

Countries around the world from Hong Kong to South Africa converted store windows into Dream-ads-come-to-life. Maidenform frequently encouraged these lavish and playful displays, as well as contests, through visits from Ida Rosenthal and other executives. A store window in Costa Rica was packed with numerous Maidenform bras, a mannequin dressed as the ever-popular Cleopatra from one of the several Dream ads with this theme, and a car being raffled off among customers who spent at least twenty dollars.<sup>580</sup> A store in Rhodesia (contemporary Zimbabwe) featured a store window with a (European-looking) live model dressed as a scantily clad Cleopatra with a bejeweled bra and see-through sequenced skirt. L'Innovation, one of Brussel's largest department stores, hosted a "gala American Fair" featuring Maidenform. A sign in the window read "Rediscover America at L'Innovation."<sup>581</sup> The connection between selling Maidenform and selling America was clear.

The adaptation of the Dream ads also manifested in fashion shows and parades. In Trinidad there was a particularly festive spectacular. In carnival-fashion, Maidenform-clad women displayed huge metallic fan shaped signs with fringe and feathers displaying names of bras like "Chansonette" or just "Maidenform." The "I Dreamed I drove them wild" ad was recreated, complete with a horse-drawn chariot with the added addition of a Roman sentinel.<sup>582</sup> In Singapore, a fashion show was held which combined American and Singaporean styles. Anglo-Saxon looking models sashayed down a catwalk with blond beehive hairdos, kitten heels, and traditional Singaporean skirts—baring their Maidenform bras, of course.<sup>583</sup> Maidenform participated in and encouraged the association of its brand with the U.S. around the world.



The American Dream Girl in the context of Maidenform's Dream campaign was symbolic of the relationship between gender, consumerism, and patriotism inherent in domestic containment. The American Dream Girl was the personification of the American Way of Life. Historians have argued that the female body was used to resolve the transition from WWII to a peacetime economy and culture.<sup>584</sup> Elaine Tyler May argues that starting during WWII, pinups and propaganda encouraged the fighting male population to see themselves as fighting for the "good life," which meant the all-American girl, domestic bliss, and the consumerist ideal. In order to create this middle-class lifestyle for returning soldiers, women were encouraged to leave their patriotic-but-no-longer-necessary wartime duties and return to the domestic sphere. Patriotic women were no longer depicted as workers, but as wives, mothers, and consumers. Since men were seen as the de facto primary breadwinners, low wages for women were justified by the logic of the "family wage," which assumed that women's incomes were merely supplemental (even single women), which only furthered women's dependence on a male earner.

The influence of containment on gender roles, families, and sexuality, furthered the postwar pressure to conform to an American ideal.<sup>585</sup> The rhetoric of containment taught that the suburban middle-class lifestyle was the best bulwark to the threat of domestic communism. Heterosexual couples were encouraged to marry younger and have kids earlier. Deviation from the norm was linked to communism and came with serious consequences, as homosexuals targeted during the Lavender Scare were all too aware. Experts believed that female sexuality could and should be contained within suburbia through the confines of a monogamous heterosexual marriage. Undomesticated female sexuality was associated with mortal danger. For example, a sexy female was a "bombshell," and the bikini, the new risqué two-piece bathing suit

fashion, was named after the island location of the first H-bomb test. Freedom was seen as alleviation from the fear of the communists and their nuclear weapons. But this freedom could only come from containment.<sup>586</sup>

Part of Maidenform's success in the Dream campaign was the inclusion of popular fashion, especially the New Look, which became synonymous with postwar affluence. Even though French clothing designer Christian Dior developed the New Look, it was adapted by American fashion designers and became a signature look of postwar America. The New Look and its many imitators featured cinched waists and expanded busts and hips creating an exaggerated hourglass figure. The abundant use of fabric in the voluminous skirt signified a repudiation of the economic hardships and frugality of the Great Depression and WWII. The fashion symbolized an ability to obtain and spend excess income on luxuries like fabric. In WWII, women's fashion was utilitarian—created with women's ability to work their wartime jobs efficiently, effectively and safely in mind. In contrast, the New Look with its relatively cumbersome and restricting design, indicated that the women who wore the New Look were women of affluence and leisure.<sup>587</sup> Maidenform's fashion-forward approach and its interpretation of the New Look had, according to the *Maidenform Mirror*, made “Maidenform the biggest name in brassieres...the same approach that has made America the best dressed, the best fed, the best housed, the best ‘automobile-d’ people in the world!”<sup>588</sup>

The contradictions of postwar fashion, as typified by the curvaceous New Look fashion, has parallels to domestic containment. The New Look was more “feminine” than WWII fashion and was characterized by both a heightened restrictiveness and an emphasis on an hourglass silhouette. The minimized waists necessitated a return to corset-like undergarments, while the

prominent breasts demanded more structured cups. Historians have remarked on the obsession with large breasts in the postwar era and the role this emphasis played in the renewed cultural differentiation between men and women.<sup>589</sup> This early Cold War physique with its ample breasts arguably signified the increased importance of fertility, which, presumably, was highly prized in the era of the baby boom. Yet Barbara Coleman has noted how breasts became more symbolic of sexuality than maternity. She notes that sixty percent of women reportedly breastfed their babies in 1950 but only thirty-eight percent in 1960.<sup>590</sup> Yet structured foundation garments not only amplified curves, they also prevented the visible jiggle of flesh underneath clothes which might hold associations of wanton sexuality by reminding the viewer just what was underneath that silhouette. Postwar undergarments exaggerated and restricted the visible signs of sexuality. Through fashion, women were given a message of freedom through control.<sup>591</sup> The New Look and the brassieres it necessitated were illustrative of the contradictory messages of female sexuality, domestic containment, and America's superpower status.

Like the New Look fashion, the Dream ads celebrated postwar affluence but virtually none of the Dream ads themselves took place in the domestic sphere.<sup>592</sup> There were no hints that the Dreamers were married or had children. The Dream girls were not representative of the domestic womanhood that was so lauded in the postwar era. Nonetheless, the Dream Girls were still very much a product of domestic containment. The influence of domestic containment was manifested through the emphasis on American women as consumers and as symbolic of a particular postwar definition of freedom. Still, the ads themselves sometimes suggested an idea of freedom beyond the boundaries of domestic containment. That such a popular campaign

allowed for interpretations of freedom that were not always aligned with domestic containment suggests that fissures existed even in rather mainstream popular culture.<sup>593</sup>

The American Dream Girl was evident in the Dream campaign's first two ads, both released in 1949 and with the tagline, "I dreamed I went shopping in my Maidenform bra." As mentioned previously, the very first Maidenform Dream ad featured a Dreamer strolling through an illustrated supermarket. Oil, potatoes, bread, cheese and eggs tumbled from a tree of plenty in the background. The ecstatic Dreamer held her shopping bag in one hand and a link of sausages in the other. Behind her to the right were shelves filled with manufactured convenience foods in cans, boxes, and jars — all the nutrient rich goods a mother needs to feed her family. This Dream ad exuded more wholesome American abundance than sex appeal. The Dreamer in her pearl necklace was going about a mundane task perfectly suitable for a suburban housewife. To reinforce that she was dreaming, she was depicted barefoot and in a fantastical grocery store. Compared to later dreams, this first was rather tame. Unsurprisingly, this first Dream ad is frequently forgotten and the second version of "I dreamed I went shopping in my Maidenform bra" is often remembered as the first.

Later the same year, Maidenform debuted what was arguably a replacement of the first advertisement. This one much was more characteristic of what the campaign would become as a whole. Instead of shopping for wholesome food for her family, this time, the Dreamer was indulging in a little personal retail therapy. The shopping Dreamer leaned against a gilded table covered with fancy hats. She held up a hand mirror to admire the wide-brimmed black hat she has tried on to match her black opera length gloves, strappy black heels, and black belt, which accentuated her impossibly narrow waist. But what stood out against the background was her

pristine white flowing skirt and matching bright white pointed Maidenform bra. If it were not for the missing blouse, the Dreamer would resemble a wealthy American woman treating herself to a day of shopping in Manhattan. The proud look on her face was not of someone who dreams of the good life but of one who knows it well. This second Dream girl was ultra feminine but not domestic. She was self-indulgent, not maternal. As this example of the first two Dream ads show, the campaign quickly shifted from a more contained early Cold War female to the American Dream Girl.

The Dream ads emphasized the American Dream Girl's glamorous life. She went to the theater and the opera, sailed for Europe, lived in a castle, was a social butterfly, a regent, and a fashion model. These visions of affluence echoed the sentiment that a benefit of American freedom was the opportunity for an opulent lifestyle. Many of the ads pushed the bounds of the fantastical, mirroring the idea that in America the sky was the limit. Various ads featured women who dreamed they were the Venus de Milo, a jigsaw puzzle, the queen of hearts and even a brand trademark. These Dreams show the imaginative spirit permitted in a democracy. None of these ads, however, featured an overt sexuality despite the fact that they were exposing the woman's bras. Most of the women in the ads were lost in their dreams, unaware of the viewer.<sup>594</sup> If they were looking directly at the viewer, like the woman who dreamed she was queen, it was with a distinct haughtiness. The look communicates that she is fabulous all by herself; she requires no adulation from a mere spectator. The focus of these ads was on the beauty of the Anglo-Saxon Dreamers and the glamorous lives they led or at least envisioned for themselves.

Some Dream ads took the idea of freedom beyond consumption and breached the gender norms. Many of the ads featured women dreaming things that were far from acceptable female behavior. In one ad a woman dreamed she won an election, in another she was a “fireman” and in still another a private eye. She also pitched in the World Series, went campaigning, and was a Toreador. Again, the tone of these ads were not overtly erotic. Occasionally the women’s expressions were playful but, mostly, they were taking these dreams seriously. The Dream ads hinted that once given freedom, American women might interpret it in ways that exceeded traditional gender roles. American women could dream of anything, and dreaming was the first step to doing. These women who were not “contained” were the American Amazonians.

Another invocation of the American Amazonian was a more self-aware sexuality. Jill Fields argues that the increased prominence of breasts in the postwar reflects not just an interest in the increased separation between men and women but also a way for women to reclaim power through glamour.<sup>595</sup> In these ads, the women seemed to be aware of the spectator. More than that, they seem to revel in puns and exhibit a playful knowingness. A clear sense of confidence was displayed in one ad, which featured a fur-clad woman with her arms spread wide, holding up her trophy and basking in the glory of “stealing the show.” The presumed runner-up, an adorable West Highland Terrier, stands alone with the remaining trophies in the background. The dreamer was so dazzling that she, a human, was able to win at a dog show. Her arms spread out in a sort of “ta-dah! Here I am!” gesture that was common to this type of ad. The gesture was included in an ad that featured a Marilyn Monroe-esque model dressed as a boxer with the tagline, “I dreamed I was a knockout.” The same mannerism was also in another ad that had the Dreamer halting a steaming train, with the caption, “I dreamed I stopped them in their tracks.” This

dreamer in her red fringed pants with matching bullfighter's muleta, appeared to have played chicken with the locomotive and won. Like a bullfighter, she showed fortitude and pluck, but unlike the traditional male bullfighter, she did it all in heels—and of course her Maidenform bra. The wit and boldness evident in these ads exemplified the unfettered confidence of the American woman—and of the nation itself.

The incarnation of a fearless sexuality palpable in the image of the American Amazonian owes much to the lineage of the WWII pin-up. The WWII pin-ups not only gave solace and hope to the young men fighting abroad but also stood as a symbol of a martial nation in the form of a sexually alluring female. Historians disagree on the origins of the pinup. Despina Kakoudaki claims that the pinup harkens back to the mid nineteenth century and the *cartes postales* and was reincarnated in the 1890s with images of the Gibson Girl.<sup>596</sup> Marie Elena Buszek, on the other hand, traces the pin-up to Hollywood in the 1910s.<sup>597</sup> Historians do agree that the pin-up girl was originally a product of consumer culture but was usurped by the war effort where she took on a variety of new meanings. Whatever her lineage, the pin-up of WWII became a symbol of the American Woman and a weapon of sexuality.

The WWII pin-up was used to simultaneously boost the morale of American (heterosexual) men by creating “erect” soldiers, and as a weapon by emasculating or “spending” the enemy's masculine energy.<sup>598</sup> This dynamic was perhaps most evident in the 1941 MGM cartoon “Blitz Wolf” by Director Tex Avery.<sup>599</sup> This well-known cartoon re-imagined the big bad wolf and the three little piggies into Hitler as the wolf and the pigs, especially one ultra-prepared General pig, as the United States. During the wolf versus pigs battle, the Wolf sends over a bomb to kill the pigs. As the bomb enters the pigs' territory the pigs show the bomb an

image of an American pin-up. The bomb, liking what he sees leaves and returns with a bunch of other interested bomb friends. The group of bombs stop to admire the lovely girl until their efforts lead to their deactivation. The bombs drop to the floor, rendering themselves harmless and cleaning out the wolf's supply of weaponry. The pin-up was used as a weapon by causing erotic arousal in the enemy. American women, in the form of the pin-up, simultaneously boosted the sexual energy of her soldiers, leaving them virile, and wrested the sexual energy of her enemies, leaving them effete. Kakoudaki argues that this "glorified the 'American Girl' with xenophobic and homophobic sentiments."<sup>600</sup>

The imagery most closely associated with WWII pin-ups are the works of George Petty and Alberto Vargas for *Esquire Magazine*.<sup>601</sup> Beginning in the 1930s, *Esquire*, the magazine for men, had printed idealized drawings and paintings of beautiful, scantily clad women. These images became wildly popular in WWII and were sent to soldiers by popular publications like *Esquire*, *Family Home Circle*, and *Yank* (a government produced magazine especially for the military. The name is presumably short for Yankee).<sup>602</sup> Copies of Petty's and Vargas' pin-ups were painted by US soldiers onto military planes and bombs. This transfer of women to weaponry, which the pin-up animates and physically embodies, helped to make them allegorical.<sup>603</sup> According to Kakoudaki, the WWII pin-up was appropriated by the military industrial complex and mixed propaganda and pornography to create the ideal woman, a New Woman, a talisman, and a weapon.<sup>604</sup>

Marie Elena Buszek in *Pin-up Grrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* connects pin-ups to real women. Vargas' images, Buszek notes, were combinations of Hollywood fantasies and ordinary American women on the homefront. She continues that "[t]his juxtaposition of



fantasy and reality in Vargas's work reflected American propaganda campaigns that encouraged women to emulate and men to idolize female types normally vilified during peacetime and actively discouraged during the depression—powerful, productive women in professions and the military, whose beauty and bravery resulted in large part from their very entry into those spheres.<sup>605</sup> Vargas' pin-ups made clear that this new sexually assertive American woman's appeal stemmed from their authorized admission into traditionally male spheres as factory workers and military personnel.<sup>606</sup> Furthering the connection between pin-ups and actual women was the popularity of photography of real women who posed as pin-ups. Most famously, movie star Betty Grable posed for a photograph in a bathing suit, showing off her “million dollar legs.” From 1942 to 1945, 20,000 copies of Grable's photo were distributed each week.<sup>607</sup> “Homemade” pin-up photography also became popular as the visibility and acceptability of pin-up images became more prevalent.<sup>608</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz argues that pin-ups were attractive to women because they were seen as active, dangerous, and self-possessed sexual agents.<sup>609</sup>

This new type of sexuality in real women could, of course, be portrayed in a different ways. While Buszek notes that a more adventurous female sexuality was tolerated evidenced by the non-derogatory names given to sexually active women—khaki-wakis, victory girls, and good-time Charlottes—it should also be noted that working women in factories were sometimes blamed for being distractions to their male co-workers. (Even Maidenform referred to this potential in their dash to get bras considered vital goods during WWII). This judgment resulted in limiting acceptable work attire, as well as the prevalence of propaganda blaming “booby traps” for the spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, which temporarily resulted in the removal of male soldiers from active duty.<sup>610</sup>

After WWII, pin-ups returned to their consumer roots. But now consumption was part of the Cold War effort and so, as I have argued, were the Maidenform Dream ads. If WWII pin-ups symbolized the patriotic American spirit, the Maidenform's Dreamers embodied the Super Power of the Cold War era. The Dreamers as Cold War pin-ups maintained some of the qualities of the WWII pin-up. The Maidenform Dreamers continued the promotion of an "American beauty" which idealized Anglo-Saxon features and large prominent breasts. The Dream Girl continued to be a woman outside of the confines of marriage or the domestic realm. She also continued to be sexually open and transcended traditional gender boundaries. However, since the Dreamer was fighting a "cold" rather than a "hot" war, she was not painted on the nose of fighter jets. Instead, she was plastered on billboards, in magazines and newspapers, and store windows. The Maidenform Dreamer was the embodiment of the American Dream and as the embodiment of a strong America was still a kind of warrior.

The Dream campaign projected a dual symbol of Cold War American womanhood in the U.S. and around the world. As the American Dream Girl, the Maidenform Woman became the embodiment of the nation and the American Way, symbolizing consumerism, freedom and Anglo-Saxon beauty. At the same time, however, the Maidenform Woman could also be the bombshell in a bullet bra; as the femme fatale, she represented a dangerous female sexuality that may be seen as a weapon during the Cold War. If Ida Rosenthal was a Cold War Warrior, the Maidenform woman in the Dream ads was an American Amazonian defending her nation by expanding consumerism. This representation may be interpreted as propagating a bold female eroticism as well as subverting gender ideals, which in turn may be viewed as a foil to domestic containment,

which attempted to “contain” female sexuality. If the American Woman was the freest woman in the world, what was to stop her from expressing self-determination in her gender and sexuality?

### Post-War Pin-ups: Comparing Maidenform and Playboy

*Playboy Magazine*, the most famous producer of postwar pin-ups, was conceived by Hugh Hefner as a manifestation of a new American masculinity in opposition to the bourgeois masculinity of the postwar period. Both Maidenform and *Playboy* utilized consumerism and images of partially clad female bodies to emphasize (a gendered) American freedom. *Playboy* utilized images of pin-ups to reinforce heterosexual masculinity and to counterbalance its association with consumerism, which was largely associated with women. The new Cold War masculinity fostered by *Playboy* emphasized freedom, which meant the freedom to have fun and be promiscuous, delaying the seeming inevitability of the prevalent masculine role of committed breadwinner and family man. By comparing the Playboy bunny to the Maidenform Woman, the complexity of the Maidenform Woman as a symbol of a new American womanhood becomes more apparent.

Buszek writes that the “[p]ost-war repression begets the postwar pin-up.”<sup>611</sup> Scholars have noted a change in the style of pin-ups during the early Cold War. The image, poses, styles, and body types of pin-ups lauded during WWII were deemed too erotic and too aggressive for the period of domestic containment.<sup>612</sup> Magazines like *Esquire* and *Life*, which were pioneers in the publication of wartime pin-ups, started to deemphasize or eliminate the images as women’s groups protested their inclusion in popular family and literary magazines.<sup>613</sup> Pin-ups were generally split into two categories, images that could function as wholesome representations used

in consumer and popular culture, and those that were not suitable for general view and were relegated to the category of pornography.<sup>614</sup> The acceptable image of the pin-up was a Marilyn Monroe type—an overt but naïve and childlike sexuality.<sup>615</sup> This harmless “dizzy blonde” or “girl next door” imagery has been interpreted as a rebuke of the femme fatales of the WWII period.<sup>616</sup> *Playboy* was the most infamous producer and promoter of this representation of female sexuality. *Playboy* creator, Hefner wrote of his publication’s particular predilection, “*Playboy* is not interested in the mysterious, difficult woman, the femme fatale, who wears elegant underwear, with lace...[such women are] sad, and somehow mentally filthy.”<sup>617</sup>

Hefner was influenced by the famous Kinsey Reports that exposed the distance between the ideal and the reality of sexual behavior, which was especially disconcerting in an era when “sexual deviance” was linked to communism. Dr. Alfred Kinsey published the *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948 and the *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953, based on his own research.<sup>618</sup> The best-selling and highly controversial books implicitly questioned the twentieth century’s hardening of sexual identifications based upon sexual actions. Dr. Kinsey suggested that human sexuality was not an “either/or” proposition but should instead be placed on a sliding scale, which considered desire as well as action. The scale ranged from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual with five different categories in between. More controversial was Kinsey’s statistical data based on interviews, which argued that women were more like men in their robust sexual appetites than seemed decent and maybe even patriotic. Kinsey stated that one in six men and one in ten women were unfaithful during marriage; twenty-two percent of men and twelve percent of women were sadomasochists; and feasibly the worst case of all, eight-five percent of men and fifty percent of women had premarital sex. Extra marital

affairs, and particularly sadomasochism, were not frequent topics of polite society, but the eradication of premarital female sexuality was a hot topic of public service announcements and behavioral guides. With the social emphasis on controlling sexual behavior, particularly that of women, sexuality was frequently examined, inspected and surveyed.<sup>619</sup>

*Playboy* created an emblem of masculinity during the Cold War era that stood in opposition to the prevailing male role. Hefner, a former employee at *Esquire*, formed *Playboy* as a more risqué version of *Esquire* but for an exclusively male audience.<sup>620</sup> *Playboy* debuted in 1953 with an unaffiliated photo spread of Marilyn Monroe taken in 1949 that Hefner found by serendipity, and purchased the publishing rights for five-hundred dollars.<sup>621</sup> Bill Osgerby argues that Hefner and *Playboy* captured a new masculinity aligned with the rising consumer society of the postwar period. This masculinity emphasized self-conscious consumption, individuality and stylish self-expression. He argues that *Playboy* “colonized the feminine,” which included cooking, the interior sphere, décor, fashion, and especially consumption.<sup>622</sup> In order to counteract an association with a feminized masculinity, or heaven forbid, homosexuality, *Playboy* promulgated the sexual objectification of women in the form of the pin-up.<sup>623</sup>

Scholars have interpreted the use of pin-ups in *Playboy* differently. Osgerby sees the creation of a new masculinity coming at the expense of women. He claims that the “girl-next-door” character of the Playboy bunny, “extended – by implication – the process of sexual objectification to women in general, the magazine encouraging its readers to think of all women as pin-up fodder.”<sup>624</sup> Osgerby claims that Hefner publicly supported feminism, giving money to NOW and the National Institute for Working Women but privately Hefner encouraged his

magazine to write articles on radical feminists, “our natural enemy,” that would be “a devastating piece that takes militants apart.”<sup>625</sup>

Another interpretation proposes that *Playboy's* pin-up imagery offered a space for female sexuality without disapproval from the society at large. Carrie Pitzulo acknowledges an early era of hostility towards women as a response to a “crisis of masculinity” in the postwar period. This “crisis” was a reaction to what white middle-class men viewed as an upset of traditional power structures including an increase of women in the workforce, the “controlling” domestic woman, emasculating corporate middle-management jobs, and challenges to white supremacy by the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>626</sup> But, Pitzulo argues, *Playboy* moved to an atmosphere of respect for women, in particular, a recognition and approval of their natural sexuality. “By sexualizing the girl-next-door,” through the centerfolds and the model’s biographies, Pitzulo claims that, “Hefner granted the same sexuality to the women *Playboy* represented—the secretaries, neighbors, girlfriends, and colleagues that Hefner told readers could be found all around them.”<sup>627</sup> Therefore, *Playboy* suggested that all women, even “good” marriageable women, could be sexual.<sup>628</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz also sees a more empowering view of *Playboy* evident in women’s letters to the editor, in which they asserted their right to enjoy sexual fun.<sup>629</sup>

Whether or not a sexual agency was available to women through *Playboy's* images of pin-ups does not change the fact that it was through these images that a new masculinity based on “freedom” was defined. *Playboy's* new version of masculinity, while differing from the ideal suburban father and breadwinner, still aligned with an American Cold War ideology which emphasized the importance of the individual and a free society, the pursuit of happiness, and a free-market capitalist system.<sup>630</sup> *Playboy's* masculinity meant freedom from “stifling” postwar

ideas about sexuality, and the freedom to prolong bachelorhood, put off young monogamous marriages and children, express oneself through consumerism while maintaining manliness, and enjoy the fruits of an affluent postwar society, which in many ways had been created for the benefit of these same white middle-class men.

The Maidenform Woman, like *Playboy*, offered an alternative to the dominant ideal of gender identity through a reworking of the idea of freedom. Also similar to *Playboy*, this new femininity was articulated through images of scantily clad women and a relationship with consumerism. However, the Maidenform Woman had more in common with assertive counter-culture pinups, embodied by women such as Bettie Page, than with a Playboy bunny. Perhaps indicative of this dynamic is a comic in *Playboy* that spoofed the Dream campaign.<sup>631</sup> The drawing featured a couple sitting together on a nighttime carriage ride through a moonlit park. The older gentleman in a tux was eyeing his much younger buxom but oblivious female companion dressed in an evening gown. The caption read, “I Dreamed I was removing your Maidenform bra.” The woman’s exaggeratedly large pointed bust parodies Maidenform’s signature “bullet bra” look. But unlike the Dream ads, the woman’s caricatured figure in conjunction with her unaware expression and fully clothed body render this a male fantasy. Unlike the Dream ads, the assumed viewer was male.

At first it may seem counterintuitive that the *Playboy* comic, a product of the male gaze, features a fully dressed woman, while in the Dream campaign, which I argue was a product of a female gaze, presented a partially dressed female figure. In Dream ads, it was a lone woman who was living out her own fantasy while partially dressed. It was the female gaze that was being catered to. The exposure of her bra was an expression of the risk she was taking and the freedom

she was embodying. She undressed for herself as an act of empowerment not as an act of voyeurism for a male audience. With the exception of two ads, the Dream Campaign does not include nor directly imply men in any way.<sup>632</sup> If people other than the Dreamer were included in the ad, which was infrequent, they were women who were assisting in the fantasy.<sup>633</sup>

The Dream campaign was open to interpretation, allowing for a myriad of different perspectives. Maidenform used images of women exposing their bras and dreaming they were doing a variety of interesting activities in order to allow the female viewer and potential customer to imagine themselves as the fun-loving Dreamers. Identifying with the Dreamers, female viewers could act as the Dreamer and transgress “contained” female sexuality. Yet the female viewer could also identify with the Dreamer as subject and view the Dreamer as an object of heterosexual male desire. John Berger notes that “women watch themselves being looked at...the surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female.”<sup>634</sup> Since the Dream ads were widely circulated, the female viewer would be aware of a male audience’s objective gaze. If the female viewer identified with the Dreamer, she could be aware that her fantasy was being observed. She could observe herself being seen. This formulation of gendered looking and the gaze of course owes much to art history and especially feminist film theory.<sup>635</sup>

This view generally assumes a (male) heterosexual perspective. However, the Dream campaign does not necessitate an exclusively heterosexual dynamic. Instead, a female viewer could see the Dreamer as an object of her own sexual desire. The female viewer could also identify with the Dreamer and simultaneously see the Dreamer as an object of desire. She may desire to be the Dreamer and desire the Dreamer herself. The visual formulation of the Dream campaign lent itself just as easily to a lesbian gaze. The female spectator may also employ what



I would call a “pan-sexual gaze,” meaning that she may apply part or all of the heterosexual female gaze and the homosexual female gaze. The female spectator does not necessarily need to adopt the male gaze ala Laura Mulvey, nor masquerade ala Mary Ann Doane.<sup>636</sup> Instead, she may cycle through or experience desire and identification simultaneously or in multiple configurations.

The suggestion of how female spectators might have interpreted the ads does not necessarily imply creative intent. It is improbable that the creators of the ads consciously constructed the campaign with the intention that it could be interpreted by the female spectator (or potential female consumer) in a specifically pan-sexual manner.<sup>637</sup> Yet as argued in the previous chapter, the use of MR by NCK and Maidenform genuinely attempted to take into account the “woman’s perspective.” Additionally, the ads were intentionally concentrated in magazines, a medium which allows for the private, long-term gaze, and at least some of the women involved in the creation self-identified as feminists.<sup>638</sup> Furthermore, the images themselves were ambiguous enough to invite a myriad of interpretations. Inherent in the ads was a version of freedom that went beyond the bounds of the norms of postwar society. The ads included imagery of unsanctioned, even normalized unmarried and undomesticated, possibly gender-transgressing female sexuality. While the campaign was a product of the social conditions created by domestic containment, it also represents the limits of that same containment. The enormous success of this ad campaign probably stems for the openness of its meaning.

This ambiguity places the Dream ads closer to counterculture versions of the Cold War pin-up than the Playboy bunny. The more direct sexuality of the WWII pin-up was continued in counterculture magazines like *Focus*, *Fantastique*, *High Heels*, and the most popular, *Bizarre*

magazine, which launched the career of Betty Page.<sup>639</sup> Buszek notes that the Cold War pin-up “capitalized on the dearth of openly transgressive female models in the 1950s and the era’s willingness to (re)construct women’s sexuality in simplistic, one-dimensional manner.”<sup>640</sup> The most famous of the postwar pin-ups is Betty Page. Popular during her own era, she still has a cult following for her burlesque style. Photographs of Betty Page, frequently taken by female photographer Bunny Yates, celebrated and parodied the pin-up genre mixing humor, cheesecake, bondage, Sadomasochism, and self-conscious theatrics.<sup>641</sup>

While Maidenform’s Dream campaign was undoubtedly less subversive than counterculture pin-ups like Betty Page, it was more widely visible and more socially acceptable for women to examine, therefore arguably having a greater cultural impact. These broadly distributed images of partially dressed models engaging in unorthodox feminine behavior likely did not normalize the transgressive behavior of the Dreamers, but they plausibly showed the limits of the gender conformity brought upon by domestic containment and the elasticity of the Cold War rhetoric of American freedom.

### Conclusion

While American-style “freedom” during the Cold War era was attainable through containment, the image of the Maidenform Woman also suggests flexibility and un-containability. The rhetoric of freedom that was intended to definitively differentiate the U.S. from the U.S.S.R. was open to interpretation. The Maidenform Woman represented this instability. As the company projected the symbols of the Maidenform Dream Girl and the American Amazonian at home and abroad, this multidimensional representation demonstrated both the norms of Cold War

femininity as defined by domestic containment and the permeability of its boundaries. American freedom that encouraged women to consume also left the door open for the American Woman to transgress. It should be reiterated that the Maidenform Woman was a presentation of a symbol and not an example of the feeling or activities of real woman. How actual woman (or men) in the U.S. and abroad interpreted the symbol is unknown. Yet this study analyzes the possibilities.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Bootstraps and Bras in Puerto Rico: Maidenform, the International Ladies'**

#### **Garment Workers Union, and the Creation of a New Export-Led Economy**

“The goings-on in Puerto Rico no longer are of interest merely to the 2,300,000 islanders themselves or to specialists in underdeveloped countries. They are of deep concern to the officers and stockholders of the 550 companies that have nibbled on the Economic Development Administration’s bait and opened plants here.”<sup>642</sup>

With the implementation of Operation Bootstrap in 1947, which incentivized American capital to manufacture on Puerto Rico through tax breaks and access to cheap unorganized labor, Maidenform became one of the earliest American companies to offshore its manufacturing. One might assume that a significant benefit of offshoring to Puerto Rico would be that Maidenform could rid itself of its powerful longtime American labor union, the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), headed by the influential David Dubinsky. It would also be reasonable to surmise that the ILGWU would vehemently fight against the same offshoring of good-paying unionized “American” jobs. As a result, it seems logical that off-shoring would seriously strain the once cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship the union and company shared. However, this examination will demonstrate that Maidenform and the ILGWU largely continued their cooperation in Puerto Rico. Maidenform, in an effort to thwart unionization by more radical Puerto Rican unions in their factories, encouraged the American ILGWU to come to Puerto Rico and continue being its exclusive union. Together, Maidenform and the ILGWU

successfully circumvented formidable attempts by Puerto Rican unions to unionize Maidenform in Puerto Rico.

Operation Bootstrap was tied to American Cold War policy and the formation of “development” strategies stressing export-led industrialization, which would become a model for “modernizing” the globalized economy<sup>643</sup>. Export-led industrialization was an the economic process that evolved out of the US’s post-WWII development strategy to “modernize” the “third world” and thus keep it safe from the temptations of Soviet-style communism. Export-led industrialization was implemented by business and government from developed countries who moved their manufacturing to developing nations in order to take advantage of cheap, unorganized, and supposedly docile (and largely female) labor, as well as the advantageous tax benefits often offered by compliant foreign governments.<sup>644</sup> The goods produced were then largely exported to prosperous commercial markets, like the US. By promoting capitalism and “modernizing” Puerto Rico, Operation Bootstrap would theoretically limit the potential appeal of communism in a vulnerable, so-called third world nation close to the US border. Operation Bootstrap would increase the economic relationship between the strategically located Caribbean island and its de facto imperial leader, the US, while conveniently decreasing (at least the appearance of) US political dominance, which during the post-WWII era had become far less defensible.

The success of Operation Bootstrap was dependent on the American brassiere industry, as well as the cooperation between American business, American labor unions, and the Puerto Rican government. The brassiere industry was the foundation of Operation Bootstrap, and Maidenform became not only the largest brassiere company on the island but also Puerto Rico’s

second largest employer. While each institution—the Maidenform company, the ILGWU, and state—consciously worked towards their own self interest, they also cooperated together, thereby buoying Operation Bootstrap and participating in the establishment of export-led industrialization. This study seeks to analyze a key inchoate moment in this cooperative process in order to better understand how and why these various institutions worked together to implement this system.

This chapter examines Maidenform's and the ILGWU's responses to development strategies focused on export-led growth — strategies exemplified in the new Puerto Rican model of Operation Bootstrap.<sup>645</sup> Maidenform's and the ILGWU's experience in Puerto Rico in the 1950s and 1960s shows both the pressures toward—and the many dilemmas involved in—offshoring manufacturing into cheaper labor environments. The restructuring of the global economy that would come through off-shoring would become an ever more powerful force for change in American life. Maidenform was an important player whose activities in these decades of the early Cold War contribute to both the history of capitalism and to labor history. This chapter analyzes how politics, business, labor, ethnicity, and gender historically worked together in what would become a model pioneered by Maidenform in Puerto Rico for export-led industrialization.

### The History of Capitalism

This study will contribute to the new field of the history of capitalism through an examination of the offshoring of Maidenform to Puerto Rico and of the interactions between the brassiere business, the ILGWU, and the Puerto Rican government during the early Cold War.

The history of capitalism is a field that has sought to unite business, labor, economics, and political history, in order to shape a more comprehensive understanding of how and why capitalism has operated in society and changed over time. Louis Hyman claims that, as a field, the history of capitalism emerged in the mid-2000s between the tech crash and the Great Recession, yet there is little consensus of what does or should constitute the history of capitalism.<sup>646</sup> This elasticity has produced both creativity and debate. Steven Mihm stated that “[t]he history of capitalism...is at once both specific (capitalism!) and yet maddeningly vague about its methods, its focus, and even its politics. But this, perversely, is its strength. It is a blank screen onto which people from a wide range of fields project their interests and ambitions.”<sup>647</sup>

There are basic outlines upon which scholars do agree. First, the crossing of disciplinary boundaries opens up possibilities for both vertical and horizontal approaches allowing for the integration of history from the top, the bottom and the middle, as well as giving a clearer picture of the relationship between the market and the state and analyzing power in multiple dimensions. Additionally, the history of capitalism calls attention to the a-historicity and inevitability in which capitalism has traditionally been viewed.<sup>648</sup> Capitalism is a historical process that has changed overtime and therefore the market and its efficiency should be questioned.<sup>649</sup> As such, capitalism should be analyzed as not one entity but many.<sup>650</sup>

As capitalism should be thought of as a plural, institutions and the people who run them should also be considered more carefully. Businesses people should not be viewed as purely motivated by rationality and profits but also as actors who are affected by ideology and culture. “Profits,” states Peter Hudson, “don’t shape everything, even in capitalism.”<sup>651</sup> Culture shapes

the way people behave and the way they are treated within the system of capitalism. Stressing the usefulness of the history of capitalism, both Louis Hyman and Elizabeth Tandy Sherman suggest people-centric histories as opposed to more esoteric inquiry or theory. By presenting the lived experiences of both the company owners and the people who worked in Maidenform's factories and who belonged to the ILGWU, this study hopes to make the important process of economic globalization more engaging and concrete.

This new area of inquiry welcomes different methodologies and cross-disciplinary pollination in order to get at the "bigger picture" and reach a broader audience. Yet in the effort to move beyond so-called identity politics which can "fracture" cohesiveness and collectivity, scholars have largely ignored the dynamic of gender and ethnicity within capitalism.<sup>652</sup> This study argues that even in the broadest sense, capitalism is historically linked to gender and ethnicity. Capitalism works by seeking out the lowest production costs for the largest profit and therefore pursues underprivileged groups, who are willing to take low wages. Traditionally, these groups have been women and people of color. When these less privileged people are no longer willing to take low-enough wages, competition-based capitalism necessitates a move to a new region where it is likely that the cost of living is cheaper and the unions are weaker. In addition, analyzing the role of gender and ethnicity within the history of capitalism allows for a more extensive perspective as gender and ethnicity are embedded within the culture in which capitalism operates. If the processes of capitalism are inextricably linked to people, the lived experiences of those people are coupled with ethnicity and gender.<sup>653</sup> Therefore, a study of ethnicity and gender facilitates Louis Hyman's call for the history of capitalism to be compelling and Elizabeth Tandy Sherman's call that it be accessible.<sup>654</sup>



Like other companies, Maidenform offshored to Puerto Rico in the 1950s to set up its low wage, labor-intensive, female-dominated industry intended to produce goods for foreign markets.<sup>655</sup> As in many other fields, men who worked at Maidenform were employed at more “skilled” jobs which earned higher salaries; it made little difference that Maidenform was founded by a woman and created products for women. Historically, “women’s work,” like sewing, has been deemed unskilled and therefore unworthy of high wages. Additionally, female-dominated industries are generally assembly-type operations viewed as less skilled and as generally less well compensated than male-dominated industries.<sup>656</sup> These female dominated industries also tend to be labor-intensive and hire more employees.<sup>657</sup> Consequently, since labor costs are a significant portion of these industries’ expenses, they are typically the first to offshore in order to take advantage of cheaper labor.<sup>658</sup>

#### Operation Bootstrap, the Commonwealth Status and the Cold War

Operation Bootstrap was inextricably tied with Puerto Rico’s colonial and Cold War relationship with the US. Historical circumstances after WWII, particularly the Cold War and the movement towards decolonization, left the US in a bind. The US wanted to use Operation Bootstrap to prove that American style democracy-capitalism was the superior model for the world, especially when compared to the tyrannical power of the Kremlin. However, the US did not want to be so democratic as to lose control of its de facto colony. The solution came in the form of Puerto Rico’s commonwealth status. Puerto Rico’s ambiguous commonwealth status would give the impression that it was no longer a US colony and yet would allow it to remain tied to the US to a degree that made Operation Bootstrap possible.

Operation Bootstrap, or Operacion Manos a la Obra, began as the Industrial Incentives Act of 1947, whose direct objective was to decrease agriculture, particularly sugar production, and industrialize the island.<sup>659</sup> The indirect objective was to keep Puerto Rico loyal to the US, undermine any independence movements, provide a livelihood to many unemployed peoples, and preclude any programs which might increase self-sufficiency and therefore decreased reliance on the US.<sup>660</sup> The program was run by Teodoro Moscoso, who was educated in and connected to the US, and was supervised by the economic planning board known as Fomento. Operation Bootstrap sought to encourage US private investment by granting tax holidays, low-interest loans, low rent on state buildings, grants for capital inputs and worker training, and supplying cheap labor. Cheaper labor was particularly attractive to work-intensive manufacturing such as the brassiere industry. It was Operation Bootstrap that attracted the brassiere industry to the island, and it was the brassiere industry which made Operation Bootstrap (relatively) successful.<sup>661</sup>

With Operation Bootstrap, Puerto Rico stood as a shining example of a so-called third world economy that had successfully adopted American-style democracy-capitalism. The success of Operation Bootstrap would make Puerto Rico a symbol for the US and capitalism in the Cold War and a model for the economy of the future. As a de facto US colony, Puerto Rico was a safe testing ground for the modern manufacturing inaugurated by Operation Bootstrap that could then be transferred around the world. Puerto Rico's experience would inspire President Harry Truman's "Point Four" program, economist's W. Arthur Lewis's influential theory of surplus labor, JFK's Alliance for Progress, Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative, the "Urban Enterprise Zones" for US inner cities, and 1998's "AfricaNAFTA".<sup>662</sup>

In many ways the history of Puerto Rico is emblematic of a broader transition in American imperialism. Puerto Rico's political status changed from colony to commonwealth according to the US's needs. Only a thousand miles off Florida, the status of this Caribbean island was of great importance to the US. Strategically located, Puerto Rico has been a US possession since the end of the Spanish-American War when it was "liberated" from Spanish colonial rule and became a de facto US colony. Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War simultaneously dissolved the Spanish Empire abroad and commenced the US's overseas empire. The 1898 Treaty of Paris allowed the US to purchase the Philippines, made Cuba a US protectorate, and ceded Guam and Puerto Rico to the US. In 1917 the Jones Act made Puerto Rico a US territory and granted the Puerto Rican people restricted US citizenship. During the 1930s, Labor and Nationalist movements rose up and threatened Puerto Rico's compliance to the US. After the repression of these movements and the imprisonment of many of the leaders, US leaders decided that they would need to cultivate politicians who could maintain stability and loyalty to the US.<sup>663</sup> Not willing to grant Puerto Rico true independence, the US lent its support to Governor Luis Muñoz Marín and his Partido Populare Democratica (Popular Democratic Party/PPD), who would usher in the commonwealth status.<sup>664</sup>

After WWII and the defeat of expansionist Germany and Japan, as well as after the start of the Cold War which pitted a rhetorical freedom-loving US against a totalitarian Soviet Union, maintaining colonies became problematic for a country espousing democratic principles. In order for the US to maintain its colonial relationship and still project the outward appearance of granting self-determination, the ambiguous commonwealth status<sup>665</sup> was created, permitting some self-governance while ultimately perpetuating dependence.<sup>666</sup>

US lawmakers understood that the commonwealth status would give the appearance of greater self-governance without essentially changing the relationship between the US and Puerto Rico. The Secretary of the Interior openly stated to the US Congress that the commonwealth status, "will not change the political, social and economic relations of Puerto Rico with the United States."<sup>667</sup> In 1950 President Truman signed Public Act 600, establishing commonwealth status and granting Puerto Ricans the right to their own constitution and internal government.<sup>668</sup> The Puerto Rican voters approved the constitution in 1952, officially inaugurating the commonwealth status. As a commonwealth, Puerto Rico would have its own elected governor, legislature, and judiciary, although the US maintained veto power and judiciary oversight; would be subject to the US draft and subordinate to the US in defense and foreign relations; and most significant for American investors, would not be subject to the federal minimum wage.

Luis Muñoz Marín formed the PPD in 1939, becoming Puerto Rico's first democratically elected governor in 1949, and remained in control for the next twenty-five years with the support of the US. The PPD rose to power on a social justice platform with the slogan "pan, tierra, y libertad" (bread, land, freedom).<sup>669</sup> Although Muñoz had previously supported independence for Puerto Rico, he quickly realized that Puerto Rico was dependent upon the US for its economic prosperity.<sup>670</sup> Muñoz became the leading champion for Puerto Rico's in-between status as a commonwealth because he believed that the alternatives, statehood or independence, would spell economic disaster.<sup>671</sup> Statehood would end the tax benefits that induced American capital to invest in Puerto Rico and independence would theoretically cut off US economic support and result in great uncertainty and possible instability. The commonwealth status allowed for (at least) the appearance that the Puerto Rican government and people consented to

the relationship with the US, while it satisfied UN requirements for self-determination of former colonies. Further, it weakened the Independence movement,<sup>672</sup> while still avoiding statehood and an end to the attractive tax breaks of Operation Bootstrap.<sup>673</sup> Commonwealth status and the continuation of private American investment would allow for Puerto Rico to be reinvented as an example of the power of US-style capitalism to transform a struggling region into a Caribbean paradise—or as *Business Week* called it, an “Industrial Island in the Sun.”<sup>674</sup>

Operation Bootstrap should be understood in the historical context of the Cold War. Operation Bootstrap was intended to be the economic driver able to transform Puerto Rico from an impoverished nation vulnerable to communism into an example of the superiority of the American Way by concurrently helping American business and the Puerto Rican economy. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was particularly worried about Soviet intervention in Latin America and pushed for the repression of the nationalists and populist movements in the area.<sup>675</sup> Especially after Fidel Castro’s take over of the nearby Caribbean island of Cuba in 1959, Puerto Rico became a symbol of the stability and prosperity possible with the American Way. In order to bolster Puerto Rico, the US believed it was necessary to address four separate but overlapping areas: population control (which put the onus on women), a centralized state (via the PPD), export-led industrialization (through American investment), and an increased standard of living (through Operation Bootstrap and emigration from Puerto Rico to the US).<sup>676</sup>

The name “Operation Bootstrap” is associated with ideals of the Protestant work ethic and the American Dream. Pulling oneself up by one’s own bootstraps refers to a person who lifts themselves out of poverty through hard work and self-reliance, as did characters in the novels by Horatio Alger.<sup>677</sup> This ideal is evident in the popular, if overly simplified, rags-to-

riches tales of poor immigrants arriving in the US with nothing in their pockets, only to make it big in the land of opportunity. Maidenform founder Ida Rosenthal and ILGWU President David Dubinsky both capitalized on this quintessentially American tale. This Bootstrap narrative took on renewed significance during the Cold War ideological battle between capitalism and communism. In the American Cold War rhetoric, Communists in the Soviet Union relied on the government to provide for them, resulting in an impotent populace who tolerated a simultaneously inept and all-powerful bureaucratic state capable of great evil. Alternatively, the US democracy based on economic capitalism fostered a nation of bootstrappers whose self-reliance and God-given freedom made them a city-on-a-hill, an example to other nations and single-handedly capable of improving the world. The US government, through Operation Bootstrap, would bring prosperity to Puerto Rico through democratic-capitalism. That this was not possible without significant government intervention seemed beside the point.

As discussed in the prior chapter, Maidenform's Cold War-era Dream campaign also had connotations relating to the American Dream. In the Dream advertisements, the Maidenform Woman, as a representation of the American Woman, was free to dream, to consume, and to transgress. When Maidenform offshored labor under Operation Bootstrap, it could be argued that the company gave Puerto Rican women not just work, but an opportunity to improve their standard of living. Maidenform was providing the women of Puerto Rico their own pair of boots—the chance to achieve their own American Dream—they had only to seize it. By 1964, Maidenform had thirteen manufacturing plants in Puerto Rico, employing approximately 3,000 people. Maidenform was the second largest Fomento-sponsored company surpassed only by the Consolidated Cigar Corp, employing 4,500.<sup>678</sup>

Whether Operation Bootstrap was ultimately a success or a failure is a matter of perspective. American business, on whole, did well. Even with a rocky start and the 1954 recession, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that nearly two-thirds of the companies were profitable by 1957.<sup>679</sup> In 1965 it was estimated that American businesses in Puerto Rico were four times more profitable before taxes and eight times more profitable after taxes than businesses located in the US.<sup>680</sup> The island was industrialized and the standard of living on Puerto Rico increased. Income per capita went from approximately \$200 in 1950 to \$1,200 in 1967.<sup>681</sup> The percentage of GDP from manufacturing rose from 16.5% in 1948 to 25.3% in 1967, while in the same period industrial employment increased by 127%.<sup>682</sup> According to *Business Week* in 1964, since Operation Bootstrap began, the Puerto Rican economy had increased 10% each year.<sup>683</sup> Largely as a result of the economic advancement, by 1960 support for independence had become virtually non-existent, polling at only three percent favorability.<sup>684</sup> But the picture was more mixed than these statistics suggest. Unemployment remained high, even with large numbers of the island population migrating to the mainland.<sup>685</sup> The majority of new manufacturing jobs went to women, resulting in the unintended consequence of upsetting the gendered status quo, at the time, this disruption was largely viewed as a negative. The government later strived to attract industry that would hire men but was less successful. When opportunities for a larger profit presented themselves in Hong Kong and Latin America in the 1960s-1980s, many US businesses left Puerto Rico, leaving even higher unemployment in its wake.<sup>686</sup> Currently, Puerto Rico is economically dependent on the US and has a serious debt crisis.<sup>687</sup>

Many blamed any failings of Operation Bootstrap on the culture and ethnicity of the Puerto Rican people. Puerto Rico may have been seen as a “laboratory for democracy” but it

was also viewed as a “culture of poverty.”<sup>688</sup> At least one historian claims that Puerto Rico was never fully incorporated into the US because the islanders were viewed as racially and culturally inferior.<sup>689</sup> When *The Wall Street Journal* asked business owners about failings in Puerto Rico in 1957, four out of the five reasons given for difficulty in Puerto Rico were blamed on the Puerto Ricans people. Businesses cited the costly training of unskilled workers, employee tardiness, irresponsible workers, and increasing wages, as well as worker-independent high shipping costs.<sup>690</sup> Essentially, when Operation Bootstrap was viewed as a success, it was as a victory for the US and capitalism. When it was viewed as a failure, it was because of the inadequacy of the Puerto Rican people and their culture.

However, as this study suggests, Maidenform’s eventual exodus from Puerto Rico was not an instance of the failure of capitalism or of the Puerto Rican people. To the contrary, Operation Bootstrap worked just as capitalism was designed to work over the long-term, and Puerto Rican workers performed with sufficient competency to generate business profit. What this analysis does suggest is a conflict between the dual impulses of capitalism and a resultant increased standard of living (or modernization), which modernization experts at the time expected to occur in tandem. American businesses went to Puerto Rico in part because Puerto Rican workers were willing to take lower wages than workers on the mainland, thereby lowering business costs and increasing profits. However, as Puerto Ricans became more “modern,” they demanded higher wages, closer to those of American workers. Unwilling to pay these higher wages, business again offshored in search of less costly workers. Theoretically, capitalism improves the living standards of “developing” nations making them more like Americans, yet when they reach something close to the “modern” American standard, these workers demand



higher wages and render themselves no longer economically viable nor sufficiently profitable in a competitive capitalist economy. From an economic standpoint, Operation Bootstrap brought improvements to Puerto Rico, yet these desired improvements, once achieved, created an economic backlash.

This study also shows the rhetorical tension between capitalism and the role of the state during the Cold War. The US Cold War discourse promoted the role of the market fueled by the private sector, in contrast to the Soviet state-run model. Yet, as this study demonstrates, the role of the state was essential in creating the conditions necessary for American business to succeed. The American ideal of bootstrapping, of succeeding solely on one's own merits, which became even more symbolic in the war between capitalism and communism, was as much a myth for businesses as it was for individuals.

Operation Bootstrap and the post-WWII environment necessitated Puerto Rico's adoption of a commonwealth status. In turn, the commonwealth status allowed for the continuation of economic policy which made Puerto Rico appealing to American business, like Maidenform. The same year that the commonwealth status was approved by the voters of Puerto Rico, Maidenform opened its first factory on the "Industrial Island in the Sun."<sup>691</sup>

#### Maidenform goes to Puerto Rico

Brassiere manufacturing was the first and ultimately one of the most significant industries contributing to the success of Operation Bootstrap.<sup>692</sup> In 1950 there were six brassiere factories with 600 employees; in 1955 there were twenty-six plants employing over 3,000 workers, mostly women, who were the main beneficiaries of the increase in employment.<sup>693</sup> This gender

imbalance had economic and cultural implications. By 1965 there would be seventy-four brassiere factories on the island.<sup>694</sup> Maidenform opened its first factory in Puerto Rico in 1952 hoping to reduce production costs and become more competitive with Exquisite Form, the first brassiere company to offshore to Puerto Rico in 1949. Maidenform set up its first factory in Mayaguez under the pseudonym Beatrice Needlecraft, and it would eventually have sixteen plants in Puerto Rico<sup>695</sup>. Many American undergarment companies followed over the next decade. Yet, it was Maidenform who would become the second largest employer on Puerto Rico and the single largest employer of women on the island.<sup>696</sup> Maidenform was key to the success of Operation Bootstrap and thus to the development of export-led industrialization.

When Maidenform went offshore, it maintained its US practice of employing exclusively male managers to oversee female factory workers, however, the nature of this dynamic in Puerto Rico was different.<sup>697</sup> The employment of women in brassiere and other apparel factories was the norm in the US, but in the US, apparel was just one of many industries, and most others hired a majority of male workers. On Puerto Rico, because of Operation Bootstrap and the enticements for labor-intensive work it provided, the apparel industry became one of the largest employers on the island.<sup>698</sup> As a result, the percentage of women in the workforce increased while the male unemployment remained high and the overall employment on the island did not greatly increase.<sup>699</sup> As the brassiere and other apparel industries went to Puerto Rico, the labor force participation for women ballooned, increasing on average 21% between 1940-1960.<sup>700</sup> In 1970, the total level of female employment was 30.8%.<sup>701</sup> Yet, the participation of men in the labor force decreased from about 80% in 1950 to 60% in 1975.<sup>702</sup>

This new gender dynamic in the workforce caused a disruption of gender norms. *The Wall Street Journal* published an article whose headline said it all—“Puerto Rican Menfolk Fret as Their Wives Bring Home the Bacon: Operation Bootstrap Creates New Jobs But the Ladies Grab Most of Them.”<sup>703</sup> The article cites a Puerto Rican Senator who states that women should be thanking Bootstrap for bringing them jobs and equality. One “swarthy Puerto Rican” man did not agree. He “grunted,” and then stated, “...some equality. It’s the women who are running the whole country now.”<sup>704</sup> The “reversal” of gender norms made it so that men, when not employed in seasonal agricultural work, took care of the children.<sup>705</sup>

In the late 1950s to the mid 1960s, male unemployment became an issue the government could no longer ignore. Complaints that employment at Fomento-sponsored plants were two-thirds female spurred the government’s efforts to attract male-dominated industries such as chemical plants.<sup>706</sup> A decrease in female employment occurred around 1960 and the reaction to this decrease shows the fear that had been generated by the gender inversion. When a report by the Government Bank for the Development of Puerto Rico noted that female employment was the lowest since the end of WWII, this decrease was interpreted as an indicator of progress, as it was believed that men would now be able to find good paying jobs, allowing women to become “full-time homemakers.”<sup>707</sup> Yet, as the previous statistics indicated the decrease in the feminization of the workforce was temporary. Anthropologist Helen Safa argues that the increased female employment created more female empowerment as women no longer considered their income to be merely supplementary to a husband’s. She claims that women became less likely to ask for permission to work or visit friends, and they developed more lenient feelings about sex and marriage.<sup>708</sup> Alice E. Colon-Warren and Idsa Alegia-Ortega argue that the results of

the gender power struggle were mixed. Although there were more divorce and more rights for women as the new constitution prohibited gender discrimination, there were also higher instances of gender violence as well as the controversial sterilization program.<sup>709</sup>

It is estimated that around 40% of Puerto Rican women who were or had been married were sterilized throughout the 1950s-1960s.<sup>710</sup> While sterilization was not uncommon in other countries as a means of birth control, particularly Latin America, Puerto Rico had the highest rate in the world.<sup>711</sup> American advocates of population control saw Puerto Rican women as key to the issue of overpopulation, which was also seen as key to the problem of poverty, and the possible appeal of communism.<sup>712</sup> Therefore, women were seen as producers of third world conditions and their reproductive ability needed to be managed. Family planning therefore became a tool in the fight against communism.<sup>713</sup> The sterilization program was based on US research and sponsored by the Puerto Rican Health Department and the US government. The practice started in the 1930s but dramatically increased in the 1950s and then doubled in the 1960s.<sup>714</sup> Working class women were disproportionately affected.<sup>715</sup> In an interview, a Puerto Rican pediatrician, Dr. Helen Rodriguez, spoke about the mass sterilizations. She claimed that other forms of birth control were difficult to obtain and abortion was illegal, leading women who had unwanted pregnancies to presume that sterilization was the best choice. Even more concerning, she stated that some of the women had not given their consent to be sterilized, and Dr. Rodriguez cites a study that shows that 25% of the women who were sterilized later regretted the procedure.<sup>716</sup>

In a 1960s survey asking Puerto Ricans to rank which institution—their employers, the government or their union—was the most helpful, women clearly favored their employers.<sup>717</sup>

With the freedom that came with employment coupled with the distrust of the government that likely occurred as a result of the sterilization program, perhaps it is not surprising that women favored their employers. Maidenform, in particular, seemed to be well-liked in Puerto Rico. It had hundreds of employees who stayed with them over a decade and it also received an award from Fomento honoring its contribution to the growth of the apparel industry.<sup>718</sup>

Maidenform, as a commanding force on the island, played a large role in which union the women of Puerto Rico would get to join. Arguably, Maidenform was key to the ILGWU's success on the island. When Maidenform first came to Puerto Rico, Maidenform managers spoke with managers of other American businesses in Puerto Rico to get a sense of the local situation. The manager of Consolidated Cigars, the largest company on the island, told a Maidenform representative that all Puerto Rican unions were substandard because they had "ignorant leadership," and frequently split.<sup>719</sup> He also told Maidenform that the PPD was pro-union and was filled with people who had no mind for business. Apparently, David Steinbeck from the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) had tried to organize Puerto Rico earlier in 1952 but had failed according to the manager of Consolidated Cigars because, although Steinbeck spoke Spanish, he did not understand "the simple mind and problems of the P.R. Worker."<sup>720</sup> Maidenform also checked on what other companies were offering their "girls" in terms of pay, vacation and health benefits. Maidenform investigated the various unions to see which ones might be acceptable and which ones they should avoid, or as it became necessary, prevent from forming at all. All of this information was sent back directly to Ellis Rosenthal. Ellis Rosenthal, the nephew of Ida Rosenthal, worked as Vice President of Production and was hands-on in the move to Puerto Rico.<sup>721</sup>

Apparently Maidenform found all of the Puerto Rican-run unions unacceptable. Although it was technically illegal, as Puerto Rico was covered by American labor protections, Maidenform opposed and prevented at least two attempts by Puerto Ricans to unionize their plants. Using underhanded and sometimes illegal means, they thwarted unionization attempts by Puerto Rican unions even if they were affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Maidenform fired union-curious employees and spied on unionization meetings, all the while reporting their findings to Maidenform headquarters on the mainland. Maidenform's behavior was so egregious that in 1953 the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) sanctioned Maidenform for violating the Taft-Hartley Act.<sup>722</sup>

According to the NLRB, Maidenform fired employee Angela Anglero because her father had made cursory attempts at organizing the factory and spoke against Maidenform's quota system.<sup>723</sup> In addition to Anglero, Maidenform also fired another woman, "# 39," who was merely seen talking to Anglero's father.<sup>724</sup> Anglero filed a complaint with the NLRB stating she had been fired for her father's unionization attempts. When interviewed by the NLRB, Maidenform's management and office workers had differing stories. The manager claimed that Anglero was fired because she had a bad attitude, while a subordinate claimed that it was not her attitude but that she had not met her quota. Although the NLRB ruled against Maidenform, after much badgering, it only required Maidenform to write an unpublished letter stating that they would not discourage union formation or intimidate workers in the future.<sup>725</sup>

The lesson Maidenform learned from the NLRB was discretion, and from then on, it went about its subterfuge more subtly. Maidenform headquarters on the mainland sent out memos reminding the Puerto Rico branch not to threaten the workers about unionizing. Instead, they

were to relate the positive things the company had done. They were also told to emphasize that the local management with its American connections (Maidenform managers in Puerto Rican factories were exclusively American for more than a decade<sup>726</sup>), had more power to help them than would a Puerto Rican union, to whom they would have to pay additional dues.<sup>727</sup>

In the year following the Anglero case, Maidenform's interoffice communication between the mainland and Puerto Rico indicated that multiple unions had come around but their "girls" were not interested. The Puerto Rican branch reported to Maidenform headquarters that some of the organizers were communists and that their Maidenform employees had no interest in associating with them.<sup>728</sup> Perhaps the local Maidenform employees believed the company's claims that as a large, powerful American company, Maidenform held greater sway with the government who controlled the minimum wage rate, than a small Puerto Rican-led union who required additional monetary support. This claim probably seemed legitimate until a union that was an affiliate of the powerful AFL came around to Maidenform's factories in Puerto Rico.

In April of 1954 the Union de Trabajadores de la Industria del Brassiere, an AFL affiliate, started to recruit at Maidenform. To avoid unionization, managers in Puerto Rico urged Maidenform headquarters to be more generous with some of the workers' fringe benefits. Manager Paul Hammer of Mayaguez advised Ellis Rosenthal to reconsider giving the employees paid vacation. Hammer claimed that it could be "the difference between a union and a non-union [shop]."<sup>729</sup> Granting the workers such benefits would show them that the company cared about their happiness and that they could get what they wanted without a union. Despite the suggestion, Hammer was apparently not overly concerned about unionization by the Union de Trabajadores de la Industria del Brassiere. He told Rosenthal that, "[a]s long as it is not the

I.L.G. itself and we are forced to join, I can lick the union problem here in Mayaguez.”<sup>730</sup>

Although this union was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, it was not the CIO affiliated ILGWU and therefore it was not deemed as a serious threat.<sup>731</sup>

Maidenform wanted to avoid unionization altogether in Puerto Rico, but they also seemed to believe that the ILGWU could, if it so desired, successfully unionize their Puerto Rican plants. At this point, Maidenform was apparently worried about this possibility and tried to discover if Dubinsky had a hand in this AFL affiliate’s unionization attempt. The head of the NLRB, the same man who let Maidenform off the hook with an unpublished letter promising to be nice to unions, initially told Maidenform that he believed Dubinsky was connected and that he would eventually show up. A month later, the consensus seemed to be that Dubinsky may have given some funds but was not directly connected.<sup>732</sup> A potential reason why Maidenform was only afraid of the ILGWU’s unionizing ability was that they had some sort of an exclusivity agreement.<sup>733</sup> This would explain why Hammer might have felt “forced” to join the ILGWU and also why, as will be presented in the next section, Maidenform and the ILGWU worked together to defeat the unionization attempt by a Puerto Rican union. If such an agreement existed, Maidenform might have believed that the ILGWU would cause the company problems on the mainland if Maidenform refused to unionize with the ILGWU on Puerto Rico. The indirect attempts by Maidenform to see if the ILGWU had connections to the AFL-affiliated union’s efforts hints at a mutual distrust as well as Maidenform’s desire to avoid unionization in Puerto Rico completely.

The Union de Trabajadores de la Industria del Brassiere’s most tempting claim was that they could get Maidenform’s employees the minimum wage pay raise granted by the NLRB



faster.<sup>734</sup> Without their help, the union claimed, the workers would have to wait up to a year to see their wage increase. Maidenform countered that the union was lying and as a precaution, increased wages right before the vote to determine if the factory would be unionized.

Maidenform felt so confident of their impending victory that they even encouraged their workers to vote. The vote was 42 in favor of the union and 77 against. In celebration, champagne was airmailed with the telegraph, “[p]aying bet with pleasure. Take my hat off to you. Do you charm all ladies thus.” After the election, perhaps in an attempt to show their loyal employees their appreciation and the company’s magnanimity, Maidenform gave additional pay raises.<sup>735</sup>

Maidenform in Puerto Rico remained union-free until the ILGWU showed up. \*\*\*If Maidenform was forced to have a union in Puerto Rico, it would rather have the American ILGWU than any Puerto Rico-based union. The activities of the ILGWU in Puerto Rico contributed to the success of Operation Bootstrap by maintaining cooperative labor-business relations. The history of the ILGWU in the US lends context to its participation in the development of export-led manufacturing in Puerto Rico.

### ILGWU Goes to Puerto Rico

With Operation Bootstrap attracting American apparel manufacturers to Puerto Rico, the ILGWU confronted a serious new dilemma that threatened its very existence. If American business could generate a larger profit manufacturing abroad, might enough American union jobs offshore to render the ILGWU obsolete? To support its American members and keep itself viable, should the union seek to discourage offshoring by attempting to raise the minimum wage on Puerto Rico, which would ultimately increase production costs? Or should the ILGWU

expand beyond the continental US, thereby salvaging its overall membership? Between a rock and a hard place, the ILGWU decided to hedge its bets and try both tactics. David Dubinsky publicly argued for US mainland and Puerto Rico wage parity. However, more clandestinely, the ILGWU also cooperated with Maidenform. This cooperation, especially as it worked against Puerto Rican unions and workers, held similarities to the ILGWU's discriminatory practices in the US. Through these various tactics the ILGWU would rapidly unionize Puerto Rico and become one of if not the most powerful union on the island.

In 1955 Dubinsky sent Robert Gladnick to unionize the island, though this was not the ILGWU's first incursion to Puerto Rico. It had first come during the Great Depression, forming local 300 in 1934, but because of "financial discrepancies" the relationship ended in 1938.<sup>736</sup> Dubinsky was skeptical about returning to Puerto Rico. A request from a Puerto Rican union to affiliate with the ILGWU (still associated with the CIO, instead of the Free Federation of Workers of Puerto Rico, an AFL affiliate) in 1940 seems to have been rebuffed.<sup>737</sup> Dubinsky answered another request in 1952 with the vague reply, "recent reports from Puerto Rico lead me to believe that it would be wiser for union to stay away from there."<sup>738</sup> Precisely why Dubinsky avoided Puerto Rico is not known. Yet, Dubinsky had been deeply involved since the 1940s in Puerto Rico's minimum wage debate. This involvement may have been a tactic to prevent offshoring, an attempt to help the people of Puerto Rico receive fair wages, or perhaps just a way for Dubinsky to keep his finger in every pie. Even though Dubinsky was reluctant for the ILGWU to go to Puerto Rico at the start of the decade, by the late 1950s, the ILGWU had become one of the main "international" or American-based unions that dominated the island.

Maidenform offshored to Puerto Rico in search of greater profits, but the ILGWU's position in Puerto Rico was less straightforward and more precarious. The start of offshoring to Puerto Rico had put the ILGWU in a difficult position—should Puerto Ricans be considered American workers, worthy of the ILGWU's protection, or foreign competition? Puerto Ricans were US citizens, but ambiguously so—they were nominally independent, spoke Spanish, and were not considered “white.” Their exemption from the federal minimum wage made them low-wage competition. Notably, the ILGWU was founded by Jewish immigrants who themselves faced an ambiguous position in America until public opinion shifted with WWII.<sup>739</sup> Even if Puerto Ricans were not considered 100% American, the ILGWU's rhetoric claimed that the union fought for labor justice worldwide.<sup>740</sup> Additionally, many Puerto Ricans were immigrating to the US and becoming ILGWU members in cities like New York and Los Angeles; thus the ILGWU needed to be practical. Part of this pragmatism was the involvement in the Puerto Rican minimum wage debate. Could the ILGWU stanch the offshoring by working to raise the Puerto Rican minimum wage to approach that of the mainland? If they could, would that be enough to stop offshoring? If the offshoring continued and the ILGWU lost members on the mainland, should they seek to gain new members in Puerto Rico?

David Dubinsky, the ILGWU's magisterial and politically influential leader, cautiously negotiated the move to offshoring. The ILGWU cooperated with US business and the Puerto Rican government, largely behind the scenes. Dubinsky took a leading role in the minimum wage debates, arguing for wage parity with the mainland, which gave the appearance to some, depending on the perspective, that he was fighting to save US jobs and/or for Puerto Rican

workers rights. Starting in the mid-1950s, the ILGWU decided the best course of action was to unionize Puerto Ricans working for US companies.

The tactical maneuverings of unions during the postwar era, which seemed to have resulted in labor's decreased power, are controversial. Some scholars have denounced the conservatism of labor in the Cold War, arguing that union cooperation with business defanged labor and sold out the working class. Others have argued that the "social accord" between business and labor was a myth and instead it was business's increasing power and conservatism that forced labor into submission.<sup>741</sup> This section presents a slightly different perspective, arguing that the historical and political conditions that shaped proposals to enhance development through export-led growth necessitated tactical pragmatism for the union to survive. To rigidly oppose the offshoring to Puerto Rico would risk that the ILGWU would be left out in the cold; they would lose power as jobs left the US and would be uninvolved in the creation of a new system of labor abroad and subsequently at home.

Social prejudices regarding ethnicity and gender played a role in the US and in Puerto Rico in the 1950s.<sup>742</sup> Gladnick set up Puerto Rico's local 600 in honor of the commonwealth law (PL600), which coordinated with the International American University of Puerto Rico to offer members after-work classes in diet planning, home decoration, and conversational English, everything they might need to become "American."<sup>743</sup> Around the same time that the ILGWU was unionizing Puerto Rico, it was dealing with accusations of discrimination in the U.S. The issue of how the ILGWU operated in Puerto Rico is better understood when the history of the union in the US is considered. After all, it was the same institution with the same leaders on both shores and in some ways they were dealing with same issues of inclusion and exclusion. Should

Puerto Rican immigrants, African Americans, and women of all ethnicities be considered fully American, worthy of the same rights as (white) male Americans? Since the ILGWU was founded on Bundists Socialist principles brought to the US by Russian Jewish émigrés<sup>744</sup>, one might assume so. Yet, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the union experienced internal power struggles, the shifting winds of politics, and changing demographics. The union changed along with the country. What resulted was “Dubinsky’s Union,” which was large, politically influential, and increasingly conservative, eschewing much of the egalitarianism upon which it was founded.<sup>745</sup>

The history of the founding of the ILGWU has parallels to the Puerto Rican situation. The ILGWU was founded by peoples not considered fully American who had to fight against discrimination. The ILGWU was founded in 1900 primarily by Russian Jewish immigrant women within the garment district of New York. These so-called New Immigrants—those recently arrived from Eastern and Southern Europe—received less than a warm welcome from the established unions made up of Old Immigrant<sup>746</sup> stock who, amongst other things, feared that the New Immigrants would provide cheaper labor and steal their jobs.<sup>747</sup> By 1910 the ILGWU grew to over 10,000 members with the “Uprising of Twenty Thousand,” which was spurred by the women in local 25 protesting sweatshop conditions. The ILGWU further increased the following year when 146 women were killed in the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Fire. However, the 1924 Immigration Restriction Act, which placed quotas based on nationality with the intent of severely limiting New Immigrants, caused a decline in the rank-and-file. Even though new Eastern European immigrants were all but banned from entering the US, the onset of the Great Depression and Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s National Industry Recovery Act (1933)

significantly increased the overall membership. It was during the Depression that Dubinsky achieved virtually absolute power in the ILGWU becoming both Secretary-Treasurer and President.<sup>748</sup> Dubinsky would go on to have the ear of Democratic presidents from FDR to Lyndon B. Johnson.

As the longtime, heavy-handed leader of the ILGWU, Dubinsky is the most influential person in the history of the union. According to Dubinsky's biographer, David Parnet, Dubinsky's background deeply affected him as he always felt he was a "Jew in a gentile world" and was conscious of his origins and Yiddish accent.<sup>749</sup> He was born David Isaac Dobnievski in 1892 in contemporary Belarus.<sup>750</sup> Shortly after his birth, the Dobnievski family moved to Lodz, in Poland, then a client state of the Russian Empire. Lodz was a thriving industrial city with vigorous labor activism. As part of the Pale of Settlement, Jews made up 32% of the population and approximately half of the businesses were Jewish owned. Most of the Jews who were industrial workers labored in the textile business.<sup>751</sup> Lodz was a leading city of the Jewish Socialist Bund and like the Rosenthals, Dubinsky was an active member. He was arrested twice and exiled to Siberia only to return to Lodz to continue the fight. Fearing another exile or worse, Dubinsky decided he might have better prospects in the US and immigrated in 1911.<sup>752</sup> He arrived in New York the same year as the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire, which reportedly convinced Dubinsky to continue his activism for worker's rights in his new country. Through a combination of Old World connections and deception about his work history (he worked for a baker rather than in the garment industry as he told the ILGWU), he was permitted into local 10 Cutter's Union of the ILGWU. A Cutter was the highest paid and most prestigious occupation in the garment industry. The ambitious Dubinsky quickly worked his way up the

ILGWU hierarchy, becoming acting president in 1929. In 1932, the same year FDR was elected, Dubinsky was officially elected ILGWU President, a title he would retain until his retirement in 1966. Dubinsky was foundational in the creation of the CIO and would play a large role in uniting the AFL and the CIO in 1955.

The early ILGWU, influenced as it was by Bundist Socialist ideology, was known for its egalitarianism. Yet even from its early days, it sought an equilibrium between an idealistic radicalism and a more practical, mainstream conservatism. Following Louis Brandeis's 1910 "Protocol of Peace," the ILGWU maintained a balance between radical politics and a reluctance to strike. But scholars have noted the strength of more radical women in the early ILGWU who supported diversity and inclusiveness. Daniel Katz calls this labor philosophy "mutual culturalism."<sup>753</sup> Women, like Fania Cohen, one-time Vice President and Executive Secretary of Education of the ILGWU, promoted ethnic and localized working class culture. As a result, Cohen came into conflict with the male leadership who desired a centralized, expert-led model more inline with mainstream culture.<sup>754</sup> Cohen, and other more radical women like her, were viewed as the old-guard and were increasingly marginalized during the 1920s as the ILGWU internally fought against a Communist insurgency.

While the 1920s was an era of internal struggle, the 1930s was the decade when the male leadership consolidated its power. Both the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (1935) and the ascendance of Dubinsky, had a dramatic impact on the shift towards a more conservative male-dominated union. FDR's New Deal brought about a sharp increase in membership of the ILGWU, yet also created the conditions in which the male leadership no longer needed the female militant localism to pressure industry.<sup>755</sup> As president, Dubinsky increased both the centralized

top-down structure and alliances with the state, and he replaced the more radical female leaders in education with more conservative men.<sup>756</sup> As Parmet writes, “[a] new era in ILGWU history, the Dubinsky era, thus begun. The union...had been wedded to socialist and anarchists traditions. In the future, pragmatism would outweigh ideology, but personality would often overwhelm both...in the mind of the public their organization would be known as ‘Dubinsky’s union.’”<sup>757</sup>

The conservative move continued with the nationalism and industrial buildup of WWII. The war years brought with it strict rules governing supplies, wages, and production. The government controlled wages and handed down judgments on labor disputes through the National War Labor Board.<sup>758</sup> To strike was to interfere with the war effort and that was considered unpatriotic.<sup>759</sup> Both the AFL and the CIO pledged not to strike for the duration of the war. In exchange for union compliance, the government implemented provisions guaranteeing maintenance of their membership. Similarly to Rosenthal at Maidenform, the ILGWU’s war-time compliance was largely continued during the post-war period.<sup>760</sup>

The onset of the Cold War popularized a connection between labor and communism, necessitating politically savvy unions to distance themselves from anything with the whiff of radicalism. Dubinsky may have come to the US as a Bundist, but after WWII, he became enthusiastically anti-Communist and pro-Zionism. Largely in retaliation for the largest labor strikes in American history, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Bill in 1947. Taft-Hartley applied regulations on unions that were originally intended to protect workers from business. Additionally, it required union leaders to sign an affidavit swearing they were not communists.



Publicly, Dubinsky railed against the bill but privately, he was more circumspect, favoring its anti-Communist provisions.<sup>761</sup>

Dubinsky shunned supposed “fellow travelers” or suspected communist sympathizers even if they were politically influential. When Congressman Arthur Klein requested Dubinsky’s support to fight some of the more unsavory legislation proposed by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Dubinsky refused, writing, “I do not associate myself with any committees that include Communists and/or fellow-travelers. And Congressmen are no exception to this rule.”<sup>762</sup> Dubinsky shunned the Congressman because he had seen a photo in the newspaper which showed Klein and a suspected communist attending the same dinner party.<sup>763</sup> Dubinsky would even work with the CIA under the apt code name “MR. Garment Worker.”<sup>764</sup> Dubinsky was connected to the CIA through the Free Trade Union Committee, which was financed by the CIA from 1948-68. Jay Lovestone, former Communist leader turned anti-Communist crusader, worked closely with the CIA and was Dubinsky’s ghostwriter from 1947-1953 and reportedly had an influence on Dubinsky’s shifting ideology.<sup>765</sup>

By the 1950s, the ethnic makeup of the ILGWU had changed but the leadership had not. While the membership started as overwhelmingly Jewish, by 1948 46.1% were non-Jewish, most of them women, and yet, the ILGWU leadership remained Jewish and male until it united with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in 1995<sup>766</sup>. While the Jewish presence in the rank-and-file declined, African American and Puerto Rican membership increased. In 1949, there was only one female and no black or Hispanic members on the General Executive Board of the union, even though by 1952, black and Puerto Rican membership was 30% and increased thereafter. Dubinsky did not believe the more numerous African Americans and Puerto

Ricans should be in leadership roles and instead started a school to train leaders from outside of the current ILGWU membership. In 1958, 25% of New York ILGWU members and 40% of New York City's Local 22 were of African and/or of Puerto Rican descent and by 1962 the percentage was up to 53%.<sup>767</sup> Yet, less than 3% were high-paid cutters and none were part of the leadership.<sup>768</sup> Even in Puerto Rico, the two successive leaders of the Local 600 were Russian-Jewish male immigrants imported from the mainland.

During the Cold War, ethnic and gender discrimination was brought to the public's attention by the NAACP.<sup>769</sup> The Powell Commission was charged with investigating issues of "de facto discrimination" against African Americans and Puerto Ricans.<sup>770</sup> When called in front of the congressional committee to answer charges that the ILGWU disallowed Hispanics and blacks from attaining leadership positions and failed to help them gain better paying positions, Dubinsky unwittingly showed his bias. When asked by the committee how many African Americans the 450,000 member ILGWU had above the position of business agent, Dubinsky replied, "That's an unfair question...Ask me how many Americans I got on my executive board." One newspaper reporting on the proceedings, apparently referred to Dubinsky's own dubious Americanness, mocking his "fractured English occasionally spiced [with] Yiddish."<sup>771</sup> When pressed further Dubinsky admitted that no African Americans held higher office but stated that it was their fault because of "their failure to put themselves forward."<sup>772</sup> Dubinsky further insinuated that there were no qualified African Americans, Hispanics, or women in the ILGWU when he replied that he opposed the idea that "a man should be a union officer because of his race, color or creed...he should be an officer based on his merits, ability, [and] character."<sup>773</sup> *The Nashua Telegraph*, like other papers, lauded Dubinsky and dubbed him a "the liberal in every

sense of the word” for his “simple wisdom” that a “professional negro, the professional Jew, the professional Italian should not be promoted because of his race, color or creed.” Furthermore, Dubinsky claimed that he would absolutely be willing to promote minorities if the committee would, “[s]how me a colored or a Puerto Rican or Italian who is capable and I’ll make him a business agent or vice president.”<sup>774</sup> Apparently, he believed he had yet to encounter a single one.

Dubinsky blamed any semblance of racial discrimination on the majority female membership. Dubinsky stated, “80% of our members are women, but we have only one woman vice president. Can we be charged with discrimination against women? No!”<sup>775</sup> Dubinsky believed that women should not serve in positions where they would need to leave their home to travel, which largely eliminated them from leadership roles. He claimed that family responsibilities and high turnover were responsible for women’s low rate of leadership roles. That 90% of the black and Hispanic members were women explained the low rates of minorities in leadership positions.<sup>776</sup> The implication was that racial discrimination, if it existed, would be problematic, but gender discrimination, which admittedly did occur, was completely acceptable. Dubinsky felt the discrimination charges were utter nonsense because he himself was a minority and therefore could not possibly be guilty of discrimination. Those who spoke against the ILGWU and its leadership were denounced as anti-Semitic or Communists.<sup>777</sup> Nevertheless, the Congressional Committee chastised the union leadership for being cut off from their rank and file and reserving leadership positions for Jewish men.<sup>778</sup>

The practices in ethnic locals were also investigated by the committee. Originally, ethnic locals were based on the multicultural ideal that granting underrepresented ethnic groups, like

Italians, their own local would allow them more power, yet in practice they fostered discrimination. Joshua B. Freeman argues that, especially after WWII, ethnic locals became a tool of discrimination used against African Americans and Spanish-speaking workers.<sup>779</sup> The first ethnic local was Italian and was created in the early twentieth century to ward off the flight of members to the Industrial Workers of the World. Many native Italian speakers desired to have union meetings in Italian as opposed to the frequently spoken English or Yiddish.<sup>780</sup> The ILGWU leadership believed that the union should encourage more Italian workers to join as a means of expanding the ILGWU with the intended secondary effect of containing the workers' influence to the specified local. As a number of post-WWII anti-discrimination laws made open discrimination less prudent, the "Italian Dressmakers" (local 89) changed their name to "Dressmakers" and agreed to allow in non-Italians. Yet, for more than twenty years none were admitted.<sup>781</sup> Despite the growing number of Spanish-speakers, Italians were the only group allowed their own ethnic local.

Latinos were also recruited by the ILGWU to increase the union's membership, but the creation of Spanish-speaking locals was routinely frustrated. In 1958, two hundred members of Bronx 132 protested that their meetings were conducted in English when over 80% of the members spoke only Spanish<sup>782</sup>. The ILGWU leadership claimed that allowing Spanish-speaking locals would fragment the movement.<sup>783</sup> After repeatedly denying Latin American workers their own Spanish-speaking locals in New York and Los Angeles, the ILGWU finally hired four Spanish-speaking business agents. The catch was that the agents were not Latin Americans but Spanish-speaking Sephardic Jews.<sup>784</sup>

ILGWU individuals charged with organizing Puerto Ricans in the US revealed their bias in inter-union correspondence. Joseph Piscitello, an ILGWU organizer in Harlem stated, “[t]his is a problem, you see, because they can’t understand English, and we can’t make them understand about the things they should have and why they should have a vision...But, you see, the Puerto Ricans, they don’t have the education that we have...except for some elite like Miss Rodriguez here...But mostly they’re just backward.”<sup>785</sup> Robert Gladnick, the most important ILGWU organizer in Puerto Rico, complained of difficulties he was experiencing in Miami in a letter to Dubinsky. “There is nothing that can be done,” he wrote, “when Latinos have a difference of a personal or political nature.”<sup>786</sup> If these were the sentiments of individuals charged with recruiting Latinos, it is likely that such attitudes about the inferiority of Latinos was widespread.

In addition to its hostility towards the formation of locals for Spanish-speaking workers, the ILGWU leadership also thwarted attempts to help minority members work their way up the ranks.<sup>787</sup> In 1962 the federal government urged the ILGWU to subsidize training programs for minorities. In the past, New Immigrant laborers were able to work their way up the ranks of a company through union help and sponsorship. However, now that the minorities were Latinos and African Americans, the ILGWU refused to create programs to assist their rise in what had been an important process of upward mobility. Stuningly, the union insisted that training programs for minorities would be counterproductive, as the garment industry depended on unskilled labor.<sup>788</sup> The process governing how members were elected to leadership roles was also exclusionary. The ILGWU, which had one of the strictest protocols of all unions, created an electoral process that restricted challengers and excluded “undesirables.” Vacancies in the leadership were instead typically filled by Jews and occasionally with Italians.<sup>789</sup>

Despite the origins of both the union and many of its founding members, the ILGWU had a history of discrimination against those of Latin and African descent that helps to contextualize its behavior in Puerto Rico. While the ILGWU started out as a group of immigrant garment workers fighting against oppression, the union's early socialist and multicultural ideology no longer matched its actions with the changing sociopolitical landscape and the presidency of David Dubinsky. At the same time that the ILGWU was facing tough questions posed by an indignant Congress for its discriminatory practices in the US, the union was essentially assisting the very same government in the subordination of working-class peoples of Latin and African descent in Puerto Rico. This history of the ILGWU in the US helps to contextualize its actions in Puerto Rico.

#### PPD - ILGWU Cooperation

Maidenform's offshoring was a major contributing factor for the ILGWU's move to Puerto Rico but in order to thrive, the union would also need to work closely with the Puerto Rican government. The US-backed Puerto Rican government of Governor Muñoz aided both American business and American unions in order to ensure the success of Operation Bootstrap—which it was believed would industrialize the island, provide local jobs, and raise the standard of living.<sup>790</sup> All of this would presumably keep the ruling PPD in power.<sup>791</sup> Like the relationship between Maidenform and the ILGWU, the association between the PPD and the ILGWU was mutually beneficial. The PPD would get a stabilizing American union which would make American businesses happy and the ILGWU would get a significant say in the minimum wage debate.

Labor rights in Puerto Rico were enforced by the US government in the form of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)<sup>792</sup> but the day-to-day labor issues were largely left up to the Puerto Rican government. While the constitution of the commonwealth guaranteed the protection of workers to unionize, bargain, and strike, the state retained the power to check union activities if such activities were seen as interfering with public safety or essential services.<sup>793</sup> The Ley de Relaciones del Trabajo, which outlined state-union relations and defined negotiated collective bargaining as “instruments by which to advance the public policy of the government in its efforts to stimulate production to the maximum, and thus it is declared they are vested with a public interest.”<sup>794</sup> In essence, collective bargaining was allowed only if it benefited Operation Bootstrap.

Despite of the power that the Puerto Rican government had over collective bargaining, the PPD was viewed as a friend of labor. After the main Puerto Rican labor party, the Confederacion General de Trabajadores, split in two, the PPD was able to proclaim itself the voice of labor and thus maintain labor compliance.<sup>795</sup> The PPD was able to gain widespread union approval by promulgating the belief that a combination of progressive social legislation coupled with the development program would bring about social equity.<sup>796</sup> The PPD represented itself as the friend of the worker by creating a “social contract” in tandem with the industrialization program. Industrialization, it was promised, equaled more jobs and a higher standard of living. This encouraged unions to comply and preserve the economic interests of the state.<sup>797</sup> The PPD’s social contract included minimum wage boards and arbitration councils, progressive legislation and programs including subsidized housing and health care, as well as the support and inclusion of union leaders in government.<sup>798</sup>

The result was the perception of the state, rather than unions, as the champion of workers' rights. With this mantle, the government was able to maintain relatively low wages, contain class conflict, and provide a friendly environment for American business. After the PPD solidified political control, its more populist message of "bread, land, and freedom" switched to "battle for production," which now emphasized a more economic and US-friendly call to action.<sup>799</sup> Likewise, the PPD's symbol of the *jibaro*, a country peasant wearing a traditional hat, shifted meaning from a populist icon of the proletariat to one that represented aspirations to whiteness, masculinity, and a romanticism for a rapidly diminishing agrarian past.<sup>800</sup> Representing Governor Muñoz's practical philosophy, which was favorable to business and less concerned about the present concerns of the working class was his motto: "The worst wage is better than no wage."<sup>801</sup>

Since American businesses believed that Puerto Rican-run unions were prone to labor unrest, controlling the Puerto Rican unions became a key part of the PPD's agenda.<sup>802</sup> American labor unions were recruited by the Puerto Rican government because they had a history of relative post-war cooperation with American business and it was hoped that cooperative spirit would continue overseas. Since the benefits provided by Operation Bootstrap attracted the apparel industry in particular, it became necessary to win over the ILGWU and David Dubinsky.

So-called international unions (which were de facto American unions), like the ILGWU, had both prior relations with American business and a vested interest in the offshoring movement. The PPD took advantage of this and courted their favor. The arrival of international unions into Puerto Rico undermined homegrown unions through their superior organizational and financial resources, in turn further fracturing an already weak Puerto Rican labor movement<sup>803</sup>. In



the early 1950s, the ILGWU's Robert Gladnick was essentially the lone international organizer on the island, though by 1958 many other internationals had come to Puerto Rico.<sup>804</sup> AFL and CIO affiliates ended up dominating the island, with independent unions relegated to the diminished agricultural sector.<sup>805</sup> By the early 1960s, accusations of "union colonialism" by Puerto Rican-based unions became prevalent as two-thirds of the organized workers in Puerto Rico belonged to internationals<sup>806</sup>, and by 1964 an estimated 73% of organized labor was part of an AFL-CIO affiliate.<sup>807</sup> American unions brought with them relatively harmonious relations with American business.<sup>808</sup> Solidifying the labor-government connection, many labor officials became fixtures in the PPD government.<sup>809</sup>

The ILGWU was one of the first and most powerful international unions on the island<sup>810</sup>, given the lead by both US unions and the PPD. Correspondence in the Maidenform Archive indicates that Jacob Potofsky, President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, told Gladnick that "the island was his."<sup>811</sup> Even prior to Dubinsky sending Robert Gladnick to Puerto Rico, Dubinsky had already received word from the PPD that it would not resist the ILGWU's efforts on the island.<sup>812</sup> The PPD and the ILGWU formed a friendly relationship. Around the same time, Dubinsky wrote Congress in favor of Puerto Rico's commonwealth status.<sup>813</sup> Dubinsky was also asked to help set up the tax incentive system during an all-expenses paid trip to Puerto Rico, but he judiciously declined.<sup>814</sup> Later, at the 1956 ILGWU convention, Dubinsky invited Muñoz to speak and reportedly gave him a warm embrace on stage. Muñoz, in turn, hailed the ILGWU-funded \$40,000 health unit and housing project plans for Puerto Rico<sup>815</sup>.

Dubinsky was also willing to help Muñoz out in more personally political ways. In an interesting bit of political theater, Gladnick wrote to Dubinsky relaying Muñoz's concern that "his worst public enemy," the dictator of the Dominican Republic Rafael Trujillo, had sent \$25,000 in hurricane relief funds to the Puerto Rican's Women's Civic Club. Muñoz wanted the ILGWU to donate the same amount so that he could refuse the money from Trujillo, but Muñoz did not want it revealed that he had requested the donation. Dubinsky agreed and donated \$25,000 in the name of the AFL-CIO with an additional \$1,000 from the ILGWU's local 22. In return, Muñoz publicly thanked Dubinsky for the organization's generosity.<sup>816</sup>

Perhaps a simple typo is most evocative of the relationship between the ILGWU and the PPD. Via letter, Gladnick was filling Dubinsky in on the latest in the upcoming election in Puerto Rico. Gladnick wrote, "I am sure the Populares are going to lose a lot of votes on the coming elections but *we* will still carry the governorship and [l]egislature [*italics added*]."<sup>817</sup> Gladnick wrote over the typed "we" with a handwritten "they." The "we," joining the ILGWU and the PPD, could have been a simple typing error, but considering the collusion between the PPD and the ILGWU, it seems more like a so-called Freudian slip.

However, the most significant indicator of the ILGWU - PPD cooperation was Dubinsky's role in Puerto Rico's minimum wage hearings. Power in discussions on the minimum wage were viewed as crucial since during the era of Operation Bootstrap, Puerto Rico was exempt from the US federal minimum wage. The Puerto Rican government gave the ILGWU significant power in the tripartite industry committee negotiations determining the minimum wage.<sup>818</sup> Governor Muñoz and the powerful American labor organizer George Meany "unofficially, but rigidly" delegated labors position on the minimum wage in Puerto Rico to

Dubinsky.<sup>819</sup> Consequently, Dubinsky, Gladnick and other ILGWU officials were frequent committee members.

The issue of the minimum wage on Puerto Rico was important for both labor and business on the mainland and the island. Originally, the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) set a federal minimum wage which covered the entire US, including Puerto Rico. However, wages on Puerto Rico were a fraction of what they were on the mainland and US businesses in Puerto Rico became furious at the wage hike and threatened to leave if the increase was enforced.<sup>820</sup> To remedy the situation, the US Congress passed an amendment to the FLSA in 1940 which established a tripartite committee to set a minimum wage in Puerto Rico on an industry-by-industry basis.<sup>821</sup> The three-part industry committee consisted of select the employers, employees, and “disinterested” members of the public (from both Puerto Rico and the US).<sup>822</sup> Each committee would make a recommendation which they would then submit to the Administrator of the Wage and Hours Division of the US Department of Labor, who would then accept the recommendations or designate a new committee.<sup>823</sup> The goal of the annual and then biannual minimum wage hearings was to strike a balance—raise wages enough so that manufacturers in Puerto Rico were not given an undo advantage over mainland business, while at the same time, wages should not be set so high as to cause job losses on Puerto Rico. The result of the hearings kept wages on Puerto Rico far below wages on the mainland until the mid 1970s, and then only achieving wage parity in the 1980s.

The differential in US versus Puerto Rican minimum wage was a point of contention as low-wage labor was seen as a problem for US-based unions and an advantage for business and Operation Bootstrap. Prior to the ILGWU coming to Puerto Rico, Dubinsky was involved in

Puerto Rico's wage hearings.<sup>824</sup> Initially, Dubinsky argued for wage parity between Puerto Rico and the mainland, the idea being that if American businesses were required to pay the same minimum wage to Puerto Rican workers as they did to US workers, offshoring would become less profitable and thus less desirable. Dubinsky publicly decried the wage discrepancy, exclaiming that "the presently unfair advantage enjoyed by Puerto Rican industrialists is becoming an ever greater menace to certain mainland industries."<sup>825</sup> However, perhaps seeing the writing on the wall, the ILGWU stopped arguing for wage parity and started urging wage hikes on a percentage basis with the US. The ILGWU seemingly ceased trying to stop the offshoring movement and instead starting utilizing their power over the minimum wage to maintain leverage over Puerto Rican workers, which the union probably wagered would be necessary if, as the movement towards offshoring labor continued, the percentage of Puerto Rican membership in the ILGWU increased.

The ILGWU did not make this shift over night. In 1954, the minimum wage in Puerto Rico was \$0.33 per hour while the minimum in the U.S. was \$1.36.<sup>826</sup> The ILGWU argued at the NLRB wage hearing that Puerto Ricans should get \$0.75 per hour. Lower wages, they claimed, would mean that the island would have an unfair advantage over the mainland. To support the \$0.42 hike, the ILGWU claimed US companies should pay Puerto Ricans more because the profits they made as a result of offshoring were high and besides, they stated, Puerto Rican workmanship was equal to that on the mainland. According to reports on the NLRB meeting, "[t]he companies," presumably Exquisite Form and Maidenform, issues a veiled threat that they might leave Puerto Rico if the wages were too high. Bernard Rashkin of Exquisite Form argued that Puerto Rican workers were only 79% as effective as workers on the mainland. The ILGWU

Research Director, Lazare Teper, countered than even if Rashkin's estimate was true, mathematically it worked out that Puerto Rican workers should get \$1.05 per hour, so the \$0.75 proposed was a deal. The US Labor Department's Wage and Public Contracts division ultimately voted in 1954 to increase the minimum wage to \$0.55 per hour.<sup>827</sup>

After it seemed fairly certain that American business was staying on the island, Dubinsky's rhetoric became more convoluted. In 1955, the ILGWU published a statement in the Puerto Rican newspaper *El Mundo*, stating that the union did not seek wage parity, but instead favored a lower wage in Puerto Rico that would be raised with increased economic development. Wage parity, the article claimed, "...would ruin industry and leave many workers without jobs."<sup>828</sup> The first line of the article states that this comment was made by the ILGWU's Gus Tyler "in the name of Mr. Dubinsky."<sup>829</sup> That Tyler gave his name to the media release as opposed to Dubinsky allows for speculation that Dubinsky wanted to give himself some wiggle room. 1955 was the same year that Gladnick went to Puerto Rico to unionize the island. Perhaps the ILGWU was preparing Puerto Ricans for a future where their union would not fight for wage parity and instead would be thankful for the increased minimum the ILGWU was able to get them. The ILGWU wanted to play all sides until the path ahead was crystal clear. Indeed, Dubinsky continued to sporadically argue for wage parity between the mainland and Puerto Rico until 1960, when the ILGWU finally endorsed Munoz's plan to increase Puerto Rican wages on a percentage basis correlating with US increases.<sup>830</sup>

Why Dubinsky ultimately backed this plan is debated. It was only three years earlier that Puerto Rico was formerly denounced at the AFL-CIO convention as a haven for runaway industry.<sup>831</sup> Publicly the ILGWU stated that they would no longer fight Munoz in order to free

up time to work on “more important” US mainland minimum wage issues with Congress.<sup>832</sup>

Most scholars assume that Dubinsky had realized he was fighting a losing battle and decided to work with the present circumstance to get the best deal. Further, Dubinsky likely understood that the wage hearings were more for show than substance and that in practice neutered labor. Pedro Caban argues that the wage hearings “functioned as effective policy instruments through which low, internationally competitive wages were maintained during the 1950s.”<sup>833</sup> Hence, the fixing of the minimum wage essentially limited the role of unions to bargaining over fringe benefits.<sup>834</sup>

Dubinsky consistently made sure that ILGWU workers would be paid five cents above the negotiated minimum wage. This ostensibly made workers grateful they were members of the ILGWU but it also led to accusations that Dubinsky made “sweetheart” deals with industry, where the minimum wage was low enough for business to agree to the higher wages for ILGWU workers.<sup>835</sup> According to a 1965 article, claims were made that Dubinsky reached an agreement from the comfort of the lavish Caribe Hilton hotel prior to the wage hearings even taking place. The article stated that “[o]ne high-placed Federal official in the Department of Labor here once described the hearings as a “farce” and that “Mr. Dubinsky seems to have had things pretty much his way.”<sup>836</sup> A 1953 Maidenform interoffice correspondence seems to corroborate the claim that Dubinsky made deals with manufacturers prior to minimum wage hearings.<sup>837</sup>

On at least one occasion, Dubinsky specifically asked for Ida Rosenthal’s opinion on the minimum wage prior to a hearing. She wrote back to him in 1954 that she believed that the standard of living for Puerto Ricans should be lifted but that the Puerto Rican worker’s productivity level was “far below that of our workers here in the United States,” which justified

the lower minimum wage. Rosenthal suggested in a “spirit of cooperation” that the minimum be set at 45 cents an hour, which was between the US and Puerto Rican minimum.<sup>838</sup> After the hearing, Maidenform manager Paul Hammer wrote to Ellis Rosenthal that Dubinsky was saving the higher wage for the ILGWU and instead proposing a lower minimum than what he could actually get because he “must show the workers that he has been able to get something for them.”<sup>839</sup> At a hearing two years later, Dubinsky told the NLRB that Maidenform was “one of the most liberal firms in the nation.”<sup>840</sup> In that same year, the ILGWU would begin to unionize Maidenform in Puerto Rico.

The PPD needed the compliance of Puerto Rican workers in order to ensure the success of Operation Bootstrap, which would help keep the PPD in power. As the brassiere business was a major industry on Puerto Rico, the PPD sought the favor of the ILGWU. For their part, the ILGWU utilized their negotiating power over the Puerto Rican minimum wage to secure its status with ILGWU members on Puerto Rico, as well as with American manufacturers like Maidenform. The ILGWU’s participation in this process smoothed the way for Operation Bootstrap and was therefore necessary to the formation of export-led manufacturing on Puerto Rico.

#### The ILGWU & Maidenform

Two incidents demonstrate the cooperation between the ILGWU and Maidenform on Puerto Rico and show how their collaboration likely worked to the disadvantage of the Puerto Rican workers. The first occurrence was the ILGWU’s Robert Gladnick’s coordination with Maidenform to defeat a unionization attempt by Juan Carlos Citron. With increasingly

sophisticated local Puerto Rican unionizers nosing around Maidenform plants, and with the ILGWU's Gladnick in Puerto Rico, Maidenform made the decision to unionize its Puerto Rican facilities under the ILGWU. The tipping point was the unionization attempt by Citron. Of the Puerto Rican based unionizers, Citron came the closest to unionizing Maidenform in Puerto Rico and might have succeeded were it not for Gladnick's intervention. The ILGWU sent Gladnick to Puerto Rico in 1955 where he rapidly unionized the island before leaving to work full-time in Miami in 1960.<sup>841</sup> In order to quickly unionize the island, Gladnick needed to eliminate the "independents," or home-grown Puerto Rican unions, like that of Citron. One strategy Gladnick utilized was playing off employers fears of the more radical unions.<sup>842</sup>

The second incident took place ten years after the ILGWU unionized Maidenform in Puerto Rico. and the ILGWU cooperation lasted years after the initial unionization. A Maidenform employee, Maria Luisa Vigo, accused her manager of beating her. She contacted her ILGWU business agent to Maidenform, Margarita Toro, who stood up for her and was then fired by the ILGWU. Toro rallied many Maidenform employees to protest the situation. The ILGWU and Maidenform worked together to suppress the protests. Employees who did not comply were fired and were left with little recourse other than forsaking Toro and pleading for their jobs back. These two occurrences of Maidenform - ILGWU cooperation illustrate the actions taken to ensure that both American institutions maintained control on the island and relatively calm labor-management relations, necessary for the success of Operation Bootstrap and the establishment of export-led manufacturing.

The highly cooperative relationship between the ILGWU and Maidenform in Puerto Rico was first forged in the US. Maidenform frequently renewed contracts earlier than required and



with agreeable conditions. In 1954, *Justice*, the ILGWU's publication, reported President David Dubinsky's satisfaction with the relationship,

“A rare case of enlightened management policy was provided by the Maiden Form firm, which negotiated a three-year contract with the ILGWU in March, 1953, two months before the 28<sup>th</sup> ILGWU Convention made it mandatory for all affiliates to sign agreements only if they provide for the 35-hour work week...According to Pres. Dubinsky, this is the first time in his experience that a firm has voluntarily surrendered a major advantage over the rest of the industry. ‘Our relations with this firm have always been conducted in a cordial and enlightened spirit,’ he said. ‘We have at all times recognized the justice of the company’s request that it be treated no worse, from its point of view, than the rest of the industry. Now we have turned the tables on the company and asked that it apply the same equitable formula so that Maiden Form workers be treated no worse than those in the rest of the industry. I am delighted that this time the company recognized the justice of our claim. In voluntarily and freely surrendering its advantage the firm has shown a rare spirit of industrial cooperation and enlightened management-labor relations,’ Pres. Dubinsky concluded.”<sup>843</sup>

This mutual praise was by no means unusual. Since the ILGWU had first organized Maidenform in 1930 until the end of the 1960s, they maintained a particularly cooperative relationship. By 1956 the ILGWU and Maidenform had an exclusive contract, which covered factories in New Jersey, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico. In *The Maiden Forum*, ILGWU anniversaries were happily reported, featuring photos of Maidenform executives attending ILGWU parties.<sup>844</sup> Both publicly gushed over their consistently successful negotiations, lauding Maidenform's uniquely high pay, benefits, and security. Pleasantries were even exchanged personally between higher ups, including Rosenthal and Dubinsky, indicating that they even spent non-business time together.<sup>845</sup>

Demonstrating the intimate relationship between Maidenform and the ILGWU is the informal and playful exchanges that characterized their interactions in the US in the late 1940s and 1950s. For Christmas, Maidenform gave ILGWU office workers brassieres and in return the recipients sent back amusing little ditties. “As usual the girls in my office have penned a poem to

you... A Cup, B Cup, C Cup too, We've got all the sizes to puzzle you. We thank you kindly for your gift, Because they give us all a lift.”<sup>846</sup> Typical of the friendly and casual relationship was a response sent from Maidenform manager William Woltz to the ILGWU's Angela Bambace. In the note, Woltz explained that the requested size 44 bras were “obviously” not for Bambace's personal use and so he included three bras he believed to be her size from “memory.” Whether Woltz was recalling Bambace's prior orders or recalling his visual knowledge of her chest, was not specified.<sup>847</sup>

The ILGWU-Maidenform cooperation was widely reported. Princeton, New Jersey's mayor presented both Maidenform and the ILGWU keys to the city in honor of the city's esteem for their positive working relationship.<sup>848</sup> When approached by *Business Week* magazine for a publication dedicated to the industrial and commercial interests of the US, as well as an attempt to answer the question, “what is a day's fair wage?”—the ILGWU told the magazine to look no further than Maidenform. The *Business Week* article, complete with multiple photographs, showed business and union working together to solve the problem of an underperforming employee. Together they determined that the employee was not using the most efficient techniques and so they taught her new methods which allowed her to work above standard.<sup>849</sup> Occasionally, ILGWU officials even defended the company against its own members. When Maidenform instituted a thirty-seven hour workweek with a percentage increase to replace the forty hour work week, members of ILGWU local 420 were unhappy with the change. Bambace believed that the shorter work week would help issues of unemployment and complimented Maidenform's efforts, stating that sometimes workers forget how lucky they have been and, “[w]orkers in the Maiden Form Brassiere have been very fortunate.”<sup>850</sup>

Numerous factors went into creating an amicable relationship between this particular business and the union. Perhaps a shared sense of community contributed to forming a positive working relationship when it could otherwise have been quite contentious. Both Maidenform and the ILGWU were founded by (mostly female) Jewish immigrants in the early twentieth century and perhaps this played a role in their harmonious relationship. Lucy Dawidowicz argues that Jewish workers and Jewish bosses felt a certain commonality and a sense of a bound fate, which facilitated cooperative relationships.<sup>851</sup> Reasonably, this would likely also have applied to Jewish bosses, like those at Maidenform, and Jewish union leaders, like at the ILGWU. In addition to the shared sense of community brought about by being Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire in a country predominated by Anglo-Saxon Protestants, prevalent anti-Semitism also probably worked to bring the groups together. Dawidowicz argues that, anti-Semitism separated working class Jews from working class gentiles, as well as upper class Jews from upper-class gentiles.<sup>852</sup> This dynamic could have perhaps strengthened the remarkably amicable relationship between the business and union that continued in Puerto Rico.

Yet, in the early days, this mutual bond did not guarantee smooth sailing or clarity of action in Puerto Rico. What Dubinsky and Gladnick's initially intended for Maidenform in Puerto Rico is unclear.<sup>853</sup> Correspondence between Gladnick and Ellis Rosenthal in 1949, when Gladnick was still working for the ILGWU and Maidenform in West Virginia, has Gladnick promising Rosenthal that he would speak to a Congressman about possible ways to address Maidenform's problem with Exquisite Form, who had offshored to Puerto Rico and begun underselling Maidenform.<sup>854</sup> There is no record indicating the ILGWU gave Maidenform information regarding Exquisite Form, but Maidenform did decide not long thereafter to offshore

to Puerto Rico. Four years later, but still prior to the ILGWU unionizing Maidenform in Puerto Rico, Gladnick met with Maidenform officials in Puerto Rico while on a fact-finding mission for the ILGWU. Afterwards, a Maidenform manager in Puerto Rico wrote to Ellis Rosenthal of his meeting with Gladnick. Supposedly, Dubinsky had sent Gladnick on short notice and with only minimal instructions. Dubinsky allegedly told Gladnick to leave Maidenform alone and instead ordered him to give Exquisite Form trouble. The correspondence also indicates that Dubinsky was willing to bargain with the manufacturers over wages prior to the NLRB's minimum wage hearings, indicating a willingness to compromise.<sup>855</sup>

Two years after that, Gladnick went to Puerto Rico to organize full-time. Still the intentions of the ILGWU were unclear. Gladnick claimed that his first task was to look into Maidenform and yet, he wrote to Dubinsky, "...our greatest problem here will be to knock the props from the agitation, that our sole purpose for coming here is to drive the industry off the island."<sup>856</sup> This statement seems to indicate that Gladnick believed it was critical to gain favor with American business on the island, especially Maidenform, and convince them it was not the ILGWU's objective to either drive up the minimum wage or to push American business out of Puerto Rico. Yet, the ILGWU would repeatedly contradict itself and would work both ends against the middle. This was probably because with the advent of the modern movement towards offshoring, the way forward for the ILGWU was unclear. The paramount goal was to remain viable, and to accomplish this goal, they needed to remain flexible. Therefore, the ILGWU strategy in Puerto Rico under Gladnick and Dubinsky seemed to be intentionally ambiguous.

Robert Gladnick was an interesting choice to unionize Puerto Rico.<sup>857</sup> Like Dubinsky and Rosenthal, he was a Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe. Impulsive and adventurous, he

left his work in California in 1936 to join the American division of the International Brigade called the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, fighting in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) for the left-leaning Spanish faction and against the faction of right-leaning Nationalist General Francisco Franco. During the conflict, Gladnick even transferred to a Soviet Tank unit where he became a tank commander. Ever the rabble-rouser, he was expelled from the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade for attempting to form an offshoot against totalitarianism. Gladnick returned from Spain as a stowaway aboard the *President Harding* and shortly thereafter joined the Canadian Army to fight in WWII before the US had entered the war.<sup>858</sup> When the war ended, he joined the ILGWU's Upper South Department where he worked until adventure again beckoned him, this time to Puerto Rico.<sup>859</sup> Gladnick requested he be sent from his job in West Virginia, where he worked with Maidenform, to unionize Puerto Rico. Helpfully, he had learned Spanish in the 1930s when he was organizing Mexican and Japanese workers in California.

Much like Dubinsky, Gladnick began as a Socialist, but by the time of the Cold War, he had become hyper-vigilant (some might even say paranoid) about radicalism and potential communist associations, even within the labor movement. This Red-Scare tinged enthusiasm and inflexibility caused problems in Puerto Rico where socialism had a more vibrant history. One incident required Dubinsky to run interference. In 1957 Gladnick refused to allow the ILGWU to participate in a parade supporting the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) strike if the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) was involved. His reason was because he believed the UGT to be "Communist dominated."<sup>860</sup> The UGT, recently affiliated with the AFL-CIO, was deeply offended. In a letter to Dubinsky complaining about the "serious" accusation made by Gladnick, a leader of the UGT asked for assistance setting up "counter charges" so that Gladnick

would be required to substantiate his claim that the UGT was dominated by Communists by forcing him to name supposed Communists inside the UGT so they could be “immediately expelled.”<sup>861</sup> Dubinsky had enough problems in Puerto Rico and he did not want to deal with infighting. Besides, numerous correspondences indicate that he was frequently irritated by his man in Puerto Rico. Dubinsky wrote to ILGWU Vice President Louis Stulberg that, “Gladnick is loose with accusations.”<sup>862</sup> Dubinsky went on to write that even if Gladnick believed that other unions were infiltrated with Communists, “he should practice restraint in our relations with them. In other words, he should learn how to keep his mouth shut.”<sup>863</sup> Dubinsky knew that to work in a place like Puerto Rico, a union leader needed to be politic and circumspect. Gladnick was neither.<sup>864</sup> In another incident, the IUE threatened to tell AFL-CIO President George Meany that Gladnick’s TV commercials in Puerto Rico for the AFL-CIO were not “militant” enough. Gladnick was furious and accused members of his own AFL-CIO of being Communists<sup>865</sup>. Gladnick was adamant that there were Communists but stated that he did not have the time to “look under every bed to see if a Stalinist is lurking there”—though he claimed that it would make a “very interesting detective project.”<sup>866</sup> After leaving the ILGWU in 1966, Gladnick continued his anti-communist crusade, joining the American Institute for Free Labor Development’s Latin American division, which was a joint effort of the AFL and CIA with the directive to spread unionism and discourage Communism across the globe. In addition, he attended the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers seminar in Columbia where he, along with union reps from Canada, US, and Latin American countries, provided instruction to new unionists in Columbia after the recent overthrow of dictator Rojas Pinilla.<sup>867</sup>

Regardless of Gladnick's outspoken personality and persistent warnings against communists in the labor movement, he was an extremely effective organizer. *The San Juan Star* stated that Gladnick "built the garment union here from scratch to a membership of 5,800 in 42 shops."<sup>868</sup> Gladnick recognized that in Puerto Rico the real obstacle to unionizing the island was not the PPD or resistance from American businesses but the smaller independent Puerto Rican-based unions, some of which Gladnick accused of being fellow travelers.<sup>869</sup> To encourage workers to join the ILGWU instead of other unions, Gladnick emphasized the ILGWU's strength in numbers. Gladnick placed an article in *El Mundo* directed at both workers and at Juan Carlos Citron, the Puerto Rican union organizer he viewed as competition in the organization of Maidenform.<sup>870</sup> His statements were essentially a call-to-arms for brassiere workers to unite under the ILGWU. The article praised workers' heretofore unsuccessful attempts at organizing with Puerto Rico-based unions, in turn urging them to join the ILGWU. Gladnick stated, "[t]he majority of the leaders of your union are honorable and sincere and they will welcome the opportunity to be able to bring their little unions into the folds of an Island wide powerful union and, thus be able to put up a real solid front to your employers."<sup>871</sup> The article also addressed fears that the real reason the American unions had come to Puerto Rico was to eliminate offshoring. It assured readers that the "great American Labor Movement is built on economic common sense. It is also built on fraternal solidarity."<sup>872</sup> In emphasizing the belief that workers world-wide were part of a single brotherhood, Gladnick concluded his plea with the new ILGWU slogan for Puerto Rico, "*es union con Corazon*" (is a union with a heart). Gladnick hoped this article would simultaneously encourage membership and counteract rumors, spread by Juan Citron and his like, that Gladnick was only visiting the island.<sup>873</sup>

Citron was the latest and most sophisticated independent organizer to attempt unionizing Maidenform. Ray Uszczak, the Maidenform manager at Ponce, feared Citron would succeed in organizing the Puerto Rican plants. Uszczak used current employees as spies to infiltrate Citron's organization, and found fault with the work of those believed to be complicit in the unionizing effort in order to terminate them.<sup>874</sup> But Citron's was different from previous unionization attempts; he was a full-time union organizer, he acted clandestinely, and he recruited internally.<sup>875</sup> Despite Maidenform's efforts, Citron gathered enough support at the Maidenform factory in Ponce for the NLRB to grant his Union de Trabajadores de la Beatrice Needle Craft Inc, de Ponce an election.<sup>876</sup> For Maidenform in Puerto Rico, the risk of their factories being unionized by Puerto Rican-based unions was too great. The days of a union-free shop in Puerto Rico were seemingly over. From the mainland, Ellis Rosenthal sent word that it was time to work with Robert Gladnick and the ILGWU.<sup>877</sup>

The first step was to defeat Citron's Puerto Rico-based union. Gladnick collaborated with Maidenform's Uszczak to form a strategy to defeat Citron. Uszczak and Gladnick held a meeting meant to give the appearance of a friendly get together with family, though in reality to discuss strategy.<sup>878</sup> Gladnick then implemented their plan. He first attempted to get Citron to withdraw but he refused. After being contacted, the ILGWU's man in Puerto Rico, Citron probably realized what he was up against. In reaction, Citron promised Gladnick that if Citron won the election, his union would become an ILGWU affiliate<sup>879</sup>. Gladnick did not buy Citron's promise or, most likely, he did not want Citron's union as an affiliate in any case: Gladnick wanted to establish an American-made union. Gladnick set up a third party in order to split the vote, hoping that Citron would lose the election and clear the way for Gladnick to organize



Maidenform.<sup>880</sup> Gladnick felt that the real solution was an industry-wide NLRB vote to elect the ILGWU. Absent this, Gladnick feared that the independent Puerto Rican unions, or as Gladnick referred to them “very unsavory characters,” would surge in as soon there were any signs of trouble. “Therefore,” Gladnick claimed, “it is important for us, to lock the door to these potential trouble-makers [with] an industry wide NLRB election, so that we knock the props from under their raiding and infiltration tactics.”<sup>881</sup>

A back and forth battle took place utilizing clandestine flyers which were littered around the factory under the cover of night. Gladnick worked with Uszczak on a “secret” Spanish-language anti-union flyer. Citron countered with his own inflammatory circular, warning workers that Uszczak was a “foreigner” and that they “don’t know where he comes from.” The circular went on, “to vote against the union is the equivalent of betraying yourself, and more so, to betray your own family.”<sup>882</sup> Despite Citron’s xenophobic fear tactics, Gladnick was so confident of his victory that he sent Citron a gloating and disingenuous letter, informing him that if only Citron had let Gladnick into his meetings, he could have helped.<sup>883</sup> Working together, Maidenform and Gladnick defeated Citron’s independent union. Maidenform believed that if they were going to have a union, it might as well be a known American union rather than an “foreign” and likely more radical Puerto Rican union. Elated that Citron’s union had been defeated, Gladnick wrote to Dubinsky that “this should take care of the Independents for a while,” and that perhaps the unionization effort by Citron had actually been a “blessing in disguise.”<sup>884</sup> With the coast clear of independents, Gladnick was free to unionize Maidenform’s Puerto Rico plants as well as the vast majority of the brassiere industry on the island.<sup>885</sup> Citron would later be elected as Mayor of

Ponce and, according to Gladnick, would control all of the independent unions in the area and still desired to take over the ILGWU controlled shops.<sup>886</sup>

In addition to the tactic of using businesses' fear of more radical Puerto Rican unions, Gladnick extended this fear to more radical *American* unions in order to install the ILGWU. In a letter to Dubinsky, Gladnick claimed that a recent wage hearing, which resulted in a significant increase in the island's minimum wage, had made "the task of organizing...almost impossible, as the workers are flushed with the newly expected raises."<sup>887</sup> Essentially, because workers were getting pay raises without belonging to a union, they had little incentive to join the ILGWU. However, Gladnick had devised a plan. He claimed, "[u]nder normal circumstances, in view of the raise plus the terror of the employers, I would say organizing would be hopeless. However, after analysing [sic] the situation, there has come into being a new element, and that element is the fear of the employers of the local Longshoremen's Union, International Brotherhood of Longshoremen AFL-CIO, who through a series of lightening strikes have been able to organize the majority of all transports (teamsters) on the Island."<sup>888</sup> Gladnick planned to use the fear of the Longshoremen's Union to the ILGWU's advantage, even getting the Longshoremen's Union to play along. He wrote to Dubinsky conspiratorially, "[t]his Union has promised us complete co-operation and in view of this plus the fear of the employers of that organization, we may accomplish something and in fact, at this very moment, we are working along those lines...For a very obvious reason it will be very difficult to go into greater details about it. However, if this co-operation should bear out we will play on the fear of the employers for a change, instead of the fear of the workers as we have, up to now, had to do."<sup>889</sup>

As previously discussed, the ILGWU's plans to unionize the island panned out. A decade later, the ILGWU and Maidenform were still colluding in order to dominate the Puerto Rican workforce. In March 1965, Margarita Toro declared on the radio that she had been fired from her job as leader of local 600 because she had backed a worker who was being mistreated by both Maidenform and the ILGWU. In two radio addresses, Toro asserted that the union and the brassiere company had a "special relationship" that was detrimental to the workers, and that the workers should therefore form a new union.<sup>890</sup> Once again, the ILGWU and Maidenform would join forces to defeat attempts to promote Puerto Rican autonomy.

Speaking to all Puerto Ricans in a radio address, Margarita Toro alleged that Maria Luisa Vigo was inappropriately fired from Maidenform by manager Paul Hammer after an eleven year tenure. Toro claimed she had been able to get Vigo reinstated but that Hammer had demanded Vigo switch duties from the ones she had performed for more than a decade. When Vigo refused, Toro claimed that Hammer and his assistant had physically beaten Vigo. Toro then brought Vigo to Gladnick's replacement at the ILGWU, Jerry Schoen, for support and assistance. Rather than help, Schoen reportedly attempted to bribe Vigo into dropping the charges against Maidenform in exchange for her old position back. When Vigo refused, Schoen urged Toro to pressure Vigo into taking the deal. When Toro refused, she was fired from the ILGWU.<sup>891</sup> In solidarity with Vigo, over one hundred Maidenform workers walked off the job in protest.

Toro then distributed a flyer at the Mayaguez plant urging the employees not to re-sign with the ILGWU. The handout claimed the ILGWU would soon distribute new cards for worker's signatures authorizing the three dollar union dues which committed them to the union, a union which intended to impose on them a new business agent (to replace Toro) they did not

know and who would not support them. The flyer went on: “Fellow workers, don’t let them fool you, knowing already the lack of backing you have. There is no law that forces you to belong to a Union you don’t want. The moment has arrived to break the chains - Do not authorize your own slavery. Do not sign.”<sup>892</sup> The flyer concluded with an invitation to an assembly to discuss further action.

To quash this uprising which threatened them both, Maidenform and the ILGWU would need to join forces. Maidenform acted first. Maidenform’s lawyer for the Puerto Rico plants contacted Jerry Schoen, warning him that ILGWU members and Maidenform employees were violating their no-strike policy and engaging in an illegal strike. This violated the ILGWU’s contract with Maidenform. The attorney informed Schoen that he had twenty-four hours to fix the problem or else.<sup>893</sup> Considering the ILGWU’s role in the incident, they probably did not require a threat to join the action, and join they did. The story of two women fired and one beaten was picked up by the newspaper *El Mundo*. In response to the bad publicity, vice president of the ILGWU in Puerto Rico, Alberto Sanchez, denounced Toro in a twenty-two minute radio broadcast, which ran over two days. Fearing that other local unions might smell blood in the water, the ILGWU sent out a warning threatening them “to keep hands off and not support Margarita...if they felt they could ‘fish in these troubled waters’ they would have a fight on their hands. The I.L.G. was not going to sit idly by with its ‘hands folded’.”<sup>894</sup>

Maidenform did not sit idly by either. They were furious that their source of low-wage labor, which was not as low as it used to be, was impeding their production. Maidenform representatives met with the Mayor of Mayaguez and encouraged him to use his influence to stop the disruption.<sup>895</sup> Maidenform and the ILGWU sent ten spies to a meeting Toro hosted to

discuss the formation of a new union.<sup>896</sup> Next, Maidenform managers began individually calling the protestors at their homes and warning them that if they did not return to work, they would be fired. Their efforts were successful as the majority of the strikers did return to work, and those who did not were immediately fired.<sup>897</sup> Maidenform's actions made it clear that they would not tolerate disobedience in Puerto Rico. Neither would the ILGWU. Margarita Toro had been correct in her prediction. She was replaced by a union representative who lived more than one hundred miles from the Maidenform factory, severely hindering future efforts to effectively organize and protest.<sup>898</sup>

Many of the women who were fired filed charges with the NLRB against Maidenform, citing violation of their right to strike. Maidenform countered that they had a no-strike clause in their agreement with the ILGWU that trumped the employees' right to strike. There is no evidence that the NLRB took any immediate action. As time passed and the women had no alternative income, their resolve faltered. One striker, Dolores Noriega, sent a letter to the ILGWU which was then forwarded to Maidenform.<sup>899</sup> In this letter Noriega stated that she had no desire to continue the formal complaint and what she and many of the other women simply wanted were their jobs back. Noriega blamed Toro and sought to appeal to the American union by referencing current events in the US. The letter attempted to quote US President Johnson's comments on the recent violence against civil rights demonstrators in Selma, Alabama, when it states: "The only way to stop those demonstrations is [sic] eliminating the cause...[a]nd the cause of all our troubles have being [sic] Margarita Toro and her group of leaders."<sup>900</sup> Noriega was, presumably, paraphrasing LBJ's statement made at a press conference addressing civil rights violations and announcing his intention of presenting an amendment to the legislation

addressing the disenfranchisement of and discrimination against African Americans.<sup>901</sup> In Noriega's analogy, Toro—not Maidenform or the ILGWU—was akin to American institutionalized racism, while Maidenform represented the federal government, which held the power to fix the wrongs suffered by the local workforce. Noriega was not rehired.

A little less than a month later, a contrite and probably desperate Toro wrote to Ellis Rosenthal asking that he intervene on her behalf with the ILGWU and rehire her at Maidenform. There is no evidence of whether Toro received a positive response from Ellis but it is unlikely, as several weeks later there is documentation that Maidenform refused to rehire Toro even though she apparently received at least nominal support from the ILGWU. Other women who had continued the strike and were subsequently fired by Maidenform also attempted to return with the ILGWU's backing. Maidenform refused them as well. Even though Maidenform occasionally gave lip service to the social benefits of the American modernization efforts, their motives were clearly dominated by financial gain. The impetus behind the ILGWU's backing of Toro and the fired workers is unknown; perhaps they genuinely desired to help these women get reinstated. Considering the history, however, it is far more likely that the ILGWU knew Maidenform would not rehire the women and the backing was more public relations than genuine assistance. The history of the ILGWU on Puerto Rico demonstrates that its main priority was not what was best for the members, but what was perceived to be best for the growth and security of the institution. As demonstrated, in multiple instances, what was good for Maidenform was what was deemed good for the ILGWU.

## The Aftermath of Operation Bootstrap

The ILGWU, Maidenform, and the Puerto Rican government all worked cooperatively, each for their own motives, and it seemed to work, at least for a while. The Puerto Rican government eagerly maintained good labor-management relations to ensure the success of Operation Bootstrap, which they hoped would bring prosperity to the island. Maidenform desired ILGWU unionized plants, thus giving them a familiar and cooperative union, to ease the transition and increase profits. The ILGWU was the linchpin making this arrangement possible. The union's success, however, was arguably fairly short lived. Competition and cheaper productions costs lured manufacturing further east to Asia during the late 1960s and 1970s. As a result, both the mainland and Puerto Rican ILGWU membership ultimately suffered a net loss of jobs in the growing garment trade. Cooperation may have slowed the loss of American jobs, but it could not stop the seeming necessity of cheaper labor costs required to succeed in the competition-based system of capitalism.

Puerto Rico became a model for export-led manufacturing in a modern globalized economy, a movement that would spread ideologies of “free trade” and designations of “export-processing zones” around the world.<sup>902</sup> This capitalism inserted the corporations of developed nations even more deeply into the affairs of developing nations.<sup>903</sup> As US colony-turned-commonwealth, Puerto Rico was an ideal and safe testing ground for the expansion of export-led manufacturing.<sup>904</sup> Those promoting export-led manufacturing claimed it might theoretically increase the standard of living, making developing nations more politically stable, while providing cheap labor for American companies.<sup>905</sup> American branch manufacturers focused on exports could, therefore, be a potentially powerful tool to prevent the spread of communism during the

Cold War. These boosters of the Puerto Rican model also claimed to prove that workers in so-called third world nations could operate in a modern manufacturing economy. Women as low-skill, low-wage workers played a key part in the restructuring of the world market.

Whether Operation Bootstrap was successful, however, proved to be a matter of time and perspective.<sup>906</sup> Despite over fifty years of US involvement and so-called development, Puerto Rico still lags behind comparable economies.<sup>907</sup> James Dietz argues that Operation Bootstrap failed because it relied too heavily on US investment at the expense of local entrepreneurship, which resulted in a stilted dependent economy.<sup>908</sup> Operation Bootstrap did largely industrialize the island, but it did not create enough jobs to support the urban migration that industrialization encouraged, even with the decrease in population due to the mass emigration to the US mainland.<sup>909</sup> The standard of living on the whole did increase, and Maidenform and other companies employed women, many of whom had never had a full-time paying job outside of the home, and thereby provided them with new or additional independence.

Yet, when the special benefits like tax breaks and low wages attached to Operation Bootstrap ended, businesses left Puerto Rico for regions with cheaper production costs. Scholars argue that higher wages, increased globalization, and the free trade movement made Puerto Rico generally less attractive to business.<sup>910</sup> From 1961-1974 Puerto Rico's share of US apparel imports decreased from 37% to 16% as places like Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan became more appealing<sup>911</sup>. By 2001, there was only a single unionized garment shop still open in Puerto Rico, and even it was due to shut its doors.<sup>912</sup> This progressive offshoring to more lucrative labor markets can be framed as a survival tactic for business—when labor costs become too high, businesses move offshore to remain competitive.



Was Maidenform's future at stake when it closed its operations on Puerto Rico? It appears that Maidenform was still profitable when it started to close its shops in Puerto Rico but did so as it had the opportunity to make even greater profits by offshoring elsewhere. In the 1960s, Maidenform made an ill-fated move into the swimsuit market by establishing swimsuit factories in Puerto Rico; these swimsuit factories were the first to be shut down. However, Maidenform had already started to diversify, opening factories in Trinidad, the Philippines, Japan, and Italy. In 1964, Maidenform announced their best year to date, with gains of 9% over 1963.<sup>913</sup> Yet, by 1970, Maidenform began shutting down their manufacturing in Puerto Rico and moving to Latin America and Asia.<sup>914</sup> Maidenform left Puerto Rico prior to the island achieving wage parity with the mainland, which did not occur until 1981.<sup>915</sup> As a result, hundreds of Maidenform employees in Puerto Rico lost the jobs they had come to rely upon with no other comparable employment to fill the void. Maidenform was seemingly profitable until the 1990s when Rosenthal's descendants sold it publicly after it faced financial difficulties due to bad business decisions and competition from newer brands like Wonder Bra and Victoria's Secret.<sup>916</sup>

One Maidenform worker from the closed San Vicente plant expressed her grief in a poem in *El Sosten (The Bra)*, the Maidenform magazine produced by and for Puerto Rican workers.<sup>917</sup> The poem entitled, "It was Me Eighty-Eight," featured a photo of the author holding a card with the number eighty-eight indicating her identification number at the San Vicente factory. She wrote of her memories at the factory, her dear friends and her kind boss, whom she hoped to see the likes of again; and she wonders if they remember her too—if not by her visage or her words, than perhaps by her number. She reminisced of how the plant was her home-away-from-home for the past twelve years, and how she could read the passage of those years in the lines of her

forehead. At the end of the poem, she revealed her Christian name and who she *used to* be: “Mi propio nombre es Maria, Y era yo la ochenta y ocho,” (My name is Maria. And I was eighty-eight).<sup>918</sup> The poem laments not only the loss of a job but also the loss of an identity, even if that identity was a number.

While the ILGWU leadership worked with Maidenform in the hope of guaranteeing the survival of the union, their collaboration was not appreciated by everyone, especially the stateside rank-and-file. Issues between the leadership and the rank-and-file on the mainland seem to have been brewing as early as 1960. Local 160 (Bayonne, New Jersey) chairwoman Mary Grodski Walachowski attempted to appeal to Dubinsky based on their mutual Eastern European Jewish heritage. Blaming the labor in Puerto Rico, she hoped that she and Dubinsky could come to an understanding based on their shared “hardships and suffering of our common background.”<sup>919</sup> A few years later, Angela Bambace, in charge of the US upper south region for the ILGWU, wrote to Ellis Rosenthal about her concerns over job losses in her region. She wrote that from 1958-1962 jobs at the West Virginia plant had decreased from 1200 to 700.<sup>920</sup> Maidenform made promises to stanch the loss of jobs on the mainland but did not follow through.<sup>921</sup>

The ILGWU cooperated with Maidenform and the PPD on Puerto Rico in order to save their union. In the short-term it worked by establishing the ILGWU on the island, but it proved to be a failure in the long-term. As the situation deteriorated in the 1960s and 1970s, the ILGWU complained that Maidenform refused to hand over its books and that it lied about having non-union shops.<sup>922</sup> Perhaps most concerning was the discovery of brassieres made in Trinidad and Philippines with union labels attached, as these were not unionized areas.<sup>923</sup> An internal

ILGWU letter from 1964 discussed their problems with Maidenform and the difficulty in finding a fair resolution due to the companies' size and influence. One ILGWU employee put the matter thusly: "How are you in dealing with sacred cows? We have such an animal in our Department and before continuing further with reading this letter I would say that you should be prepared to 'lock horns' with a sacred female cow or else stop reading. MAIDENFORM. That's the cow...For me Don Quixote, contrary to the popular imagery attributed to him was not a comical character when he tilted windmills. If Maidenform be your windmill, I will be ever faithful Sancho."<sup>924</sup>

## Conclusion

A little more than a decade after the end of the Dream Campaign, Maidenform tried to revive the prior magic with the “Maidenform Woman” campaign and the tagline, “you’ll never know where she’ll turn up.” These ads featured tall, less voluptuous models, similar to the physique of the 1980s supermodel, in a robe exposing their bra and underwear on a baseball field, in an airport runway, a hospital room, or perhaps a bar. Like the ads of the 1950s and 1960s these women were daring to go anywhere, but unlike the independent humor-loving Dreamers, these women were frequently donning sultry expressions in the company of men. The trend away from the female-only space and towards the male point of view continued, culminating in the 1987 “Celebrity” campaign which omitted both women and bras and instead featured famous male actors expounding upon their feelings on women’s undergarments. This “devolution” may seem counterintuitive. As this study has argued, prior to a robust feminist movement, Maidenform promoted a type of female empowerment. Yet in the era of broad shoulder pad wearing businesswoman and the first female vice presidential candidate, Geraldine Ferraro, Maidenform sold women undergarments explicitly using male desire. Could this have been a backlash to the feminist movement?

An in-depth look into why this shift took place might be a productive question for future studies. However, it is interesting to briefly reflect on the popular lore surrounding the feminist movement and the bra. As legend has it, on the Atlantic City Boardwalk feminists burned bras in protest of the 1968 Miss American Pageant. In reality, the protestors had originally planned to incinerate a myriad of accoutrements of stereotypical femininity (and, the protestors argued,

oppression), including fake eyelashes, mops, high heels, and bras; but due to fire regulations, instead they opted to throw them away in a “freedom trash can.”<sup>925</sup> Nevertheless, the media widely reported on the self-proclaimed members of the Women’s Liberation as “bra burners” and the moniker stuck.<sup>926</sup>

One reporter, Art Buchwald, self-described as “one who has always been on the side of protestors,” believed that the “well-meaning but misled” picketers had “gone too far” by burning bras and “trying to destroy everything this country holds dear.”<sup>927</sup> Buchwald argued that it was legitimate to protest the pageant for being “lily white” but not for encouraging American women to be beautiful. After all, he claimed American women were known to be the most attractive in the world but this was largely due to “scientific ingenuity.” Reminiscent of Ida Rosenthal’s claims that her products provided much needed help to nature, Buchwald wrote, “[w]here nature failed, American know-how succeeded...it is now impossible for anyone to know where God leaves off and Maidenform takes over.” The article continues that although these women think that they were fighting for greater independence they were actually “turning back the clock to pre-civilization days when men and women did look...alike.” He claims that it was “only after women started...putting dust on their cheeks and red clay in their hair” that men stopped clubbing them over the head. Ominously he claimed, if these bra-burners had their way, the beatings would resume because, “these is no better excuse for hitting a woman than the fact that she looks just like a man.” He ends the article entitled, “Women Burn Their Bras Behind Them But Beauty Contest Protest Is Big Bust,” by proclaiming that this time, “dissent in this country has gone too far.”<sup>928</sup>

The demonstrators were protesting the simplification of women's worth into their physical appearance and attempting to create a female-only space by asking that even supportive men refrain from joining that specific protest. However, much of the discourse was redirected towards the heterosexual male perspective and the reiteration of the simultaneous superficiality and fanaticism of women who challenged the status quo. Jill Fields argues that the bra-burning myth was created to discredit the women's movement by associating it with the radicalism of the draft card burning Vietnam War protestors and the frivolity of women preoccupied by fashion.<sup>929</sup> This event and the accompanying (mis)interpretations serves to highlight the ambiguity of the symbol of the Maidenform bra, as it was specifically Maidenform that the reporter Buchwald conjures, and the way it can be used to represent ideas of freedom.

It is the unfixed concept of "freedom" in the early Cold War era that Maidenform utilized to create expanded representations of gender in consumer culture. In the early Cold War discourse, freedom became the defining characteristic of the United States as it interpreted its own values against those of the Soviet Union. At least rhetorically, the U.S. became the standard-bearer and paragon of freedom. It was tautological—if freedom was the global principle par excellence, then the U.S. was the world's foremost nation-state and vice versa. But what was freedom, exactly? Sanctioned concepts of (American) freedom meant the freedom to consume and to dream. However, inherent in this definition, is that freedom is not fixed. Therefore, freedom could be extended to mean the freedom to transgress against contained gender roles. Therein lies the rub—containing gender roles as a key element of domestic containment ensured American freedom as it protected the U.S. against the onslaught of Soviet communism, and yet, holding up freedom as a foundation of American identity also meant that Americans

could supercede conventional gender roles. Evident in the example of Maidenform is the power of the concept of freedom—and its limits.

In this same Cold War rhetoric, capitalism created freedom, and American style capitalism was no better represented than through consumer culture, which supposedly strengthened the U.S. and had the potential to makeover the whole world in the U.S.'s image, theoretically creating a prosperous and peaceful world. As the U.S. was seen as the lone entity that could save the world from the horrors of communism, American consumer culture was perhaps its strongest Cold War weapon. Enter Maidenform. During this era, Maidenform became the top producing bra manufacturer in the world. Its Dream campaign became world famous as a representation of the American Woman and the benefits of American style democracy-capitalism.

Maidenform also made use of the possibilities and the limits inherent in American freedom. The Woman-to-Woman marketing strategy, which started with Ida Rosenthal and was infused throughout the company, implicitly assumed that the American woman's needs were not being met by early Cold War era gender roles. Therefore, the Woman-to-Woman strategy sought to “speak” to the American woman in terms that were respectful and which seemed to come from a “woman's perspective.” The Woman-to-Woman approach created a brand that gave the impression it was made by women, for women. This manifested a mix of the traditional and the transgressive, the feminine and the masculine. This was largely possible because the Woman-to-Woman approach not only attempted to be empathetic but also provided the sense of an exclusively female space. Like the images of traditional femininity that the Maidenform brand held onto, this exclusive space provided a veneer of respectability and a cover for the transgressive elements. The wide-scale dissemination of the symbol of the Maidenform Woman

arguably provided women examples of unorthodox gender representations which they could (re)interpret as they saw fit.

The transgressive potential of freedom as well as its limits were shown throughout this analysis. Chapter One illustrated the Woman-to-Woman approach through the gender-bending persona of Ida Rosenthal, the blending of the private and public in the external marketing, as well as the rather open female sexuality permitted and even encouraged in the Maidenform workplace. The analysis of the Dream campaign and the influence of Motivational Research in Chapter Two exhibit the degree to which Maidenform was willing to empathize with female consumers and promote their supposed subconscious desires surrounding gender and sexuality. Chapter Three shows the image of the Maidenform Woman as the American Woman as unusually free—not only was she free of a blouse, she was also free of a husband, children, and any domestic duties. This uncontained image of free American femininity promoted all over the world was in stark contrast to the traditional portrayal of the domestic goddess typical in American consumer culture.

However, Maidenform's goal was to make a profit and ultimately the Woman-to-Woman approach was a strategy created to fulfill this goal. Therefore, to successfully operate within this capitalist framework, Maidenform needed to find a balance with the traditional. This was evident in the more conventional imagery Maidenform circulated including the use of New Look fashion, Anglo-Saxon beauty ideals, and traditionally feminine fantasies. While the adoption of the progressive Woman-to-Woman ethos within the business culture demonstrated that the aims went beyond the economic, Chapter Four then outlines the limitations faced by Maidenform as they attempted to save money by offshoring labor to Puerto Rico during Operation Bootstrap.



Maidenform's use of the ILGWU to deny their primarily female worker's Puerto Rican-based unions shows that efforts like the Woman-to-Woman approach can only go so far under a capitalist system.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Farrell-Beck and Colleen Gau, *Uplift: the bra in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Jill Fields, *An Intimate Affair: Women, Lingerie, and Sexuality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Emily Rosenberg, "Consuming Women: Images of Americanization in the 'American century,'" *Diplomatic History* 23.3 (1999).

<sup>3</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, *The Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Post War America*, (New York: Knopf, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Farrell-Beck and Gau, *Uplift*; Fields, *An Intimate Affair*; Adrienne Berney, "Streamlining Breasts: The Exaltation of Form and Disguise of Function in 1930s' Ideals," *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Technology and the Body (2001), pp. 327-342; Yalom, Marilyn, *A History of the Breast*, (New York City: Ballantine Books, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Philip Scranton, ed. *Beauty and business*; Geoffrey Jones, *Beauty Imagined: A History of the Global Beauty Industry*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Alfred Chandler, *The visible hand: the managerial revolution in American business*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1977); Kathy Peiss, "'Vital Industry' and Women's Ventures: Conceptualizing Gender in Twentieth Century Business History," *Business History Review*, 72.2 (Summer, 1998) 219-241 and *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Joan Wallach Scott, "Comment: Conceptualizing Gender in American Business History," *The Business History Review*, Vol. 72, No. 2, Gender and Business (Summer 1998), pp. 242-249; Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Scalon, Juliann Sivulka, and Denise Sutton discuss the impact of adwomen. Scalon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1995); Juliann Sivulka, *Ad Women: How They Impact What We Need, Want, and Buy*, (Amherst: Prometheus, 2009); Denise Sutton, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty: Women, Advertising and the Power of Marketing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York City: Basic Books, 1998); Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Farrell-Beck and Gau, *Uplift*; Fields, *An Intimate Affair*; Tom Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*, (Amherst: Prometheus, 2003); Tom Reichert and Jacqueline Lambiase, *Sex in Advertising: Perspectives on the Erotic Appeal*, (Cambridge: Routledge, 2002); Paul Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy: Freud to Madonna*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Sivulka, *Ad Women and Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising*, (Boston: Cengage Learning, 1997); Denise Sutton, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty: Women, Advertising and the Power of Marketing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York City: Morrow, 1984); Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> Linda J Busby and Greg Leichty, "Feminism and Advertising in Traditional and Nontraditional Women's Magazines 1950s-1980s," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, (June 1993,

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vol. 70 no, 2, 247-264); Alice Courtney and Sarah Lockeretz; Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*; William H. Young, *The 1950s. American Popular Culture through History*. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2004); Sivulka, *Sex, and Cigarettes, Stronger than Dirt*.

<sup>11</sup> Rutherford's *A World Made Sexy* discusses Ernest Dichter and the Dream Campaign in separate chapters. Tom Reichert's *The Erotic History of Advertising* mentions the Dream campaign as it relates to sexuality in advertising. Barbara Coleman's chapter, "Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s" in *Forming and Reforming Identity*, ed. Carol Siegel and Ann Kibbey, Issue 21 of Genders Series (NYU Press, 1995), argues that the campaign mocked women.

<sup>12</sup> While the Dream campaign did not challenge racial norms, chapter one argues that ideals of white Anglo-Saxon beauty were questioned as part of the Woman-to-Woman strategy on the Maidenform factory floor.

<sup>13</sup> Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), pp. 519-531; 526.

<sup>14</sup> Judith Butler has developed her theories through a large range of work. Of particular importance to this study are Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006); "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay on Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theater*, ed Sue-Ellen Case, (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1990); *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, (New York: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Few studies examine the Maidenform company. Only two chapters in two separate books discuss Maidenform, and they center on labor and touch on business culture. Those are Vicki Howard, "At the Curve Exchange: Post-war Beauty Culture and Working Women at Maidenform," in Philip Scranton, *Beauty and Business: Commerce, Gender, and Culture in Modern America*, New York: Routledge, 2001) and Melanie Shell-Weiss, "I Dreamed I Went to Work: Southern Unionism and Transnational Organizing in the Mid-Twentieth Century Lingerie Industry," *Florida's Working Class Past: Current Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender from Spanish Florida to the New Immigration*, ed Robert Cassanello and Melanie Shell-Weiss (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> To date, there is no full-length academic study of Ernest Dichter by a single author but two edited editions. In 2007 *A Tiger in the Tank: Ernest Dichter: An Austrian Advertising Guru* edited by Franz Kreuzer Gerd Precht and Christoph Steiner. Another collection of essays on Ernest Dichter was published in 2010 and edited by Stefan Schwarzkopf and Rainer Gries, entitled *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research: New Perspectives on the Making of Post-war Consumer Culture*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). To date, Lawrence R. Samuel's *Freud on Madison Avenue: motivational research and subliminal advertising in America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) is the only full length historical study on psychoanalytic marketing in the postwar period. Other articles or book chapters that cover Motivation Research and/or Ernest Dichter are the following: Mark Tadjewski, "Remembering Motivation Research: towards an alternative genealogy of interpretive consumer research," *Marketing Theory* 2006, Volume 6 (4): 429-466; Barbara Stern, "The Importance of Being Ernest: Commemorating Dichter's Contribution to Advertising Research," *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol 44, Issue 2, June 2004, pp 165-169; Paul Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy: Freud to Madonna*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

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<sup>17</sup> Melanie Shell-Weiss, "I Dreamed I Went to Work: Southern Unionism and Transnational Organizing in the Mid-Twentieth Century Lingerie Industry," *Florida's Working Class Past: Current Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Gender from Spanish Florida to the New Immigration*, ed Robert Cassanello and Melanie Shell-Weiss (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009); Vicki Howard, "At the Curve Exchange," in Scranton, *Beauty and Business*; Helen Safa, *The Myth of the Male Breadwinner: Women and Industrialization in the Caribbean*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Palmira N. Rios, "Export-Oriented Industrialization and the Demand for Female Labor: Puerto Rican Women in the Manufacturing Sector, 1952-1980," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Special Issue: Women and Development in the Third World. (Sep., 1990), pp. 321-337; Emilio Pantojas Garcia, *Development of Puerto Rico's Export-Led Industrialization Experience*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990); James L. Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institution Change and Capitalist Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Rueben Berríos Martínez, *Puerto Rico's Decolonization*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997.; Deborah Berman Santana D, *Kicking Off the Bootstraps: Environment, Development, and Community Power in Puerto Rico*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> Robert A. Brawer, *Fictions of Business: Insights on Management from Great Literature* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1998). Brawer, the embarrassed young man, recalled that there was an awkward silence and then they both started laughing. He knew her through his wife and stated that she was both imperious and charming, (70-71).

<sup>19</sup> The phrase "woman-to-woman" is used in "Maidenform's J.A. Coleman," by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, November, 1960, p. 54. The sentence reads as the following, "Woman-to-woman, the ads offer brassieres in the 'bare look fashion' or with 'perfect separation and natural uplift'." Series 2, Box 2, Folder 6, Maidenform Collection, 1922-1997 #585, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian, Washington DC. (Hereafter Maidenform Collection).

<sup>20</sup> Relevant studies on gender and consumer culture include: Lois Banner, *American Beauty: A Social History...Through Two Centuries of the American Idea, Ideal, and the Image of the Beautiful Woman*, (Los Angeles: Figueroa Press, 1983); Rachel Bowlby, *Carried Away: The Invention of Modern Shopping* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Alison J. Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Books, 2001); Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman*; Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough, editors. *The Sex of Things: Gender Consumption in Historical Perspective*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Susan J. Douglas, *Where the girls are: growing up female with the mass media* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994); Carol Dyhouse, *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism*. (London: Zed Books, 2010); Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Margaret Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture and Votes for Women*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Andrea, Friedman. "The politics of consumption: women and consumer culture," *Journal of Women's History*, 13.2, Summer, (2001) 159-168; Anne, Herman. "Shopping for Identities: Gender and Consumer Culture," 28.3(Autumn, 2002), 539-549; Daniel Delis Hills, *Advertising to the American Woman, 1900-1999* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001); Vicki Howard, *Brides, Inc: American Weddings and the Business of Tradition*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Lisa Jacobson, "Fashion, Feminism, and the Pleasures and perils of

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Consumer Fantasy,” *Journal of Women’s History*, 22.1 (Spring, 2010) 178-187; Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Katherine Parkin, *Food is Love: Advertising and Gender Roles in Modern America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Rachel Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Emily Rosenberg, “Consuming Women: Images of Americanization in the ‘American century,” *Diplomatic History* 23.3 (1999); Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies’ Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1995); Scranton, ed. *Beauty and business*; Sutton, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty*; Karen Whitney Tice, “For Appearance Sake: Beauty Bodies, Spectacle and Consumption,” *Journal of Women’s History* 18.4 (Winter, 2006) 147-156; Tiffany M. Gill, *Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women’s Activism in the Beauty Industry* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Relevant studies in marketing, public relations, and advertising: Sivulka, *Ad Women*; Sutton, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty*; Nancy Lyons, "Interpretive Reading of Two Maidenform Bra Advertising Campaigns". *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*. 23.4 (2005) 322-332; Hill, *Advertising to the American Woman*; Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*; Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counter Culture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); William Leach, *Land of Desire*; Cohen, *The Consumers’ Republic*; Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*; Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*; Coleman, “Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s,”; Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*, (Washington DC, Smithsonian, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Relevant scholarship on business history, public relations, and female entrepreneurship are: Jones, *Beauty Imagined*; Chandler, *The visible hand*; Peiss, “‘Vital Industry’ and *Hope in a Jar*”; Scott, “Comment: Conceptualizing Gender in American Business History,”; Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism* and *Beauty and Business*; Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul*; Farrell-Beck and Gau, *Uplift*; Fields, *An Intimate Affair*.

<sup>23</sup> No documentation from the Maidenform Archive, which holds Maidenform’s papers, show a “blueprint” of the Woman-to-Woman” strategy. This is an organization device of my invention, which considers their marketing as a whole and labels a consistent trend of seemingly addressing a “women’s point of view” in a manner that was believable and at the same time unorthodox.

<sup>24</sup> Peiss, “‘Vital Industry’ and Women’s Ventures,” and *Hope in a Jar* (1998); Scott, “Comment: Conceptualizing Gender in American Business History.”

<sup>25</sup> Female entrepreneurs include Madame CJ Walker who sold hair products to the African American community, Helena Rubenstein, who sold cosmetics. Madame CJ Walker was renowned not only as the first female millionaire but also for hiring an exclusively female sales force.

<sup>26</sup> Regina Lee Blaszczyk. *Producing Fashion: Commerce, Culture, and Consumers*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Wendy Gamber, *The Female Economy: the Millinery and Dressmaking Trades, 1860-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*.

<sup>27</sup> Jones, *Beauty Imagined* and Scranton, *Beauty and Business*.

<sup>28</sup> Marchand, *Creating the corporate soul*, p. 361.

<sup>29</sup> Scott, "Comment: Conceptualizing Gender in American Business History," p. 242-249.

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<sup>30</sup> Peiss's in *Hope in a Jar*, examined the market segregation by gender and demonstrated how female entrepreneurs could use their role as women (simultaneously defying and reifying gender norms) in their business ventures to empower themselves and other women. Scranton's *Beauty and Business* also takes up Scott's challenge in his edited collection, including Vicki Howard's labor history of beauty culture in Maidenform factories.

<sup>31</sup> Scott Sandage's *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) tells the flip side to the American Dream by delving into the history of those who have failed to pull themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps and were trampled beneath capitalism in nineteenth century America. Sandage explains the shifting meaning of what it meant to be a financial "loser."

<sup>32</sup> Herbert Gutman stated that an immigrants past conditions were indicative of his/her life in their new country.

<sup>33</sup> Robert D Parmet, *The Master of Seventh Avenue: David Dubinsky and the American Labor Movement*, (New York: New York University Press, 2005), pp 6-7. Many of the restrictions were moot by WWI and were completely eliminated with the Revolution of 1917.

<sup>34</sup> David Laskin, *The Family: Three Journeys into the heart of the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Viking Press, 2013) pp. 30-31.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 260.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 35, 38, 41.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>39</sup> Ed. Judy Barrett Litoff, Judith McDonnell, *European Immigrant Women in the United States: A Biographical Dictionary*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, p. 42.

<sup>41</sup> Ida was her Americanized name, even though those close to her continued to use her birth name Itel.

<sup>42</sup> According to Laskin, Itel's uncle was the first in the family to move to the US. She lived with him in New York before she married Wolf.

<sup>43</sup> "Maidenform's Mrs. R," *Fortune* 42 (July 1950): 75-76, Series 2, Sub C, Box 68, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>44</sup> Harold Evans, Gail Buckland, David Lefer, *They Made America: From the Steam Engine to the Search Engine: Two Centuries of Innovators* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2004).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> *Women's Wear Daily*, Aug. 26, 1965. Box 9, Folder 19, Gus Tyler 5780/088, ILGWU Records, Kheel Archive, Cornell University, Ithaca. (Here after ILGWU Records).

<sup>47</sup> A limited list of relevant scholars of gender and fashion include: Banner, *American Beauty*; Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, (New York: Rutgers University press, 1985); Christopher Breward, *Fashion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) and *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress (Studies in Design)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2000); Susan B Kaiser, *Fashion and Cultural Studies*, (Oxford: Berg, 2012).

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<sup>48</sup> This version is told in numerous locations from Maidenform company literature to news articles to biographies.

<sup>49</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, p. 116.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Although according to Maidenform's biographical information, it was Ida, not Enid, who created their first makeshift brassiere.

<sup>51</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, p. 116.

<sup>52</sup> "A Woman's New York Success Figure," by Alice Hughes, *Times Herald*, Dallas Texas, Dec 16, 1962.

<sup>53</sup> It wasn't until years later that Maiden Form became Maidenform.

<sup>54</sup> This is in contrast to some of their competitors like Playtex and Peter pan, whose names have not feminine implications.

<sup>55</sup> "A Woman's New York Success Figure," by Alice Hughes, *Times Herald*, Dallas Texas, Dec 16, 1962.

<sup>56</sup> Yet, it doesn't seem that William Rosenthal went out into the public to promote the bra. According to several sources, he was more introverted and domestic and stayed out of the public eye. He stuck to design and internal management of the business, while Ida handled the PR. William's also described as more of the family caretaker and repeated mentions of his kindness are made by those who knew and worked with him. Notably, while Ida is described as energetic, charismatic, and shrewd, she's never chronicled as kind.

<sup>57</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, p. 117.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Farell-Beck and Gau discuss in their history of the bra, *Uplift*, the confusion over the "real" inventor of the bra. While many they claim that many cite socialite Caresse Crosby as the early twentieth century inventor, Farell-Beck and Gau claim Luman L. Chapman patented the first breast supporter in 1863.

<sup>60</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, p. 117.

<sup>61</sup> Calvin Coolidge's Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C., January 17, 1925.

<sup>62</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, pp. 152, 187.

<sup>63</sup> After Ida Rosenthal's retirement, her son-in-law was briefly president, followed by her daughter, Beatrice Coleman.

<sup>64</sup> William Rosenthal and Dr. Coleman played a large part in the administrative part of the branch. Further, almost the entire salesforce was male.

<sup>65</sup> Maidenform defies the traditional narrative of business history and provides an example of the importance of gender as an analytical tool in business history. After a sputtering start in the 1920s, business history burgeoned in the 1970s with the preeminent business historian Alfred Chandler. Chandler's most famous contribution was his articulation of the transformation of western industry with the managerial revolution. More recently, Philip Scranton has shown alternatives to Chandler's interpretation of American business history. In *Proprietary Capitalism* he challenges the master narrative that businesses grow from small/traditional firms to large/modern firms. In his study of textile businesses in Philadelphia, Scranton shows how instead large companies allowed small enterprises flexibility and growth. In the last two decades, scholars have looked back to Chandler's rival, Thomas C. Cochran, and have started to ask questions concerning the interaction of culture and business.

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<sup>66</sup> Maidenform Field Sales Guide, 1963, p. 59, Box 27, Series 5, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> “Maidenform’s Golden Dream,” Maidenform’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the *Maidenform Mirror*, 1972. Series 1, Box 1, Maidenform Collection. The *Maidenform Mirror* was a bi-monthly promotional magazine sent to every account since 1931.

<sup>69</sup> 1964 press release for Australia, p. 3. Series 7, Box 69, Maidenform Collection

<sup>70</sup> “Maidenform’s Mrs. R,” *Fortune* 42 (July 1950): 75-76, Series 2, Sub C, Box 68, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Many books on the birth of public relations, the history of cigarettes, and the “new woman,” cite Edward Bernays’, “the father of PR” and nephew of Sigmund Freud, 1920s publicity stunt which made it fashionable for women to smoke in public. Bernays encouraged young socialites to smoke in the New York City Easter parade. This stunt, which Bernays made sure was captured in newspapers, made the connection in the public’s mind between women fighting for equality with men, who could smoke sanction-free in public, with cigarettes.

<sup>73</sup> Laskin, *The Family*, pp. 117, 133.

<sup>74</sup> “A Maidenform Dream Come True,” 12/9/65, *New York Times*, Series 2, Sub C, Box 68, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>75</sup> “Maidenform’s Mrs. R,” *Fortune* 42 (July 1950): 75-76, Series 2, Sub C, Box 68, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>76</sup> Maria Balinska, *The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Hughes, Lawrence, “Maidenform dreams big...” *Sales Management*, April 5, 1963, 35–9, 118.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> This topic will be covered in further detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>81</sup> *Time* 1960, “I dreamed I was a tycoon in My...” Series 2, Sub C, Box 2, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>82</sup> The Dior New Style was a popular fashion trend after during the 1950s and early 1960s that emphasized a large bust, small waist, and full-skirted figure.

<sup>83</sup> The campaign has frequently been conceived of as a characteristically mid-twentieth century example of eroticized advertising that debased women. The ad “I dreamed I went to work” has been especially derided. The most vociferous author of this opinion is Coleman in her article “Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s.” Coleman argues that the ads were a Freudian joke, that both men and women were in on, that mocked women’s career aspirations and displayed them as silly and sexualized. She also calls attention to the possible meanings (traditional femininity, modern technology, women as symbols) of the fashionably large and pointed breasts that Maidenform popularized. While I think that she has a valid interpretation of *some* of the images and it is possible that some viewers of the ad received them this way, arguing meaning and reception of a 20 year ad campaign with hundreds of images would result in infinite interpretations, few of which are explicated in the essay.

<sup>84</sup> Some who see consumerism as a largely negative force would include Stuart and Mary Ewen, Susan Douglas. Some scholars who see potential for empowerment, especially for women include Kathy Peiss, The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group, Nan Enstad, and Emily Rosenberg. Roland Marchand in *Advertising the American Dream* viewed advertising as



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a means to help adjust the public to modernity. Charles McGovern, on the other hand, in *Sold America*, viewed consumption as becoming more important than voting as a duty of citizenship.

<sup>85</sup> Rutherford, in *A World Made Sexy*, discussion of the Dream campaign is the most nuanced to date. He categorizes the campaign under the heading of “erotic sell,” but notes that it used fashion and humor to tamp down potential negative implications of NCK’s use of the “Freudian appeal.” Additionally, he states that they, “even had a touch of subversion,” but he concludes that there was a “distinct air of mockery” in the models pretending to be things like fireman that they couldn’t be in reality and that women would find such jokes at their expense funny. This study elaborates on his argument but brings more archival evidence to the discussion, which demonstrates the woman-to-woman approach, which complicates his interpretations and argues against the idea that any ridicule was intended.

<sup>86</sup> Additionally, the act and the item responsible for altering the female form in itself takes on erotic connotations.

<sup>87</sup> Alderson & Sessions report, 1957, p. 18, Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Maidenform Collection

<sup>88</sup> The ad campaigns ran primarily in magazines and newspapers. When the campaign started in 1949 they ran 90 million ads between August and December. The magazines utilized were Vogue, Harpers Bazaar, Mademoiselle, Glamour and Charm, Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, Woman’s Home Companion, Cosmopolitan, Today’s Woman, Parents, Calling All Girls, Seventeen, True Confessions, Photoplay, Modern Screen, The New Yorker, and the NY Times. *Maidenform Mirror*, August 1949. Maidenform was mentioned on TV and they sponsored a show called “Vanity Fair,” but they never had an ad on the air.

A May 1958 text documents an “Outdoor Advertising Test,” which would study public reaction to billboards in 6 cities (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Omaha, Nebraska; Portland, Maine; Providence, Rhode Island; San Diego, California; Seattle, Washington), Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection. A photograph of a large Maidenform billboard in a Denmark is also evidence of billboard advertising outdoors. Series 7, Sub C, Box 51, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>89</sup> Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman*.

<sup>90</sup> “Merchandising Memo For Fall...Maidenform’s dreams in the nation’s best-read magazines!” *Maidenform Mirror*, April 1952, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>91</sup> Springmaid Fabrics notoriously used overt sexuality in their advertisements starting in 1948, but this was rare for mainstream products. Springmaid’s campaign wasn’t aimed at appealing to women consumers but instead was most likely aimed to shock and garner attention. The ads were banned by some publications for the lewd imagery and highly suggestive word play.

<sup>92</sup> “I dreamed I was an international figure” and “I dreamed I was given the key to the city” are the only ads to my knowledge, which contains males in the ads.

<sup>93</sup> Ads like “I dreamed I covered the Paris the collection,” “I dreamed I had tea for two,” “I dreamed I inspired a new look,” and many others feature more than one woman.

<sup>94</sup> Sivulka, *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*.

<sup>95</sup> Parkin, *Food is Love*.

<sup>96</sup> This is discussed in many of the previously mentioned advertising histories.

<sup>97</sup> Sivulka, *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*.

<sup>98</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, “40 years of Advertising Leadership”, 1962. Ten years later, the company would claim the ads were, “satisfying the secret longings of the sentimental women of the

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fifties.” *Maidenform Mirror*, 1972, “Maidenform’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: The Golden Dream,” Maidenform Collection.

<sup>99</sup> Since, there has been some controversy over who created the ad campaign. A 1977 article in *Advertising Age* by fellow adman Joe Sacco, claims that art director Herman Davis of Cadwell-Compton originally generated the idea. Davis supposedly wrote the idea for Seamprufe slips but it was rejected. Sacco claims that Fillius was at Weintraub Agency (later Norman, Craig & Kummel) and was having trouble coming up with an idea for her client Maidenform. Sacco told the harried Fillius to borrow the idea and they would later tell Davis what they had done. The rest is history. Significantly, Fillius was deceased at the time this article by Sacco was published. Sacco, Joe, “Dreams for sale: How the one for Maidenform came true,” September 12, 1977, *Advertising Age*. Another suggestion made by Jane Farrell-Beck and Colleen Gau in their book *Uplift*, that a similar ad for Joseph Magnin Department store that read “Last night I dreamed I hand nothing on but my black Gossard,” which was featured in the January 1946 issue of *Corset and Underwear Review*, could have been the inspiration for the campaign (Farrell-Beck, p. 128-129).

<sup>100</sup> Sivulka, *Ad Women*, p. 236.

<sup>101</sup> Fred F. Decker, “Why Agencies Neglect Women,” *Printers’ Ink*, February 02, 1960, 33-34.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34.

<sup>104</sup> Notably, successfully utilizing female employees was not the only area where NCK was ahead of the curve. NCK also had a high percentage of African Americans workers compared to other firms, which might reflect the agency’s inclination to hire outside of the white-male-box or to seek in-house advice from African-Americans about their perspectives on consumption in the same way it did with women. Jason Chambers, *Madison Avenue and the Color Line: African Americans in the Advertising Industry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2011). Chambers has a 1968 chart recording the number of African Americans working at major ad agencies. NCK had one of the highest percentages at 7.8%, 19 out of 245 employees. The average was 3.5%. Only Benton and Bowles had a higher percentage at 8.5%. (Chambers, 177).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>106</sup> Mayer, *Madison Ave, USA*, p. 62.

<sup>107</sup> Maidenform Field Sales Guide, 1963, p. 53, Series 5, Sub C, Box 27, Maidenform Collection,

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>111</sup> “Maidenform’s Dream Marks Its 20<sup>th</sup> Year,” *Women’s Wear Daily*, March 20, 1969, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>112</sup> “Maidenform’s J.A. Coleman,” by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, (Nov, 1960), p. 54, 58, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>117</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, “40 years of Advertising Leadership”, 1962. Series 1, Box 1, Folder 8, Maidenform Collection.

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<sup>118</sup> Interview with Kitty D'Alessio, August 8, 1990, p. 1, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>119</sup> When approved, they would select a photographer who would pick a model, for whom they would custom make a bra and costume. They frequently used the same photographers and models like famous fashion photographers Randy Avedon and Lillian Bassman.

<sup>120</sup> *Time* 1960, "I dreamed I was a tycoon in My..." Series 2, Sub C, Box 2, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>121</sup> Jessica Weiss, *To Have and to Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom, and Social Change*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), p. 17.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with D'Alessio, p 5, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 21, Maidenform Collection

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Dior's New Look which is notable for its exaggeration of the female form—accentuated breasts (helped by uplifting bras), small waist (assisted by girdles), and wide hips (aided by full skirts).

<sup>125</sup> Beatrice Coleman produced the trade magazine, the *Maidenform Mirror* when she came to work at her parent's company. The magazine started in 1931. *Maidenform Mirror*, "40 years of Advertising Leadership", 1962, Series 4, Sub A Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Kitty D'Alessio, August 8, 1990, p. 1, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>127</sup> "Maidenform's Dream Marks Its 20<sup>th</sup> Year," *Women's Wear Daily*, March 20, 1969, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 12, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>128</sup> Marilyn Monroe also used humor to mitigate the overt use of sexuality.

<sup>129</sup> Thomas Frank in *The Conquest of Cool*, writes about the cooption of the language and symbolism of the youth counter culture movements of the 1960s by the advertising industry.

<sup>130</sup> I believe the first ad, which features pants of some sort are in the 1954 ad, "I dreamed I went on a safari." The model is wearing cropped zebra print pants and is being carried by cartoon elephants. The subheading amusingly reads, "Look who's after big game...me!...the most dangerous figure in the Congo. Completely ambushed by admiring glances for my fabulous form. No girl on the hunt ever had more fatal ammunition than a Maidenform bra." While it does allude to onlookers (only cartoon animals are shown), the female is the hunter.

<sup>131</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, October 1949, p 3. Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection

<sup>132</sup> This sort of unpaid publicity was great for the company. In a 1949 *Maidenform Mirror*, their trade magazine, they discussed one anticipated potential of the "Dream" campaign, stating "...[the] possibilities for secondary publicity are limitless." The popularity of the ads did indeed contribute to a great deal of free publicity. *Maidenform Mirror*, October 1949, p 3. Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Tom Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*, p. 149; Reichert and Lambiase, *Sex in Advertising*; Sivulka, *Ad Women and Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*. Many blogs and other popular sources repeat this story in an echo chamber.

<sup>135</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, October 1949, p 3. Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>136</sup> Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*, p 98.

<sup>137</sup> In minute 43, the two main characters are discussing their frustration with Stepford's traditional (skewered as practiced by robots who have replaced real women by their husbands)

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gender roles. One of the characters states, “I told you I messed around with women’s lib when I was in New York...I’m not planning any Maidenform bonfires but they could certainly use something around here.” This statement indicates that Maidenform was a symbol of both female repression and bras. Additionally, in hour 1 minute 21, when one of the main characters has been replaced by an identical robot, she comments, “how about the shape? Padded uplift bra. It’s true what they say in the ads.” This also most likely a reference to Maidenform’s classic claim of “uplift” which it developed in the 1930s. This reference is discussed further in Chapter 2.

<sup>138</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, October 1949, p 3. Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, p. 7, March 1953, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>141</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, p. 4, July-August 1954, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Warner’s especially imitated the Dream Campaign with their series of ads in the 1950s featuring women in their underwear in public and their fantasy series of women floating.

<sup>145</sup> Catherine Gourley, *Gidgets and Women Warriors: Perceptions of Women in the 1950s and 1960s* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008).

<sup>146</sup> *Panic Magazine*, April 1954.

<sup>147</sup> *The Times of India*, April 19, 1960, p. 14.

<sup>148</sup> The company would conduct customer preference tests as well as conduct and utilize information from polls. Maidenform utilized its organizational skills to implement findings from market research and data analysis into it’s marketing. For example, they used data gathered to decide what words to employ to market their bras (padded? Contoured?), what size and color the model should be wearing in the “Dream” ads (34B, white), and what age group responded best to their marketing techniques. Series 5, Sub A, Box 27, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>149</sup> Archibald Crossley developed first formal survey in 1919, William J. Rielly’s *Marketing Investigations* in 1929 and Percival White’s *Marketing Research Techniques* in 1931, making market research legitimate. Paul T. Cherington “father of market research” was at J. Walter Thompson’s (the largest advertising firm) in the 1920s. Scientific sales management itself is legitimized when it gets its own conference in 1937 under America’s Marketing Association. (Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue: motivation research and subliminal advertising in America*, p. 5-7).

<sup>150</sup> Sarah Elizabeth Igo, *The Averaged American: surveys, citizens, and the making of a mass public*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). Igo uses as her focus the 1929 Middletown study, Kinsey’s 1950s sexuality studies, as well as Gallup and Roper polling. Middletown told the nation what the ‘average’ American was like in the ‘average’ town, influencing the idea of a mass national public. While Kinsey sought to normalize ‘sexual deviance’ by showing its regularity, influencing advertisers employing Motivational Research, to the ‘inherent’ sexual drivers of Americans.

<sup>151</sup> “A New Guide to Industrial markets,” prepared by Research Institute Staff for Members, September 29, 1947, Series 5, Subseries A, Box 23, Maidenform Collection.

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<sup>152</sup> “A New Guide to Industrial markets,” prepared by Research Institute Staff for Members, September 29, 1947, p.7, Series 5, Sub A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>154</sup> “Recommended Program for the Marketing Function,” prepared by Alderson & Sessions, June 1957, Series 5, Sub A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p. 7-8, 15. The recommendation for diversity may have spurred Maidenform’s lackluster endeavor into the bathing suit market in 1959. Additionally based on comments (p. 32) about Playtex’s innovation in advertising through television, which may have encouraged the company in its modest TV venture in.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>158</sup> “The Maidenform Image,” 1963, Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection

<sup>159</sup> Apparel Testing Institute report on Maidenform wear tests, August 1959, Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 2-3.

<sup>161</sup> “Teen-age Market Study,” produced by Steve Sturman for Marvin Schneider (head of forecasting and statistics), 1960, Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>162</sup> “Teen-age Market Study,” produced by Steve Sturman for Marvin Schneider (head of forecasting and statistics), 1960, Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>163</sup> “I dreamed I was sugar and spice,” April 1960, Series 5, Sub C, Box 26, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>164</sup> “18-35 Your Market,” *Maidenform Mirror*, April-May 1961, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*.

<sup>168</sup> For example, Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream* and Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*.

<sup>169</sup> “18-35 Your Market,” *Maidenform Mirror*, April-May 1961, Series 5, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Sutton in *Globalizing Ideal Beauty* found that the elite adwomen of J. Walter Thompson integrated their educated and feminist ideologies into their advertising work directed at female consumers.

<sup>172</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, July - August, 1962, Series 5, Sub B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>173</sup> Maidenform didn’t only use research to increase their public marketing potential but also to increase the productivity within the company. In 1957 Maidenform had a thorough analysis of its marketing and internal sales functioning by the consulting firm Alderson & Sessions. Alderson & Sessions along with an internal Maidenform evaluation, came to the conclusion that Maidenform was excellent on ‘pull’ marketing (getting people in the stores, i.e. national advertisement campaign), but weak on ‘push’ marketing (pushing the reputation of the brand on retail sales people). They recommended Maidenform build up their sales department, increase advertising, and challenge competitors with more innovation in designs. While difficult to know with exact accuracy, the timing of changes indicates that Maidenform employed this advice. In

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the 1950s, as stated earlier, they increased the degree of interactions with their retailers. Additionally, advertising continued to increase and Maidenform targeted the teen market more aggressively, as well as created a swimsuit and “Dream” bra (for wearing to bed) in the 1960s.

<sup>174</sup> Lears, *Fables of Abundance*.

<sup>175</sup> Leach, *Land of Desire*.

<sup>176</sup> Maidenform photographically documented many of the window displays and even hosted yearly contests. Series 7, Sub C, Box 51, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>177</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, December 1949, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>178</sup> *Maidenform* February 1950, p. 4, Series 4, Sub B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>179</sup> “600 Department stores do Designing Women window,” 1955, *Maidenform Mirror*, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>180</sup> Leach, *Land of Desire*.

<sup>181</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, March 1953, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>182</sup> These pictures are found in a scrapbook of international images from Ida Rosenthal’s travels, presumably in the mid- 1960s. Series 7, Sub B, Box 66, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>183</sup> The exception seems to be high-ranking Maidenform managers who, on at least one occasion, made appearances at the shows. The one event documented where males from Maidenform attended, also included Ida Rosenthal. Series 5, Sub C, Box 69, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>184</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, p. 3, October 1949, Series 4, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, October 1950, Series 4, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Series 5, Sub C, Box 26, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>189</sup> Teen Market, 1963, Series 5, Sub A, Box 23, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>190</sup> “Fabulous 50s,” *Maidenform Mirror*, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1972, p. 10. The 30 millionth bra was sold in 1957. In 1962, the number had almost doubled to 55 million. Series 1, Box 1, Folder 8, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>191</sup> Farrell-Beck and Gau, *Uplift*, page 220, endnote 55.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> “Maidenform...outside the U.S.,” *Maidenform Mirror*, mid-1950s, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>194</sup> “More Sales! More Profits to Stores Via New Maidenform self-service bra bar,” *Maidenform Mirror*, 1954, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>195</sup> “Maidenform...outside the U.S.,” *Maidenform Mirror*, mid-1950s, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>196</sup> “Fabulous 50s,” *Maidenform Mirror*, 1972, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 8, Maidenform Collection

<sup>197</sup> “More Sales! More Profits to Stores Via New Maidenform self-service bra bar,” *Maidenform Mirror*, 1954, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Retailers could also build their own bra bar but were instructed to send Maidenform pictures of the structure before they would send the packaged bras to fill the bar. One fixture held 24 dozen prepackaged bras with equal amount of room in a storage area. The *Maidenform Mirror* the new fixture to retailer had an illustrated example of the bar with measurements as well as an

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illustration of what the new prepackaged bra would look like. Series 5, Sub H, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>202</sup> Vicki Howard, "At the Curve Exchange," in Philip Scranton, *Beauty and Business*, pp 195-196, 200.

<sup>203</sup> Vicki Howard, "At the Curve Exchange" in Philip Scranton, *Beauty and Business*, p 203. The happiness of International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) members who were Maidenform employees in the US would most likely contribute to the harmonious relationship between the ILG and Maidenform. Chapter four shows how this mutual cooperation on the leadership level was utilized in Puerto Rico as Maidenform offshored to the island with Operation Bootstrap.

<sup>204</sup> By 1952, at least in the Clarksburg factory, the title had converted to "Miss Maidenform." Series 4, Sub B, Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>205</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, July 1947, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid

<sup>207</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, June 1946, March 1946, May 1947, July 1947, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>208</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, May 1947, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>209</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, February 1947, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>210</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, April 1950, p. 6, Series 4, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>211</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, June 1950, p.6, Series 4, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>212</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, June 1946, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>213</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, October 1946, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>214</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, January 1943, Series 4, Box 22, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>215</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, January 1947, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>216</sup> "Fine Talent Revealed at Maidenform," *The Clarksburg News*, 12/22/50, p3, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>217</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, January 1947, p. 1, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>218</sup> ILGWU - Maidenform union contract 1942, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 5, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>219</sup> ILGWU - Maidenform union contract 1957, Series 10, Box 58, Folders 5, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>220</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, January 1947, p. 1, Series 4, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>221</sup> ILG - Maidenform union contract 1960, Series 10, Box 58, Folders 5, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>222</sup> The following are the names and positions of the executives as of 1952, the 40th anniversary of Maidenform. Ida Rosenthal (Chairman of the board and treasurer), Dr. Joseph A. Coleman (President), Beatrice Coleman (Vice President Design), John Currier (Vice President Sales), Henry Heppen (Secretary and Legal Counsel), Abraham Kanner (Vice President Finance), Edward Kantrowitz (Advertising Manager). Mortimer Mass (Assistant Vice President Comptroller and New Products manager), Kurt Metzger (Vice President Foreign Operations), Ellis Rosenthal (Vice President Manufacturing), Moe Rosenthal (Director of Special Projects). Series 1, Box 1, Folder 8, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>223</sup> This information is from a Maidenform Handbook c. 1959. Series 11, Box 85, Folder 7, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>224</sup> ILG - Maidenform Contract 1942, Series 10, Box 58, Folders 5, Maidenform Collection.

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<sup>225</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, “40 years of Advertising Leadership”, 1962. Ten years later, the company would claim the ads were, “satisfying the secret longings of the sentimental women of the fifties.” *Maidenform Mirror*, 1972, “Maidenform’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: The Golden Dream,” Series 1, Box 1, Folder 8, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>226</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*.

<sup>227</sup> Tawnya J. Adkins Covert, *Manipulating Images: World War II Mobilization of Women through Magazine Advertising*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011).

<sup>228</sup> This study does not imply all women started emulating June Cleaver. In fact, Joanne Meyerowitz produced a collection of essays about this topic (Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver*). Instead, this examination addresses the predominant image of ideal femininity projected in popular culture. This study seeks to suss out why Maidenform would present an image of femininity that was seemingly at odds with the conventional type of womanhood in the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>229</sup> Christine Fredrick, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, (New York: The Business Borse, 1929); Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*.

<sup>230</sup> Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*; Alice Courtney and Sarah Lockeretz; Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*; William H. Young, *The 1950s. American Popular Culture through History*, (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2004); Linda J Busby and Greg Leichty, “Feminism and Advertising in Traditional and Nontraditional Women’s Magazines 1950s-1980s,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, (June 1993, vol. 70 no, 2, 247-264).

<sup>231</sup> Clarke, *Tupperware*; Cohen, *The Consumers’ Republic*; Sivulka, *Stronger than Dirt*; Douglas, *Where the girls are*; de Grazia and Furlough, ed. *The Sex of Things*; Delis Hills, *Advertising to the American Woman*; Parkin, *Food is Love*; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*

<sup>232</sup> “Motivation Research” was a term (probably) coined by Ernest Dichter to signify his marketing philosophy, which made use of his own particular brand of psychoanalysis to understand what consumers *really* desired. The term “Motivation Research” has become an umbrella term that encompasses the post-war fad for Freudian-influenced marketing techniques. I use the qualifier “probably” because Dichter self-proclaimed himself the originator of the term and indeed of the practice. However, because of Dichter’s tendency towards self-aggrandizement and his subsequent fame, it is not always easy to separate his self-promotion from fact.

<sup>233</sup> Peiss notes that the “modern ad agency promised to create a national market of consumers, indeed, to systematize desire.” She notes that these advertisers were primarily “organization men” who reified the dynamic of the productive male and the domestic female. This chapter shows that machinations behind the Dream campaign differ from this formula in multiple ways. In this way the Dream campaign may be read as part of Maidenform’s Woman-to-Woman approach, as discussed in the previous chapter. Peiss, “American Women and the Making of Modern Consumer Culture,” (electronic text of lecture, *The Journal for MultiMedia History*, Vol 1 No 1, Fall 1998).

<sup>234</sup> Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*; Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver*.

<sup>235</sup> Schwarzkopf argues that advertising historians are guilty of abiding to a “Hegelian philosophy” that privileges advertising in 20th century America as a history-less modernizing force for the world (many, if not most, historians of American consumerism locate the rise of our modern consumer society at the end of the 19th century). He also claims that scholars of advertising have done content analysis without sufficient historical contextualization reifying



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advertisers view of themselves. While this study is dealing with an American advertising campaign in the 20th century, it strives to follow some of Schwarzkopf's suggestions for future research. In particular, this chapter notes the transnational origins of MR and makes no claim that the Dream campaign had a modernizing effect. It does argue that MR influenced the creators of the campaign to look at the gender roles of American women and attempt to empathize with them. The positive reception of the campaign, while varied, tends to suggest that it connected with the female consuming public. Additionally, this study makes one of its main goals to look at the campaign and its creators within the historical period to better understand their possible motivations. Schwarzkopf, "The subsiding sizzle of advertising history," *Journal of Historical Research and Marketing*, Vol. 3, Iss. 4, pp. 528-548.

<sup>236</sup> No book length studies have analyzed the Dream campaign as their main subject. The following scholarly books contain a chapter or mention the campaign in some depth: Sivulka in *Ad Women*, argues that feminist critiques of consumer society, and the stereotypically gendered way it portrayed women, focused its ire on ad men. She claims that women made the majority of advertising for women. Sivulka shows how ad women utilized their presumed "feminine touch" to gain power and made important contributions to the industry. She counts Mary Fillius's "Dream" campaign as one of three of the most famous fashion and ad campaigns of the 1950s. While my previous chapter on the woman-to-woman marketing technique complimented Sivulka's argument it also complicated her interpretation of female empowerment. Additionally, this chapter will continue to flesh out gender and advertising in the mid twentieth century by bring together the focus on gender and women's contributions to consumer society and the nascent discussion of the influence of Motivational Research. Rutherford's *A World Made Sexy* discusses Ernest Dichter and the Dream Campaign in separate chapters. Tom Reichert's *The Erotic History of Advertising* mentions the Dream campaign as it relates to sexuality in advertising. Coleman's chapter, "Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s" argues that the campaign mocked women. Even fewer studies examine the Maidenform company. Only two chapters in two separate books discuss Maidenform, and they center on labor and touch on business culture. Those are Howard, "At the Curve Exchange" in *Scranton, Beauty and Business* and Shell-Weiss, "I Dreamed I Went to Work," *Florida's Working Class Past*.

<sup>237</sup> This refers to the 1968 protest of the Miss America contest where feminists through symbols of patriarchal repression like fake eye lashes, bras, and pots into a trash can on the Atlantic City boardwalk. Even though bras were not incinerated, "bra burners" became a common derogatory hallmark of second wave feminism.

<sup>238</sup> To date, there is no full-length academic study of Ernest Dichter by a single author but two edited editions. In 2007 *A Tiger in the Tank* by Franz Kreuzer (Journalist), Gerd Prechtl (PhD in psychology, consultant) and Christoph Steiner (PhD in theology, Librarian at the Austrian National Library) was translated into English and expanded from the German version published in 2002. This book is a collection of several essays and interviews. Another collection of essays on Ernest Dichter was published in 2010 and edited by Schwarzkopf and Gries, entitled *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*. Schwarzkopf is a Professor of Business History and Marketing at the Copenhagen Business School and Gries is a Professor of Communications at the University of Vienna and of Modern History at the University of Jena. This book is the most academic and includes scholars from the US and Europe. To date, Samuel's *Freud on Madison Avenue* is the only full length historical study on psychoanalytic marketing in the postwar period.

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While the author holds a PhD in American Studies, the book does not make use of archival research and is generally geared towards a popular audience. The study of Psychoanalytic marketing and its practitioners is multi-disciplinary; Tadajewski is a Professor of Marketing at the University of Durham and Stern was a Professor of Marketing Theory at Rutgers University; Rutherford is a Professor of History at the University of Toronto; and Samuel is a prolific writer of historical books for public consumption who holds a PhD in American studies and runs a consulting firm. Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*; “Tadajewski, Mark, “Remembering Motivation Research: towards an alternative genealogy of interpretive consumer research,” *Marketing Theory* 2006, Volume 6 (4): 429-466; Stern, Barbara B., “The Importance of Being Ernest: Commemorating Dichter’s Contribution to Advertising Research,” *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol 44, Issue 2, June 2004, pp 165-169; Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*.

<sup>239</sup> Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*; Schwarzkopf, and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*; Kreuzer, *A Tiger in the Tank*.

<sup>240</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivational Research*. Schwarzkopf and Gries are editors of a multinational exploration of Dichter.

<sup>241</sup> Of the studies that focus on Motivational Research, none analyze the Dream campaign in any depth, if they mention it at all. Samuel, Schwarzkopf, and Gries are spearheading the new scholarship on Dichter and Motivational Research. Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*; Schwarzkopf and Rainer, *Ernest Dichter and Motivational Research*; Kreuzer, *A Tiger in the Tank*.

<sup>242</sup> This will expand the scholarship on brassieres by Jill Fields, *An Intimate Affair: Women, Lingerie, and Sexuality*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007) and Farrell-Beck and Gau, *Uplift: The Bra in America*, (Diane Pub Co 2002).

<sup>243</sup> Focus primarily on sexuality: Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*; Reichert, Tom Lambiase, *Sex in Advertising*; Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*. Focus primarily on gender: Sivulka, *Ad Women and Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*; Sutton, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty*.

<sup>244</sup> JWT benefits from not only being arguably the most famous ad agency but also having its own archive. NCK has no archive.

<sup>245</sup> No large cache of NCK business records is available in any archive. This analysis is utilizing material from the Maidenform Archive at the Smithsonian, relevant fragments from the Hart Library at Duke University, as well as historical newspapers, magazines, industry publications (especially the advertising “bible” *Ad Age*), film clips, as well as two advertising men’s memoirs.

<sup>246</sup> James Twitchell, *Adcult: The Triumph of Advertising in American Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 1, 253.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ernest Dichter, *The Strategy of Desire*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960), p. 12.

<sup>249</sup> Dichter could doubly be seen as a “foreigner” as he was born in Austria and was also Jewish. Although the American public soured on blatant anti-Semitism as a result of the Holocaust, associations with Dichter and the controversy over mass manipulation with the “trickster Jew” stereotype were likely lingering below the surface. While this section does not delve much into aspects of anti-Semitism, since Ida Rosenthal, Norman B. Norman, Ernest Dichter and Sigmund Freud were all Jewish, it would likely be a fruitful avenue of investigation.

<sup>250</sup> See Horowitz, chapter 2, Schwarzkopf and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivational Research*.

<sup>251</sup> Barbara B. Stern, “The Importance of Being Ernest,” pp. 165-169.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, p. 168.

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<sup>253</sup> Client List, Box 213, Ernest Dichter Papers (Accession 2407), Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE 19807. Hereafter abbreviated to the Dichter Papers.

<sup>254</sup> Walter Dill Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising: A Simple Exposition of the principles of psychology in their relation to successful advertising*, Small, Maynard & Company, Boston, 1913, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Digital copy.

<sup>255</sup> Scott states that it is fairly common to use psychology in advertising but that he is the first to gather the study of the “scientific psychological application to advertising” into one location. Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising*.

<sup>256</sup> Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising*.

<sup>257</sup> For interesting look at the impact of Bernays, see part 3 of Adam Curtis’s 2003 documentary *The Century of the Self*.

<sup>258</sup> Catherine Gourley, *Flappers and the New American Woman: Perceptions of Women from 1918 Through the 1920s*, (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008), p. 85. This anecdote is also cited in numerous other texts about Bernays, Public Relations, and the history of smoking.

<sup>259</sup> Archibald Crossley developed the first formal survey in 1919, while Paul T. Cherington at J. Walter Thompson’s was known as the “father of market research” during the 1920s. With William J. Rielly’s *Marketing Investigations* in 1929 and Percival White’s *Marketing Research Techniques* in 1931, market research was legitimized. Scientific sales management finally got its own conference in 1937 under America’s Marketing Association. This very brief history of market research is found in Samuel’s *Freud on Madison Avenue*, p. 5-13.

<sup>260</sup> Sarah Igo’s *The Averaged American: surveys, citizens, and the making of a mass public*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007) goes into depth about the use of social science methods in mass marketing focusing on the 1929 Middletown study, Kinsey’s 1950s sexuality studies, as well as Gallup and Roper polling.

<sup>261</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries, ed., *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research* argues for the transnational nature of MR, which they argue shows the emerging 20<sup>th</sup> transatlantic research dialogue, emergence and transfer of consumer cultures, the making of the public as driven by brand-driven market place (Schwarzkopf and Gries, 13). They claim that, “...European immigrants have welded America as a consumer society and reminded us of the essentially European roots of the so-called American dream.” (Schwarzkopf and Gries, 5-6). Roland Fullerton argues in his essay, “Ernest Dichter: Motivational Researcher” in ed., *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*, that the origins of MR began in Europe in the 1920s and 30s, first with a group surrounding Wilhelm Vershofen’s Society for Consumption Research (Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung) in Nuremberg and with Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues at the University of Vienna, and after 1927 he established the Institute for Economic Psychology (Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle), (Fullerton, 63). The idea that “consumer motives were often veiled, even unconscious, and needed psychological interpretation had been stressed on both sides of the Atlantic by the early 1930s, for example by German Otto Breyer (Breyer 1929), by the Austrian advertising consultant Hanns F.J. Kropff (Kropff 1934), by the Austrian émigré Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1935) and by the American Donald Anderson Laird in his 1935 book *What Makes People Buy...*” (60-61). Fullerton argues that Lazarsfeld kicked off MR in the US with his 1934 publication in *Harvard’s Business Review* in 1934 on psychology in marketing (p.65).

<sup>262</sup> Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*.

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<sup>263</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*, p.16.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

<sup>265</sup> Dichter, *Getting Motivated by Ernest Dichter: The Secret Behind Individual Motivations by the Man Who Was Not Afraid to Ask "why?"* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 2, 55, 56

<sup>266</sup> Dichter wrote extensively about his background and his rise to success in his own books, including, *The Strategy of Desire, Motivating Human Behavior* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), and *Getting Motivated by Ernest Dichter*.

<sup>267</sup> Dichter described the story of his escape from the Nazis to the U.S as one of personal ingenuity. This rendition fit well with the American "pull yourself by the bootstraps" ethos. His wife, however, related a story of a helpful American consulate that got them authorization to go from Paris to the U.S. and found them temporary housing, a cousin in Connecticut that acquired for them an invitation, and a generous Jewish-owned shipping company that paid for their passage. Hedy Dichter from conversations with Gerd Prechtel, "A Life with Ernest: Episodes from a Jewish Emigrant's Story Between Hope and Fulfillment" in Franz Kreuzer, ed., *A Tiger in the Tank*, p. 116-118.

<sup>268</sup> Daniel Horowitz, "From Vienna to the United States and Back: Ernest Dichter and American Consumer Culture," in Schwarzkopf and Gries, ed., *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*, p. 41-42.

<sup>269</sup> "A Proposal for a motivational research study of the sales and advertising problems of the corset and brassiere industry," submitted to the corset & brassiere association of American NY, May 1955, Box 23, Ernest Dichter Paper.

<sup>270</sup> "Biographical Note," Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>271</sup> Dichter's book publication include the following not previously listed: *The Psychology of Everyday Living* ( New York: Barnes & Nobles, Inc.1947), *Handbook of Consumer Motivation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), *The Naked Manager* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada1974), *Packaging The Sixth Sense—A Guide to Consumer Motivation* (Boston: Cahners Books, 1975), *Total self-knowledge* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976) and *How hot a manager are you?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987). In addition to his books, he wrote numerous articles and gave many public speeches.

<sup>272</sup> The individuals who primarily filled the void were former academics from Europe (more specifically Viennese Jewish refugees) who worked in market research like Paul Lazarsfeld, Herta Herzog, and of course, Ernest Dichter. Lawrence, *Freud on Madison Avenue*.

<sup>273</sup> Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*, p. 13.

<sup>274</sup> *Time* 1960, "I dreamed I was a tycoon in My..." Series 2, Sub C, Box 2, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>275</sup> Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*, p. 38.

<sup>276</sup> Ronald Fullerton, "Ernest Dichter: Motivational Researcher", in Schwarzkopf and Gries, ed., *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*, p. 63.

<sup>277</sup> Horowitz, "From Vienna to the United States and Back: Ernest Dichter and American Consumer Culture," cites his interview with *Printer's Ink* in 1959, p. 44.

<sup>278</sup> Dichter's daughter, Susan, discussed her father in Adam Curtis's documentary *Century of the Self*, episode 3.

<sup>279</sup> Horowitz, "From Vienna to the United States and Back" in Schwarzkopf and Gries, ed., *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*, cites his interview with *Printer's Ink* in 1959, p. 44.

<sup>280</sup> Dichter, *Getting Motivated by Ernest Dichter*, p. 46.

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- <sup>281</sup> Christoph Steiner and Thomas Cudlik, “‘Rabbi Ernest’: The Strategist of Desire: A Portrait,” in Franz Kreuzer, ed., *A Tiger in the Tank: Ernest Dichter: An Austrian Advertising Guru*, p. 57.
- <sup>282</sup> Dichter, *Getting Motivated*, p. 92.
- <sup>283</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>284</sup> Dichter, *Getting Motivated by Ernest Dichter*, p. 46.
- <sup>285</sup> From a 1981 interview with Dichter by Franz Kreuzer, printed in his book, *A Tiger in the Tank*, p. 28.
- <sup>286</sup> Horowitz, “From Vienna to the United States and Back,” p. 47.
- <sup>287</sup> Steiner and Cudlik, “Rabbi Ernest” p. 70-71.
- <sup>288</sup> “Report of a Consumer Panel on Playtex Bras,” submitted to Reach, McClinton & Company, Inc. May 1962, Box 73, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>289</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivational Research*.
- <sup>290</sup> His work for Ivory soap is frequently told in narrative about Dichter.
- <sup>291</sup> Roland Marchand in *Advertising the American Way* states that the woman was called the “Family G.P.A” or the general purchasing agent, (Marchand, p. 168).
- <sup>292</sup> Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*; Conor, *The Spectacular Modern Woman*
- <sup>293</sup> Banner, *American Beauty*; Hills, *Advertising to the American Woman*; Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*; Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*; Parkin, *Food is Love*; Sivulka, *Ad Women and Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*.
- <sup>294</sup> Peiss, “American Women and the Making of Modern Consumer Culture,” (text from lecture reproduced in *The Journal of Multi Media History*, Vol 1 No 1, Fall 1998).
- <sup>295</sup> As quoted by Peiss in “American Women and the Making of Consumer Culture”
- <sup>296</sup> Peiss, “American Women and the Making of Consumer Culture.”
- <sup>297</sup> Simone Weill Davis, *Living up to the Ads: Gender Fictions of the 1920s*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 200), p. 88.
- <sup>298</sup> Very likely, the contributors and creators of the Dream campaign were not the very first to attempt to empathize with women. Ad agencies had hired women copywriters to work on “women’s issues” and surely, they at times, and one would think the occasional male colleague, would truly attempt to create advertising which did more than simply exploit supposed sex difference and instead sought to tackle the cultural role of gender. However, as this chapter outlines, those involved with the Dream campaign took it more seriously and with MR, there was a structured philosophy.
- <sup>299</sup> “One Major Job of Advertising—The Awakening of Desires,” *Advertising International*. Ernest Dichter Papers, Box 162, Folder 6. Versions of this article also appeared in Paris, *Herald Tribune* 3/67, Barcelona 2/22/69, *American Exporter Magazine* 2/27/69, and *World Trade Bombay* 5/6/69.
- <sup>300</sup> Dichter, *The Strategy of Desire*, p. 12.
- <sup>301</sup> “A Proposal for a motivational research study of the sales and advertising problems of the corset and brassiere industry,” submitted to the corset & brassiere association of American NY, May 1955, Box 23, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>302</sup> “One Major Job of Advertising—The Awakening of Desires,” *Advertising International*. Box 162, Folder 6, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>303</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>304</sup> Gabriele Sorigo in “Ernest Dichter, Religion and the Spirit of Capitalism: An Exegete of Pure Cult Religion Serves Consumer Society,” writes of Dichter’s connection between religion and

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capitalism. Sorgo claims that Dichter saw religion as a threat to society because of the ideas about punishment and guilt. Additionally, Dichter considered himself a redeemer of society, which he largely equated with the economy, (Schwarzkopf and Gries, p79-80). Franz Kruezer also discusses Dichter's relationship with religion. In an interview, Dichter argues that threatening people, ala the Ten Commandments, didn't work, ( Kreuzer, *A Tiger in the Tank*, p. 26-27). Steiner and Cudlik point out in "Rabbi Ernest" that Dichter stated in *Getting Motivated* that he dreamed of contributing to the solutions of what ails mankind—wanted to be "a modern version of the Messiah," (Kreuzer, *A Tiger in the Tank*, p. 51).

<sup>305</sup> "Are Advertisers Losing out on Sex Appeal?" *Advertising Age*, April 7, 1969, Folder 6, Box 162, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> "One Major Job of Advertising—The Awakening of Desires," *Advertising International*. Box 162, Folder 6, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivational Research*.

<sup>310</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries, *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research*, pp. 5, 15, 27.

<sup>311</sup> Dichter, "What is an American?" proposed article, early 1960s, Folder 6, Box 162, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Speech for Overseas Press Club, 10/16/57, "Changing America's Image Abroad," Folder 6, Box 162, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Speech "the psychology of international marketing" at press luncheon at 21 Club, NY, 12/11/58, Folder 6, Box 162, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>316</sup> Speech for Overseas Press Club, 10/16/57, "Changing America's Image Abroad," Folder 6, Box 162, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Speech "the psychology of international marketing" at press luncheon at 21 Club, NY, 12/11/58, Folder 6, Box 162, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Schwarzkopf and Gries claim that an awareness of the role of consumer's emotions in the purchasing process started in the seventeenth century. But it wasn't until the twentieth century that the focus really shifted to the consumer. (Schwarzkopf and Gries, 27).

<sup>321</sup> Gene Kummel, "Ten Who Helped Build N.Y.'s Solid Foundation: Assembling A Dream Team for Clients as Varied as Ajax and Willys Jeep," *Advertising Age*, January 27, 1997.

<sup>322</sup> Martin Mayer, *Madison Ave, U.S.A.: The Inside Story of What Really Goes on in the Advertising Business—the agencies, the clients, the personalities who rule America's Buying Habits*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 61.

<sup>323</sup> Norman, Craig & Kummel stands for Norman B. Norman, Eugene H. Kummel (later-1973-head of McCann Erikson Worldwide, joins in 1965, chairman of American Association of Advertising Agencies), and Walter Craig.

<sup>324</sup> Gene Kummel labeled it a "medium-sized" agency in an article he wrote for *Ad Age* called "Ten Who Helped Build N.Y.'s Solid Foundation: Assembling A Dream Team for Clients as Varied as Ajax and Willys Jeep," *Advertising Age*, January 27, 1997.

<sup>325</sup> Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*, p. 55-57.

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<sup>326</sup> “Norman B. Norman, 77, Is Dead; Former Ad and Marketing Adviser,” by Wolfgang Saxon, *The New York Times*, November 28, 1991.

<sup>327</sup> “Norman, Craig & Kummel,” *Adage Encyclopedia*, September 15, 2003. Although some of the details of the entry on NCK appear to be inaccurate. For example, it states that Maidenform’s Dream campaign “featured half-clad female models alongside fully dressed men in environments such as financial offices or architects’ drafting rooms,” which, as I have shown previously, is blatantly untrue.

<sup>328</sup> Mayer, *Madison Ave, U.S.A.*, p. 36.

<sup>329</sup> Gene Kummel, “Ten Who Helped Build N.Y.’s Solid Foundation: Assembling A Dream Team for Clients as Varied as Ajax and Willys Jeep,” *Advertising Age*, January 27, 1997.

<sup>330</sup> Footnote 25, Walter W. Bergman, *Spray the Bear: Reminiscences From the Golden Age of Advertising*, (Bloomington: 1st Books, 2002). Mayer also describes the incident but doesn’t give an explanation for making Kaplan the silent partner, although his tone is suggestive.

<sup>331</sup> Footnote 25, Bergman, *Spray the Bear*, p. 234. Mayer also describes the incident but doesn’t give an explanation for making Kaplan the silent partner, although his tone is suggestive.

<sup>332</sup> “36 Top Radio-TV Agencies Billed \$812.5 Million in ’55,” *Broadcasting Telecasting*, Vol. 49, No. 24, December 12, 1955.

<sup>333</sup> “Norman Leaves Rich Ad Legacy,” *Advertising Age*, December 9, 1991

<sup>334</sup> Much personal information about Norman is provided in Walter W. Bergman’s memoir, *Spray the Bear*. Bergman was president of NCK Europe from 1966-1970 when Norman made him president of the entire operation, a title he retained until 1974. He describes himself as a close friend, even co-owning a vacation house with him and one other NCK executive. They reportedly had a falling out but Bergman states that this was common with the quixotic Norman and that he still greatly respected him. Bergman believes that Norman has been forgotten because of his difficult nature. When Norman died and *Ad Age* didn’t comment on his passing, Bergman sent them a letter that spelled out his many accomplishments. From this letter comes the quote describing Norman as an “industry icon,” (241). Ad man Martin Mayer wrote a tell-all book in 1957, *Madison Ave, U.S.A.*, that also supplies colorful information about Norman who seemed to be widely admired and despised throughout his industry at the same time. Mayer provides the quote of Norman as “the perfect huckster” to which he credits to an unnamed “head of an unfriendly rival agency.”

<sup>335</sup> Bergman describes him as both “at least six feet four” and “six-foot-six,” (239,189).

<sup>336</sup> Bergman, *Spray the Bear*, p. 239.

<sup>337</sup> Bergman, *Spray the Bear*, p. 240.

<sup>338</sup> When Bergman lost the American Tobacco account, Norman consoled him. His coworker, Art Hohmann told him this as an explanation, (Bergman, p. 240).

<sup>339</sup> Bergman, *Spray the Bear*, p. 325.

<sup>340</sup> Bergman, *Spray the Bear*, pp. 236-238, 242.

<sup>341</sup> Bergman variously describes NCK’s overseas operations from pp. 129-242; “Norman Leaves Rich Ad Legacy,” *Advertising Age*, December 9, 1991.

<sup>342</sup> Walter Craig mainly supervised this project as he was one of the few Democrats in the advertising business. NCK produced five minute spots like *Man From Libertyville* (Barnouw, 77-78). Erik Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States: Volume 3: The Image of Empire*. According to Craig Allen, NCK signed a one year contract with the DNC where they got control over buying and creative with a standard 15% commission. NCK knew that the DNC

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couldn't match the RNC's buying power to purchase air time, but they figured they had a budget around two million. In actuality, the DNC had only \$100,000, (Allen, 101). NCK paid \$35,000 to produce a 30 minute documentary for the Democratic convention, supervised by Dore Schary of MGM and narrated by JFK. It also aired on ABC and NBC (Allen, 118).

<sup>343</sup> Karen S. Johnson-Caree, Gary Copeland, *Negative Political Advertising: Coming of Age*, (129); Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, (334).

<sup>344</sup> For example, the ad ex "How's that again General?" used footage of his previous presidential campaign ads against him and compared them to his performance in office, (Johnson-Caree and Copland, 129). The Nixon quote is from an NCK memo. David Greenberg, *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image*, Norton paperback, 2004, (p.61).

<sup>345</sup> Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, (334).

<sup>346</sup> Mayer, *Madison Ave, U.S.A.*, p. 36.

<sup>347</sup> This incident is mentioned in multiple advertising history books including, Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*; Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*; Sivulka, *Stronger than Dirt*; Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer Culture*, (McGraw Hill, 1976); Fox, *The Mirror Makers*; Twitchell, *Adcult USA*.

<sup>348</sup> Samuel, *Freud on Madison Avenue*, p. 56.

<sup>349</sup> Freud described the sexual life of adult women as a "dark continent for psychology," which has much mysteries. Freud, *The Question of Lay Analysis: Conversations with an Impartial Person*, translation from 1927, (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1978).

<sup>350</sup> Quotes from footage featured on Adam Curtis' blog *Madison Avenue*, under the article, "Experiments in the Laboratory of Consumerism 1959-67," August 20, 2010. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/adamcurtis/2010/08/madison\\_avenue.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/adamcurtis/2010/08/madison_avenue.html).

<sup>351</sup> Quotes from footage featured on Adam Curtis' blog *Madison Avenue*, under the article, "Experiments in the Laboratory of Consumerism 1959-67," August 20, 2010. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/adamcurtis/2010/08/madison\\_avenue.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/adamcurtis/2010/08/madison_avenue.html).

<sup>352</sup> Mayer, *Madison Avenue, U.S.A.*, p. 122.

<sup>353</sup> "Dreams for sale: How the one for Maidenform came true," by Joe Sacco, *Ad Age*, Sept 12, 1977.

<sup>354</sup> "Maidenform's J.A. Coleman," by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, (Nov, 1960), p. 40, Series 2, Subseries A, Box 2, Folder 6, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>356</sup> Norman also states that the credit belongs to Fillius in an article in *The New York Times* in November 10, 1967.

<sup>357</sup> According to Joe Sacco in "Dreams for sale: How the one for Maidenform came true," *Ad Age*, Sept 12, 1977, the unidentified firm was Seamprufe slips.

<sup>358</sup> "Maidenform's J.A. Coleman," by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, (Nov, 1960), p. 39, Series 2, Subseries A, Box 2, Folder 6, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>359</sup> "Dreams for sale: How the one for Maidenform came true," by Joe Sacco, *Ad Age*, Sept 12, 1977.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>361</sup> "Maidenform's J.A. Coleman," by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, (Nov, 1960), p. 40, Series 2, Subseries A, Box 2, Folder 6, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid* p. 68.



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<sup>364</sup> Ibid, pp. 40, 54.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>366</sup> “Advertising: Years of Maidenform Dreams,” by Philip H. Dougherty reprinted in unknown publication in March 1968 from *The New York Times*, (Nov, 10, 1967), Series 2, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>367</sup> “Maidenform’s J.A. Coleman,” by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, (Nov, 1960), p. 54, Series 2, Subseries A, Box 2, Folder 6, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>368</sup> NCK, who produced the show for Revlon and the notoriously demanding Charles Revson, sought Dichter’s assessment on the appeal of the show. Box 198, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>369</sup> Three studies or pilot studies for Maidenform; “Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958; Maidenform London-Sales/Advertising Problems, July 1958; and “The Motivating Response Patterns to Two Maidenform and one Playtex Commercials” For NCK, March 1958. Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>370</sup> “A Proposal for a Motivational Research Study on the sales ad advertising problems of Maidenform Brassieres Submitted to Maidenform (London) LTD,” July 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>371</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>372</sup> According to a 1957 brochure, Dichter started with the client’s problems then developed a proposal for the specific areas and techniques that they would research. The research could include any of the following techniques: “conceptual research,” “depth interview,” “projective tests,” “product tests,” “panel families,” “living laboratory,” “motivational theater,” and “statistical analysis.” The Institute prided itself in developing the unique methods of “depth interviews,” “living laboratories” and “motivational theater.” The diagram on the brochure then indicates that after they validated their findings they would conduct a “creative analysis” and then set out a “blueprint for action.” Dichter frequently was intimately involved in the final stages. In a 1955 proposal of the Corset & Brassiere Association, several additional research methods were mentioned including; “field observation and Interviews,” “psychometric ad testing,” “psychometric package testing,” and “visual research.” Of the nine specialist on the staff listed in the proposal, only one, a Dr. Lenore Seltzer, was presumably female. It is not recorded whether the researchers who worked for Maidenform were men, women, or a combination of the two. It is probable that female researchers dealt directly with the female interviewees, while both men and women were involved in the aspects of the research not involving the public. A 1957 package from the Institute of Motivational Research sent to The National Authority for the Ladies Handbag Industry includes a picture of a female researcher interviewing a female volunteer. It is reasonable to suppose that the Institute used primarily female researchers when dealing with feminine products, especially products as intimate as brassieres. Box 42 & 23, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>373</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers. This particular study conducted depth interviews with 30 women from the New York area and held a special panel with 15 women, in which they specifically discussed advertising. Of the women used, most were educated; 64% had either completed high school or had some college. 63% were between 20-39 years old; 54% were housewives, students or retired; 29% were clerical workers; 13% were professionals; 58% used Maidenform; 29% used Warners; 21% used both Exquisite and Bali; and 17% Playtex.

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- <sup>374</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>375</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>376</sup> “The Motivating Response Patterns to Two Maidenform and one Playtex Commercials,” March 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>377</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>378</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>379</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>380</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>381</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>382</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>383</sup> WAAFS is an abbreviation of the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force, which was the female branch of Great Britain’s Royal Air Force during World War II. “A Proposal for a Motivational Research Study on the sales ad advertising problems of Maidenform Brassieres Submitted to Maidenform (London) LTD,” July 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>384</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>385</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>386</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>387</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>388</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>389</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>390</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>391</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>392</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>393</sup> “The Motivating Response Patterns to Two Maidenform and one Playtex Commercials,” March 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>394</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>395</sup> “The Motivating Response Patterns to Two Maidenform and one Playtex Commercials,” March 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>396</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>397</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>398</sup> “A Proposal for a Motivational Research Study on the sales ad advertising problems of Maidenform Brassieres Submitted to Maidenform (London) LTD,” July 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>399</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>400</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>401</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>402</sup> This report focused on television commercials, comparing the response between two different Maidenform ads and one by Playtex. The report claimed to track “motivating response patterns” which enabled the production of more effective ads. The four reactions measured were: interaction (getting the viewer to identify/participate); integration (creating unified positive impression); inter-relation (stands out/reinforces brand image); and activation (moves viewer to action-towards rehearsal of use or purchase). This “living laboratory” contained 62 women and

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11 men. The men were not included in the statistical summary but were used to examine reactions in mixed company. The group would be given a test for visual sequence integration (in which they would describe visual memories and list five things recalled from each commercial), an audio sequence integration test (same as the visual sequence test, but with sound instead of images), and the famous depth interviews. “The Motivating Response Patterns to Two Maidenform and one Playtex Commercials,” March 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>403</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>404</sup> “The Motivating Response Patterns to Two Maidenform and one Playtex Commercials,” March 1958, Box 42, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Dream commercials on TV, Series 6, Box 61, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>409</sup> “A Motivational Pilot Study on Maidenform Bras,” January 1958, Box 42 Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid.

<sup>411</sup> Series 4, Subseries A, Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>412</sup> Many advertising histories discuss the Woodbury Soap advertisement series, including the following: Sutton, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty*; Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*; Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*; Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine*; Sivulka, *Ad Women and Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*; Fox, *Mirror Makers*; Jones, *Beauty Imagined*; Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*; Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress*; Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*; Scranton, *Beauty and Business*.

<sup>413</sup> “Historical and Psychological Perspective of the Erotic Appeal in Advertising,” ed.

Jacqueline Lambiase .*Sex in Advertising*, p. 52.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>415</sup> Rutherford uses case studies to put the Eros Project within the context of Michel Foucault’s history of modern sexuality (Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*, p. 6-10).

<sup>416</sup> Rutherford, *A World Made Sexy*, pp. 6-9.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid, pp. 90-95

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>421</sup> Women were portrayed as sex symbols in the form of the “sex kitten” or the “bombshell” but these were objectified female bodies largely for the male gaze. This chapter differentiates those representations from the images in the Dream Campaign as it argues Maidenform’s Dreamers were examples of a self-possessed female sexuality for a female audience and presented from a supposed woman’s point of view.

<sup>422</sup> Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*.

<sup>423</sup> Mayer, *Madison Ave, U.S.A.*, p. 36.

<sup>424</sup> The film came out in 1934, several months after the strict enforcement of the Hays Code (1930-1968), which regulated anything deemed promoting immorality in film. DeMille’s *Cleopatra* seems to have escaped the close scrutiny of the censors. Colbert’s costumes are quite revealing, particularly showing off her chest. In one scene she wears a high-waisted skirt and

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what I can only describe as pasties. Colbert reportedly demanded that costume designer, Travis Banton, emphasize her breasts as she was self-conscious about her waist and neck (Tapert, A., *The Power of Glamour: The Women Who Defined the Magic of Stardom*, New York: Crown, 1998, p. 177).

<sup>425</sup> *Cleopatra*. Dir. Cecil B. DeMille. Paramount Pictures, 1934.

<sup>426</sup> Clarence R. Slavens, "The Gold Digger as Icon: Exposing Inequity in the Great Depression," *Studies in Popular Culture*, Vol 28, No. 3 (April 2006, pp.71-92).

<sup>427</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, "Politics in an Age of Anxiety": Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis of Masculinity, 1949-1960," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (Sep., 2000), pp. 515-545; Lauren Jae Gutterman, "Another Enemy Within: Lesbian Wives, or the Hidden Threat to the Nuclear Family in Post-war America," *Gender & History*, Vol. 24, No.2, (Aug., 2012), pp.475-501; Elizabeth Fraterrigo, *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-style in Modern America* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001).

<sup>428</sup> Sivulka briefly discusses the two Spring Mill ads but doesn't give much information on the reception. Sivulka, *Soap, Sex and Cigarettes*, p. 255-257.

<sup>429</sup> Some alternative pinups were also arguably subversive in their presentation of female sexuality but they were still mainly intended for a male audience. Further discussion of this pinup genre is in chapter 4.

<sup>430</sup> Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*, p. 142; Description of "Between the Springmaid Sheets," Winthrop University Gallery, Sept 10- Oct 26, 2012, <http://www.winthrop.edu/news-events/article.aspx?id=24969>. Sivulka cites Sydney W. Head and Christopher H. Sterling, *Broadcasting in America: A Survey of Electronic Media* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 67.

<sup>431</sup> Both Vance Packard's book *The Hidden Persuaders* (New York: David McCay & Co., Inc., 1957) and Betty Friedan's study *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1963) refer to Dichter and his work. In particular, Packard's book sparked a mass awareness of psychoanalytic marketing techniques and hysteria regarding subliminal advertising, even though he only briefly mentioned it. Dichter allowed Friedan access to his paperwork, which she utilized to formulate her arguments about consumer society manipulating and degrading women. These two works are perhaps the most famous but are not the only studies that reflect society's cynical view of the advertising business. As early as 1947, Hollywood starred Clark Gable in *The Hucksters* based on adman Frederic Wakeman, Sr's novel. Daniel Horowitz has written about criticism of consumer culture in *Vance Packard and American Social Criticism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1994) and *Anxieties of Affluence: Critiques of American Consumer Culture, 1939-1979*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).

<sup>432</sup> Dichter also made use of the scandalous publicity to hype up his own reputation.

<sup>433</sup> Michelle R. Nelson, "The Hidden Persuaders: Then and Now," *Journal of Advertising*, vol 37, no1 (Spring 2008), pp. 115.

<sup>434</sup> *The Hucksters*. Dir. Jack Conway. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 1947.

<sup>435</sup> *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*. Dir. Nunally Johnson. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. 1956.

<sup>436</sup> Mayer, *Madison Ave U.S.A.*, 239.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>438</sup> Fox, *The mirror makers*.
- <sup>439</sup> “Anacin,” *AdAge Encyclopedia*, September 15, 2003.
- <sup>440</sup> Nelson, “The Hidden Persuaders: Then and Now,” pp. 113-126.
- <sup>441</sup> Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*.
- <sup>442</sup> Nelson, “The Hidden Persuaders: Then and Now,” p. 114.
- <sup>443</sup> Packard, *The Hidden Persuaders*, p. 76.
- <sup>444</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>445</sup> Daniel Horowitz, *Anxieties of Affluence*, p. 59.
- <sup>446</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>447</sup> Nelson, “The Hidden Persuaders: Then and Now,” pp. 115-116.
- <sup>448</sup> For the connection between Consumer Behavior and MR, see Fullerton, Ronald, “The Birth of Consumer Behavior: Motivation Research in the 1950s,” Paper at the 2011 Conference on Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing, CHARM Proceedings, p. 61. For a discussion of the genesis of interpretive consumer behavior and Consumer Culture Theory, see Mark Tadajewski, “Remembering Motivation Research,” p. 429.
- <sup>449</sup> The first endnote for chapter 9, “The Sexual Sell,” states, “The studies upon which this chapter is based were done by the Staff of the Institute for Motivation Research, directed by Dr. Ernest Dichter. They were made available to me through the courtesy of Dr. Dichter and his colleagues, and are on file at the Institute, in Croton-on-Hudson, New York.” Friedan also thanks Dichter in her acknowledgements.
- <sup>450</sup> (American) is in parentheses because Dichter separated nations into categories, as well, along developmental lines that had to do with wealth, consumerism and class lines. Therefore, these categorizations of women would not fit women hailing from the Soviet Union or Nigeria or Sweden, countries that were in separate categorizations from the U.S. “Electrical Home Appliances in the Postwar world: a Psychological Study on Women’s Attitudes,” 1945, Box 3, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>451</sup> This idea may partially be a reflection of Dichter’s own experience. He wrote that his Wife, Hedy, a classical musician, was the primary bread earner when Dichter struggled for work in Europe.
- <sup>452</sup> “Electrical Home Appliances in the Postwar world: a Psychological Study on Women’s Attitudes,” 1945, Box 3, Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>453</sup> “Biographical Note,” Ernest Dichter Papers.
- <sup>454</sup> In *The Psychology of Everyday Living* (1947), Dichter encouraged women to find creativity and joy in cooking and find challenges and relief in housework.
- <sup>455</sup> Horowitz, *The Anxieties of Affluence*, p. 56-58.
- <sup>456</sup> Dichter, *The Strategy of Desire* (1960), p. 240.
- <sup>457</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>458</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>459</sup> Ibid, pp. 182-183.
- <sup>460</sup> Ibid, p. 185.
- <sup>461</sup> “Maidenform’s J.A. Coleman,” by Henry Lee, *Madison Avenue*, (Nov, 1960), p. 68, Series 2, Subseries A, Box 2, Folder 6, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>462</sup> “A Proposal for a motivational research study of the sales and advertising problems of the corset and brassiere industry,” submitted to the corset & brassiere association of American NY, May 1955, Box 23, Ernest Dichter Papers.

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<sup>463</sup> “Report of a Consumer Panel on Playtex Bras,” submitted to Reach, McClinton & Company, Inc. May 1962, Box 73, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>464</sup> “Proposal for a Psychological Analysis of the Sales and Advertising Problems of Flexees Brassieres,” July 1948, Box 4, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> “Report of a Consumer Panel on Playtex Bras,” submitted to Reach, McClinton & Company, Inc. May 1962, Box 73, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>467</sup> “A Proposal for a motivational research study of the sales and advertising problems of the corset and brassiere industry,” submitted to the corset & brassiere association of American NY, May 1955, Box 23, Ernest Dichter Papers.

<sup>468</sup> Jacqueline Lambiase writes, “As the years went by, the campaign portrayed women who turned these dreams into reality by penetrating traditional male-dominated domains, such as financial offices, architects drawing rooms, and even pool halls. But the ads increasingly infuriated feminists because they pictured the scantily clad women with fully dressed men. And by the 1960s, some women were burning their bras and not wearing them at all, so Maidenform discarded the campaign,” (“Historical and Psychological Perspective of the Erotic Appeal in Advertising,” and ed. Lambiase. *Sex in Advertising: Perspectives on the Erotic Appeal*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2003, p.59). Sivulka in *Ad Women and Soap, Sex and Cigarettes* repeats a similar sentiment (p. 276). It should be noted that Lambiase’s statement about the Dream ads featuring “scantily clad women with fully dressed men,” is false. Barbara J. Coleman in “Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s” references the anger from feminists over the Dream ads.

<sup>469</sup> *The Stepford Wives*, directed by Bryan Forbes, minute 43. The film is based on the 1972 book by Ira Levin of the same name.

<sup>470</sup> *The Stepford Wives*, hour 1 minute 21.

<sup>471</sup> “Is Maidenform Bra Gal Having Dreams or Nightmares,” Stephen Baker, Under “An art director’s viewpoint...” June 1967, *Ad Age*.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Lawrence Hughes, “Maidenform dreams big...” *Sales Management*, April 5, 1963, 38, Series 2, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>475</sup> Reprinted *New York Time* article from Nov 10, 1967 by Philip H. Dougherty, Series 2, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> Lawrence Hughes, “Maidenform dreams big...” *Sales Management*, April 5, 1963, 38, Series 2, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>478</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, p. 4, July-August 1954, Series 4, Sub A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> “Maidenform’s Dream Marks Its 20<sup>th</sup> Year,” *Women’s Wear Daily*, March 20, 1969, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

<sup>482</sup> Kitty D’Alessio interview, 1990, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 21, Maidenform Collection

<sup>483</sup> Lawrence Hughes, “Maidenform dreams big...” *Sales Management*, April 5, 1963, 38, Series 2, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.

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<sup>484</sup> *Maidenform Mirror*, “40 years of Advertising Leadership”, 1962, p. 39, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>485</sup> Lawrence Hughes, “Maidenform dreams big...” *Sales Management*, April 5, 1963, 38, Series 2, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>486</sup> Mayer, *Madison Ave, U.S.A.*; Hughes, “Maidenform Dreams BIG,” *Sales Management*, 1963.  
<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Reichert, *The Erotic History of Advertising*, p. 149; Reichert, and Lambiase, *Sex in Advertising*; Sivulka, *Ad Women and Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*. Many blogs and other popular sources repeat this story in an echo chamber.

<sup>489</sup> Wendy Burns-Ardono, *Jiggle*, p. 87.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

<sup>491</sup> Barbara Coleman, “Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s,” James Stull, “The Maidenform Campaigns: Reaffirming the Feminine Ideal,” *Connecticut Review* 14 (Spring 1992).

<sup>492</sup> Coleman, “Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s,” p. 5.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Raymond Williams, “Advertising: The Magic System,” in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, (London: Verso, 1980), p. 170-195; 179.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*, pp. 5-6, 10.

<sup>497</sup> More information on how the brand was created is found in chapter 2.

<sup>498</sup> There was, of course, more than one stereotype about the Soviet woman. Another stereotype prominent in popular culture was of the Russian woman as a femme fatale, or more specifically, a devious and seductive spy. This archetype was present in, for example in various James Bond movies and as the character “Natasha” in the children’s cartoon *Rocky and Bullwinkle*.

<sup>499</sup> Elaine Tyler May, etc.

<sup>500</sup> Lois Banner describes 1950s movie stars like Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell as “mammary goddesses” in *American Beauty*. Banner states that the term was originated by Marjorie Rosen in her book *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies, and the American Dream* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973).

<sup>501</sup> Rosenberg, “Consuming Women: Images of Americanization in the American Century,”; ed. Rosenberg and Shannon Fitzpatrick, *Body and Nation: the Global Realm of U.S. Body Politics in the Twentieth Century*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*.

<sup>502</sup> Farrell-Beck and Gau argue for the importance of the women who designed, promoted, and produced brassieres from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth to the industry. They argue that as women who wore bras they were more perceptive and productive, *Uplift*. Likewise, Wendy Burns Ardolino explores the relationship between women as producers and creators, Burns Ardolino, *Jiggle*. Although this study does not argue that Ida Rosenthal because she was female had special insight into brassieres, it does emphasize her importance in leading and crafting the meaning of Maidenform.

<sup>503</sup> Roland Marchand, *Creating the corporate soul*, p. 361.

<sup>504</sup> “Fitting the Feminine Form,” by Marion Dixon, p. 623, *Hygeia*, Series 9, Box 55, Maidenform Collection.

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- <sup>505</sup> “Why Corsets and Brassieres are Essential—A Report From The Corset & Brassiere Association of American,” c. 1942-43, Series 9, Box 55, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>506</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>507</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>508</sup> “Why Corsets and Brassieres are Essential—A Report From The Corset & Brassiere Association of American,” c. 1942-43, p. 14-15. Series 9, Box 55, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>509</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>510</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>511</sup> Ibid, p. 15.
- <sup>512</sup> “State Of: Maiden Form Brassiere Company, INC. in support of its application for a Declaration of Essentiality,” to the USA Manpower Commission, created by Blumberg & Kleeblatt, General Counsel for Maiden Form, p. 2-3, Series 9, Box 55, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>513</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>514</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>515</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>516</sup> Series 7, Box 51, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>517</sup> *The Maiden Form Mirror*, July 1942, p. 8, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>518</sup> Information about their war supply production can be found in many different locations including *The Maiden Form Mirror* (November 1942; July and October 1945). Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>519</sup> Design plans, order forms, and other information on the pigeon vests can be found in Series 9, Boxes 53, 54 & 71, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>520</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, November 1945, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 2, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>521</sup> *The Maiden Form Mirror*, p. 8, October 1942, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>522</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>523</sup> *The Maiden Form Mirror*, p. 8, July 1942, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>524</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, December 1944, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 22, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>525</sup> *The Maiden Form Mirror*, p. 8, July 1942, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>526</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, December 1944, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 22, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>527</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, January 1945, p. 1, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 22, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>528</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, April 1945, May 1945, p.1, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>529</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, July 1945, p. 3, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>530</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, July 1945, p.3. Series 4, Subseries B, Box 75, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>531</sup> These were similar to the previous tradition of employee profiles but some of the elements of pinup culture were adopted, including, as Jill Fields notes, replacement of portraits with full-body photographs.



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- <sup>532</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, November 1944, p. 1, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 22, Folder 1, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>533</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>534</sup> *The Maiden Form Mirror*, p. 6, May 1941, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>535</sup> *The Maiden Form Mirror*, p. 7, February, 1944, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>536</sup> Cohen, *Consumer's Republic*; McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship*
- <sup>537</sup> Rosenberg, "Another Mission to Moscow," and "Consuming Women."
- <sup>538</sup> "I Dreamed I was a Tycoon in My..." *Time Magazine*, October 24, 1960, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 2, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>539</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>540</sup> Various articles note that she still spoke Russian but had also taken the effort of attending language classes in preparation for the trip. One article noted that, "Because Maidenform's tireless founder was born in Minsk, her familiarity with the Russian language enabled her to converse freely with the people," "I Dreamed I went to Moscow...", *The Maiden Form Mirror*, 1963. Series 4, Subseries A, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>541</sup> "I Dreamed I went to Moscow," *Time NewsMagazine*, 1963; "Bra-Vote for Ida," *Oakland Tribune*, Feb. 6, 1964, 53; "Russian Women May Soon Dream," by Marilyn Bender, *The New York Times*, July 30, 1963, Series 7, Box 66, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>542</sup> "Bra-Vote for Ida," *Oakland Tribune*, Feb. 6, 1964, p. 53, Series 2, Subseries A, Box 3, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>543</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>544</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>545</sup> "Russian Women May Soon Dream," by Marilyn Bender, *The New York Times*, July 30, 1963, Series 7, Box 66, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>546</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>547</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>548</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>549</sup> "Russians 'Impressed' on Visit to Maidenform," *The Maiden Forum*, February, 1964, p. 2. Series 4, Subseries B, Box 22, Folder 13, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>550</sup> Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).
- <sup>551</sup> "Russians 'Impressed' on Visit to Maidenform," *The Maiden Forum*, February, 1964, p. 2. Series 4, Subseries B, Box 22, Folder 13, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>552</sup> Department of State letter to Ida Rosenthal from Frank G. Siscoe, Director Soviet and Eastern European Exchange Staff, December 31, 1963. Series 7, Box 66, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>553</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>554</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, Jan. 1955, p.3, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>555</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, Feb. 1957, p.2, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>556</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>557</sup> Fields, *An Intimate Affair*, p. 5.
- <sup>558</sup> Yalom, *History of the Breasts*.
- <sup>559</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, 30 Year Anniversary Special, 1952, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

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<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> Berney argues that the predominate rhetoric taught that beautiful breasts were not good at lactating, for breasts to be beautiful they shouldn't be used as nourishment. She notes that Yalom labels this the "standardized bust." Adrienne Berney, "Streamlining Breasts," p. 340.

<sup>562</sup> Fields, *An Intimate Affair*, p. 10.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid, p. 95.

<sup>564</sup> David L. Gold, *Studies in Etymology and Etiology (With Emphasis on Germanic, Jewish, Romance, and Slavic Languages)*, (San Vicente: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2009). Edward G. Uhl invented the M1 bazooka, or shoulder rocket launcher, in 1942. Fredrick N. Rasmussen, "Edward G. Uhl dies at 92: inventor of the bazooka," *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 2010.

<sup>565</sup> Yalom, *History of the Breasts*, p. 339.

<sup>566</sup> Fields, *An Intimate Affair*, p. 105.

<sup>567</sup> Rosenberg, "Consuming Women."

<sup>568</sup> Rosenberg, "The American Look," pp. 190-206.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid, pp. 190, 201.

<sup>570</sup> "The Kitchen Debate," Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, U.S. Embassy, Moscow, Soviet Union, July, 1959. Transcript on <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-kitchen-debate/>.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> The debate in the Apex Corporation booth and the debate in front of the American kitchen exhibit are generally lumped together as one debate, as booth featured the leaders defending their respective political and ideological systems. Video tape of the discussion the Apex booth was recorded on a new color television and is available at <http://www.c-span.org/video/?110721-1/nixonkhrushchev-kitchen-debate>.

<sup>573</sup> "History – Export Department," July 16, 1968, p. 1-3. Series 1, Box 1, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>574</sup> Rosenberg, "Another Mission to Moscow," p. 134.

<sup>575</sup> "Maidenform has International Appeal," *Maiden Form Mirror*, 1964, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 70, Folder 10, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

<sup>577</sup> "Bras are more Important Than Shoes: desire for the U.S.A. label reaches far and wide in surprising places," *Maiden Form Mirror* 1960, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 70, Folder 9, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

<sup>579</sup> "Maidenform Abroad," *Corsets and Brassieres*, January 1955, p. 55. Series 2, Subseries C, Box 2, Folder 10, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>580</sup> Photograph of a store window display in Costa Rica in 1964. From the company photo album with accompanying text of Maidenform trips abroad from the mid 1950s – mid 1960s. Series 7, Subseries E, Box 51, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>581</sup> "Dreams Around the World!" *The Maidenform Mirror*, mid-1950s, p. 6, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 20, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>582</sup> Photo Album with accompanying text of Maidenform trips abroad from the mid 1950s – mid 1960s. Series 7, Subseries E, Maidenform Collection.

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<sup>583</sup> Photographs of a fashion show in Singapore in 1965. From the company photo album with accompanying text of Maidenform trips abroad from the mid 1950s – mid 1960s. Series 7, Subseries E, Box 51, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>584</sup> Fields, *An Intimate Affair*, p. 258.

<sup>585</sup> Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Fields, *An Intimate Affair*, p. 258. Dior stated, “Without foundations there can be no fashion.” As quoted in Burns-Ardono, *Jiggle*, p. 68. See Elaine Tyler May, Jill Fields, Wendy Burns Ardono, Ann Beth Presley, and Doreen Caldwell for discussions on the roles of women, fashion, and bodies in “recovering” prewar femininity in postwar America.

<sup>588</sup> *The Maidenform Mirror*, February – March 1955, Series 4, Subseries A, Box 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>589</sup> See Elaine Tyler May, Jill Fields, Wendy Burns Ardono, Ann Beth Presley, and Doreen Caldwell for discussions on the roles of women, fashion, and bodies in “recovering” prewar femininity in postwar America.

<sup>590</sup> Coleman, “Maidenform(ed): Images of American Women in the 1950s.” p. 10.

<sup>591</sup> As noted in Burns-Ardono, *Jiggle*, p. 70.

<sup>592</sup> The phrase “return home” is in quotes to acknowledge that many women did not in fact stop working and that this “return” was nostalgic as women had always worked inside and outside of the home, especially working-class women, in one capacity or another. Therefore, the idea of the “homeward bound” woman is representative of a larger cultural ideal, which became seen as a strict norm, not a fact of reality for all of society.

<sup>593</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz has commented that perhaps the “homeward bound” culture in the postwar era has been over hyped by historians, through alternative examples of women who were “not June Cleaver.” This analysis hopes to add to that historiography by arguing that nuance was available even in rather surprising places, namely women’s consumer culture.

<sup>594</sup> This does not deny a voyeuristic aspect, although the “gaze” will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

<sup>595</sup> Fields, *An Intimate Affair*.

<sup>596</sup> Despina Kakoudaki, “Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II,” in ed Linda Williams, *Porn Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). See also Robert C. Allen, *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

<sup>597</sup> Maria Elena Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

<sup>598</sup> Kakoudaki, “Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II,” pp. 340-341.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid, p. 340.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid, p. 336.

<sup>601</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, p. 211; Kakoudaki, “Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II,” p. 340.

<sup>602</sup> Kakoudaki, “Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II,” p. 362.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid, p. 359.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid, pp. 336, 364.

<sup>605</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, p. 198.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid, p. 199.

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- <sup>607</sup> Kakoudaki, "Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II," p. 359.
- <sup>608</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, pp. 220-221.
- <sup>609</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material".
- <sup>610</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, p. 217. Fears over STDs which blamed women were evident in numerous war posters created by the government.
- <sup>611</sup> Ibid, p. 235.
- <sup>612</sup> Kakoudaki, "Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II," p. 362.
- <sup>613</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, p. 242.
- <sup>614</sup> Kakoudaki, "Pinup: the American Secret Weapons in World War II," p. 363. Agrees with Andre Bazin's essay "Entomology of the Pin Up Girl" in *What is Cinema Vol. 2* (translation by University of CA Press, 1971).
- <sup>615</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, pp. 233-234.
- <sup>616</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>617</sup> Quoted from Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, pp. 244-245.
- <sup>618</sup> Publications by Dr. Kinsey and the Kinsey Institute are available online at [www.kinseyinstitute.org](http://www.kinseyinstitute.org).
- <sup>619</sup> Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*.
- <sup>620</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, p. 237.
- <sup>621</sup> Bill Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise: Masculinity, Youth and Leisure-Style in Modern America* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), pp. 5, 121-122.
- <sup>622</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, pp. 5, 129-132.
- <sup>623</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>624</sup> Ibid, pp. 5, 146.
- <sup>625</sup> Osgerby is quoting a leaked memo from 1970. Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, p. 5, 146
- <sup>626</sup> Carrie Pitzulo, *Bachelors and Bunnies: The Sexual Politics of Playboy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
- <sup>627</sup> Ibid, p. 39.
- <sup>628</sup> Ibid, p. 40.
- <sup>629</sup> Meyerowitz, "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material."
- <sup>630</sup> Osgerby, *Playboys in Paradise*, pp. 5, 145.
- <sup>631</sup> The comic, created by Jack Cole, is from a December 1957 issue of *Playboy*.
- <sup>632</sup> "I dreamed I was an international figure" (1956) depicts a Dreamer descending a jet in front of a crowd. The crowd is shown from the back and consists of the back of presumably male heads denoted by hats in the masculine fashion. Another example is "I dreamed I rode in a gondola" (1953). In this ad the Dreamer is a real woman but the man who is rowing the gondola is a watercolor-esque rendition. While males are indicated in these two ads, they are not fully-fledged characters on the same level as the Dreamers.
- <sup>633</sup> For example, "I dreamed I covered the Paris Collection," (1960) shows a smartly dressed reported viewing a fashion show from an exclusively female audience. "I dreamed I inspired a new look" (1962) shows a woman be fitted in chic attire by two older female seamstresses.
- <sup>634</sup> John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), p. 47.
- <sup>635</sup> Canonical theorists on the gendered gaze include John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (*Screen* 16.3 Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18), and Mary Ann Doane "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," in *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, (New York: Routledge, 1991). Both Berger

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and Mulvey theorize that the gaze is masculine. Women who gaze at themselves adopt the male gaze. Doane argues for the idea of masquerade. Femininity is a social construction and therefore a female gaze is a mask.

<sup>636</sup> Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” and Doane, “Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator.”

<sup>637</sup> Although, as discussed in the Advertising chapter, the campaign was associated with Freudian theory. Theories of the gaze are developed from Lacanian Mirror-stage theory, which itself is derived from Freudian psychoanalysis.

<sup>638</sup> Interview with Kitty D’Alessio, August 8, 1990. The interview was conducted in the showroom at Maidenform Park Ave. Series 1, Box 1, Folder 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>639</sup> Buszek, *Pin-up Grrls*, p. 244-245.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-247.

<sup>642</sup> Peter B. Bart, “Puerto Rico Woes: Pay Boosts, Transport Troubles Drive Away Some Immigrant Firms. Unemployment Stays High; Island Pins Hope on GE and Other Big Newcomers. Cordero Clinks the Glasses.” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 22, 1957.

<sup>643</sup> The controversial move towards “free trade” is part of this restructuring of the global economy. Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 18-25; Palmira N. Rios, “Export-Oriented Industrialization and the Demand for Female Labor: Puerto Rican Women in the Manufacturing Sector, 1952-1980,” *Gender and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Special Issue: Women and Development in the Third World. (Sep., 1990), pp 323-332; Deborah Berman Santana D, *Kicking Off the Bootstraps: Environment, Development, and Community Power in Puerto Rico*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), pp 88-92.

<sup>644</sup> Rios, pp. 321-337. This process created the current conditions where developing nations are now supplying manufacturing labor instead of raw materials.

<sup>645</sup> Rios claims that Puerto Rico and not Hong Kong in the mid 1960s is the pioneer of the New International Division of Labor. (Rios, 332).

<sup>646</sup> Louis Hyman, “Why Write the History of Capitalism?” *Symposium Magazine*, July 8, 2013, <http://www.symposium-magazine.com/why-write-the-history-of-capitalism-louis-hyman/>.)

<sup>647</sup> Stephen Mihm, JAH Interchange: The History of Capitalism, *Journal of American History* (2014), 101 (2): 503-536. Doi: 10.1093/jahist/jau357.

<sup>648</sup> Hyman believes that people should be reminded that everything changes, including capitalism. “Capitalism,” he writes, “isn’t the end of history...it is our history.” Hyman, “Why Write the History of Capitalism?”

<sup>649</sup> Hyman, “Why Write the History of Capitalism?”

<sup>650</sup> Philip Scranton, JAH Interchange: The History of Capitalism.

<sup>651</sup> Peter Hudson, JAH Interchange: The History of Capitalism, p. 536

<sup>652</sup> Hudson, JAH Interchange: The History of Capitalism.

<sup>653</sup> For labor historians who focus on gender see: Alice Kessler-Harris, *Gendering Labor History* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007), *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), *A Woman’s Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990), *Women Have Always Worked: A Historical Overview* (New York: The Feminist Press at

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CUNY, 1981); Daniel Katz, *Altogether Different: Yiddish Socialists, Garment Workers, and the Labor Roots of Multiculturalism* (New York: NYU Press, 2011), Ruth Milkman, ed. *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of US Women's Labor History* (New York: Routledge, New Ed Edition, 1985), *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Segregation by Sex During World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Vicki Howard, "At the Curve Exchange: Post-war Beauty Culture and Working Women at Maidenform," in Philip Scranton, *Beauty and Business: Commerce, Gender, and Culture in Modern America* (London: Routledge), Ava Baron, "Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker, and the Historian's Gaze," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 69, (Spring, 2006), pp. 143-160 and *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1987), Vicki Ruiz and Ellen DuBois, ed. *Unequal Sisters: An Inclusive Reader in U.S. Women's History* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Margaret Walsh, ed. *Working Out Gender: Perspectives from Labour History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

<sup>654</sup> Hyman, "Why Write the History of Capitalism?" and Elizabeth Tandy Sherman, JAH Interchange: The History of Capitalism, p. 517.

<sup>655</sup> The apparel industry is traditionally female-dominated and one of the lowest paying fields. (Rios, pp. 327-328).

<sup>656</sup> Rios, p. 326.

<sup>657</sup> Male dominated industries included food, industrial and chemical. When the increased proportion of females in the workforce became apparent, the architects of Bootstrap sought to attract these industries which would hire men. They were less successful (Rios, 323-324).

<sup>658</sup> Rios, p. 327.

<sup>659</sup> Emilio Pantojas Garcia, *Development of Puerto Rico's Export-Led Industrialization Experience*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990).

<sup>660</sup> James L. Dietz, *Economic History of Puerto Rico: Institution Change and Capitalist Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) pp. 183; Deborah Berman Santana D, *Kicking Off the Bootstraps: Environment, Development, and Community Power in Puerto Rico*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), pp 88.

<sup>661</sup> Scholars like Berrios Martinez have argued that Operation Bootstrap was ultimately a failure because it did not generate enough jobs for the remaining population and because of the tax incentives, there was little funding for state programs. Initially touted as an economic miracle, offshoring to even cheaper areas in Asia by the mid 1960s and into the 1970s caused significant unemployment. Rueben Berrios Martínez R. *Puerto Rico's Decolonization*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997.

<sup>662</sup> Berman Santana, pp. 90-92.

<sup>663</sup> Berman Santana, p. 105.

<sup>664</sup> Berman Santana, pp. 88, 110.

<sup>665</sup> The Puerto Rican voters approved the constitution in 1952 officially inaugurating commonwealth status. The official status in Puerto Rico is Estado Libre Asociado, or associated free state, but is known as commonwealth in English, (Berman Santana, p. 89).

<sup>666</sup> Scholars of Puerto Rico argue that Operation Bootstrap and the creation of the commonwealth status were maneuvers to keep Puerto Rico a defacto colony while giving the appearance of self-

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determination, (Berman Santana and Helen Safa, *The Myth of the Male Breadwinner: Women and Industrialization in the Caribbean*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

<sup>667</sup> Quote made by the Secretary of the Interior to congress in 1950, (Berman Santana, p. 101-102).

<sup>668</sup> A Senate Report, which shared the sentiments found in House Reports, found that Law 600 would not fundamentally change Puerto Rico's relationship with the U.S. (Berrios Martinez, p. 3).

<sup>669</sup> Berman Santana, p. 95.

<sup>670</sup> Berman Santana suggests that there may have been a deal struck between Muñoz and DC. (Berman Santana, pp. 105-106).

<sup>671</sup> "Puerto Rico: Industrial Island in the sun: economic climate still beckons," 9/17/64, *Business Week*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>672</sup> The independence movement was no small thing. In 1950 Puerto Rican Nationalists attacked the PPD government but were quelled by the Puerto Rican army. They also attempted to assassinate President Truman in 1950 and shot at the US congress in 1954.

<sup>673</sup> Berman Santana, p. 103

<sup>674</sup> "Puerto Rico: Industrial Island in the sun: economic climate still beckons," 9/17/64, *Business Week*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>675</sup> Berman Santana, p. 103.

<sup>676</sup> Briggs, p. 18.

<sup>677</sup> Noliwe M. Rooks writes about the myth of the Bootstrapping as used by American politicians in *Time Magazine*. Noliwe M. Rooks, "The Myth of Bootstrapping: Politicians love to portray themselves as Horatio Alger characters, but they aren't talking about how social mobility is all but impossible for the many these days," Sept. 07, 2012, *Time Magazine*.

<sup>678</sup> "Puerto Rico: Industrial Island in the sun: economic climate still beckons," 9/17/64, *Business Week*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>679</sup> *The Wall Street Journal* reported in 1957 that a quarter of the companies that went to Puerto Rico had left and over half that stayed made less than \$250,000 in profit. "Puerto Rico Woes: Pay Boosts, Transport Troubles Drive Away Some Immigrant Firms: Unemployment Stays High; Island Pins Hopes on GE And Other Big Newcomers: Condero Clinks Glasses," 3/22/1957, *The Wall Street Journal*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>680</sup> "Puerto Rico—where the profits are," 12/23/65, *Women's Wear Daily*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>681</sup> Berrios Martinez.

<sup>682</sup> Caban, pp. 154-155.

<sup>683</sup> "Puerto Rico: Industrial Island in the sun: economic climate still beckons," 9/17/64, *Business Week*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>684</sup> Ibid.

<sup>685</sup> Berrios Martinez states that from 1945-1964 about 750,000 Puerto Ricans left the island, which is about one third of the total population. Others claim up to a million.

<sup>686</sup> Galvin, p. 136.

<sup>687</sup> See Michelle Kaske and Martin Z. Braun, Puerto Rico's Slide," Dec. 4, 2015, *Bloomberg*; Benjamin Zycher, "For Puerto Rico Debt Crisis, the Can Hits the End of the Road," Dec. 10, 2015, *The Hill*; Gillian B. White, "What's Really Happening in Puerto Rico?" Jun. 29, 2015, *The Atlantic*; Richard Finger and Justin Velez-Hagan, "Default: Puerto Rico's Inevitable Option,"

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Dec. 1, 2015, *Forbes*; The Editorial Board, “Puerto Rico Needs Debt Relief,” July 1, 2015, *The New York Times*.

<sup>688</sup> Rexford Tugwell, the New Dealer and one-time Governor of Puerto Rico during the 1940s is credited for the first quote, while the more disparaging second quote is from anthropologist Oscar Lewis in his 1966 book *La Vida*. Lapp, p. 170.

<sup>689</sup> Safa, p. 7.

<sup>690</sup> “Puerto Rico Woes: Pay Boosts, Transport Troubles Drive Away Some Immigrant Firms: Unemployment Stays High; Island Pins Hopes on GE And Other Big Newcomers: Condero Clinks Glasses,” 3/22/57, *The Wall Street Journal*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>691</sup> “Puerto Rico: Industrial Island in the sun: economic climate still beckons,” 9/17/64, *Business Week*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>692</sup> Maidenform and other brassiere manufacturers came over to Puerto Rico in the first stage of Bootstrap (1950-1963), which can be characterized as labor-intensive, light manufacturing like apparel (Rios, 323). Maldonado claims that, “Operation Bootstrap first achieved the “critical mass’ needed for economic takeoff in the brassiere industry,” (Maldonado, p. 138).

<sup>693</sup> These statistics are supplied in multiple sources in the Maidenform Archives including Maidenform records, news reports, and ILG magazines.

<sup>694</sup> “Puerto Rico—where the profits are,” by Roy Brown, 12/23/65, *Women’s Wear Daily*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>695</sup> “30 Years Selling to Puerto Rico, 10 years on Puerto Rico,” Maidenform’s 40th Anniversary. 1/8/63, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 19, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

<sup>697</sup> This system was installed regardless of the fact that Maidenform was founded by a woman, Ida Rosenthal, and utilized what I have called the Woman-to-Woman strategy in their marketing. As demonstrated in the prior chapter, the Woman-to-Woman approach was for public consumption, the reality for the institution was not always the same. According to the Maidenform Handbook published in the late 1950s, early 1960s the executives were as follows: Chairman of the Board and Treasurer: Ida Rosenthal, President: Dr. Joseph Coleman (husband to Beatrice Coleman, Ida’s daughter), VP of Design: Beatrice Coleman, Sec & Legal Counsel: Henry C. Heppen, VP Production: Ellis Rosenthal, VP of Marketing: Abraham Kramer, VP of Sales John Currier, VP of Special Projects: Kurt Metzger. While not considered an executive, Italian immigrant Ernest Silvani was head of the Design Department. William Rosenthal’s sister, Masha Hammer, was head of quality control under Ellis Rosenthal, who was William’s nephew. The only female high up in the company who was (probably) not a family member was Betty Kaupp, who was a designer.

<sup>698</sup> Briggs, pp. 113-114

<sup>699</sup> Ibid.

<sup>700</sup> The percentage of women in employed with “homework” or sewing that they would complete at home as a sort of independent contractor decreased. The decrease of at-home work made it more difficult for women with small children to find employment, (Briggs, pp. 113-114).

<sup>701</sup> Here is a brief breakdown of the statistics used by Rios:

-1950: labor force participation rate: 70.6% men, 21.2% women. 23.4% women as percentage of total employment



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-1960: labor force participation rate: 65.8% men, 20% women; 24.4% women as percentage of total employment

-1970: labor force participation rate 58.8% men, 24.5 women; 30.8% women as percentage of total employment

Rios, 322-323.

<sup>702</sup> Briggs, pp. 113-114.

<sup>703</sup> “Puerto Rican Menfolk Fret as Their Wives Bring Home the Bacon: Operation Bootstrap Creates New Jobs But the Ladies Grab Most of Them,” 2/19/1957, *The Wall Street Journal*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>704</sup> Ibid.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid.

<sup>706</sup> The second stage of Operation Bootstrap (1967-1977) targeted capital-intensive heavy industries like petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals, (Rios, pp. 323, 329).

<sup>707</sup> Rios, p. 328.

<sup>708</sup> Safa, p. 27.

<sup>709</sup> Alice E. Colon-Warren and Idsa Alegia-Ortega, “Shattering the Illusion of Development: The Changing Status of Women and Challenges from the Feminist Movement in Puerto Rico,” *Feminist Review*, No 59, Rethinking Caribbean Difference (Summer 1998), pp. 101-117. pp. 103-106.

<sup>710</sup> Alice E. Colon-Warren and Idsa Alegia-Ortega, “Shattering the Illusion of Development: The Changing Status of Women and Challenges from the Feminist Movement in Puerto Rico,” *Feminist Review*, No 59, Rethinking Caribbean Difference (Summer 1998), pp. 101-117. p. 106.

<sup>711</sup> Charles W. Warren, Charles F. Westoff, Joan M. Herold, Roger W. RoCHAT and Jack C. Smith, “Contraceptive Sterilization in Puerto Rico,” *Demography*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Aug., 1986), pp. 351-365; p. 351.

<sup>712</sup> Migration was used in tandem with sterilization. A 1948 commission noted that migration of women, in particular, was important to keeping down unemployment and the birthrate. Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*.

<sup>713</sup> Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*.

<sup>714</sup> Charles W. Warren, Charles F. Westoff, Joan M. Herold, Roger W. RoCHAT and Jack C. Smith, “Contraceptive Sterilization in Puerto Rico,” *Demography*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Aug., 1986), pp. 351-365., p 352-353; Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: the Struggle to Control World Population*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2008); Iris Lopez, *Matters of Choice: Puerto Rican Women’s Struggle for Reproductive Freedom*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*.

<sup>715</sup> Joan M. Herold, Charles W. Warren, Jack C. Smith, Roger W. RoCHAT, Ruth Martinez and Mildred Vera, “Contraceptive Use and the Need for Family Planning in Puerto Rico,” *International Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Dec., 1986), pp. 125-131. p. 125.

<sup>716</sup> Interview conducted by a radio program called “The Rest of the News,” in New York City, “Sterilization in Puerto Rico,” *Off Our Backs*, Vol.4, No. 11 (Nov., 1974), pp. 9-10. The doctor also mentions that Puerto Rican women were subjects of birth control pill tests from 1952-1960. She is quoted as saying, “And I have no doubt that informed consent wasn’t obtained in this very, very widespread study before the pills were licensed for use in the U.S.”

<sup>717</sup> It was found that men had a slight preference towards their unions (Galvin, p. 148).

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<sup>718</sup> In 1966 awards were given to over 250 employees who had worked for the company for at least ten years. In 1964 Fomento gave Maidenform an award for its contributions to establishing the apparel industry on the island. “Founder of Maidenform to be Feted at Party Here,” 1/18/66, *The San Juan Star*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>719</sup> Series 10, Box 58, Folders 16-17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid.

<sup>721</sup> “Maidenform: The Company and the People” (1958 or 1959), Series 1, Box 1, Folder 12, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>722</sup> Series 10, Box 57, Folders 5-7, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid.

<sup>724</sup> Presumably since “#39” did not file a complaint with the NLRB she was not mentioned in the NLRB report. “#39” was mentioned in interoffice reports about the incident. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 16-17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>725</sup> The NLRB demanded that Maidenform rehire Anglero but the company refused. The tension ended when it was discovered that Anglero’s husband had returned from Korea and no longer wanted his wife to work. Series 10, Box 57, Folders 5-7, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>726</sup> Maidenform managers, like Paul Hammer from New Jersey, were sent to Puerto Rico to set up and run the factories. It was not until more than a decade later that a Puerto Rican would become a plant manager. “30 Years Selling to Puerto Rico, 10 years on Puerto Rico,” Maidenform’s 40th Anniversary. 1/8/63, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>727</sup> Interoffice Correspondence, Series 10, Box 58, Folders 16-17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>728</sup> Ibid.

<sup>729</sup> Ibid.

<sup>730</sup> Ibid.

<sup>731</sup> The ILGWU was affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO). It was not until a year later that Dubinsky would be instrumental in the unification of the AFL and CIO.

<sup>732</sup> Interoffice Correspondence, Series 10, Box 58, Folders 16-17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>733</sup> Documents from later years imply such an agreement is being broken in other foreign countries. Box 25, Folders 15-23, 25-26, ILGWU Collection, Kheel Center, Cornell University (Hereafter ILGWU Collection).

<sup>734</sup> Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid.

<sup>736</sup> Box 111, Folders 1a-1c (Puerto Rico Needle Workers, May 34-40), David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>737</sup> Box 111, Folders 1a-1c (Puerto Rico Needle Workers, May 34-40), David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>738</sup> Box 258, Folder 1a-1b, 2a-2b, 3a-3b, 4a-4b David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>739</sup> Brodtkin, Karen. *How Jews Became White Folks and what that says about Race in America*, (New York: Rutgers, 1994/2002).

<sup>740</sup> Labor Historian Robert D. Parmet, who wrote the “definitive” biography on David Dubinsky and his involvement with the ILG, claims that Dubinsky desired to assist in the building of unions worldwide (Parmet, 269). Dubinsky was part of forming the American Labor Committee on International Affairs and the Free Trade Union Committee both of which funded the formation of unions abroad. Dubinsky and other union members cooperated with the CIA to oust Communism in the US and abroad. Dubinsky’s shift from Socialist Bundist to anti-

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Communist crusader first started during the 1920s with an internal struggle between Communists and Socialists, resulting in the purge of Communists. It should be noted that at this time Dubinsky's anti-Communism was mild compared to the American Federation of Labor (AFL) who favored their deportation (Parmet, pp. 202-203).

<sup>741</sup> Bruce Laurie in his 2011 LERA Proceedings, "Reflections on the Recent Course of Labor History," characterizes the historiography of Labor History from the "Old Labor History" to the most recent "New and Improved Labor History."

<sup>742</sup> For issues of "whiteness" in labor history see David Roediger and Matthew Frye Jacobson. Relevant studies about ethnicity and race include: Daniel Soyer, "Class Conscious Workers as Immigrant Entrepreneurs: The Ambiguity of Class Among Eastern European Jewish Immigrants to the United States at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Labor History*, 42:1, pp. 45-59 (2001), David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), Eric L Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), Susan Roth Breitzer, "Writing the World of Our Fathers and Mothers: The Fall and Rise of American Jewish Labor History," *History Compass* 9/2 (2011); 147-161, Andrew R. Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity* (New York: Columbia University press, 1992), Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What that says about Race in America* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1998), Stephen J. Whitfield, *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (Waltham, Brandeis University press, 2001), Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), Immanuel Ness, *Immigrants, Unions and the New U.S. Labor Market* (2010), David Roediger and Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference: Race and the Management of Labor in US History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Gary Fink and Merl E. Reed, *Race, Class and Community in Southern Labor History* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2003), Robert H. Zieger, *For Jobs and Freedom: Race and Labor in America Since 1865* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2007), Moon-Kie Jung, *Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii's Interracial Labor Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>743</sup> *Justice*, April 1958, Series 10, Box 71, Folder 10, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>744</sup> Founded in 1897 in Russia, the Bund (General Jewish Workers' Union of Russia, Lithuania and Poland) was an important international Socialist organization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They believed in the universal liberation of workers and the protection of Yiddish culture in the Pale.

<sup>745</sup> Dubinsky and the IGLWU would maintain a close relationship with the American government from FDR through LBJ. After becoming involved with FDR and the New Deal, he would officially leave Socialism to become a liberal. After discussions with his friend FDR, Dubinsky agreed to halt union led worker stoppages and strikes as long as WWII lasted. After the war the ILGWU and Dubinsky, like many other unions who wanted to survive the Red Scare, became publicly anti-Communist. He would continue to promote "social unionism," which some derisively call "business unionism." Dubinsky has been quoted as stating, "unions need capitalism like a fish needs water," (Parmet, 332).

<sup>746</sup> So-called Old Immigrants are peoples from Northern and Western Europe.

<sup>747</sup> Benefiting from the efforts of earlier German-Jewish immigrants, Russian-Jewish immigrants flocked to the garment district of New York. By the 1880s, German-Jewish Americans owned 234 of the 241 clothing factories in New York City and in 1890 almost 50% of working Jews

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were employed in the garment industry. This, in combination of the tendency of new immigrants to congregate in the same areas and industries as their country folk, facilitated the large concentration of Russian-Jews who settled in the garment industry. Juxtaposed to the AFL, the ILGWU was positively radical. The mostly “Old Immigrant” AFL held strains of anti-Semitism. Approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the immigrants were predominately from eastern and southern Europe with the remaining quarter coming primarily from Asian, mostly China and Japan. Even before the 1924 immigration law banned immigrants from Asia, there was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Gentleman’s Agreement of 1907 barring Japanese immigrants. It wasn’t until 1965 that the discriminatory race/nationality restrictions on immigration were lifted.

<sup>748</sup> Robert Parmet. *The Master of Seventh Avenue: David Dubinsky and the American Labor Movement*, (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 79.

<sup>749</sup> Parmet. *The Master of Seventh Avenue*, p. 2.

<sup>750</sup> Dubinsky was born 6 years later and approximately 350 kilometers southwest from Ida Rosenthal.

<sup>751</sup> Parmet. *The Master of Seventh Avenue*, p. 4

<sup>752</sup> Parmet. *The Master of Seventh Avenue*, p. 12.

<sup>753</sup> Katz, Daniel. *All Together*, p.6.

<sup>754</sup> Cohen supported the request by Italian members to form their own local but the male leadership refused. As a result, many of the Italian members left the ILG and joined the Industrial Workers of the World. In response, to the loss of thousands of members, the ILG leadership conceded and allowed for the creation of the Italian Dressmakers local (Katz). Yet, Italians were the only ethnic group in the history of the ILG to be granted its own specifically ethnic local. Cohen was replaced by Rose Pessota in 1926 because of her efforts to transfer power from the male leadership to the mostly female rank and file (Asher, 111). Pessota was described as a “token” vice president and she stated that the ILG President at the time, Benjamin Schlesinger, told her she would be better off staying home and having babies (Asher, 111).

<sup>755</sup> Katz, Parmet, p. 86.

<sup>756</sup> Katz.

<sup>757</sup> Parmet, p. 80.

<sup>758</sup> Jeremy Brecher, “The World War II and Post-War Strike Wave,”

<https://libcom.org/history/world-war-ii-post-war-strike-wave>.

<sup>759</sup> Although there were “wildcat strikes,” which were strikes not authorized by unions.

Additionally, African American labor leader Philip A. Randolph (Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) threatened FDR with a March on Washington DC, which convinced him to issue an executive order prohibiting discrimination in industries with federal contracts.

<sup>760</sup> Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor’s War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982/2003).

<sup>761</sup> Parmet, pp. 216-217.

<sup>762</sup> Box 146, Folders 2a-2b, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

<sup>764</sup> Parmet, pp. 234-235.

<sup>765</sup> Ibid.

<sup>766</sup> Parmet, pp. 216-217; Green, p. 81.

<sup>767</sup> Green, p. 83.

<sup>768</sup> Parmet, pp. 213-217.

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<sup>769</sup> This statement calls attention to the fact it is definitively unknown whether discrimination increased during the 1950s-1960s. Perhaps because of the Civil Rights era's increase in the challenges to discrimination by ethnic minorities, acts of discrimination became more public. Prior historiography does not directly address this question but instead implies that the ILGWU had become less egalitarian overtime. This chapter wants less to weigh in on this discussion than to point out that the issue of discrimination seemingly came to a head in the Cold War era and that this fact supplies evidence which may help clarify the situation on Puerto Rico.

<sup>770</sup> Herbert Hill, Labor Secretary of the NAACP, in a 14 page memo submitted to the subcommittee.

<sup>771</sup> "I Explain You, Mr. Congressman," Sep. 22, 1962, p. 1, *The Victoria Advocate*.

<sup>772</sup> Ibid.

<sup>773</sup> "Why Hasn't It Been Said Before?" Sep. 29, 1962, p. 4, *The Nashua Telegraph*.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid.

<sup>775</sup> "Dubisky Right, Only Merit Significant," by David Lawrence, Aug. 29, 1962, *The Evening Independent*.

<sup>776</sup> Green, pp. 89-90.

<sup>777</sup> Parmet, p. 308.

<sup>778</sup> Parmet, p. 310.

<sup>779</sup> Freeman, p. 16.

<sup>780</sup> Freeman, pp. 10, 12.

<sup>781</sup> Freeman, pp. 9, 11.

<sup>782</sup> Asher, pp. 116-117.

<sup>783</sup> Asher, p. 119.

<sup>784</sup> Freeman, p. 14.

<sup>785</sup> Asher, pp. 118-119.

<sup>786</sup> Shell-Weiss.

<sup>787</sup> The issue of achieving "whiteness" through labor is applicable to the situation with the ILG leadership. (Freeman states that while a large historiography exists on the post-war racial practice of unions, there is not one for ethnicity. He claims that an investigation into ethnicity and labor is important because race and ethnicity were linked). Goldstein states that between 1875-1950, Jews struggled with "competing impulses of inclusion and distinctiveness" within American society (Goldstein, 239). Yet, as racial lines hardened, Jews abandoned their self definition as a separate race and instead adopted the idea of ethnicity. While pursuing whiteness they also "negotiated" their place as something in-between (Goldstein, 5-6. Also see Katz and Dolber).

<sup>788</sup> Asher, pp. 121-122.

<sup>789</sup> Asher, p. 119.

<sup>790</sup> The success of Operation Bootstrap has been debated. Although, from the U.S.'s and an economic standpoint, the conditions created by Operation Bootstrap were beneficial to US business. From the point of view of Puerto Rico, the policy did increase the overall income and industrialized the island. Although, it did not ultimately help with overall unemployment levels as companies left Puerto Rico to go to Asia and other Latin American countries. It also created greater dependence on the U.S.

<sup>791</sup> Berman Santana, p. 110.

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<sup>792</sup> The NLRB was an independent federal agency made to enforce the Wagner and Taft-Hartley Act.

<sup>793</sup> Caban-1989, p. 561.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid.

<sup>795</sup> Berman Santana, p. 108.

<sup>796</sup> Caban-1989, p. 560.

<sup>797</sup> Caban-1989, pp. 560-563.

<sup>798</sup> Caban-1989, pp. 560-561.

<sup>799</sup> Berman Santana, p. 95.

<sup>800</sup> Safa, p. 22.

<sup>801</sup> Galvin, p. 136.

<sup>802</sup> Maldonado believes that the Puerto Rican government feared Dubinsky and the influence he held in congress and decided to win him over by welcoming the ILG to Puerto Rico and giving him an important role in the minimum wage debate (Maldonado, 138-140).

<sup>803</sup> Many Puerto Rican union members also migrated to the U.S. mainland during this period.

<sup>804</sup> Galvin, pp. 157-158.

<sup>805</sup> Hernandez-Diaz, pp. 15-16, 20; Caban-1989, pp. 18, 166.

<sup>806</sup> Hernandez-Diaz, p. 21.

<sup>807</sup> Caban-1984, p. 162.

<sup>808</sup> Caban-1989, p. 562.

<sup>809</sup> Galvin, p. 153.

<sup>810</sup> The first international unions were the Seafarers International Union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and the ILG (Hernandez-Diaz, 19).

<sup>811</sup> 11/18/1953, Correspondence from Maidenform in Puerto Rico to Ellis Rosenthal. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 16-17, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>812</sup> Correspondence from Lazare Teper dated 10/17/1955, Box 350, Folder 3a-3c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>813</sup> Box 258, Folder 1a-1b, 2a-2b, 3a-3b, 4a-4b, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>814</sup> Box 258, Folder 4a, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>815</sup> 6/8/56 Secretary of Labor, Fernando Sierra Berdecia writes to Dubinsky, congratulating him on the convention. Box 350, Folder 3a-3c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>816</sup> August 1956, letters to and from Dubinsky and Gladnick. Box 350, Folder 3a-3c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>817</sup> Letter from Gladnick to Dubinsky, October 11, 1956, Box 350, Folder 3a-3c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>818</sup> Munoz reportedly was aware that the ILG was dedicated to protecting mainland jobs but felt that catering to Dubinsky was the best way to assure success of the development project (Gavin, 161).

<sup>819</sup> Galvin, p. 161.

<sup>820</sup> The 1938 FLSA made no exceptions to the minimum wage rate for Puerto Rico. The going wage on Puerto Rico was far below that of on the mainland and therefore American business on Puerto Rico balked at the wage parity. Therefore the amendment was passed in 1940 which released Puerto Rico from the federal minimum wage standard and instead set up the tripartite system. It was not until 1958 that the minimum wage committee was required to meet on a biannual basis. In 1961, another amendment was added that required that the minimum wage be

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raised by a certain percentage in accord with the mainland minimum wage. The increases could be postponed in cases of hardship. Therefore by 1961, two committees were used, one that recommended minimum wage increase by an industry-by-industry basis and the second, which was in charge of the automatic increases resulting from the raises to the federal minimum. Leo C. Brown, "Tripartite Wage Determination in Puerto Rico," 19th Annual Meeting — National Academy of Arbitrators, 1966, [naarb.org/proceedings/pdfs/1966-1.PDF](http://naarb.org/proceedings/pdfs/1966-1.PDF), p. 1 –2.

<sup>821</sup> David Card and Alan B. Krueger, *Myth and Measurement: The New Economics of the Minimum Wage*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 243.

<sup>822</sup> The Code of Federal Regulations of the United States of America, Title 29, Chapter 5, January 1, 1965, pp. 214-215.

<sup>823</sup> Ibid.

<sup>824</sup> Caban-1984, pp. 163-164.

<sup>825</sup> Caban-1984, pp. 163.

<sup>826</sup> *Justice*, February 1954, Series 10, Box 71, Folder 9, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>827</sup> Ibid.

<sup>828</sup> Translation of ILGWU statement in *El Mundo*, December 23, 1955, Box 351, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>829</sup> Ibid.

<sup>830</sup> 2/17/60, *Puerto Rican Star*, "ILGWU Not to oppose Munoz for minimum wage scale here"; 2/19/60, *San Juan Star*, "Garment Wages Up six cents," Series 10, Box 58, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>831</sup> Galvin, p. 157.

<sup>832</sup> "ILGWU Not to oppose Munoz for minimum wage scale here," 2/17/1960, *San Juan Star*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 3, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>833</sup> Caban, p. 151.

<sup>834</sup> Galvin, p. 151.

<sup>835</sup> 12/23/65, *Women's Wear Daily*, "Puerto Rico—where the profits are," Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>836</sup> Ibid.

<sup>837</sup> Maidenform Inter-Office Correspondence, 11/18/1953. Someone from Maidenform in Puerto Rico spoke to Gladnick and is relating detail to Maidenform headquarters. The letter states that Dubinsky sent Gladnick to Puerto Rico with only "5 minutes instruction," to survey and unionize needle workers. Gladnick related that Dubinsky specifically told him to leave Maidenform alone and to cause trouble for Exquisite Form and the General Manager Bernard Rashkin. The report inferred that Gladnick told Maidenform about the secret dealings that Dubinsky had with manufacturers. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 16, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>838</sup> Correspondence from Rosenthal to Dubinsky, January 4, 1954, Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3, 4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>839</sup> 1954 NLRB Hearings, Letter from Hammer to Rosenthal, Series 10, Box 57, Folder 5-7, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>840</sup> Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3, 4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>841</sup> The first mention of Gladnick in Puerto Rico comes from a Maidenform inter-office correspondence from 11/18/1953. Yet it seems that he resided full-time starting in the summer of 1955, according to a correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky dated 2/20/1955. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection. Reportedly, by 1965, the only brassiere

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company the ILG was unable to organize was Warners. 12/23/65, *Women's Wear Daily*, "Puerto Rico—where the profits are," Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>842</sup> 8/13/1965 Gladnick writes to Dubinsky about using employers' fears of the Longshoreman's Union to get them to accept the ILG. Box 350, Folder 3a-3c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>843</sup> *Justice*, January 1954, Series 10, Box 71, Folder 9, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>844</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, 1950, p 6; Press release of ILG-MF agreement, January 30, 1950; Press release of ILGWU-MF agreement, May 10, 1963; Letter from ILG thanking Ellis Rosenthal for the contribution of a float to their Labor Day Parade, December 11, 1949. Series 4, subseries B, Folders 75, 21, 12, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>845</sup> Ida Rosenthal wrote a letter to Dubinsky thanking him for taking her to LBJ's inauguration, stating that she had a wonderful time. Jan 25, 1965, Box 369, Folder 6, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>846</sup> Letter from Angela Bambace (ILGWU) to Ellis Rosenthal, December 12, 1955. The bra donation was an annual event. Another letter from the ILGWU in Virginia-Maryland also includes a humorous plea for Maidenform brassieres, (December 16, 1949), Series 10, Box 57, Folders 1-4, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>847</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>848</sup> *The Maiden Forum*, October 1950, p.1, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>849</sup> *The Maiden Forum* described the article in *Business Week* and reprinted the photographs, which ran on October 27, 1951. October 1951, p 6, *The Maiden Forum*, October 1950, p.1, Series 4, Subseries B, Box 21, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>850</sup> Box 13, Folder 13-16, Upper South Department Records, 5780/039, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>851</sup> Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "Jewish Labor Movement," *The American Jewish Experience* (1997/1986), pp. 191-192.

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>853</sup> Adding to the uncertainty about intention is that much of the available evidence was authored or influenced by Robert Gladnick. Available information about Gladnick brings up questions about his reliability. Correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky show Dubinsky's frustration with and dubiousness about his man in Puerto Rico. They seemingly had a contentious relationship. For example, even though Gladnick had worked for the ILG for years, Dubinsky wrote Gladnick an angry letter stating, "Your telephone call today proved to me again that you are a stranger and that you got your experience anywhere but in our union." 10/18/1955, Correspondence from Dubinsky to Gladnick, Box 111, Folder 1a-1c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>854</sup> 5/13/1949, Gladnick to Ellis Rosenthal, Series 10, Box 58, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>855</sup> 11/18/1953, Letter from Maidenform in Puerto Rico to Ellis Rosenthal, Series 10, Box 57, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>856</sup> 9/20/1955 Correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky, Box 111, Folder 1a-1c, David Dubinsky 5780/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>857</sup> By recounting the successful efforts of the ILGWU's Spanish-speaking Jewish-Russian immigrant Robert Gladnick (originally Roman Gladnick), in Puerto Rico, this chapter will bring to light an important yet little studied figure. To my knowledge, Melanie Shell-Weiss's chapter in *Florida's Working Class Past* is the only scholarly work that discusses Robert Gladnick.



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Shell-Weiss briefly discusses his work in Puerto Rico and credits that experience as vital to his work in Florida.

<sup>858</sup> ILGWU Biography Notes, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>859</sup> ILGWU Biography Notes, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>860</sup> Letter from Gladnick to Hugo DiGiovanni of the IUE, March 6, 1958, Box 350, Folder 3a –3c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>861</sup> Letter from Adolfo Martinez to David Dubinsky, March 19, 1958, Box 350, Folder 3a –3c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>862</sup> Letter from Dubinsky to Louis Stulberg, March 31, 1958, Box 350, Folder 3a –3c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>863</sup> Ibid.

<sup>864</sup> Dubinsky and Gladnick may have experienced a similar ideological trajectory from Socialists to avowed anti-communists during the Cold War, yet in many practical ways, they were quite different, which caused conflict. Dubinsky was strategic and slick. He saw the big picture and worked for the long-term but placated in the present. Dubinsky liked to work above the fray, using his influence and power. If Dubinsky was a general, than Gladnick was a hand-to-hand combatant. He was tenacious and impulsive. The two men frequently butted heads. In their correspondence, Dubinsky repeatedly criticizes Gladnick for wanting to spending too much, loose talk, as well as vague and incomplete updates. At one point, Dubinsky even derided Gladnick for not organizing Puerto Rico fast enough. That accusation was certainly unwarranted, because if Gladnick did anything efficiently, it was organizing Puerto Rico. Box 350, Folder 3a –3c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>865</sup> Letter from Gladnick to Dubinsky, March 5, 1958, Box 350, Folder 3a –3c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>866</sup> Letter from Gladnick to Mark Starr, Director of the ILGWU's Educational Department, Sept. 16, 1958. Box 350, Folder 3a –3c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>867</sup> Shell-Weiss.

<sup>868</sup> "Lingerie Worker Will Receive More Pay: New Pact Imminent," 8/17/1960, *San Juan Star*, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.

<sup>869</sup> 10/17/1955 Correspondence between Lazare Teper and David Dubinsky, Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>870</sup> Ibid.

<sup>871</sup> Underline in the original article. A note included told Dubinsky that the underlined section was the "real" reason he ran the ad. "To the Workers of the Brassiere and Needle Industry of Puerto Rico," *El Mundo*, October 1955. Translation of article included in correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky, October 7, 1955, Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>872</sup> "To the Workers of the Brassiere and Needle Industry of Puerto Rico," *El Mundo*, October 1955. Translation of article included in correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky, October 7, 1955, Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>873</sup> October, 1955, correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky; *El Mundo* interview (10/6/1955). Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.

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- <sup>874</sup> 7/28/1955, Correspondence between Ray Uszczak and Ellis Rosenthal. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>875</sup> 6/4/1955 and 7/15/1955 Correspondence between Ray Uszczak and Ellis Rosenthal. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>876</sup> 9/8/1955, Correspondence between Ray Uszczak and Ellis Rosenthal. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>877</sup> 10/18/1955 and 10/21/1955, Correspondence between Ray Uszczak, Metzger, and Ellis Rosenthal. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection
- <sup>878</sup> 10/24/1955, Correspondence between Uszczak and Metzger, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>879</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>880</sup> 10/21/1955, Correspondence between Metzger and Uszczak, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>881</sup> Letter from Gladnick to Dubinsky, February 14, 1956, Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>882</sup> 10/24/1955, Correspondence between Uszczak and Metzger, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 17, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>883</sup> 11/3/1955 Correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky, Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>884</sup> 10/24/1955 and 11/3/1955 Correspondence between Gladnick and Dubinsky. Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>885</sup> By 1965, Warner's was the only brassiere manufacturer on Puerto Rico that the ILG had not organized. "Puerto Rico—where the profits are," Roy Brown, *Women's Wear Daily*, 12/23/1965, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 15, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>886</sup> Correspondence between Gladnick and Stulberg, Box 111, Folders 1a-1c, Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>887</sup> Correspondence from Gladnick in Puerto Rico to Dubinsky in New York, September 13, 1956. Box 351, Folder 1a-1c, 2a-2b, 3,4, 5a-5c, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>888</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>889</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>890</sup> Toro recounted her story on the radio station WTIJ at 6:30 pm on March 15, 1965 and March 16, 1965. Certified transcript of speech, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 22, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>891</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>892</sup> Translation of flyer sent March 17, 1965 to Maidenform's Mayaguez factory, signed by Margarita Toro, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 22, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>893</sup> Letter from Vicente J. Antonetti, JD, to Jerry Schoen, March 11, 1965, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 22, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>894</sup> "Notes Re: Mayaguez Work Stoppage 3/6 – 3/23/65," p. 2-3, day-to-day break down of activity sent to Maidenform Headquarters. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 22, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>895</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>896</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>897</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>898</sup> Copy of US NLRB “Charge Against Employer” filed by Dolores Noriega, Francisca Martell de Alegain, Inocencia Santiago, Ramona Figueroa, and Angelica Arroyo Hernandez, March 30, 1965. These women were listed in a Maidenform inter-office memo (to Ellis Rosenthal, Mr. Lieberman from Mr. Nazario and Mr. Yogman, March 24, 1965) as the “most conspicuous leaders of the movement and were not admitted back to work and definitively released.” Series 10, Box 58, Folder 20, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>899</sup> Letter from H. Lieberman containing the content of the letter from Dolores Noriega, April 12, 1965. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 20, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>900</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>901</sup> Press Conference at the White House, March 13, 1965. The letter is presumably paraphrasing the sentiments of LBJ’s press conference. Series 10, Box 58, Folder 20, Maidenform Collection. The following is LBJ’s response to a question about how Governor Wallace reacted to his suggestions about how to deal with the demonstrations. “I told him [Governor Wallace] that I thought our problem, which I had been working on for several weeks now, was to face up to the cause of the demonstration and remove the cause of the demonstration, and that I hoped if he would give assurances that people would be protected in their demonstrations in Alabama, he would give assurance that he would try to improve the voting situation in Alabama, if I could submit my message to the Congress and get prompt action on it that would insure the right of the people of Alabama to vote, that I thought we could improve the demonstration situation.” <http://millercenter.org/president/lbjohnson/speeches/speech-5905>.
- <sup>902</sup> Rios, pp. 323-333.
- <sup>903</sup> Rios, pp. 330-332.
- <sup>904</sup> Rios, pp. 332.
- <sup>905</sup> See Briggs, Rios, Berman Santana.
- <sup>906</sup> Berman Santana notes that there is disagreement over the success of Operation Bootstrap. (Berman Santana, p. 89).
- <sup>907</sup> Pantojas-Garcia, pp. 170-171.
- <sup>908</sup> Dietz, *Negotiating Development and Change*.
- <sup>909</sup> Berman Santana, p. 94.
- <sup>910</sup> Safa, p. 26.
- <sup>911</sup> Caban-1984, p. 564.
- <sup>912</sup> Safa, p. 26.
- <sup>913</sup> Via Ida Rosenthal in *Women’s World Daily*, December, 24, 1964. Series 2, Box 2, Folder 2-3, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>914</sup> Folder 15-23, 25-26, Box 25, Wilbur Daniels 5780/084, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>915</sup> Safa, p. 26.
- <sup>916</sup> “Maidenform and NCC Industries File for Bank Bankruptcy,” July 23, 1997, *New York Times*; “Sara Lee Wonder Bra,” Jonathan Siskin, Barry Stern, Ru, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~afuah/cases/case15.html>.
- <sup>917</sup> “ERA YO LA OCHENTA Y OCHO,” Maria Ballester Torres, *El Sosten*, Vol. 1, No. 3, July-August 1967, Series 10, Box 58, Folder 23, Maidenform Collection.
- <sup>918</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>919</sup> Folder 8a-8b, Box 316, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>920</sup> Folder 6, Box 369, David Dubinsky 57800/002, ILGWU Collection.
- <sup>921</sup> Folder 15-23, 25-26, Box 25, Wilbur Daniels 5780/084, ILGWU Collection.

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<sup>922</sup> Folder 19, Box 9, Gus Tyler 5780/88 and Folder 15-23, 25-26, Box 25, Wilbur Daniels 5780/084, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>923</sup> Folder 3-5, Box 26, Wilbur Daniels 5780/084, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>924</sup> Correspondence between Joseph Shane and Mitchell Lockiiec, July 7, 1964, Folder 19, Box 9 Gus Tyler 5780/088, ILGWU Collection.

<sup>925</sup> The “bra burning” myth has been corrected and reported on by a number of venues.

<sup>926</sup> Fields, *Uplift*, p. 272.

<sup>927</sup> “Women Burn Their Bras Behind Them But Beauty Contest Protest Is Big Bust,” Art Buchwald, *Toledo Blade*, September 12, 1968, p. 11.

<sup>928</sup> Ibid.

<sup>929</sup> Fields, *Uplift*, p. 273.