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United States World War II Propaganda and the Workforce Machine: The Case of Rosie the Riveter

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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Dedication

First and Foremost, I thank our Almighty God for giving me health, strength, and answered prayers to achieve it.

This humble work is dedicated to each and every person who has supported me throughout the journey.

To my loving mother whose prayers accompanied me ever since I opened my eyes.

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To myself.

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Abstract

Following the 1941 attacks on Pearl Harbor, the United States involvement in World War II had a significant impact on the workforce machine. The United States was still recovering from the effects of the Great Depression, with the unemployment rate hovering around 25%. During the war, American factories retooled to produce goods for the war effort, thus, the unemployment rate dropped almost overnight to around 10%. As more men were sent to the frontlines, women were hired to take over their assembly line jobs. Before World War II, women were generally discouraged from working outside the house. Amidst the war imbroglio, they were encouraged to take on jobs that had previously been considered exclusively for men. Taking Rosie the Riveter as a case study, this research explores the relationship between the US workforce machine shortage and the role of the World War II propaganda, as well as the role of visual propaganda in altering popular perception of women during wartime.

الملخص

بعد هجمات ميناء بيرل عام 1941، كان لمشاركة الولايات المتحدة في الحرب العالمية الثانية تأثير كبير على القوى العاملة. كانت الولايات المتحدة لا تزال تتعافى من آثار الكساد الأعظم، حيث كان معدل البطالة في حدود 25%. خلال الحرب، تم إعادة تجهيز المصانع الأمريكية لإنتاج السلع اللازمة للمجهود الحربي، وبالتالي انخفض معدل البطالة بين عشية وضحاها إلى حوالي 10%. مع إرسال المزيد من الرجال إلى الجبهات، تم توظيف النساء لتولي وظائفهم في خطوط التجميع. قبل الحرب العالمية الثانية، كانت النساء بشكل عام غير مشجعات على العمل خارج المنزل. وشُجِّعن بحلول ذلك الوقت على تولي وظائف كانت تُعتبر في السابق حكرًا على الرجال. من خلال دراسة حالة "روزي ذا ريفتر"، سيستكشف هذا البحث العلاقة بين النقص في القوى العاملة في الولايات المتحدة، دور الدعاية في الحرب العالمية

الثانية، ودورها في تغيير النظرة العامة للمرأة أثناء الحرب.

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Chapter Three: Rosie the Riveter: Analysis and Impact

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAF	Army Air Force
AFRS	Armed Forces Radio Services
GI	Government Issue
OWI	Office of War Information
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SPARS	Semper Paratus-Always Ready
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VOA	Voice of America
WAACs	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
WAC	Women's Army Corps
WASPs	Women Airforce Service Pilots
WAVES	Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service

General Introduction

World War II (1939-1945) was one of the most transformative periods of the twentieth century, not only because of its devastating worldwide impact, but also because of the deep social, economic, and cultural upheavals it caused among the countries involved. In the United States, the war sparked massive national mobilization that reached far beyond the battlefield. As millions of American men were recruited and sent overseas, the country experienced a massive domestic labor shortage, threatening the stability of its wartime economy and industrial capability. To address this issue, the US government along with private corporations resorted to women as an underused labor force.

The remarkable admission of women into factories, shipyards, and other previously male-dominated industries not only closed the labor gap, but also challenged long-held gender norms and expectations. This transformation was not accidental; it was carefully planned and pushed through massive propaganda campaigns aimed at persuading women to take on traditionally masculine roles. This campaign relied heavily on visual propaganda, such as posters, films, and cartoons, to portray working women as patriotic, capable, and necessary to national prosperity.

None of the several propaganda posters created during this period proved as iconic or durable as Rosie the Riveter, whose meaning is still relevant in conversations about labor rights and gender equality today. The war years are, therefore, a critical period of study for comprehending the development of women's roles in American society because they produced a distinctive shift of official propaganda, visual culture, and gender politics.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the US workforce machine shortage and the role of the World War II propaganda, as well as the role of

visual propaganda in altering popular perception of women during wartime, with a particular emphasis on how these representations influenced both immediate wartime participation and long-term gender identities. The figure of Rosie the Riveter is central to this research, particularly The "We Can Do It!" poster which became a symbol of female strength and national responsibility. This study seeks to demonstrate how visual culture functioned as a strategic means of persuasion and ideological messaging, encouraging a temporary reinvention of women's roles in the workplace.

The study focuses on visual propaganda as a cultural and political weapon for mobilizing American women. Before the war, women worked in the labor force, but their positions were frequently limited to domestic or caregiving tasks. World War II broke down these barriers by requiring women to work in industrial and military settings, and propaganda played an important role in making this change socially acceptable.

Additionally, this study looks closely at propaganda items, including posters, radio broadcasts, films, and cartoons to see how femininity was redefined to meet the requirements of a nation at war. The case of Rosie the Riveter is highlighted as a focal point for understanding how propaganda not only supported women's wartime labor, but also changed public perceptions toward gender roles during and after the War.

This research is guided by three fundamental research questions. How did US military propaganda depict women and their responsibilities in the workforce during WWII? How did Rosie the Riveter's character and image reflect, reinforce, or challenge conventional gender expectations? Finally, how did these images affect women's place in American culture, both immediately and over time? These inquiries seek to explore the narrative and symbolic methods incorporated in wartime propaganda and assess their historical importance in changing gender dynamics.

Various academic sources offering critical historical, cultural, and analytical viewpoints on World War II and its societal ramifications further enhance this research. A worldwide perspective on the war's development is provided by Antony Beevor's detailed account in *The Second World War*, which highlights the connections between political processes, the home front mobilization, and military strategy. His thorough description enhances the study's historical context, particularly in understanding the extent of mobilization that necessitated the transition of the United States workforce.

Furthermore, *World War Two: Propaganda* by David Welch is an essential source for the visual and ideological analysis of this study. It examines the ways in which governments employed propaganda to influence public opinion and behavior. His analysis of visual media shapes the methodological approach used to examine Rosie the Riveter and other wartime imagery.

Finally, Emily Yellin's *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* adds a deep personal and human dimension to the subject by capturing the various roles that American women played during the war, from factory workers to military personnel using firsthand accounts that are invaluable for understanding the lived experiences behind the propaganda. Together, these works provide the historical range and critical depth required to support the research's investigation of women, labor, and visual culture during World War II.

The study uses a qualitative methodology based on historical and visual analysis to look into these concerns. With an emphasis on the causes, major events, in particular the economic pressures that resulted in a large-scale mobilization of women for the workforce, the historical analysis component reconstructs the larger background of World War II. To comprehend the sociopolitical climate of the times, the analysis of official records, wartime reports, press reports, and personal stories is strongly needed. The visual

analysis approach, on the other hand, explores the aesthetic, rhetorical, and symbolic components employed in influencing public opinion by digging deeper into the propaganda materials themselves, particularly the "We Can Do It!" poster. It is often used in qualitative research to explain the way visuals influence perception and meaning.

This work is divided into five major parts, a general introduction, three main chapters, and a general conclusion. The first chapter titled "Context to WWII and Workforce Shortage" gives a fundamental historical review of World War II, addressing its underlying causes, important events, and the particular challenges affecting the US economy and labor market. This chapter lays the framework for understanding why women were forced to enter the workforce in record numbers. The second chapter titled "United States War Efforts: Propaganda and Women" investigates the nature of US wartime propaganda, defining its forms (such as posters, films, and radio) and exploring how various media depicted women's contributions to the war effort. It also examines women's experiences in the military and at home, as well as the post-war issues they faced after men returned from the front lines. The third chapter titled "Rosie the Riveter: Analysis and Impact" examines the image's cultural context and origins, offers a visual analysis of important propaganda items, and evaluates the wider social and economic effects Rosie had both during and after the war.

Chapter One

World War II and the United States Workforce Shortage

Introduction

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 marked a watershed in world history that changed the political, economic, and social climate globally. The US faced many obstacles throughout this war that would change the country, particularly on the home front. A number of factors contributed to the worldwide struggle in the years preceding the war, and the emergence of totalitarianism intensified tensions across Europe. Furthermore, important events during the global conflict not only signaled important shifts in the struggle for supremacy, but also compelled countries to reevaluate their capacities in a time of unparalleled fighting.

After initially concentrating on preserving a policy of neutrality, the US was progressively pushed into the war, the fact that changed its workforce and economy. After joining the conflict, the US experienced a severe labor shortage as millions of men joined the military, especially in vital sectors required to support the war effort. This chapter delves into the complicated historical context of World War II and the US crucial role in contributing to the Allies' victory, as well as the effects of labor shortages on American society. This part also sheds light on how the US adjusted to the demands of a global war by examining the causes of the US involvement into the conflict, the economic change, and the workforce mobilization.

1. World War II: A Historical Background

Despite the fact that the first World War was named "the war to end all wars", twenty years after it ended in 1919, a second conflict was declared. As a result of the economic and political instability following the first War, and the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe particularly in Germany under the rule of Adolf Hitler. A devastating

war that was fought for nearly 6 years on a worldwide level extending its hands to affect every part of the world; between the Allied powers (the UK, France, the Soviet Union, and the US) and the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan).

1.1. Fundamental Causes

The Second World War is strongly explained through the outcomes of the Great War. A. J. P. Taylor, a British historian specialized in 19th- and 20th-century European diplomacy, claims in his work "Origins of The Second World War" that because of the first World War's failure to either entirely meet or crush German goals (explained later in this chapter), the Second War was implied from the very beginning (qtd. in Henig 3).

In January 1918, US president Woodrow Wilson unveiled his fourteen-point plan for world peace; a plan that will be used in post-World War I peace negotiations. The president's speech was prepared by about 150 political and economic researchers with the goal of analyzing American and Allied policies in practically every region of the world and discussing political, social, and economic issues that would likely be raised at the peace conference ("President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Ponits").

Directly addressing what he perceived as the causes for the Great War, Woodrow Wilson stated:

> …it will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world. ("President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points")

In his speech, Wilson highlighted the causes behind the conflict by advocating for the elimination of secret agreements, a reduction in armaments, a modification of colonial claims in the best interests of both colonists and native peoples, and liberty of the seas. Wilson offered ideas that would guarantee future world peace. For instance, he suggested a global organization that would offer a system of collective security for all countries, the elimination of economic barriers between them, and the promise of "self-determination" for marginalized groups.

A year later, a peace conference known as the Paris Peace Conference was convened just outside Paris to discuss peace terms after world war one. With nearly thirty nations participating, the big three (US, UK, and France) dominated the negotiations that resulted in the creation of one of history's most hated treaties, the Treaty of Versailles, which put an end to the first World War in June 1919 and laid the foundation for World War II. The latter emphasized the compromises attained during the conference. It included the proposed creation of the League of Nations, which would function as both an international forum and an international collective security arrangement. The conclusion of the negotiations was that Germany was the one to blame and exposed the latter to severe punitive measures as desired by the British and French. As expected, the peace treaty signed by European leaders was a slap in the face to Germany and ultimately caused German people to grow resentful ("The Paris Peace Conference").

Germany's industrial output was lowered by the enormous reparations payments, and other factors caused hyperinflation in the 1920s, contributing to the Great Depression's economic instability. The redrawn map of Europe and the compromises each country made in the name of an unstable peace left European leaders displeased, with some feeling let down that Germany hadn't received even worse treatment (Blakemore). The French Army's Marshal Ferdinand Foch was one wise observer who was spot on. He stepped up and

proclaimed that the “Treaty of Versailles”, which formally put an end to the war in June 1919, was only a "twenty year's armistice" and not a true peace (Citino).

1.2. Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany

Anthony Beevor stated in his book The Second World War that, in September 1930, the National Socialist Party's percentage of the vote increased from 2.5% to 18.3%. The conservative right in Germany, with little regard for democracy, virtually destroyed the Weimar Republic, paving the way for Adolf Hitler. They underestimated Hitler's ferocity, believing that they could use him as a tool to guard their vision of Germany; But little did they know what he wanted. Later on, Hitler became chancellor on January 30, 1933, and quickly sought to destroy any potential resistance (15).

Beevor also claimed that “The tragedy for Germany’s subsequent victims was that a critical mass of the population, desperate for order and respect, was eager to follow the most reckless criminal in history. Hitler managed to appeal to their worst instincts: resentment, intolerance, arrogance and, most dangerous of all, a sense of racial superiority” (15). This quote focuses on how Adolf was able to mislead the German public, notably during the time leading up to World War II. It points out that a considerable part of the populace, feeling hungry for stability, respect, order, and a strong leadership after the humiliation of World War I were prepared to follow a risky leader, even one as destructive as Hitler. He played on the fears and prejudices of his people and promoted the belief that Germans were superior to other races, which justified his discriminatory laws and brutality.

It is clear that Hitler's invincible climb to power sparked alarm both inside Germany and in nearby nations. The Nazis did not act as normally as members of other political parties, and Hitler was not the usual party leader. They focused a lot on verbal and visual impact, such as uniforms and catchphrases that were used often. They

drew as many supporters as they repulsed, and their use of violence was a crucial component of their fight for acceptance and authority (Henig 11).

1.3. Key Events

Significant acts of violence and political alliances that prepared the ground for the Second World War took place between 1931 and 1939, particularly in Europe and Asia. Armed conflict broke out on September 18, 1931, when the Japanese army invaded Manchuria in northeastern China. This marked the start of Japan's expansionist tactics and helped to isolate the country internationally. Following this, from October 1935 to May 1936, another act of aggression occurred when Fascist Italy invaded, conquered, and annexed Abyssinia (Ethiopia). This further troubled international relations and showed the futility of the League of Nations, which later denounced the Italian invasion and decided to impose economic sanctions on the aggressor. Not too long after, the Rome-Berlin Axis was formally announced in November, following the signing of a contract of collaboration between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy; an agreement that strengthened their partnership ("World War II: Timeline").

Shortly after, The Anti-Comintern Pact was signed in November 1936 by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan; it brought the Axis powers together at first, with Italy joining in 1937. The term "Comintern" referred to the Communist International, a global organization of communist parties that sought to spark a global revolution under the leadership of the Soviet Union. The Rome–Berlin–Tokyo Axis, or simply the Axis, was the name given to this new coalition. Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Act in September 1940, one year after World War II began, promising to help each other militarily and economically (Hart).

By invading China in July 1937, Japan increased its aggression and fueled the wider tensions in Asia that eventually resulted in conflict. Japan's increasing militarism,

territorial aspirations, and desire to increase its power throughout East Asia were the direct causes of this invasion (“World War II: Timeline”).

Shedding light on Germany, the Lebensraum policy was a key element of Nazi ideology and foreign policy, driven by the belief that Germany needed to acquire vast territories in the East to secure its long-term survival and prosperity. This policy, which roughly translates to "living space," was based on the premise that Germany’s population and economy were growing, and without additional territory and resources, the country was doomed to long-term collapse (Weisiger 105).

Furthermore, Germany's subjection of Austria, known as the Anschluss, in March 1938 was an act of expansion that illustrated Germany's dominance in Europe and hinted at the conflict that was to follow. The event was a threat to the post-World War I order and symbolized the harsh ideology of Nazi expansionism. Hitler's aspirations to create a single Reich out of all Germans were the foundation of the Anschluss. The Nazis celebrated Austria's complete annexation into Germany on March 13 as the realization of a patriotic goal. However, there was no worldwide reaction (“World War II: Timeline”).

The League of Nations, that was supposedly created to stop such violent acts, did not do anything to stop the Nazis. The major countries entrusted with implementing the Treaty of Versailles, France and Britain, chose not to step in. Under the leadership of Chamberlain and Daladier, both nations favored a policy of appeasement over confrontation out of concern that opposing Hitler might spark a broader war. Hitler was actually given more confidence by his victory in the Anschluss. (“World War II: Timeline”). This fact showed that his dictatorship was prepared to flout international law and seize territory by force.

On September 30, 1938, Germany, the UK, France, and Italy came to an agreement known as the Munich Agreement where a dispute over the Sudetenland (a part

of Czechoslovakia with a sizable ethnic German population), was settled. Adolf Hitler had insisted on Germany gaining control of the Sudetenland. In order to appease him, Chamberlain, Daladier, and Mussolini agreed to let him annex the Sudetenland. In return, Hitler had to promise to refrain from pursuing additional territorial expansion. Hitler's expectations remained unfulfilled in spite of the promises made, leading to Germany invading the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, less than six months after the meeting (Cartwright).

Hitler's invasion demonstrated his willingness to overstep any pacts in order to further his objectives and his lack of interest in halting his territorial expansion. Thus, there was no longer any hope that Hitler could be appeased through diplomatic negotiations after Czechoslovakia was annexed. This incident contributed to the start of the Second World War by causing diplomatic ties between Germany and the Western powers to worsen (Cartwright). After that, Britain and France responded by promising to protect Poland, which was thought to be Hitler's next target.

Henig claimed that, in August 1939, Germany and the Soviets signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which sought to aid one another while splitting nations like Poland. With no chance of British or French support, the pact's conclusion left Poland vulnerable to attack. Hitler pushed forward with his invasion plans, with the goal to destroy Poland completely and quickly, avoiding last-minute negotiations that might slow him down. However, The British and French governments made it clear that they would uphold their commitments to help Poland by any means possible, even in the face of the Nazi-Soviet pact, when they signed a treaty of alliance with Poland on August 25. Hitler hesitated but not for too long. After German forces invaded Poland on September 1, Britain and France declared war on Germany on September 3. Europe became engaged in another significant conflict twenty years after the end of the first. However, the global

conflict did not start as a result of the German invasion of Poland. Britain and France were unwilling to consider a peace based on the German expansionism, they understood that it would be followed by more military aggression (38-39).

2. United States Involvement

Both on the battlefield and through its economic, political, and diplomatic power, the United States had a crucial role in shaping the course of World War II. Following the surprising Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, initially neutral, the nation entered the war. The United States, a key Allied power, made a substantial contribution to the Axis forces' defeat, providing significant supplies, weaponry, and personnel to the Allied armies. American troops participated in major campaigns, including the 1944 D-Day assault. The United States' enormous industrial production, which produced war materiel on a never-before-seen scale, contributed to changing the course of the global conflict. Through initiatives like Lend-Lease, which sent crucial supplies and weapons to nations like the UK and the Soviet Union, the US also emerged as the "Arsenal of Democracy," providing its Allies with the resources they lacked; and so, the Second World War brought new life to the country’s industry and most important its economy.

2.1. America Enters the War

Sean Judge claimed in his report about the Pacific War between Japan and the United States that the goals of the Japanese war were to establish Japan's Asian "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, destroy the western countries, including eventually Russia, subjugate China and integrate it into their empire, and gain dominance in their chosen area of influence in Asia. The US severed its oil supply to Japan in 1941 as a result of Japan's adventurism in China and Manchuria in the late 1930s. Gaining unrestricted access to vital resources (oil in particular) became a top priority for the Japanese policy that followed. The Japanese army had always supported an action against Russia, but the crushing defeat at the

hands of Soviet forces in the Nomonhan Campaign in 1939, the destruction of France and the Netherlands by Germany in 1940, and the oil crisis in 1941 prompted a reassessment that resulted in a focus on the South Pacific, which inevitably led to war with the United States (55-56).

The Imperial Japanese Navy launched an attack on the US Naval station at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu early on December 7, 1941, using 177 aircraft. Before the US Pacific Fleet could react to Japanese operations against US, British, and Dutch territory in Southeast Asia that were on the same day, they planned to destroy and seriously damage as much of the fleet as they could. In addition to launching torpedoes on the US warships anchored in the port, this initial wave of attacks started destroying the hangars and parked aircraft of the island's airfields. The USS Oklahoma and the USS Arizona were among the four battleships struck in the attack's opening five minutes. A bomb struck the gunpowder stores of the Arizona a few minutes later, causing the ship to explode, killing 1,177 of its crew members. A second wave of 163 Japanese aircraft arrived an hour after this catastrophic strike. In under two hours, 2,403 American service members were killed, 188 planes were destroyed, and 21 US vessels were sunk or damaged. (“What Happened at Pearl Harbor?")

President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged for a formal declaration of war against Japan in a speech to the US Congress the day after the bombardment. An hour later, the United States entered the Second World War, united behind the war effort as war was proclaimed. (“What Happened at Pearl Harbor?"). Thus, the main push behind the US involvement in this global conflict was the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Japan committed a serious mistake when it decided to bombard Pearl Harbor. This act of violence ultimately resulted in the use of atomic weapons against two Japanese cities, the fall of the Japanese state, the collapse of its empire, years of foreign occupation, and the

execution of many of its leaders. Another one of Tokyo's significant mistakes was invading southern Indochina in July 1941. This led to a clash with Washington, something that Japan should have anticipated, and that would later demand substantial concessions to settle. Since the US was planning to encircle Japan, cut off its oil supplies, and obstruct the maritime traffic that was essential to Japan's imperial authority, many Japanese commanders thought that they had no alternative but to attack. There were other routes, but they weren't thoroughly investigated. Japan bet that by striking Pearl Harbor unexpectedly, it would be able to weaken the American Pacific fleet long enough to cement its Asian triumphs. It seriously underestimated how the surprise strike would affect America's willingness and capacity to quickly deploy a large military force (Gombert 93).

Mark Clapson dedicated a chapter to Japan's attack in his book The Blitz Companion: Aerial Warfare, Civilians and the City since 1911, where he mentioned the move known as the first Tokyo Raid or the "Doolittle Raid," which was called for the American mission leader Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle, that took place four months after the attack and served as a preview of the traditional air battles against Japan. In retaliation for the assault on Pearl Harbor, sixteen US bombers targeted military and industrial sites in and around the Japanese capital. A few American pilots were arrested and put to death, while several civilians were massacred (98).

President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated that although the United States would maintain its neutrality in law, he could not ask every American to remain neutral in thought as well when war broke out in Europe in September 1939. He therefore worked hard to support countries fighting Nazi Germany and wished to lend a hand to those that lacked the resources needed. In particular, the UK was in dire need of assistance. In September 1940, the US began providing the Allies with significant military supplies and other support, even though it did not formally enter the war until December 1941. Through a creative

arrangement called Lend-Lease, a large portion of this aid went to countries who were already at war with Japan and Germany. Roosevelt was driven more by self-interest than by charity. Lend-Lease was created to help America defeat Nazi Germany without going to war until the American people and military were ready to fight. It was an essential US. tool in the war against Nazi Germany at a time when most Americans were against active involvement in the conflict ("Lend-Lease and Military Aid").

The US declared war on Japan following the Japanese attack. a few days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the US, and the country entered the Second World War. A huge mobilization effort immediately followed the US's entry into the war. Millions of men and women served abroad in the country's armed services, while the majority of people who stayed at home committed themselves to helping the war effort in any way possible, primarily by working in military-related industries, like military uniforms, armaments, and airplanes production factories. As the demand for steel and other needed resources grew, Americans took part in recycling and scrap metal campaigns, as well as rationing initiatives. Americans also bought Liberty-bonds to contribute their hard-earned money to the war effort. The bonds, which were sold by the US government, supported the war effort by raising funds and giving bond buyers a sense of accomplishment ("World War II Great Depression").

Almost three years after, code-named Operation Overlord, a cross-channel attack on German occupying forces was organized by the Allies as a result of France's invasion by the Nazis in 1940. The landing on Normandy, also known as D-Day, was the result of two years of planning. The amphibious assault was the key to the Continent in World War II. On June 6, 1944, almost 160,000 Allied forces landed along a heavily-fortified French coastline to confront the Nazis, backed by almost 5,000 ships and 13,000 aircraft that would attack in five beach areas, two beaches would be the landing sites for the First American Army and

three beaches for the Second British Army. To launch the American D-day assault on the two beaches of Omaha and Utah, the planners decided to use the First Army. By the end of the day, the Allies had established themselves in Continental Europe (Fowle 1).

Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945. The Second World War ended when Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, following the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During the war, over 330,000 American soldiers lost their lives. Many more were wounded or disabled forever ("World War II Great Depression").

2.2. Impact on United States Economy

According to Tassava, For the US, the Great Depression and World War II were the most significant economic events of the 20th century. The impacts of the war were numerous and extensive. The depression itself was terminated by the war. After the war, the federal government became a powerful economic force that could influence economic activity and exert some degree of control through consumption and spending. The war brought new life to American industry, by 1945, many industries were either entirely dependent on defense production like atomic energy, or heavily geared toward it such as electronics. The war bolstered the organized labor movement beyond its peak during the Great Depression, making it a significant check on the government and private sector.

Many scientists, engineers, government officials, and citizens adopted a permanent expectation of ongoing innovation as a result of the war's rapid scientific and technological advancements, which accelerated and continued trends started during the Great Depression. Adding to that the fact that jobs were extremely hard to come by just ten years' prior, the country's entry into the war definitely helped to revive the country's economy after the Great Depression. With a creation of 17 million new jobs during the war, people were able to pay off previous debts and start saving some of their earnings. Similar to this, many Americans anticipated lasting improvements to their material circumstances as a result of the war's

significant increases in personal income and, often, if not always, in quality of life, while others feared a postwar resurgence of the depression. Thus, the global scope of the war seriously harmed all of the world's major economies except that of the US, which after 1945 enjoyed unheard-of levels of political and economic dominance (Tassava).

3. United States Workforce Shortage

The United States faced never-before-seen challenges with the start of World War II, one of which was a severe lack of civilian laborers. The nation was forced to fill significant positions in war production and other vital businesses while millions of men were recruited into the military to fight abroad. The quick transition from a peacetime to a wartime economy, which necessitated a huge rise in industrial output, made this shortfall much worse. In response, the US. workforce experienced significant transformations, with women, African Americans, and other demographic groups filling men's roles. The shortage of workers not only affected the war effort for a long time, but also changed American society and labor relations in ways that would be felt long after the war was over.

In December 1941, the US faced a daunting task. The country was at war with three powerful enemies, was ill-prepared, and had to be ready to fight on two very different and far-off fronts: The Pacific and Europe. America has to rapidly build up and prepare a military. It also needed to figure out how to provide its allies in the Soviet Union and the UK with support. To meet these demands, the conversion of already-existing sectors to wartime production, the building of new factories, and changes in consumption patterns would all be necessary. When all physically capable men joined the military, labor shortages soon followed. Companies started recruiting men who were exempt from the conscription all around the country. High school students were hired by lowering the age restrictions. It wasn't sufficient. The aviation sector, which was not yet

unionized, took the lead right after Pearl Harbor by employing 60 women. Thus, labor, industry, and government had to work together to create what President Roosevelt referred to as the "Arsenal of Democracy" (“Take a Closer Look”).

In September 1940, President Roosevelt and Congress approved the country's first peacetime military conscription because they were concerned about the danger of war. By December 1941 America's military had risen to about 2.2 million soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines (“Take a Closer Look”).

Before World War II, American factories produced toys for kids, cars, and both large and small appliances. President Franklin D. Roosevelt commanded the creation of the War Production Board in January 1942, just one month after the Pearl Harbor assault. Its objective was to turn the factories of peacetime businesses into production plants for weapons and military equipment for the battle. Conserving metal, which troops, sailors, and Marines would require for weapons, munitions, tanks, ships, airplanes, tactical vehicles, and other items, was the second objective. Paper, plastic, rubber, and petroleum goods were also deemed necessary for war. For civilians, this meant stringent rationing, which included prohibiting the use of cars and the acquisition of luxuries. The War Production Board operated until October 1945, shortly after World War II came to an end (Vergun).

Economic and military growth led to a workforce shortage. Industry and the government pushed women into the workforce to close the gap. Therefore, millions of working women accepted better-paying positions in military manufacturing, but the majority of them still worked in more conventional vocations like teaching and nursing. In addition, minorities such as African Americans occupied well-paying industrial positions as well that were formerly held by white people. During the war, millions of women, including many mothers, joined the industrial workforce, finding particularly

high-paying jobs in the shipbuilding and aircraft industries, although wages in defense jobs were significantly higher than those in traditional "female" occupations, and women were still frequently paid less than men. Furthermore, women were supposed to vacate the factories after the end of the war to make room for returning male soldiers (“Take a Closer Look”).

Conclusion

The United States changed from a neutral position to a key player in the Allied triumph during World War II, marking a turning point in history. Due to labor shortages and economic restructuring brought about by the war, women and minorities were forced to fill previously unfilled positions, which resulted in profound changes to the American economy and culture. These adjustments challenged long-standing societal conventions and expectations and demonstrated the country's flexibility in the face of extraordinary adversity. Technology and industrial capacity advances brought about by the mass mobilization effort further cemented the United States as a major economic force in the world. Adding to that, the Second World War not only marked a turning point in the struggle for dominance in the world, but it also sparked significant social changes in the United States. Future generations and the course of the country's growth were impacted by the experience of complete mobilization, social unrest, and group sacrifice. American identity was altered, and the foundation for the civil rights movements and more significant societal shifts that would occur in the decades after the war was laid.

Chapter Two

United States War Efforts: Propaganda and Women

Introduction

This chapter discusses the US war efforts and propaganda. It highlights the role of women and their contribution in war. Moreover, it introduces US war propaganda with its definition and types, in order to shape public opinion and maintain US economy. In addition, it gives prominence to women's participation in the US workforce during war time. This analysis delineates post war challenges witnessed by women to showcase the shift from a traditional life to holding positions led by men.

1. War Propaganda: A Categorization

The American government opted for a propaganda for the purpose of obtaining a reaction and support from the American citizens. Guns, tanks, and bombs were the principal weapons of World War II, but there were other subtler forms of warfare as well. Words, posters, and films waged a constant battle for the hearts and minds of the American citizenry just as surely as military weapons engaged the enemy ("Powers of Persuasion,"). This highlights that the American government realized during World War II that the conflict was being waged not only on actual battlefields but also in people's thoughts. A number of non-military strategies, including propaganda, were employed to aid in the war effort, influence public opinion, and raise morale.

1.1 War Propaganda

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2011) the word propaganda can be traced back to 1621-23, when it first appeared in "Congregatio de progapanda fide," meaning "congregation for propagating the faith." This was a mission, commissioned by Pope Gregory XV, to spread the doctrine of the Catholic Church to non-believers. In essence, the goal of this mission was to spread the Catholic faith,

especially to unbelievers and those living in areas where Catholicism was not common. The mission's main goals were to promote religious ideas throughout the world and to educate and convert people.

Richard Alan Nelson in his book *A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States* (1996) states that " propaganda is a form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels".

In the United States, such propaganda came from the Office of War Information (O.W.I.). The majority of Americans, particularly those who had lived through World War I, were still isolationist in 1941, thinking that their nation should recover from the Great Depression rather than engage in a far-off conflict. Roosevelt established the O.W.I., but most people were persuaded to support the war after the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor ("World War II Propaganda"). Which means that in order to change the isolation mindset, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (O.W.I.) to promote support for the war. However, the major turning point came after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which dramatically shifted public opinion and led to widespread support for the war effort ("World War II Propaganda").

1.2 Types of US War Propaganda:

David Welch in his book *World War II Propaganda Analyzing the Art of Persuasion during Wartime* notes that "World War II witnessed a vast proliferation of media production, from state-sponsored posters, pamphlets, radio, and films (including newsreels) to commercial newspapers, comics, and military newspapers "(xxii). Throughout World War II, the United States employed a variety of propaganda

techniques to increase national enthusiasm and mobilize popular support for the war effort. Government organizations such as the Office of War Information (OWI) created messages to persuade people to support military recruitment, conserve resources, purchase war bonds, and engage in the defense industry because they understood the influence of the media on public opinion.

Propaganda prevails in a variety of media, such as newspapers, radio shows, movies, and posters, in order to reinforce national integration. All of which were strategically formulated to target the American culture. These initiatives aimed to instill a sense of urgency and patriotism in the American people as well as to demonize the enemy and foster national unity.

1.2.1 Posters

In 1943 the artist, Norman Rockwell, in conjunction with the Office of War Information (OWI), produced a series of posters illustrating each of the four freedoms in a highly successful war-bond drive. Rockwell's Four Freedoms first appeared in four consecutive issues of the Saturday Evening Post starting on February 20, 1943" (Welch 17). These four freedoms depicted in those posters are: freedom of speech, worship, want and fear (Welch 17).

This online exhibition focuses on posters and is based on a larger display that was shown from May 1994 to February 1995 in the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. It looks at how World War II posters' design and text demonstrate persuasion techniques (National Archives, "Powers of Persuasion."). It examines the persuasive strategies used in these posters, demonstrating how their linguistic and visual components were designed to affect people's beliefs and actions during the conflict.

We Can Do It! poster painted by J. Howard Miller, perhaps the most well-known image to emerge from the WWII era is Rosie the Riveter, who today stands for feminism

and women's strength, and for good reason—the women who remained filled the economic gaps left by men being drafted and serving on the front lines, leading to women taking on unconventional roles in industries that were previously dominated by men, such as manufacturing weapons. This poster became an ongoing symbol of how important women were in changing the nature of the American workforce (“10 Unforgettable WW2 Propaganda”).

“Do With Less- So They’ll Have Enough!” poster, common household items like sugar, shoes, dairy, meats, and gas became rare during the final three years of the war. Ration stamps were issued to Americans for these kinds of goods in order to restrict their consumption. Additionally, this made sure that sufficient funds were available to sustain troops overseas, which became a top concern. The government strictly restricted the use of leather and rubber shoes during the last stages of the conflict. Even kids who grew up quickly had to get by. Americans were reminded by this poster that in order to support the soldiers and win the war, personal sacrifice was required (“10 Unforgettable WW2 Propaganda”).

Of Course I Can! poster, in later war years, rationing also included canning and storing perishable items. In times of food scarcity, propaganda posters urged women to preserve food to keep it fresh. This poster shows a homemaker with jars in her arms while wearing an apron. Women made a contribution by working harder at home in order to fulfill their role as "patriotic Americans". On the whole, these local efforts were viewed as essential gestures of patriotism, demonstrating the importance of every contribution, no matter how small (“10 Unforgettable WW2 Propaganda”).

Avenge Pearl Harbor, American retaliation was sparked by this poster following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The answer to revenge? Bullets. Uncle Sam, in the foreground, is wearing a patriotic shirt as smoke rises to the Japanese bombers above. His

thirst for revenge is evident in his body language, which also urges Americans to fight on the Pacific front (“10 Unforgettable WW2 Propaganda”).

The Marine Corps' "We Don't Promise You a Rose Garden: The Marines Are Looking for a Few Good Men," which was published in 1971, and the Army's "Be All You Can Be," which was featured in a wide range of posters released at different points during and after the Vietnam War, are two famous examples of the military's continued use of posters following World War II (Vergun).

1.2.2 Radio Broadcasting

Gerd Horton in his book *Radio Goes to War* writes that "radio joined the propaganda campaign. The purpose was, as described by poet-turned-propagandist Archibald MacLeish, to explain to Americans what their country was fighting for and “to make the war their own”" (43).

One of the most effective radio program techniques the American government employed was the "You technique," which placed the listener directly in situations like battle or being in a military camp by addressing them personally. Ninety percent of American families owned a radio during World War II, and broadcasting was available twenty-four hours a day in an attempt to keep citizens engaged. However, propaganda was poorly received, reminding citizens of the efforts used in World War I, which prompted President Roosevelt and others to try to persuade the public that the government was there to inform them, not to censor information (“Radio Propaganda in World War II”).

In fact, radio was a vital tool to communicate with the American people. The majority of Americans got their entertainment and news in this way. It was the ideal platform for fusing propaganda with entertainment. Over the years, numerous historians have recognized its significance. At Concordia University, Gerd Horton is a professor of

the humanities. He is the author of Radio Goes to War (2003) and "Radio Days on America's Home Front" (1996). Horton asserts that radio was essential in bridging the gap between commercial and entertainment radio, which in turn helped to promote goods and demonstrate the patriotism of marketers. Propaganda and advertising were frequently presented by well-known radio hosts (Gerd 46–52).

According to Michael J. Socolow in his *News is a Weapon*, Roosevelt in particular recognized the value of radio propaganda and sought to create a national radio network run by the government. No one had ever tried this before. This demonstrates the significance of radio as a propagandist and information-sharing tool. To create this relationship and create a particular culture throughout the conflict, the American government sought to intervene.

Benjamin Barber and Charles Miller, have written a more recent article on the use of radio in World War II titled "Propaganda and Combat Motivation" in 2019 focuses on how German soldiers exposed to German propaganda had a higher chance of performing well in combat and receiving decorations for valor (Barber and Miller). While many historians concentrate on the use of radio in America, considering the German perspective offers a more complete picture of the role that radio played in the war effort and propaganda production.

During this time, American radio also began to spread abroad. Before the war, the US government had no foreign radio voice. The majority of Americans were not aware of the radio war that was unfolding because they lacked shortwave receivers. The Voice of America (VOA) network was established by the government's Office of War Information after the United States entered the war. It started out in early 1942 with a few transmitters, some of which were taken from the BBC. From the beginning, VOA aimed

to offer a radio window into American culture, news, and public events countering Nazi propaganda (“Radio - American Radio Goes to War”).

Formally created in May 1942, the Armed Forces Radio Services provided a large portion of the programming for the listeners in uniform. The Hollywood-based AFRS team produced its own shows and made transcription discs of popular commercial station programming. The popular music program "Jubilee," which was created by and for African Americans, and the write-in show "Mail Call" and "G.I. Journal" as examples. Soldiers' need for familiar knowledge and entertainment to divert their attention from the conflict around them was directly addressed by "G.I. Jive" and their favorite song, "GI Jill" (“Christmas on the Air”). Such radio propaganda was important in raising soldiers’ morale and sense of resistance, undermining enemy's confidence during war time.

Mildred Gillars was possibly the most well-known of the American Nazi enthusiasts who broadcast on German state radio. Gillars, a former Broadway showgirl who was born in Maine, relocated to Berlin in 1934. After the war started, she stayed in Germany and went on to become one of the most well-known radio hosts of the Third Reich, hosting the propaganda program "Home Sweet Home," which was aimed at American soldiers. Although Gillars used the radio handle "Midge," American GIs quickly gave her the more iconic title "Axis Sally" (Andrews). It played as a source of entertainment for the armed forces even though its aim was the opposite.

1.2.3 Films

Film has always been an effective instructional medium. It has served as a teaching tool for particular teachings and renditions of events since its inception. Bernard F. Dick's The Star-Spangled Screen was one of the first significant studies on film and World War II, he tries to demonstrate and make the point that, for Hollywood and cinema, the war started in the early 1930s with disguised illusions and analogies to the

fascist invasion, rather than on September 1, 1939, or December 7,1941 (Clum). It demonstrates how crucial movies were for spreading anti-fascist ideas years before the war began and how they could accomplish even more after it did. Both Andrew M. Clark and Thomas B. Christie are associate professors in the University of Texas's Communication department in their article "Framing Two Enemies in Mass Media" which aims at understanding the extent to which the American government shaped American filmmakers' perceptions of Germany and Japan (Christie and Clark). The purpose of the article is to examine the extent to which the government influenced how these two nations were portrayed as enemies in wartime films and other media.

The Bureau of Motion Pictures, a division of the US Office of War Information, was solely focused on Hollywood. According to Mirlees, "Between 1942 and 1945, the Bureau reviewed 1,652 scripts, revising or discarding anything that portrayed the US unfavorably, including any material that made Americans seem oblivious to the war or anti-war." "The easiest way to inject a propaganda idea into most people's minds is to let it go through the medium of an entertainment picture when they do not realize they are being propagandized," stated Elmer Davis, the head of the Office of War Information. Due in part to its concern that its opponents would reveal unfavorable traits about Americans, the US administration sought to assure that those common, communal sentiments supported America's involvement in the war and soldier's morale presenting the Second World War as a war of the people's (Weikle).

Wake Island, is regarded to many contemporary cinema historians as the first World War II movie to factually address the brutal reality of combat and the first to be made under War Department supervision. Modern reports claim that Paramount delayed the film's final scene to test the viability of recapturing Wake Island by US Marines. According to the movie, Wake Island was captured by the Japanese on

December 23, 1941, when the Marines, who had been defending the island since December 7, 1941, were subjected to a full-scale invasion. The Marines are shown fighting to the death in the movie, while American forces actually surrendered to the Japanese. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt praised the Marines for their "heroic and historic defense" following Wake Island's collapse (“AFI Catalog”).

You Natzy Spy! In a time of stress and bloodshed, the Three Stooges provided much-needed, humorous relief. Moe, Larry, and Curly parody Nazi Germany in You Natzy Spy. Before the US was directly involved in the war, they also raised awareness of the Third Reich's rising menace. Released in 1940, the short film is said to have been the first Hollywood production to openly parody Hitler (whom Moe portrayed). Charlie Chaplin played Adolf in the more well-known movie The Great Dictator a few months later. Any movie that overtly expressed any kind of prejudiced opinion toward the war wasn't very popular because isolationism was still the dominant American strategy at the time. As the United States entered the war, the movement that the Stooges started grew (“WWII Movies Made in the 1940s”).

Welch writes that "One of the most interesting examples of official propaganda justifying the war Why We Fight, a series of seven documentary films commissioned by the United States government, whose purpose was to show American soldiers the reason for US involvement in the war" (29). The purpose of the seven propaganda films directed by Frank Capra was to persuade the American people that their nation had a legitimate interest in the war.

The Purple Heart, focuses on the Pacific front, while numerous World War II films examined growing tensions with Nazi Germany. In addition to discussing how the Japanese treated prisoners of war, the movie sporadically narrates the story of the Doolittle Raid participants. The film, which was released soon after the attack on Pearl

Harbor, strikes a raw chord at a time when the war against Japan was intensifying. Despite being fiction, The Purple Heart does its best to paint a prejudiced and unfavorable picture of Japanese people. In the end, the movie was propaganda designed to justify the military's murder of Japanese residents and to promote anti-Japanese feelings in American citizens (“WWII Movies Made in the 1940s”).

1.2.4 Cartoons and Animation

Cartooning was the perfect medium for discussing the conflict in many ways. It was an effective and straightforward mass media for spreading messages about the hardships of war, whether they were propagandistic or not. Furthermore, cartoons are an exception to the laws of physics. Amazing and surprising things are possible in these universes. In addition to providing us with escape and transcendence, they also add a darker dimension by enabling warped views that imitate the language of reality while hiding the brutal reality of our times (“How Mickey Mouse”).

Even though the Pearl Harbor bombing was a compelling enough event to persuade men to join the military, propaganda animation was created to appeal to others who weren't immediately as involved. The US administration emphasized aspects of the war that would appeal to young men through Snafu, a character in the American World War II movie Booby Trap. By showcasing women's chests and depicting catastrophic explosions, the animation aimed to mobilize a specific segment of the American society (Reed).

Maureen Furniss, author of Animation : The Global History, from an interview with Eye On Design said : ‘‘It was an effective series for imparting messages to be careful and keep your mouth shut, using a character that people could laugh at. With things like this, they knew that even if people had heard or read a message 100 times, Snafu would get their attention.”

A number of propaganda films highlighted the Disney Studio's involvement in the war effort and enhanced its public perception; the most popular, Academy Award Winner Der Fuehrer's Face (1943), showed Donald Duck smashing a rotten tomato in Hitler's face (Watts 230). By portraying the enemy as immoral or even inhuman by mobilizing soldiers for battle and interacting with civilians at home (Chase).

Der Fuehrer's Face, demonstrates the difficulties that come with having to live under an authoritarian government. Viewers may see Donald starting his day as a German manufacturing worker in full Nazi uniform in this cartoon. The marching Axis leaders prod him out of bed, get him ready for the day, and then march him out to work while punching him in the back with a bayonet. Disney exposed American viewers to the realities that people in European nations experience on a daily basis by depicting what it meant to be a German citizen under Hitler's dictatorship. Donald Duck slams a rotten tomato into a caricature of Hitler's face on the cartoon's poster. This picture might attract American viewers as with a rotting tomato on his face, Hitler appeared less threatening. Der Fuehrer's Face, an eight-minute animated film, even took home the Best Animated Short Film Oscar at the Fifteenth Academy Awards (Jackson 130).

Furthermore, Bill Mauldin, the most well-known cartoonist of World War II who documented conflict for those engaged in war. Mauldin's division traveled overseas to North Africa in 1943, at the age of 21. Mauldin, who had been drawing cartoons since he was a young boy, was soon given the task of covering the battle for Stars and Stripes and later the 45th Division News. His drawings, which portrayed a shabby pair of foot soldiers named Willie and Joe, quickly became popular among the soldiers who viewed them. In just two years, Mauldin became well-known and received a Pulitzer Prize for his portrayal of the daily experiences of foot soldiers ("WWII Cartoons".)

2. Women's Contribution in The Workforce During War Times

Women significantly contributed to the transformation of the American workforce during World War II by filling positions previously occupied by men who had joined the armed forces. Women were asked to substitute in offices, factories, and other sectors vital to the war effort while millions of men were mobilized for military service. During the course of that period, women were employed in a variety of occupations, including engineering, nursing, manufacturing airplanes and munitions, and even serving in the armed forces. The famous Rosie the Riveter picture became a representation of their tenacity and fortitude, introducing a shift in gender norms and women's involvement in the workforce.

David Welch in his book *World War II Propaganda Analyzing the Art of Persuasion during Wartim*e claims that due to severe labor shortages during the war, women were required in the armed services, civil service, and defense industry in the United States. Propaganda tactics targeted women who had never held a job before, despite the ongoing trend of women into the workforce. The resulting images promoted and glamorized working women's positions and implied that a woman's femininity should not be sacrificed for employment. For instance, the tagline "Victory Waits on Your Fingers—Keep 'Em Flying, Miss U.S.A." were used to recruit typewriters. Women were consistently shown as attractive, self-assured, and determined to contribute to winning the war, whether they were performing their duties in the office, factory, home, or military (xxi).

As said by President Roosevelt at his 1942 Columbus Day Speech "In some communities, employers dislike to hire women. In some others they are reluctant to hire Negroes. We can no longer afford to indulge such prejudice." (Yellin 39). The government's strategy was successful in hiring almost 6 million women in a variety of

occupations. Women joined the workforce to support their nation, and this intervention involved exploration and the discovery of new roles and responsibilities that would have unpredictable consequences for American women.

Maureen Honey observes, "War work became a vehicle for women to shoulder their civic and moral responsibilities as good citizens, rather than a way to become more dependent and powerful" (7). Women worked because they believed it was their responsibility as decent citizens to support their nation, not because they wanted to become powerful or independent. Instead of challenging traditional ideas of women's responsibilities in society, they were urged to work to aid in the war effort and their labor was viewed as a means of helping the country.

Moreover, when men left, women "became proficient cooks and housekeepers, managed the finances, learned to fix the car, worked in a defense plant, and wrote letters to their soldier husbands that were consistently upbeat" (Ambrose 488). They studied new skills like fixing cars and factory labor in addition to handling home tasks like cooking, cleaning, and planning. They also provided emotional support to their soldier husbands by sending cheerful and motivating letters. This demonstrates how, during this trying period, women adjusted and developed their resourcefulness in a variety of areas.

2.1 Women in The Military

Nearly 350,000 American women volunteered for the newly established Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACs, later renamed the Women's Army Corps), the Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES), the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, the Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS), the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS), the Army Nurses Corps, and the Navy Nurse Corps, serving in uniform both at home and overseas. Without the support of the women in military, General Eisenhower believed he could not win the war ("History at a Glance"). "The contribution of the women of

America, whether on the farm or in the factory or in uniform, to D-Day was a sine qua non of the invasion effort" (Ambrose).

When WACs were first established as an auxiliary branch of the US Army, they were not given the same rank, benefits, or even compensation as males in the Regular Army. When the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps changed its name to the Women's Army Corps (WAC) and formally joined the US Army in July 1943, a significant step was taken. Because they could get the appropriate benefits in the event that they were injured or killed while serving, this allowed WACs to serve abroad, the original recruitment target of 25,000 had been achieved by November 1942, and African Americans were admitted for duty after the shift to WAC service was finished (Martin).

In addition, the Congress established the United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS). It was more often referred to as the SPARS, which stands for "Semper Paratus—Always Ready," the Coast Guard motto. The Coast Guard had to fill critical positions at its stations on the home front as the requirement for soldiers on sea duty grew. The Coast Guard said service gave them a feeling of purpose as well. Women might serve their country, win the war, and "free a man to fight" by enlisting "United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS)" ("United States Coast Guard").

In July 1942t he Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) and Women Reservists programs were established by a bill that allowed women to join the US Navy and Marine Corps. Approximately 86,000 women enlisted as WAVES. The navy experienced a manpower shortage, and women emerged as the ideal replacement (Yellin 137).

The WAVES held a variety of jobs during their time in the military, including clerical and secretarial jobs, accountants, nurses, archivists, weather forecasters, radio and control power operators, parachute riggers, ship designers, mechanics, aviation

metalsmiths, and air traffic controllers. It was also feasible to locate surgeons, engineers, or mathematicians among officers, challenging the "perceived limits of what women were capable" (Allion 17). With over 86,000 women enlisting, including almost 8,000 officers, the WAVES grew to become the second-largest women's military force by the end of the war (Chen).

The Army and Navy Nurse Corps started to grow as a result of a huge rise in demand for qualified nurses following America's participation into the war. The Cadet Nurse Corps was created in the summer of 1943 to address the demand for nurses in the military and in the civilian sector. The program provided free nursing education, housing and board, and uniforms to young women between the ages of 17 and 35. The program, which was open to women of all races with a high school diploma or more, offered an expedited curriculum to place qualified nurses in hospitals. In addition to working in army and navy hospitals, Cadet Nurse Corps nurses assisted in addressing the lack of civilian nurses in public hospitals. The program trained about 125,000 nurses between July 1943 and December 1948 (Martin).

For the first time ever, women doctors were permitted to enlist in the US military in 1943. In the past, female physicians could only participate as contractors. With the Army's numbers growing from 267,000 to over 8 million between 1940 and 1945, and a shortage of doctors to treat them, authorities realized they could not afford to turn away female physicians. Margaret D. Craighill, MD, became the first female medical officer in the United States in May 1943, one month after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Sparkman-Johnson Bill into law, enabling women to acquire Medical Corp commissions. She immediately created medical guidelines for female recruits, who had started working as drivers, clerks, and other volunteer positions. One of

these guidelines required that pregnant women undergo examination during enlisting (Weiner).

In September 1942, the AAF (Army Air Force) authorized the establishment of two civilian programs: The Women's Flying Training Detachment and the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, which provided women with the opportunity to transport aircraft between military bases and factories. This marked the beginning of a serious effort to capitalize on women's growing interest in aviation. Eleanor Roosevelt (1942) acknowledged their potential as well and encouraged for their continued involvement in the war effort. In her column "My Day," she expressed that “We are in a war and we need to fight it with all our ability and every weapon possible. Women pilots, in this particular case, are a weapon waiting to be used” (Scrivener 366).

In fact, nearly a year later, the AAF created the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) by combining the organizations and granting them official federal employment status, freeing up men for battle. However, the group maintained its civilian status, thus even while the WASPs were trained and disciplined by the military, they were not officially a member of the American military (Scrivener 366).

In addition to ferrying aircraft, the WASPs also performed test and low-target flying duties during training missions, towed aerial targets for gunnery drills, trained male AAF cadets, and handled secret weaponry in addition to cargo and non-flying personnel (Scrivener). The WASPs traveled over 60 million miles and completed about 300,000 flight hours during their job time, and their director, Jacqueline Cochran, was ranked among "some of the best aviators in the industry" proving that they are worth of their position in the air force service (Archer 31).

2.2 Women in The Home Front

Although more than 350,000 women fought in the armed forces during the conflict, over 20 times as many entered the workforce, taking over civilian positions left unfilled by men joining the military and boosting the number of women employed to 36 percent. Women's participation in the labor market and previously unattainable professions allowed them to show their abilities, even though their purpose was limited to the duration of the war and the wartime emergency. Their shared wartime experience and sense of independence also served as a basis for the diverse social and political movements that arose in the 1960s (McEuen).

Millions of women undertook labor in factories and shipyards during World War II. They worked as riveters, machinists, and welders, of course, influenced by the famous propaganda of "Rosie the Riveter". Moreover, women worked as truck drivers, housekeepers, pilots, fundraiser coordinators, medical professionals, farmers, code-crackers, and at the same time not neglecting their duties as mothers (“Women in World War II”).

Furthermore, Numerous volunteer options were available to women who chose not to work. Women were encouraged to assist with local city chapters of the American Red Cross, the country's largest charity. Millions of women produced twenty-seven million care packages of nonperishable goods for American and other Allied prisoners of war, packed and sent about half a million tons of medical supplies overseas, and planned family-friendly communal social activities (Locke and Wright 244).

American women played crucial roles in the military and at home during World War II, making their contributions revolutionary. They demonstrated female ability and courage by accepting professions that had historically been filled by men and serving in unprecedented military roles. Along with contributing to the war's victory, their

participation questioned gender stereotypes, bringing about long-lasting social change and creating opportunities for women in a variety of areas for future generations. Their legacy serves as a source of inspiration and a reminder of the vital part that women have played in shaping history.

3. Post War Challenges Faced by Women

Following World War II, American women faced many difficulties as they returned to their typical home duties after serving in the military. Women had joined the labor in historically high numbers during the war to cover the void created by men who left to fight, often working in offices, factories, and other previously male-dominated fields. However, women were urged or even forced to quit their employment and return to their household duties when the war came to an end and the soldiers went home. Many found this return to traditional gender roles difficult because it went against their desire for freedom and professional growth (McDermott). Women were let off at the end of World War II, despite the fact that up to 75% of them stated that they wanted to keep working after the war ("American Women and World War II").

Women experienced a lot of social pressure to fit into traditional gender norms despite their desire for freedom. Yellin in her book *Our Mothers' War* draws attention to the extensive advice given to women to put marriage, motherhood, and domesticity first by the media, the government, and popular culture. The same propaganda organizations that had urged women to work throughout the war now promoted the benefits of quitting their jobs to provide employment for returning males. Three and a half million women had either voluntarily or involuntarily left the labor force a year after World War II ended.

According to Ruth Schwartz Cowan's book More Work for Mother, popular writers, psychologists, and psychiatrists of the time criticized women who wanted to

work and even those who wanted a job, calling these "unlovely women" "lost," "ridden with guilt complexes," or simply "man-hating" (“Women and Work after World War II”).

Furthermore, women who worked in "pink collar" jobs like servers and secretaries were frequently hired because they were unappreciated and paid poorly. As professional schools closed, women were shut out of professions including commerce, law, and medicine. Women started to integrate professional values into homemaking as career progression chances declined, frequently saying, "I had wanted to be a doctor, but given the realities, I made the choice" (May).

In Betty Frieden’s *The Feminine Mystique*, she indicates that marital and family priorities are largely responsible for the drop in the number of women who sought higher education. Despite the availability of additional government funding to pay for university education, women made up 38 percent of college students in 1958 compared to 47 percent in 1920 (16). The government pushed women away from finishing their education or pursuing a career and rather stick to duties at homes as wives or mothers only, especially after serving in different jobs during the war.

Similar to women in other traditionally male-dominated fields, military women experience sexism and gender bias as well as sexual assaults in a variety of ways. The patriarchal structure of the military, which upholds "values such as formality, rank, leadership, loyalty, camaraderie, and emotional control," and its hierarchy, which serves as a tool for establishing dominance, further encourages this behavior. Resulting in severe psychological issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). " Sexual assaults are a major reason that some female service members leave the military. As a result of military-related sexual trauma, many female veterans struggle transitioning back into civilian life, with some ending up homeless " (Castro et al. 54).

Many researches have revealed that compared to the general population, female veterans are more likely to have mental health issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, alcoholism, anxiety during medical exams, eating disorders, depression, and greater suicide rates. In addition to having a low quality of life, many female veterans who suffer from PTSD are homeless and have reduced capacity to carry out everyday tasks (Burkhart and Hogan).

Like war veterans, former women's corps members in the US had difficulties transitioning to civilian life, finding suitable employment, and preserving relationships. They felt neglected by the general public, and their help was often ignored by community services. Rumors about the women's corps continued into civilian life, and their enlistment was disapproved of by friends and family. Relationships may be impacted by the personality and character changes brought about by military service (Huner).

It is clear that American women's roles faced a significant change in the years following World War II. A type of oppression was used by the government effort to force women to quit from their roles and to give up the inspiring freedom and experiences they had during the war... In their 1974 book "demobilization and the female labor force," Sheila Tobias and Lisa Anderson described how the women who were employed in the war effort were angry when they were removed from the industrial sector in favor of men who had returned from the conflict. As a result, American women faced lack of power and marginalization following the war, and they were less able than men to formally participate in the peace effort and the post-conflict political, social, and economic recovery (qtd. in Yellin).

Conclusion

The United States war efforts during World War II were greatly influenced by the different types of propaganda and the major contribution of women in the workforce. The government use of posters, movies, radio broadcasts and cartoons were mainly to encourage enlistment and raise morale. Moreover, a significant change in American culture was brought about by women's employment during the war. Women filled traditionally male-dominated jobs in shipyards, factories, and other industries while a significant number of men were sent to the military. They also made direct contributions to the war effort while serving in different military roles, showcasing women's strengths in fields that were previously believed to be beyond their capabilities.

Despite their significant achievements, women in this era faced many obstacles. Significant challenges included managing work and family obligations, overcoming social expectations, coping with wartime shortages, in addition to suffering from mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The war marked a turning point in the way society perceived women's role forcing them to be confined solely to domestic and material responsibilities after the war.

Chapter Three

Rosie the Riveter: Analysis and Impact

Introduction

This chapter explores the origins of the iconic figure of Rosie the Riveter, the real story behind the famous poster, and how the United States used such propaganda that first began as a military campaign and later became a symbol of female strength and the workforce mobilization as well as the visual analysis of the " we Can Do It" poster. Additionally, it analyzes the impact of Rosie the Riveter on the female labor force, highlighting the huge increase in women's participation in different work sectors which led to many changes regarding gender roles and societal expectations for women during the wartime. The chapter examines Rosie's postwar legacy, including the decline in women's working positions and the ongoing symbolism of such image in the American society serving as a battle cry for the women's rights movement. This case study provides insights into how propaganda can reflect and affect social as well as economic changes, particularly during times of historical upheaval.

1. Rosie the Riveter

The most recognizable image of working women, Rosie the Riveter, was the face of a campaign during World War II to recruit women for the military industry. Due to massive gaps in the industrial labor force caused by widespread male enlistment, American women joined the sector in previously unheard-of numbers during the war. Nearly one in four married women worked outside the home by 1945, as the proportion of women in the US employment rose from 27 percent to almost 37 percent between 1940 and 1945 (“Rosie the Riveter”).

1.1 Origins of the Name

Originally, Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb used the term "Rosie the Riveter" in a song they wrote in 1942. According to the song, Rosie worked hard on an assembly line while other women were out at the bar. Rosie receives recognition for her commitment to the American military effort and her hard work. Although the song's authors were inspired by a real woman, Rosalind P. Walters, a wealthy worker in a factory producing the F4U Corsair Fighter fighter plane, Rosie the Riveter is not a real person. The phrase "Rosie the Riveter" gained widespread recognition in the US after this song became popular (Smith).

Furthermore, the song "He's 1-A in the Army and He's A-1 in My Heart" was written by Redd Evans (1912–72) in 1941, and Rosie's song is largely credited to John Jacob Loeb (1910–70). The song started with these lyrics: "While other girls attend a favorite cocktail bar, . . . There's a girl who's really putting them to shame—her name is Rosie." It was recorded by The Four Vagabonds, who took inspiration from another well-known African American vocal quartet, the Mills Brothers. In the 1930s and 1940s, they appeared on a number of well-known radio programs in the Midwest. They mimic the sound of a rivet gun, bass, and trombones in this song, but not the melody that goes with it (Haines).

1.2 The Story Behind the Image

On February 15, 1943, J. Howard Miller's "We Can Do It" poster was released for a Two-week domestic campaign at Westinghouse. The poster was not connected to "Rosie" at the time, nor was it viewed nationally. The poster wasn't rediscovered, valued, and associated with Rosie until the early 1980s (Sundin). "We Can Do It" gained a lot of attention since it was featured in the 1982 Washington Post Magazine article "Poster Art

for Patriotism's Sake," which discussed the National Archives' poster collections (Metcalf).

Kimble, an associate professor of communication at Seton Hall University in New Jersey became interested in the propaganda utilized at home during World War II and started researching the “We Can Do It” poster. In his research, he claimed that for years, people believed the woman on Miller's "We Can Do It" poster was Geraldine Hoff, a Michigan woman who had previously worked as a metal presser in a factory for a short time in 1942, recognized a picture of a lady wearing a bandanna at an industrial lathe in a magazine in the 1980s and connected it to Miller's well-known poster, but Kimble wasn't so sure and began investigating the 1942 image. He eventually located "the smoking gun," as he refers to it, another copy of the photo with the original caption attached to the reverse, after five years of looking. It identified the woman at the lathe as "Pretty Naomi Parker" and was dated March 1942 at the Naval Air Station in Alameda (Pruitt).

Moreover, Norman Rockwell's depiction of Rosie the Riveter appeared on the cover of The Saturday Evening Post on May 29, 1943, which contains Biblical and allegorical allusions that elevate the subject in the picture. The body and posture are lifted from the Sistine Chapel's Michelangelo artwork of the prophet Isaiah. The riveter's snake-like shape, which refers to a virtuous serpent that killed a demonic creature in the book of Isaiah, emphasizes this point (particularly when Rosie crushes a copy of Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf beneath her foot). She also makes one think of classic representations of the Madonna and Child. This iconic image of Rosie the Riveter has come to symbolize all women who wore men's work boots to help in the war effort (Conrads and Harris).

The model for Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter cover from May 29, 1943, was Mary Doyle Keefe. In Arlington, Vermont, she was a 19-year-old phone operator when Rockwell called to ask if she "wouldn't mind posing for a painting." He wasn't interested

in the white blouse and shoes from the first sitting, so she posed twice. Mary explains that she never saw Hitler's book Mein Kampf, she did have the white handkerchief that emerged from a pocket, a ham sandwich while posing, and the rivet gun was a lightweight fake. For the painting, Rockwell had made the small, 110-pound Mary into a robust, brawny woman appearing more masculine than Miller's version. "He called me and apologized for making me so large," she recalls (Knight).

2. Visual Analysis of the "We Can Do It!" Poster

The "We Can Do It!" Poster by J. Howard Miller from 1943, represents one of the most iconic symbols of American visual culture. It was first created as a part of a wartime propaganda campaign by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation. This visual analysis aims to explore the poster through multiple interpretive lenses, including formalist, iconographic, contextual, and feminist approaches.

2.1 Formalist Analysis

In visual art, formalist analysis is a critical approach that focuses on the formal elements of an artwork such as line, shape, color, texture, and composition over its subject matter, historical context, or emotional content (Chipp). This approach says that the intrinsic qualities of an artwork are essential in understanding its value and meaning. Aims at evaluating art based on its aesthetic and structural properties, regardless of external factors.

The origins of formalist analysis in visual art is related to the Russian Formalism which focused on the formal properties of literature, influencing similar approaches in visual art. While in the United Kingdom, art critic Clive Bell introduced the concept of "significant form" in his 1914 book Art, laying the ground for the arrangement of visual elements in formalist criticism. In the United States however, Clement Greenberg developed the whole theory which was instrumental in the acceptance of abstract art

movements. The works of Bell and Greenberg established formalist analysis as a significant approach in art criticism.

2.1.1. Composition and Layout

Due to how tightly framed and centrally designed the visual space of the "We Can Do It!" poster, Rosie's position is in the forefront of the viewer's space. Although Rosie's body is leaning to one side, her face and eyes are immediately in front of the viewer, creating a striking and direct visual trajectory. She has positioned her bent arm so that it creates upward-oriented triangle shape, creating visual hierarchy that communicates stability and strength. This sense of dynamism and central placement in the layout pulls the viewer in through sense of immediacy and interaction. There are very few background elements to contend with, as well as limited components to the layout, so Rosie becomes the primary focus of action and her messages. The absence of clutter enhances the image, and it allows for added clarity and impact, emphasizing the message and memorializing Rosie.

2.1.2. Color and Contrast

Key to the overall formal qualities of the poster is the use of strong, primary colors. The bright, energetic backdrop created with yellow draws the viewer in and fosters a sense of urgency and hope. Within the red, white, and blue color scheme, Rosie wearing a work shirt doing blue recalls some patriotic signifiers while simultaneously emphasizing useful and discipline. The very contrast of her dark physical clothing and the bright yellow behind, as well as the red polka-dotted bandanna, emphasizes her head and facial expression. The contrast of the blue voice bubble with the white text reinforces a sense of visibility and immediacy. Overall, strong contrasts and careful selections of color achieve important goals by illuminating and separating the poster's objects and images.

2.1.3. Typography and Textual Form

The words "We Can Do It!" are displayed in a large white sans serif typeface within a blue speech bubble. A speech bubble's associations combine to create a direct, immediate, and urgent communication. All capital letters create clarity and urgency, while the sans serif font is clean and contemporary. The speech bubble gives Rosie a voice, removing the metaphor of the picture and allowing for an actual direct addressing of the audience. Rosie is not just a figure or representation; it establishes her as an agent who addresses the audience directly. The speech bubble also formalizes this notion of agency. Together with her strong visual impact, the small, central placement of the text in relation to her head guarantees that it gets read and viewed together, facilitating an instantaneous transition from image to word.

2.1.4. Gesture and Pose

Rosie's posture is the center of the image, especially her flexed right arm that has the sleeve pulled up, which has become a sign of strength and determination. She is presented with a confident posture, slightly leaning back, looking directly at the viewer, and her hand is tightened into a fist. In order to emphasize symbolic strength rather than literal strength, her muscles are enlarged and the gesture is exaggerated in this refined instead of realistic visual posture. Her confident but strong-looking pose represents both closure and openness. The combination of her posture, gaze, and gesture completely lyricizes one image of empowerment that is expressed purely in a visual mode as opposed to a text mode.

2.2. Iconographic Analysis

Iconographic analysis is an essential method in art historical interpretation that decodes the symbolic meaning of images by understanding visual elements within their overall frameworks. This method was mostly formalized by Erwin Panofsky in his

Studies in Iconology, where he introduced the tripartite model of pre-iconography, iconography, and iconology. Panofsky provided a structured approach to analyzing works of art beyond their aesthetic form. his iconology goes beyond the identification of motifs to explore how symbols convey broader ideological and philosophical concepts.

2.2.1. Rosie as a symbol

With its variety of visual symbolism, Rosie the Riveter's poster conveys power, patriotism, and a shift in gender roles. For Rosie, the red-and-white polka-dot bandana represents her adaptation to industrial job while maintaining her femininity. Here, a female figure reinterprets the typical masculine emblems of power and readiness like rolled up sleeves and flexed arm gesture to represent women's strength and their crucial role in the wartime workforce. The message is made bolder and more immediate by the use of the primary colors (Yellow, red and blue) which also emphasizes its urgency and national significance.

2.2.2. Body Language and Facial Expression

Through the poster, Rosie radiates confidence because of her direct stare and powerful posture. Her right arm is flexed in a display of strength, copying a typical male gesture, which defies gender stereotypes and physically suggests that women are just as capable as men. Both resolution and calm assurance are conveyed by her controlled yet resolute facial expression with concentrated eyes and slightly lifted eyebrows. Together, these facial expressions and body language present a strong picture of female empowerment at a time when women were being called to join the workforce.

2.2.3. Physical Appearance and the Work Uniform

Wearing a basic blue work shirt with sleeves pulled up and the collar unbuttoned, the character practically symbolizes industrial labor and a break from conventionally feminine clothing. Together with the tidy bandana, her calm and collected

demeanor conveys the idea that women can remain in control and retain their dignity. The image of women in industrial roles was normalized by this visual combination of neatness and ruggedness.

2.2.4. The Slogan “We Can Do It!”

The pronoun “We” is used in the inspirational phrase to bring all viewers (especially women) together around a common feeling of ability and purpose. Women were encouraged to perceive themselves as essential to the war effort. The phrase had the immediacy of direct communication because of its bold, simple typeface and speech bubble placement which make it seem as though Rosie is speaking directly to the audience.

2.3. Contextual Analysis

During World War II, Rosie the Riveter represents the dramatic change in the American workforce as women began to fill positions that had previously been filled by males. Women filled a variety of labor roles, especially in heavy industries, to maintain the wartime economy while millions of men were sent away. Through songs and government propaganda programs that promoted female employment, the term "Rosie the Riveter" became a popular way to refer to these women collectively. J. Howard Miller's 1942 poster "We Can Do It!" is a famous image linked to Rosie. It depicts a woman wearing overalls and a kerchief, flexing her bicep, symbolizing power and resilience (Gardner).

In addition to removing widespread misconceptions about women's skills, this campaign set the stage for later feminist movements. While many women returned to their traditional roles after the war, they had a lasting impact on how society viewed women’s equality and labor. Awards, such as the Congressional Gold Medal presented to

women who served during World War II, show that we still reflect on Rosie's legacy today (Gardner). Rosie the Riveter clearly had an enduring legacy.

2.4. Feminist Analysis

This part examines how the representation of Rosie as a powerful reversal of the typical submissive female challenges the 1940s gender norms by portraying a woman as capable and independent. Her confident expression and pose suggest agency and defies the stereotype that women are weak. This imagery laid the groundwork for later feminist visual culture, which sought to reclaim and redefine femininity.

The poster has been also adopted as a representation of women's empowerment in modern feminist discourse. Although it wasn't meant to be a feminist symbol at first, feminist movements have subsequently used the picture, frequently for the sake of gender equality. This analysis looks at how the poster has been used to question contemporary gender inequality and encourage action in a variety of settings, including political campaigns, protest signs, and the media.

3. The Propaganda Process

America entered World War II as a result of the 1941 Pearl Harbor bombing, which prompted President Roosevelt to declare war. The industrial workforce shrank as men enlisted; therefore, the government Office of War Information and War Manpower Commission began recruiting women. The government used propaganda about Rosie the Riveter to make up for the lack of workers ("Women in Transportation").

The propaganda effort of the government made use of many of powerful patriotic posters and statements that featured different versions of Rosie the Riveter. The iconic poster depicts a woman showing off her muscular arm while working in a factory on the home front during World War II. Just take a look at Rosie's huge arms, which serve as the poster's primary focus, to understand that she is a strong, masculine woman.

Since she uses a huge, heavy riveting gun, she is perceived as masculine. In addition, she is dressed in men's clothing. However, she is also perceived as a feminine woman; just take a look at her lipstick and rouge, as well as the pretty red polka bandana she wears over her hair. As a strong yet feminine woman, Rosie served as a source of inspiration for women during the war (Sheridan).

Various categories of women were the target of the campaign. First, women who were already employed were urged to advance to industrial occupations that paid more, especially those who were minorities and occupied low-payings. Girls who had just graduated from high school were then hired. The program targeted married women with children who didn't actually need or want to work as it became clear that even more workers were needed. The campaign emphasized several strong points, particularly the value of patriotism and the notion that if women at home took the place of absent male workers, the war would be over sooner. Likewise, fear propaganda said that if women didn't take up the work, they would be labeled "slackers" and that more soldiers would die (Hoyt).

Between 1940 and 1945, Rosie the Riveter's advertising campaign significantly raised the proportion of women in the American workforce from 27 percent to about 37 percent. Although women performed a wide range of jobs that were previously unattainable during World War II, the largest growth in female employment was in the aviation sector where more than 310,000 women were employed in 1943. Additionally, the munitions business employed a large number of women. Approximately 350,000 of them joined the Armed Services and served both domestically and overseas, along with working in factories and other industries on the home front (“Rosie the Riveter”).

It took another forty years for Miller's poster to become widely linked with Rosie. Beginning in the 1980s, the "We Can Do It!" picture spread widely and entered

popular culture through a variety of replicas, ranging from political campaigns and postage stamps to advertising and bubblehead dolls. Miller's artwork, which was first made just for an internal Public Service Announcement rose to prominence as a feminist symbol. In the process of creating a greater variety of identities, contemporary depictions of Rosie have expanded who might represent Evans and Loeb's lyrics, "there's something true about/Red, white, and blue about/Rosie the Riveter " (Butler).

4. Rosie's Impact on the Female Workforce During the War

The beginning of World War II was a turning point in American history particularly in what concerns women's labor. There was a huge increase in demand for industrial and wartime work as the country prepared for war, and a large number of men were drafted into the battle. Using the character of "Rosie the Riveter" as an inspirational and uniting symbol, the US government responded by launching a massive effort to get women into the workforce. Rosie was not only a creation of propaganda during the war; she became a symbol of a profound shift in society. She stood for the increasing representation of women in fields that had historically been dominated by men, such as industry and aviation. Adding to that, Rosie the Riveter not only changed how people perceived women's abilities, but also set the stage for long-lasting shifts in the gender dynamics of the American workforce.

4.1. From Caretakers to Economy Shapers

Butler Kirstin stated that, in early 1942, shortly after the US officially joined the conflict, the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasted a serious issue as heavy numbers of US male citizens were drafted into the battle: a six million labor shortfall would cause the nation's productivity to collapse unless something was done ("Rosie the Riveter Isn't Who You Think She Is"). The solution was as clear as the problem, to gain a reaction and support from American citizens, particularly women, the American government launched

a propaganda campaign. The most famous aspect of this campaign was perhaps Rosie the Riveter. The poster "We Can Do It!" by Pittsburgh artist J. Howard Miller, which features the most famous picture of Rosie today, shows her working at a Manufacturing Company, dressed in blue denim coveralls and a red and white bandana, representing an American ideal of the patriotic woman, assuming roles that were formerly reserved for men with courage and boldness (Nelson).

The famous character known as "Rosie the Riveter" became a representation of the crucial role that women played on the Home Front during World War II. Later known as “Rosies”, women performed vital jobs in shipyards, factories, and other settings like welding, riveting, and assembling the war's equipment while millions of men got departed for military service. Many were entering traditionally male-dominated fields for the first time, changing the way society views what women are capable of (“Who Was Rosie the Riveter?”).

4.2. Gender Roles and Societal Expectations for Women

On the Home Front, World War II had a profound impact on both men and women. Due to wartime demands, there was a greater need for both male and female laborers, more home duties and sufferings, and more pressure on Americans to fit in with society and culture. As a result of these shifts, Americans began to reconsider their views on gender, including what traits women and men should possess, how they should act, and the responsibilities they ought to bear in their families and communities (“Gender on the Home Front”).

In McEuen’s words, the pressures of war put social mores to the test, enabling women to take advantage of the changes and establish their own. However, longstanding gender standards offered strategies for preserving social order in the face of rapid change, and when some women defied these expectations, they were severely criticized.

Opportunities for certain women were limited while those for others were expanded by a combination of criteria such as race, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, education, and place of birth. As these Rosie the Riveters posed a threat to the dominant paradigm of female homemakers and male providers.

Prior to the global conflict, women were mostly limited to household duties or occupations deemed "feminine," like teaching and secretarial work, restrictions that were broken by the necessity of war, proving that women could succeed in specialized, professional occupations. Thus, beyond only breaking misconceptions, Rosie's legacy is also about showing what is possible. Her enduring concept of "We Can Do It!" encouraged women to rise above challenges, pursue their dreams, and work toward a more equitable society (“Who Was Rosie the Riveter?”).

5. Post-World War II Impact

Following the end of World War II, Rosie the Riveter's image as an icon of female strength persisted. She had an impact on many facets of postwar American society. Her legacy influenced mainly social and economic spheres as the country moved from wartime mobilization to postwar recovery. Rosie opposed traditional gender norms and established the framework for upcoming campaigns supporting women's rights. Adding to that her accomplishments during the war that brought attention to the value of women in the workforce, which had an impact on workplace dynamics and labor laws in the decades that followed. As a cultural icon, Rosie the Riveter later resurfaced at pivotal points in feminist history, maintaining her status as a powerful symbol.

5.1. Social impact

Although women in World War II bravely defended their nations and communities, their deeds and contributions had a knock-on effect that continues to influence gender roles and social mores today. By showcasing women's ability in a

variety of disciplines that were previously thought to be exclusively male, these women's efforts helped pave the way for the women's rights movement. Because of their skill, women were more widely accepted in professional sectors, which motivated later generations to strive for equal opportunities and improvements in women's rights ("Women in World War II: Breaking Barriers").

Stephens Lannyl confirms the fact that Rosie the Riveter left a lasting legacy beyond the war, that impacted later generations of women who aspired to equality and respect. Influencing feminist groups that have used her picture as a representation of their determination, strength, and camaraderie. Moreover, women are still motivated to tear down obstacles, follow their dreams, and demand equal opportunity in all industries inspired by Rosie's legendary reputation. She is a reminder of the achievements women have made throughout history, despite persecution and hardship.

In addition to the fact that during the 1960s and 1970s, Rosie's image served as a rallying cry for the women's rights movements, leading to laws such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963 ("Who Was Rosie the Riveter?")

5.2. Economic impact

Even after the war ended and men returned home, Rosie the Riveter's influence on women in the labor continued. Although the number of women in the labor decreased and pre-war norms restored, families understood that if women could succeed in the workforce, they may have more ("Honoring Rosie the Riveter").

Rosies were supposed to quit the work after the war, therefore the appeal for working women was only intended to last temporarily. Some women accepted this, but they came away from their postings with greater self-assurance and new abilities. Those who continued to work were typically demoted. However, males were no longer able to assert their dominance over women following their noble efforts during World War II. A

taste of financial and personal independence had been enjoyed and even thrived upon by women, and many of them wanted more (McDermott).

Many middle-class families were able to live comfortably on the income of one breadwinner for the first time in American history since men's incomes were greater than ever before due to the post-war boom of the American economy abroad. But according to the data, there were more married women in the labor force by the early and mid-1960s than at any other point in American history ("Women and Work after World War II").

Conclusion

To sum up, the story of Rosie the Riveter illustrates how wartime propaganda not only mobilized a nation but also reshaped the social and economic landscape for American women. By uncovering the origins and evolving symbolism of Rosie, this chapter has shown how a military campaign transformed into a powerful representation of female strength and labor, highlighting the importance of such propaganda through the visual analysis of the "We Can Do It " poster. The increased participation of women in various work sectors during World War II marked a pivotal shift in gender roles and societal expectations. Although the postwar period saw a decline in women's labor positions, the enduring legacy of Rosie continues to inspire the fight for gender equality. Ultimately, this case study demonstrates how propaganda can both mirror and drive profound societal change, especially in times of crisis.

General Conclusion

In this dissertation, a historical analysis of the propaganda launched by the United States during the World War II period was conducted to explore the intersection between the United States workforce shortage and the role of the propaganda campaign. The study moves from a general historical overview of the war to the United States workforce shortage and eventually the exceptional participation of women, with a specific focus on the case of Rosie the Riveter.

Through examining the United States involvement into the conflict, its workforce mobilization, and the analysis of the famous figure of Rosie the Riveter, this study sheds light on visual propaganda as a cultural and political tool for the mobilization of women. It was a vast national mobilization that extended far beyond the battlefield as millions of men joined the conflict and the country faced a severe workforce shortage. Furthermore, it shows how visual culture functioned as a calculated tool of ideological messaging and persuasion, promoting a temporary reinvention of women's responsibilities in the workplace. Through highlighting the case of Rosie the Riveter, this work explains how propaganda not only encouraged women's wartime labor, but also altered public attitudes toward gender roles during and after the war. Additionally, it thoroughly looks at propaganda items, including posters, radio broadcasts, and films to see how femininity was reframed to suit the needs of a nation at war.

World War II did not only mark a turning point in the global fight for dominance, but it also sparked significant societal transformations in the United States. The latter changed from a neutral position to a key player in the Allied victory marking a turning point in history. Due to labor shortage and economic restructuring brought about by the war, women and minorities were forced to assume previously unfilled posts, which resulted in significant changes to the American economy and culture. These changes went

against long-standing societal norms and expectations, and demonstrated the country's adaptability in the face of extreme hardship.

The United States military efforts throughout the conflict were influenced by the many forms of propaganda and the role of women in the workforce. Directly contributing to the war effort, women demonstrated their strengths in areas that were previously thought to be beyond their capabilities while serving in various military roles. Despite their notable accomplishments, women in this era faced many challenges including managing work and family responsibilities, overcoming social expectations and adjusting to wartime shortages.

The story of Rosie the Riveter illustrated how wartime propaganda not only mobilized a nation but also reshaped the social and economic landscape for American women. By uncovering the origins and evolving the symbolism of Rosie, this study has shown how a military campaign was transformed into a powerful representation of female strength and labor, highlighting the importance of such a propaganda through the visual analysis of the "We Can Do It " poster. Although the postwar period saw a decline in women’s labor positions, the enduring legacy of Rosie continues to inspire the fight for gender equality. Ultimately, this case study demonstrated how propaganda can both mirror and drive profound societal changes, especially in times of crisis.

The launched propaganda campaign during the war portrayed women as vital to the war effort, but only within limits. It aimed to manage the narrative of women's empowerment by depicting them as temporary solutions rather than long-term members of the workforce. In addition to helping in the normalization with women's labor throughout the war, these representations prepared the way for their eventual return to conventional positions. During World War II, Rosie the Riveter both questioned and upheld traditional gender norms. By presenting women as strong, competent, and vital to

the war effort, she challenged gender norms by accepting industrial positions that had traditionally been assigned to males. Her self-assured pose and the slogan "We Can Do It!" represented the independence and strength of women. But all this was within the frame of retaining feminine characteristics and portraying women's labor as a temporary, patriotic obligation rather than a long-term social change. Rosie within this same context, served to uphold norms.

Women's status in American society was profoundly impacted by Rosie's image, both during and after the war. She offered women a sense of empowerment, purpose, and financial independence in the short term and encouraged the concept of women working outside the house, especially in industrial and defense occupations. Most women were expected to return to domestic duties after the war, and Rosie's image was diminished when men took back their positions. Yet, Rosie eventually rose to popularity as a feminist icon. However, women's rights movements brought the image back to life as a representation of power and gender equality which sparked continuing discussions about women's responsibilities in the workforce and society.

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Appendices

Appendix A

We Can Do It ! Poster

"Rosie the Riveter Day." *The National WWII Museum*, 2 June 2018, www.nationalww2museum.org/events-programs/events/124009-rosie-riveter-day.

Appendix B

Norman Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter

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