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"A REVOLUTION BUT HALF ACCOMPLISHED": THE TWENTIETH CENTURY'S ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILD-RAISING, WOMEN'S WORK, AND FEMINISM

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Nothing renders society more restless than a . . . revolution but half accomplished.
—Carl Shurz

In 1966, a group of politically active women gathered around a table at a government luncheon and created the National Organization for Women, the first avowedly feminist organization of the twentieth century's "second wave" of women's-rights activism. The new movement responded to an expansion in wage work for women, a phenomenon driven not by ideology but by economic circumstance. Within the decade, the women's movement had crafted a comprehensive package of reforms that, if adopted, would have modernized workplace practice as well as family roles to fit the changed wage-earning roles of women and ensure the proper care of children.

For the rest of the century, feminists sought a revision in public policy to make possible equal opportunities for women at work, to improve economic security and independence for women (and their children), and to support a revolution in personal relationships between women and men. Arguing that gender roles grew out of social influences rather than biology—a key departure from the older varieties of women's activism—feminists declared child-raising to be a responsibility of both men and women as well as the society at large.

At the twentieth century's end, the U.S. Code and the statutes of the various states reflected the stunning success of the women's movement in expunging the hoary laws that diminished women's legal capacity and subordinated married women to their husbands. Thanks in large measure to a renewed feminist consciousness, legislation proscribed the ubiquitous discrimination that had existed in the practices of employers and educational

institutions. Other laws, such as those guaranteeing access to abortion or family leave, acknowledged women's need for control over their reproductive lives and offered some accommodation to their responsibility for raising children. But the new millennium had not yet arrived. For all the feminist successes, change occurred slowly with respect to family responsibilities. In the 1990s, women still provided most childcare, receiving modest help from fathers, and little from employers or state agencies. The average "working mother" worked two shifts,[1] usually located in separate sites. Moreover, her wages reflected the long-standing assumption that women's paid work occupied a position secondary to their child-raising role, despite a labor-force participation rate in 1998 of 63.7 percent for married mothers with children under six and a rate of 76.1 percent for those with children from ages six to thirteen.[2]

The attempt to transform childcare arrangements faltered on practical aspects such as cost, but the failure also reflected confusion about the "traditional" way in which children were raised in the "typical" American family. The discussion about childrearing proceeded as if the "traditional" American family consisted for most of America's history of a father who "went to work" and earned enough by himself to support the family comfortably, a mother who "stayed home" and devoted herself to nurturing her children, and children who went to school full-time at least until they graduated from high school. Departures from this model—whether the absence of the father, his failure to earn an adequate wage, or the mother at wage work—thus represented a decline from a healthier and long-standing practice. Wage work for women detracted from their "natural" role as full-time mothers.

This history of the family was, however, a myth. Promulgated in the early nineteenth century, the ideal urban family constituted a realistic goal for only a minority of families in the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century. The moment when a "typical" nonprofessional family could aspire to the family ideal existed only briefly—in the period following World War II, an anomaly popularized by the new medium of television. Most families recognized their own substantial shortfalls from the level of economic security (not to mention emotional and social control) displayed by their television models. They nevertheless accepted the image as the norm and therefore an appropriate goal.

But the true "traditional American family" was not the white middle-class suburban family of the 1950s pictured on the television screen. Until the twentieth century, most Americans had grown up on farms, not in suburbs, and in families that differed dramatically in character from 1950s televised fiction,

where mothers vacuumed in high heels and fathers went to work at a vague and indistinguishable locale known as "The Office." In the traditional American farm family, particularly the subsistence agricultural setting of the frontier but also in the commercial agricultural environment of the nineteenth century, mothers—and fathers—undertook childrearing and breadwinning simultaneously and in the same place, and with little glamour about it.

FAMILY LIFE IN PREINDUSTRIAL AMERICA

On the farm, women's work had a central relation to agricultural production. In addition to engaging in market exchange activities, farmwomen fed and clothed not only their own large families but also auxiliary workers on hand to help with the crops or the indoor work. Producing food comprised many steps: planting and maintaining a garden, harvesting the fruit and vegetables grown there, preserving them for future meals and cooking and serving them in due course. Food also came from the family dairy: farmwomen processed milk, butter, and cheese for the family table. They raised chickens as well, which would need to be slaughtered and dressed, and eggs, which needed to be collected, some to be eaten and some to grow into new livestock. Making and maintaining the family's clothing was similarly time-consuming and labor-intensive: acquiring cloth, cutting simple patterns, stitching new clothing, mending or altering outgrown clothing for a younger child, laundering (including making soap from lye and fat, maintaining the fires that would heat water, scrubbing, rinsing, and hanging them out), and ironing, performed with weighted flatirons heated on the stove. Her labors supplied family members with goods, and they counted on her surplus production to bring in cash. In addition to marketing cheese and eggs, farmwomen skilled as dressmakers or midwives could help earn family income by performing services for neighboring families. And all of these chores took second place to field work when the crop required it.

As an agricultural producer, the farm wife could not have made childcare her primary focus. Children perforce grew up without the close adult scrutiny adjudged essential by nineteenth- and twentieth-century childrearing experts. On the farm, raising children meant attention to their physical needs, spiritual training, primary education, and apprenticeship for adult work roles. Mothers might have supplied little of this care. Siblings of the parents and of the children helped satisfy the child's physical needs. Small children were commonly expected to keep an eye on even smaller ones, bringing in-

fants to adults when they needed to be fed. Children themselves took on economic roles early in life, boys helping with the outdoor work and girls emulating their mother's roles, sometimes undertaking labor as backbreaking as factory work.[3] Childcare thus became synonymous with job training.[4]

Although most late-twentieth-century families could not reproduce the coherence intrinsic to farm life (and they would certainly have wanted no part of the backbreaking work), the dual subsistence-producing and nurturing roles women played in that earlier context would have represented a sounder model for late-twentieth-century mothers than the "angel of the hearth." And a fuller conversancy with this earlier family template might have enabled urban Americans to understand the long history of women's role in family economic support and its centrality to the family's well-being. Instead, throughout the twentieth century, income-earning mothers found themselves described almost continuously as a "problem."

The "problem of the working mother" emerged in the nineteenth century almost immediately upon the relocation of families from the farm to an urban setting. The transition from a predominantly agricultural society to a predominantly urban one did not take place until the half-century following the Civil War, but a small proportion of families, particularly along the eastern seaboard, had experienced it earlier in the century. Elite families solved its central conundrum—how to raise children with home and work sites located in separate places—by creating the doctrine of "separate spheres."[5] Men would work to earn income and would support the mothers of their children, who would withdraw from income-producing work for virtually all of their adult lives; women would instead devote themselves exclusively and intensively to raising their children. In 1830, however, such a model was irrelevant to the 90 percent of families still residing on farms. It also bore little resemblance to the lives of poor urban dwellers, since most nonprofessional occupations did not permit a man to earn enough to support a family comfortably on his own.

By 1900, however, 40 percent of the American population lived in urban settings, confronting the issue of child-raising off the farm. The nineteenth-century domestic ideal still proved elusive. Relatively few families in industrial America could follow the model because relatively few men could earn the income to support it. The average wage in 1900 of $490 a year (about $9600 in 1999 dollars[6]) for nonfarm employees meant that a "typical" urban family of six was most unlikely to meet basic needs from the wage-earning capacity of only one adult.[7] Those nonfarm families that stayed in rural communities would have earned even less. Most nonfarm families therefore had

to supplement the father's wage with the wage-earning work of at least one other family member, constrained by the prevailing notion that married mothers should not work for wages outside the home.

Twentieth-century Americans thus began a series of unwitting experiments in earning income and raising children in an urban industrial society. Early reformers and policymakers focused on various solutions for the pressing problems of insufficient family income, child abuse and neglect, and the preparation and protection of the modern workforce: "a family wage" for male workers; bans on child labor; compulsory schooling; protective labor laws barring women from certain occupations or hours of work; minimum-wage laws to raise the lowest rates paid to women workers; stipends for mothers raising children alone. No solution, however, succeeded in making permanent that desideratum of family life, the full-time mother relieved of the necessity to contribute to the family income. To the contrary, as the century unfolded, more rather than fewer married mothers worked for wages and more families relied on mothers' wages to survive. Yet, having never been addressed directly, at the twentieth century's end as at its beginning, the question of how to care for children in a nonagricultural setting while earning adequate family support still beset the polity. And at the end as at the beginning, race, social class, and gender inflected the answers.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY EXPERIMENTS IN CHILDREARING

In roughly chronological order, we can identify five twentieth-century arrangements adopted or proposed to deal with the problem of raising children and earning income for families in an industrial/commercial economy. Initially, income, not childcare, proved to be the preeminent concern. Thus, strategies to cope in the new urban world varied chiefly by which family member would assist in earning cash wages necessary to support the family and under what circumstances.

MOTHERS AT HOME, CHILDREN AT WORK

At the beginning of the century, when most Americans still lived in rural communities, European immigrants presented the most visible and aggravated cases of families' adapting to urban spaces. More than three million

immigrants had arrived in the last decade of the nineteenth century; in 1900, of sixty-seven million white Americans, some twenty-six million were either foreign-born or the child of a foreign-born parent—40 percent of the white population. Thirteen million more immigrants arrived between 1900 and 1915, the majority settling in cities. Already coping with drastic shifts from European peasant or village life, urban immigrant families tried various ways to stave off poverty, many of which included mothers' work. The practice of taking in boarders was ubiquitous, taking in washing and sewing common. Some immigrant mothers worked in home industries, making clothing, flowers, or cigars.[8] For others, family businesses offered employment and the option to live above the store, thus being at hand when children were about. As Sonya Michel has pointed out, those desperate mothers who had to leave home to find work often took small children with them, keeping them occupied with related tasks, in essence using child labor as a form of childcare.[9] In these ways, families replicated in an urban setting the farm way of life in which mothers melded childcare and subsistence-producing work, albeit without the salubrious aspects of farm life—fresh air and homegrown food.

But economics and convention limited the amount that mothers could earn, and most nonfarm families relied on the wages of another wage earner—an adult or minor child. The data are sparse and do not precisely address the question of family wage-earning structure, but it is possible to draw some inferences from those data available. By 1910 only eleven married women out of a hundred recorded themselves as working for wages, fewer than two million wives. Still, there were 25.8 million nonfarm workers and fourteen million nonfarm households. Some three million households—those with professional or managerial men as the husband/father—probably could have relied on only one wage earner. Thus, approximately twenty-three million workers supported eleven million households, slightly more than two workers per family on average.[10] Census enumerators were instructed to request the occupation of all residents ten years old and older, recognizing how commonly children worked for wages. In 1910, the Census counted 1.6 million children ten to fifteen years old in the labor force, about 15 percent of children that age, unquestionably an undercount.[11] Children over the age of fourteen had usually left school; in 1910, only 15 percent of fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds attended high school.[12] Many parents expected older children to leave school and pursue paid work as soon as they could reasonably anticipate finding a place.[13] Thus, we can infer that the first experiment in raising children in a nonagricultural setting consisted, for the "typical" urban family, of mothers at home (trying to add to the family income

from there) and children from ten years old and up performing wage work to help support the family.[14]

An exception to this pattern appeared early among African American families. Although some also sought to emulate the ideal of having a mother withdraw from wage work (and the field labor necessary for agricultural families), many preferred to keep daughters in school if possible. Thus, mothers took on domestic work rather than sending the younger women to such jobs where they would be more vulnerable to the sexual depredations of white male employers.[15] In 1900, when 3 percent of white married women reported themselves as working for wages, the labor-force participation rate of black married women was 26 percent. In this adaptation as in later ones, the black family anticipated a change that would come later to white ones.

"Maternalist" Progressive reformers in the early decades of the twentieth century sought to limit the workplace participation of children by protective labor legislation and by enforcement and extension of compulsory schooling laws. The movement to withdraw children under fourteen from paid labor and to keep them in school took four decades to effect. States were slow to outlaw child labor: by 1923 only thirteen states imposed any significant legal restrictions on child labor and those laws tended to deal only with factory work, leaving children working in agriculture unregulated.[16] Congress passed child-labor laws in 1916 and 1919, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled both unconstitutional. A constitutional amendment submitted to the states by Congress in 1924 won the support of only six states by 1930. By 1932, however, all states had some legislation affecting child labor (most barring factory work by those age fourteen and younger)[17] and the work of children under the age of sixteen in interstate commerce finally became illegal in 1938 with the passage of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

Progressives had an easier time with compulsory schooling laws. Massachusetts had enacted a school attendance law as early as 1852. Another twenty-two states followed suit between the end of the Civil War and 1890. Southern states waited until the twentieth century, but by 1918 all states had compulsory school laws, normally requiring attendance of children to age fourteen. Enforcement was a different matter. Many objected to the government's compelling children to attend school, arguing that children benefited from working and that, in any case, such a decision belonged to parents. Families that needed children's income had a powerful incentive to flout laws and school districts lacked both sufficient desks for all children and the capacity to police either the densely packed tenement districts or the sparsely settled rural areas.[18] School officials disliked dealing with rough, poorly prepared

students from urban ghettos—the very ones Progressives hoped would gain most from education provided at public expense. But Progressives succeeded in improving enforcement and in extending both the number of required days in school each year and the number of years a child would attend. According to David Tyack, from 1890 to 1918 more than ten thousand new high schools were built and high school attendance increased more than 700 percent. New school administrators emerged for the specific purpose of monitoring school enrollment and enforcing attendance rules.[19] The expectation that children would attend high school worked in tandem with child-labor laws to withdraw children from industrial labor. The proportion of children aged fourteen to seventeen enrolled in high school doubled from 16 percent in 1910 to 32 percent in 1920.[20] But that figure left two-thirds of high school-age children likely at work.

Ultimately, whether a child could stay in school or not depended on the general state of the economy. The prosperity that marked the 1920s lifted the wages of working men and helped to shrink the numbers of children in the labor force. In the 1920 census, the ratio of nonfarm workers to nonfarm households had dropped from 1.84 overall in 1910 to 1.75, indicating that additional families probably were relying on the wages of one earner. Indeed, the average wage of workers in all industries, excluding farm labor, rose from $630 in 1910 to $1,500 in 1920 (farm laborers earned only $810). An annualized wage for factory workers in 1920 equaled about $1,350. No doubt fostered by the relative affluence, high school attendance increased. By 1930, just over half (51.4 percent) of the high school-age population attended school.[21]

But an annualized wage for factory workers in 1920 equaled about $1,350—approximately $11,000 in 1999 dollars—and most families still probably required a second income to maintain an adequate standard of living. In their study of Muncie, the Lynds found that only twenty-five out of one hundred working-class families earned the $1,920 deemed the minimum income necessary for a family of five. In 1920, of approximately twenty-three million male nonfarm workers, 3.9 million, who occupied professional and managerial positions or owned their own businesses, were potentially successful single-family earners, less than 18 percent. Removing their households from the total of eighteen million nonfarm households at the time, we find that nineteen million remaining male workers (of whom sixteen million worked at manual labor and three million in white-collar jobs) presumably supported the balance of fourteen million nonfarm households, assisted by 7.5 million nonfarm working women (including about 9 percent of wives), an average of 1.9 workers for each of these households. It is possible that more than half of

these urban households managed on one income, but if they did so they likely suffered substantial economic duress.[22]

The Depression both accelerated the trend against child labor and impeded the growth of paid labor for married women. The scarcity of jobs led families to encourage children to stay in school in the hope that they would be better able to earn with more education. The combination of compulsory school laws through twelfth grade or age sixteen and legal barriers to the employment of children younger than fourteen removed many urban children from the labor force. By 1940, 73 percent of fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds attended school, and the ratio of nonfarm workers to nonfarm households fell to 1.64. With work scarce, little sentiment favored mothers at work. The Depression crisis had already threatened family stability in numerous ways; restoring fathers as the family breadwinner constituted a key policy goal of the New Deal. The pervasive unemployment of men led to a more intense commitment to the "traditional" family than had appeared in the 1920s, when careers for married women enjoyed something of a vogue. Animosity toward married women at work led to both private actions by employers and legislation to establish a policy against hiring married women in lieu of male breadwinners. One unemployed husband voiced a widespread sentiment among working-class men when he declared, "I would rather starve than let my wife work."[23] Yet, despite the hostility toward them, married women increased their work rates during the Depression (though their numbers remained small). In 1930, about 12 percent of wives were at work; by 1940, that proportion had risen to 17 percent. Black married women entered the labor force at a rate three times that of white women, reflecting the disadvantaged position of black men in the labor force.[24]

Wives undoubtedly worked because families with only one wage earner had a hard time of it. In the 1930s, a third of all families reported an income below $800 annually (about $9500 in 1999 dollars), more than 80 percent of them one-earner families. One-third of the 20 percent of American families in 1940 that earned a middle-class income (between $1,600 and $2,500, or between $19,000 to $30,000 in 1999 dollars) got there by benefit of two or more earners.[25] But during the 1930s, older children, rather than wives, remained the preponderant group bringing in additional wages. Of eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds, only 12 percent had married, although only 29 percent were enrolled in school; for the next age cohort, twenty to twenty-four, fewer than 7 percent were in school, about two-thirds were still single and 88 percent of the men and 46 percent of the women were in the labor force, most likely helping with family expenses.[26]

World War II had the potential for creating dramatic changes in family-wage-earning arrangements. Once the United States started building arms, the availability of jobs drew married women into the labor force. At the peak of the war, the female labor force had grown by almost 50 percent and, while policymakers expressed reservations, mothers who could find good care for their children could do their part to ease the labor shortage without opprobrium. The federal government even allocated a small portion of public funds to the support of childcare centers. The number of wives at work doubled.[27] But the welcome for married women at work and the public support for childcare turned out to be a brief aberration that the polity was not yet prepared to endorse. The next adaptation appeared in the postwar era.

MOTHERS AT HOME, CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

After the war ended, the economic dominance of the United States globally, pent-up consumer demand, and huge government investment in infrastructure, education, and industry launched a boom that, for the first time in American history, appeared to make it possible for an "average" working-class family to survive on the wages of a single (male) income earner. By one measure—the Current Population Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census—from 1948 to 1955 slightly more than half of American families sustained themselves on the wages of a single wage earner.[28] But while suggestive, these data are not dispositive because the definition of "wage earner" included both casual teenage workers as well as those who contributed to family support, and the definition of "family" included childless married couples. Closer analysis of census data between 1940 and 1980 refines the picture: Daniel Hernandez concludes that the number of children in "ideal" families peaked in 1950. In that year, the proportion of children between birth and age seventeen who lived in families in which the father had worked at least forty-eight weeks the previous year and thirty-five hours the previous week and in which the mother did not participate in the labor force amounted to 47.1 percent. The proportion of children so situated fell to 44.7 percent by 1960 and to 26.3 percent by 1980.[29] Thus, even in the 1950s, more than half of American children lived in families that departed from the ideal. Moreover, some of the ostensibly ideal families certainly had the assistance of a second wage earner. The labor-force participation rate of teenaged children remained high, including two-thirds of boys aged sixteen to nineteen and two-fifths of girls that age.[30] Although many teenagers no doubt used their

earnings as personal discretionary income, others also surely helped pay family bills, especially among the 23 percent of fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds not attending school.

Still, the prosperous postwar economy allowed many new mothers, especially white mothers, to stay out of the labor force without the family's relying on the wages of a minor or adult child, the second adaptation to raising children in a nonagricultural setting in the twentieth century and the first time working-class husbands could anticipate earning a "family wage." With 3.4 million to 4.2 million births every year for a decade, the population grew to include some twenty million new families with small children, out of some 43.5 million total families. In 1960 only 18.6 percent of married mothers with children under six worked for wages, but more than 60 percent of families (with and without children) earned more than $5,000 (the average family income was $6,819, or $28,000 in 1999 dollars). Only 39 percent of male workers over the age of fourteen earned that amount, although another 23 percent earned between $3,000 and $5,000, again strongly indicating the presence of a second wage earner in many families.[31] But most families probably did rely on one wage earner: 66.6 million nonfarm workers supported 48.7 million households—1.36 workers per household.[32]

MOTHERS AT HOME AND AT WORK

The moment was brief: For the rest of the century, the numbers of mothers in the labor force would increase. In 1950, 21.6 percent of mothers with children under eighteen were at wage work; by 1960, their participation rate had grown to 30.4. By 1967, in two-parent families where all the children were between the ages of six and seventeen, 44 percent of white mothers—and 55 percent of nonwhite mothers—worked.[33] The labor-force participation rate for married mothers with children between six and seventeen passed the halfway mark in the 1970s; those with children under six reached the halfway mark during the following decade.[34] These women thus instated the wage work of mothers as a permanent feature of the U.S. economy, initiating the third experiment in income-earning and raising children: mothers routinely fitting wage work in around school schedules and childcare needs.

Ironically, at the very moment that growing numbers of women were joining the paid labor force, a new invention inscribed the image of the model white affluent suburban family on the American consciousness. Television brought the Nelson family, the Anderson family, the Stone family, the Cleaver

family, the Reilly family, and the Williams family into American living rooms, shortly followed by numerous other families, most of which revolved around a mother devoting full time to family care rather than wage earning, regardless of the age of the children.[35] The power and prevalence of these images did not cloud the vision of those families who realized that they could not in fact afford the ongoing estrangement of one adult from paid work. They did, however, implicitly characterize the working mother as "deviant" and, quite possibly, neglectful.

In order not to neglect their children, mothers employed outside the home took jobs less than full-time or year-round. And they worked part-time. In 1967, of working mothers with children between the ages of six and seventeen, 39 percent worked full-time for the full year, about 14 percent worked more than six months but fewer than fifty weeks at full time, and 12 percent worked full-time fewer than six months of the year. About one-third of mothers worked part-time. Mothers with children younger than three were no more likely to work part-time than were mothers with older children, but they did work fewer weeks per year, perhaps reflecting the difficulty of getting jobs that required fewer than thirty-five hours per week.[36] Employers, meanwhile, justified discrimination against the married mother (and, by extension, every woman) on the very ground that she would be likely to put her family before her wage work, as indeed she was expected to do.

Fitting childcare and paid work together became even more difficult because experts had redefined what children required in the way of "raising." The twentieth century witnessed not merely a shift from farmland to cityscapes but a revision of what a family owed a child. Although the idea of children as unique individuals requiring special attention had gained currency by the early nineteenth century, in the latter part of the century Darwinian psychologist G. Stanley Hall expanded the notion to suggest that children's physical and mental well-being demanded specific treatment at different developmental stages, by a mother trained for motherhood.[37] John B. Watson, in *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (1928), insisted on scientific principles for raising children. Women could not rely on instinct and in particular needed to guard against excessive attachment.[38] Freudians laid at mothers' feet blame for the neurotic child, and popular writers such as Philip Wylie (*Generation of Vipers,* 1942) launched vituperative attacks on overbearing mothers who suffocated their children to fulfill their own selfish needs.[39] Meanwhile, concerns about juvenile delinquency led to censuring mothers who left their children unattended. A modern woman could not "mother" carefully enough. Such obligations had not beset the mother on the farm.

Modern mothers also had new responsibilities concerning their children's education. In an agricultural world, children's formal schooling got short shrift. School schedules purposely permitted children to help with farming and, even though schools suspended operation during the summer, farm children attended much less often than city kids, most only from mid-November to early spring.[40] In 1870, when most families were still farm families, the average length of the school term was 132 days, but the average number of days attended per enrolled pupil was 78, the equivalent of sixteen weeks of school.[41] In 1898 a "typical young American" could anticipate five years of education.[42] Southern children, black children, sharecroppers' children, could look forward to even less schooling.[43] But an urban twentieth-century worker needed formal education, more so as the century wore on. When educational professionals came in contact with the work of child development experts, they expanded their recommendations concerning the range of stimulation that children needed in their early years to enhance their success in school (and, therefore, later at work). Standardized testing documented deficits when children failed to meet grade-level norms; educators held mothers accountable for lapses. By 1950, children were expected to stay in school until high school graduation and mothers were expected to shepherd their children throughout, supplying emotional sustenance and intellectual enrichment. For the rest of the century, childrearing experts ratcheted up the efforts ostensibly required to raise a healthy and successful child, while at the same time more mothers undertook childrearing as a part-time rather than a full-time occupation, exacerbating the tension between their roles as mothers and as workers.

Criticism notwithstanding, mothers' wage work facilitated their children's education. If, in the first half of the century, the labor of adult children had permitted their fourteen-year-old, fifteen-year-old, and sixteen-year-old siblings to finish high school, in the next half-century mothers replaced their older children as family earners, permitting them to go to college. School enrollment of eighteen- and nineteen-year-olds closely tracked the labor-force participation rates of mothers with children between the ages of six and seventeen; enrollments of those twenty to twenty-four also rose in concert with mothers' work. The wage work of mothers permitted children to stay in school long past the legal working age, acquiring the skills necessary to navigate an economy increasingly reliant on sophisticated technical and professional skills.

The work of women benefited not only their own families but also the national economy. Women's work on farms had sustained the agricultural

economy; women's work in the paid labor force was no less essential to a modern economic system. World War II had intensified the trend of married women's joining the paid labor force: In 1940 (as noted earlier), 17 percent of wives worked; by 1960, 32 percent did.[44] Immediately after the war, the growth of women's wage work led to concern among policymakers, businesses, and unions over the prospect of competition between men and women for scarce jobs. But by the time of John Kennedy's inauguration in 1961, it had become clear that women would not replace men in the jobs traditionally identified as male. To the contrary, the need for clerical workers, nurses, and teachers made plain that both the public and the private sectors required women's paid work. In addition, the Cold War fueled anxieties about leaving women's talents unplumbed; in 1957 the National Manpower Council released a report called *Womanpower,* warning that women were essential workers: "Without their presence in the labor force we could neither produce and distribute the goods nor provide the educational, health, and other social services which characterize American society." The council also observed that women were underutilized, especially compared to the Soviet Union: "There are annually some 13,000 women graduating as engineers in the Soviet Union, compared to well under 100 in the United States." But, the council also noted, women's lives "are fundamentally determined by their functions as wives, mothers, and homemakers."[45]

Thus, in 1961 John F. Kennedy appointed a presidential commission to formulate recommendations to help women negotiate the two often conflicting roles of worker and mother. The commission appointed seven subcommittees, three of them dealing with employment and working conditions, one with family life, and one with education geared to lifelong paid work. Two more subcommittees considered the changes in the law and in tax and insurance schemes needed to adapt them to women's new roles. The commission accumulated data that documented women's relative disadvantage and the extent of the problem of adequate care for children. In 1963, by the time the commission issued its report, a national network of activists had formed to pursue the goals the national commission and its state offshoots had crafted.[46] No one had suggested that a presidential commission examine how fathers could perform their two roles, although industrialization had also vitiated the role of fathers as educators and guides of their children. This burden—of merging paid work and childcare to meet the demands of the late-twentieth-century economy—fell entirely on women; a feminist movement, fostered by federal policymakers, emerged in part to help women cope with its demands.

Congress had responded quickly to women mobilized by the President's Commission and energized by the prospect of recognition. In 1963 Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, an amendment to the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act that barred employers from discriminating in pay rates based on sex. The first piece of federal legislation banning sex discrimination by private employers, the statute signaled the beginning of government's recognition of the permanent attachment of women—including married mothers—to the wage-labor force.[47] In 1964, Congress passed a civil rights act that included a wider ban on sex discrimination in employment. The legislation designated a new agency, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), to enforce the law, but the EEOC gave short shrift to its responsibility to ensure equal treatment for women workers. Its disdain provoked a response from the women's network organized by the federal and state commissions. In 1966, a group of women attending a meeting of state commissions on women formed a new nongovernmental organization devoted to the full equality of women—NOW: the National Organization for Women. NOW took as its first order of business improving the performance of the EEOC,[48] but its wider mission included reordering social expectations about gender roles and it proposed a fourth system—a new ideal—for earning income and raising children in modern America.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS AT WORK AND AT HOME, CHILDREN IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

NOW constituted only the first of what would become a plethora of new women's organizations devoted to an explicitly feminist agenda based on freedom from stereotypical gender roles. Its program was much more comprehensive than the one Kennedy's commission had laid out. Not only would society help women resolve the role conflict produced by wage work done simultaneously with childcare, feminists now called upon men to adopt with women ownership of the full range of human responsibilities, to be divided on lines of individual preference and aptitude, not by sex. Thus, the new woman's movement proposed a new feminist system of childrearing in which women and men would again share all the work of the world, including family financial support and child-raising—as they had a century earlier. Both parents would negotiate with employers and make compromises in their work lives to provide their children with adequate parental care, supplemented by income replacement from employers or government. Public

funding would support new institutions that would also provide childcare, both to accommodate parental work schedules and to expose the young child to experiences beyond those her parents could offer. The arrangement would permit men to develop the affective side of their nature and women to achieve both the satisfaction of instrumental work and the protection of economic autonomy. Such economic wherewithal for women would equalize power within the heterosexual family, would permit women to leave unhealthy or dangerous marriages and still care for their children, and would make possible a variety of new family forms, including same-sex partners with children.

Feminists also fought for reproductive freedom, including access to abortion. Birth control had become accepted during the Depression as a method of "family planning," and the oral contraceptive, available in the 1960s, made contraception reliable and accessible. But abortion gave women ultimate control over reproductive vicissitudes, essential in the modern era to both women and to their employers. In an agricultural setting, in which children contributed labor as farm hands and a woman raised her children while she worked, an additional child could have a positive economic impact. In a corporate business economy, an unplanned child could constitute an economic disaster for the woman and her family and uncertainties for employers. An expanded right to birth control and abortion gave a woman the ability to determine her work life as well as her reproductive choices, making childrearing a much more contingent activity, increasingly a decision women themselves were forced to justify.[49] Thus, although crafted to respond to the problems of the moment as experienced by women, the feminist program would have modernized family organization and public policy to fit a late-twentieth-century postindustrial economy with virtually every adult engaged in lifelong wage work.

The movement, consisting of national and local groups of all political stripes, had a powerful impact on public policy, including executive branch actions, legislation, and court decisions on the federal and state level. Although from the outset the women's movement demanded public support for childcare, the political community proved most amenable to the laws that banned discrimination rather than those that seemed likely to change child-rearing practices and to require substantial federal expenditure.[50] By 1980, federal laws and executive orders banned discrimination in employment and job training against women (even when pregnant) and Congress had expanded the reach of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to state and local governments. Lenders could no longer offer credit only to men; educational in-

stitutions could no longer discriminate among their students based on sex (although schools could continue to limit enrollments to a single sex). Congress also opened military academies to women and allocated money for special programs to achieve equity for women and to hold a National Women's Conference to set new goals for eliminating sex discrimination.

Concomitantly, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed its jurisprudence pertaining to sex-based classification in the law. By 1980, the Court had enunciated a new standard for such statutes: States would have to demonstrate that a sex-based classification had a substantial relationship to an important governmental objective.[51] Using this standard, the Court threw out almost all laws that distinguished on the basis of sex, including those that pertained to marital property, alimony, jury service, and age of majority. The Court further established and maintained the existence of a right to privacy that permitted physicians to terminate pregnancies during the first three months of gestation (the famous holding in *Roe v. Wade,* 1973). By virtue of these judicial decisions, the close—and surprising—defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982 had only a marginal impact on women's legal standing.

With new support for equal treatment, women's wage-earning roles continued to grow. In 1996, the labor-force participation rate of single women reached 65 percent, up from 53 percent in 1970. For married women, the rate had changed in the same time from 41 to 61 percent; for married women with children under six, from 30 to 63 percent; for married women with children from six to seventeen years old, from 49 to 77 percent.[52] By the end of the century, women were 29 percent of lawyers and judges, 26 percent of physicians, a third of professional athletes, half of all entry- and midlevel managers. Women received more than half the bachelor's degrees awarded annually and almost half of the doctorates.

But feminists' success was incomplete. Most women worked in traditional women's jobs and earned the wages to show for it. In 1996, 57 percent of working women earned their livings as service workers, sales women, or secretarial/clerical workers. Women made up more than 90 percent of nurses, 98 percent of nursery school teachers and childcare providers, 83 percent of elementary school teachers, 97 percent of secretaries and receptionists, 92 percent of bookkeepers, 90 percent of bank tellers, and 95 percent of household service workers. Few working-class women gained access to the higher-paid and traditionally male blue-collar jobs; in 1996, women constituted only 2 percent of firefighters, 1 percent of automobile mechanics, and 5 percent of truck drivers. Although the wage gap had closed more than 15 percentage points since 1960, women on average were still earning only 76 percent of

men's wages.[53] Women's lower wages reflected the prevailing view that women were "secondary" earners because they still held the primary responsibility for raising children, although 75 percent of working mothers with children ages six to seventeen worked full time, as did nearly two-thirds of working women with younger children.[54]

The feminist proposal for childcare envisioned a partnership among mothers, fathers, employers, and government, but key components of this regime failed to appear. Feminists came within a hair of winning major federal support for institutional assistance with child-raising but quickly lost their leverage. In 1971, Congress passed the Comprehensive Child Development Act, which would have provided $4.5 billion dollars in subsidized childcare for poor families. Richard Nixon vetoed it, in keeping with the rightist view that such facilities would "Sovietize" American children.[55] The political and religious right stymied federal financial support for childcare and joined forces to mobilize against the feminist agenda, eventually adopting the rubric of "family values," citing with opprobrium collective childcare arrangements, access to abortion, and support for gay rights.[56] As a result, congressional support for publicly funded childcare never came close to meeting the need. Instead, in 1981, tax credit provisions allowed families to claim up to $480 for care for one child and $960 for two or more children. Beginning in 1982, the federal government allocated about $3 billion a year for a social services block grant that states could (but did not have to) use for childcare services. States responded with major cuts in childcare services.[57] A 1990 bill, the Act for Better Child Care, which Republican President George Bush signed, included both $2.5 billion over three years to states for childcare services and tax breaks for mothers at home. Further devolution of such programs to the states at the end of the century left childcare support uncertain.

After a Democratic president won election in 1992, feminists wrested a grudging accommodation to their parental responsibilities in the form of a national guaranteed period of leave for pregnancy, childbirth, and the care of sick family members. In 1993, President Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, which mandated twelve weeks of unpaid family or medical leave for workers in covered employment, a proposal twice vetoed by his Republican predecessor, George Bush. Family and medical leave assumed that women would remain attached to the labor force even during their childbearing years and for the first time national legislation offered some job security to women facing childbirth. The sex-neutral language of the statute—men as well as women were guaranteed family leave—retained the feminist ideal of shared family roles, although women primarily would take advantage of the

benefit. While poor women would need to retain their jobs at least as much as middle-class women, only those with ample resources could take the full leave, stingy though it was, without pay. The question of who would care for the three-month-old infants at the end of the leave remained unaddressed.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS AT WORK, CHILDREN IN TRANSIT

At century's end, with more than three-quarters of single and married mothers with school-age children in the labor force, families received comparatively little assistance in paying for or in locating suitable care for their children. Such limited public financing for childcare, resistance to educational standards for private daycare providers, and the absence of paid leave, set the United States apart from its Western European counterparts, which routinely offered such benefits to working families. Private daycare providers filled the gap, many of them women who hoped to reconcile their own parental responsibilities with their need to earn money by caring for children in their homes. Lax standards left parents with a shortage of satisfactory choices, while daycare workers—usually women, often minority women—earned an average wage of $11,780, too low to support their own families adequately and less than the average bartender did.[58] Businesses showed little interest in helping. By 1998, only 9 percent of a thousand employers surveyed by the Families and Work Institute offered childcare services to their employees, although they advised other firms that doing so helped recruitment and led to increased rates of retention.[59] According to Sonya Michel, about 5,600 employer-supported childcare programs served about half a million youngsters in the 1990s.[60]

Parents nevertheless continued to work and to find help with childcare. In 1995, for all children under six, 40 percent were cared for only by their parents. When mothers were at work full time, one- third of young children were cared for by relatives, about 40 percent were in daycare or nursery school, and an additional 32 percent were in the care of nonrelatives, either inside or outside their own home. For 12 percent, even with mothers working full-time, their parents managed all childcare.[61]

These figures reveal that some fathers had stepped in to provide hands-on care for their children. In 1997, a CBS News poll reported that in 31 percent of families, husbands and wives shared childcare equally, up from 27 percent in 1983.[62] In 1994, fathers were the primary caregivers in 22 percent

of families with preschool children, a dramatic increase from virtually none.[63] The ideal feminist lifestyle of two parents both working for wages and caring for their children seemed most likely to be pursued by working-class couples. Although they may have evinced little interest in feminist theory, they possessed fewer economic resources to support other options. In 1993, for fathers of children under five years of age, 42 percent of those who worked in service occupations cared for their children while their wives worked, compared to 20 percent of fathers in professional or managerial jobs.[64] The highly educated professional classes, more committed to feminist ideology, were least likely to adopt an egalitarian arrangement.[65] Rather, these couples hired another woman to take care of their children, or the professional wife temporarily dropped out of a promising career to devote herself full-time to child-raising, relying on the single substantial professional income of her husband.

Still, the onus of arranging nonparental childcare fell most often on mothers and the demands of the job, coupled with antiquated school schedules, meant that mothers frequently had to arrange more than one kind of care for a child—or for two children—and had to plan transportation to get them from one place to the other. According to a national survey of 45,000 families conducted in 1997, 38 percent of children younger than five in nonparental care with mothers at work spent time in two or more childcare settings each week. Thirteen percent of these three- and four-year-olds had three or more nonparental caregivers in a given week (19 percent in Minnesota and New York).[66] Family income levels had no bearing on the use of multiple childcare providers. So at the end of the twentieth century, fathers retained their full-time connection to the paid work, while mothers working full time arranged surrogate care for their children around the demands of their jobs—the most recent of the experiments to raise children in a modern, nonagricultural economy.

In 1996, the conservative right itself acknowledged implicitly the weakening hold of the ideal of the full-time mother in reformulating policy for the poor (and putatively black) mother. At the beginning of the century, reformers had identified households that lacked male breadwinners as urgent objects of assistance. Because of their commitment to mothers at home, these Progressive reformers sought and gained publicly funded "mothers' pensions" to permit mothers to eschew paid employment for the sake of providing care to their children. States did not provide much in the way of funding and state officials openly favored white mothers, but the more effective New Deal policies, incorporated in the Social Security Act of 1935

and its 1939 amendments, adopted the model of financial support to mothers of minor children to permit them to forgo work for wages indefinitely.[67] Until the 1960s this support was contingent on the mother's *not* working outside the home.

In the 1960s several trends merged to undermine such a policy. Thanks to both urban migration and to the movements for civil rights and social justice, more black mothers received aid previously limited in many states almost entirely to white women.[68] As the program of "aid to families with dependent children" became identified with black families living in urban ghettoes, critics assailed public assistance as the cause of familial disorder rather than its palliative. At the same time, (white) working mothers became the rule rather than the exception. Animosity therefore intensified over taxing those white women to help other—black—mothers stay home. The federal government thus simultaneously enacted laws explicitly supporting women at work by barring discrimination (the Equal Pay Act in 1963 and the Civil Rights Act in 1964), at the same time devising programs (such as the work requirements in the Public Welfare Amendments of 1962) that would encourage poor women to work for wages rather than to remain full-time mothers.[69]

Over the next three decades, the preference for work grew and the defense of spending public money to allow poor women with young children to stay home virtually disappeared. Opponents of federal aid to the poor argued that poor impoverished children would benefit from working mothers as effective role models, and poor mothers would benefit from the experience of wage earning and workplace interactions.[70] Although evidence demonstrated that most mothers on public assistance already worked for wages for a substantial number of hours, in 1996 a Republican Congress insisted on the necessity of a law that would force women to work.[71] New federal legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, mandated work and removed the guarantee of public assistance to poor mothers. With the signature of a Democratic president, this so-called welfare reform law apparently signaled that neither both political party would now defend full-time mothering for women as either the practice or the goal.

But the 1996 welfare legislation had as its explicit objective not to compel single mothers to work but rather to promote marriage. Copious evidence showed that most poor women leaving welfare could not find jobs that would provide sufficient income to support their families adequately.[72] In its "findings," Congress noted in the law: "Marriage is the foundation of a successful society; Marriage is an essential institution of a successful society

which promotes the interests of children." The new welfare law had as its purpose therefore "to increase the flexibility of States . . . to . . . provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; [to] end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage [and to] encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families."[73] Unwilling to provide a public subsidy to permit single women to stay at home while married mothers went to work, conservative policymakers argued for the chimera of father-supported families, with mothers at home, for children in families at all income levels.

The decline in marriage rates in the United States and the increase in single-mother families mirrored transnational trends.[74] Nevertheless, conservative commentators reasserted the necessity for fathers to occupy gender-based "leadership" roles in the family, invoking both nature and the principles of traditional Christian theology. David Blankenhorn, in his book *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem,* warned not simply that children needed their fathers in residence and married to their mothers but that the parents had to adopt gendered parental roles, a need supposedly confirmed by "psychological and anthropological evidence from a diversity of cultures." Children required a full-time stay-at-home mother and a father-breadwinner, a role that "permits men to serve their families through competition with other men." The "New Father" of the feminist model, wrote Blankenhorn, "finally becomes no father."[75] In June 1998 the Southern Baptist convention declared, as an addition to their fundamental credo, that a husband "has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect and to lead his family." In return, "a wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ."[76] The president of the denomination, Paige Patterson, explained that the declaration responded to "a time of growing crisis in the family."[77]

Meanwhile, the mainstream press began to characterize the childrearing problem repeatedly as a woman's issue, a parallel "back-to-the-home" movement. On February 15, 1998, *The Washington Post Magazine* offered a cover story entitled "Dispatches From the Mommy Wars—To Work or to Stay Home: A New Mother's Tour of a Cultural Battlefield," by Tracy Thompson. Not two months later, on April 5, 1998, *The New York Times Magazine* devoted a special issue to the subject, entitled (accurately enough) "Mothers Can't Win: A Special Issue on the Joy and Guilt of Modern Motherhood." The cover photograph of a woman and three children on a stark white back-

ground conveyed the clear idea that children were women's problem. Superimposed on the photo was a series of questions, the first: "Work or home?" "No matter what they choose, they're made to feel bad," the cover type explained—without acknowledging that such a choice was available only to the affluent woman. "Elizabeth Munro, ex-lawyer." On the contents page, a photograph of another woman, this time with five children, showed her posed in front of a window, also without a father in sight. In an article concerning support groups for full-time mothers, the reporter noted that one mother "has an MBA, a master's degree in economics and is fluent in Mandarin," but is staying home with her son, having given up "a career in China and a six-figure salary." The mother herself expressed ambivalence: "No matter what a woman decides, to stay at work or to stay at home, she feels conflicted." For such women, groups like Mothers First, FEMALE, and Parents and Community Education, gave women the opportunity to meet other women who had made the same decision.[78] The resignation of Brenda Barnes, chief of Pepsico's North American operation, to spend more time with her children made the lead in a story called "Women on the Tightrope: Two Views," reviewing two books on the subject: *When Mothers Work: Loving Our Children Without Sacrificing Our Selves* by Joan Peters and *When Work Doesn't Work Anymore: Women, Work, and Identity* by Elizabeth Perle McKenna.[79]

With surrogate care often replacing the care of both poor and more affluent mothers, feminists had to confront arguments about the adequacy of group arrangements in order to respond to those who labeled "working mothers" a problem. Unable to change the discussion to emphasize the continuing hesitance of men to render actual physical care for their children and the refusal of the government and employers to do more to assist families, feminists were reduced to defending a system in which poorly paid women offered substitute childcare in group settings that many claimed failed to provide sufficient attention to young children.[80] Such circumstances divided women by class and race as families tried to keep daycare costs low by resisting raises in wages that necessitated raises in rates. Rather than abating, conflict over the effect of surrogate care for children intensified, with some combatants offering damning evidence about deficits in children left in institutional care, while others reassured anxious parents that surrogate care was fine. In 1998, a front-page story in the *New York Times,* "Struggling for Personal Attention in Day Care," observed that "such care often forces the workers to change their emphasis from individual attention to group management." Noting that the demand for daycare was rising, the reporter cited studies showing that "more than 1 in 10 children

are in care that is unsafe and harmful to their development."[81] In "Attachment Theory: The Ultimate Experiment," a reporter rehearsed the data about attachment theory and referred to children raised in a Romanian orphanage to warn against a cavalier attitude toward daycare.[82] (Parents' parking children in front of television sets engendered no cries to remove those children to good daycare centers, however.) Television news shows and newspapers bruited horror stories of murderous nannies and viewers blamed the mother—not the father—for leaving the child with the caregiver.[83] (News stories of mothers and fathers murdering their children, however, did not prompt arguments against parental care, nor did reporters point out that a child was much more likely to be harmed by a parent than by a daycare worker.) Some experts rode to the rescue: In the March 1999 issue of *Developmental Psychology,* a psychologist concluded that children at age twelve whose mothers had worked during their first three years showed no ill effects when compared with children the same age whose mothers had been home,[84] and a report from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development deemed most childcare "fair" or "good," with only 8 percent identified as "poor."[85]

So while feminists insisted on the need for more and better publicly funded childcare and more public and social support for families, conservatives maintained that the solution to raising children in a nonagricultural society was to have one adult (which is to say, the mother) withdraw from wage work and devote herself solely to childrearing. The father of the children, they argued, should subsidize such a solution.[86] For women who were not married, they recommended marriage. Still, enough measurable change had occurred in both behavior and in the way the public viewed family responsibilities to suggest that such a conservative counterrevolution would win few adherents. Only 22 percent in a 1997 poll agreed that a husband's job was more important than the wife's,[87] and a stunning 91 percent of men and 94 percent of women polled by in March 1998 agreed with the statement: "Everything about the care of children should be shared equally by both parents."[88]

CARING FOR CHILDREN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, but the end of the century found Americans still struggling with the question of how to care adequate-

ly for young children and provide sufficient family income. Initially, policymakers had advocated the withdrawal of mothers from waged labor for a substantial portion of their lives to devote themselves to childcare. But this strategy depended upon the availability of other workers to supplement family wages. Such a system deprived young people of educational chances, while the financial dependence of women on men left women and children vulnerable to economic deprivation. The insufficiency of wages paid to male workers as well as rising divorce rates indicated that the father's wage earning alone could not in the long run support most families. In addition, as the century progressed, women's income provided benefits to families (college education, dental care, vacations, homes) that women's unwaged work at home could not. Moreover, by mid-century it had become clear that the national economy required both the skills and talents that women possessed as well as the sheer labor power to fill essential positions. Thus, calls to reestablish the "traditional American family" had an anachronistic ring, a fruitless attempt to establish an idealized nineteenth-century system unsuited to the reality of a twentieth-first-century economy.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, with global competition creating more pressure for all adults to work for wages outside the home, a raft of new policy proposals seemed to herald the understanding that a concerted social response would have to emerge to ensure the proper care of children—and other family members—and to complete the transition from an agricultural to a postindustrial economy.[89] Some proposals implied the kind of massive governmental intervention that accompanied earlier economic transformations. In January 2000, the *New York Times* reported that "the explosion in after-school programs—federal financing alone has ballooned to $454 million this year from $1 million in 1997—represents nothing less than a reimagining of the school day for the first time in generations, as educators and policymakers seek to respond to the realities of working families and what may be missing from the classroom."[90] Universal preschool programs appeared in the Democratic presidential platform, "the educational issue du jour," while forty-two states instituted preschool programs for poor children.[91] Labor unions and private corporations indicated a new emphasis on negotiating issues concerning family care. In May 2001, the Ford Motor Company, at the urging of the United Auto Workers, announced plans to create thirty "Family Service and Learning Centers" with programs for both children and parents of Ford workers.[92] Countless books appeared to advise policymakers to update government mandates for private employers so that workers, both male and female, might provide their children and, increasingly, their parents

with appropriate care.[93] Feminist policymakers advised expansion of "social wages," such as paid family leave, to provide additional support for families without futile attempts to coerce family forms. They argued that the burden of accommodation to the global economy could not be placed solely on the shoulders of women.[94]

Contrary to prevailing wisdom, for most of American history, most American women did not engage in full-time childcare. When they did so, it was all too often at the cost of making family breadwinners of teenagers. For only a historical minute in the middle of the twentieth century could a majority of American women contemplate a life devoted to full-time homemaking and child-raising, supported solely by a male breadwinner. As they reassumed income-producing roles—in the twentieth century, outside the home—women encountered haphazard and makeshift policy responses that failed to address the needs of children adequately and that left women disadvantaged as wage earners, also to the detriment of children. Solving the problem of childcare in a postindustrial society thus must be the work of the twenty-first century and, with its resolution, may come as well the culmination of the feminist revolution begun in the 1960s.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see, for instance, Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989).

2. U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1999* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), table 660.

3. Walter I. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), chap. 6.

4. Descriptions of work and childrearing on farms at various periods include Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750–1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985); Marilyn Irvin Holt, *Linoleum, Better Babies & the Modern Farm Woman, 1890–1930* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995). For a discussion of the ways in which mothers handled

childcare in a preindustrial setting, see Sonya Michel, *Children's Interests / Mother's Rights: The Shaping of America's Child Care Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), chap. 1.

5. See, for example, Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: A Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), for a discussion of this ideology.

6. All 1999 figures are calculated using Robert C. Sahr, "Consumer Price Index (CPI) Conversion Factors to Convert to Dollars of the Year 2000," an updated version of which is available at http://www.orst.edu/dept/pol_sci/fac/sahr/sahr.htm. All numbers are estimates.

7. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Part 1* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), Series D 779-793, p. 168 (hereinafter cited as *Historical Statistics*).

8. On homework, see especially Eileen Boris, *Home to Work: Motherhood and the Politics of Industrial Homework in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

9. Michel, *Children's Interests,* 97.

10. *Historical Statistics,* Series A 119-134, p. 15; Series A 350-352, p. 43; Series D 49-62, p. 133; Series D 182-232, p. 139.

11. See Katharine DuPre Lumpkin and Dorothy Wolff Douglas, *Child Workers in America* (New York: Robert M. McBride, 1937), chap. 1, for a discussion of "hidden" child workers.

12. Harry G. Good and James D. Teller, *A History of American Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), table 8.1.

13. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children,* 38–40.

14. In 1910 an adequate income for a family of six, depending on location, ranged from about $700 to $1,000, according to a number of different observers. See discussion in Gordon M. Fisher, "From Hunter to Orshansky: An Overview of (Unofficial) Poverty Lines in the United States from 1094 to 1965," August 1997, pp. 13–17, at http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/povmeas/papers/hstorsp.4html# N_1_. At the time, the average annual wage for "all industries" excluding farm labor equaled $630. In manufacturing, the average amounted to $558; for schoolteachers, the average was $492. The average annual wage for farm labor totaled $336. *Historical Statistics*, Series D 779-793, p. 168.

15. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Bantam, 1985), 101; Jones, *Labor of Love,* 96–98.

16. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children,* 30, 153; Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 96.

17. Edgar W. Knight, *Fifty Years of American Education, 1900–1950* (New York: Ronald Press, 1952), 69; Trattner, *Crusade for the Children,* 184.

18. Knight, *Fifty Years of American Education,* 58–70; David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 70–71.

19. Tyack, *The One Best System,* 183–184.

20. Good and Teller, *A History of American Education,* 237.

21. Good and Teller, *A History of American Education,* 237.

22. Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929), 83–85; *Historical Statistics* (see note 10).

23. Lois Scharf, *To Work and to Wed* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980), 141.

24. Grace Palladino, *Teenagers: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), chap. 3; John Modell, *Into One's Own: From Youth to Adulthood in the United States, 1920–1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), chap. 4.

25. Scharf, *To Work and to Wed,* 148.

26. *Historical Statistics,* Series H 442-476, p. 372; Series A 160-171, p. 20; Series D 29-41, p. 132.

27. William H. Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), chap. 7.

28. Table F-12, "Earners—Families (All Races) by Median and Mean Income: 1947 to 1996." Based upon the Current Population Survey, at http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/incfamdet.html.

29. Daniel Hernandez with David E. Myers for the National Committee on the 1980 Census, *America's Children: Resources from Family, Government, and the Economy* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993), fig. 4.6. Hernandez's figure is actually overly inclusive in that the fathers who worked forty-eight weeks were not necessarily working full-time during those weeks. Moreover, this figure includes children living in families in which the couple had a child before this marriage, another deviation from the "ideal" family.

30. *Historical Statistics*, Series D29-41, p. 132.

31. *Historical Statistics*, Series G 257-268, p. 298; Series G 283-296, p. 300; Series 297-305, p. 300; Series G 306-318, p. 301.

32. *Historical Statistics*, Series A 350-352, p. 43; Series D 11-25, p. 127.

33. U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *1969 Handbook on Women Workers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), tables 17 and 18.

34. *Statistical Abstracts 1997,* table 631.

35. These families figured, respectively, in *Ozzie and Harriet, Father Knows Best, The Donna Reed Show, Leave It to Beaver, The Life of Reilly,* and *Make Room for Daddy*. See

Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), chap. 2, for a discussion of this phenomenon. Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) examines the interaction of family ideals and television. See also Susan J. Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media* (New York: Random House, 1995).

36. U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *1969 Handbook on Women Workers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), table 20.

37. Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work,* 46–47; G. Stanley Hall, *Youth: Its Education, Regimen and Hygiene* (1904), discussed in Maxine L. Margolis, *Mothers and Such: Views of American Women and Why They Changed* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 48.

38. Margolis, *Mothers and Such,* 51–54.

39. Margolis, *Mothers and Such,* 72–84.

40. Trattner, *Crusade for the Children,* 152.

41. *Historical Statistics,* Series H 520-530, p. 376.

42. Tyack, *The One Best System,* 66.

43. Lumpkin and Douglas, *Child Workers in America,* chap. 5.

44. See *Historical Statistics,* H 442-476, pp. 370–372; *Statistical Abstracts,* 1995, table 631; *1969 Handbook on Women Workers,* table 18.

45. National Manpower Council, *Womanpower* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 262–263.

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47. Harrison, *On Account of Sex,* chaps 3 and 6.

48. Harrison, *On Account of Sex,* 177–182, 295 n. 20; Jo Freeman, "How 'Sex' Got Into Title VII: Persistent Opportunism as a Maker of Public Policy" *Law and Inequality* 9 (March 1991): 163–184.

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51. *Craig v. Boren,* 429 U.S. 190 (1976).

52. *Statistical Abstracts 1997,* table 631. The data refer to women sixteen years old and up.

53. *New York Times,* June 10, 1998, p. A20.

54. Cynthia B. Costello, Shari Miles, and Anne J. Stone. *The American Woman, 1999–2000* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), table 4-22.

55. Michel, *Children's Interests,* 247–251.

56. See, for example, Phyllis Schlafly, *The Power of the Christian Woman* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishers, 1981).

57. Michel, *Children's Interests,* 253.

58. *New York Times,* April 29, 1990, p. A14; Children's Defense Fund, "Facts about child care in America," July 8, 1998, at http://www.childrensdefense.org.

59. *Washington Post,* July 17, 1998, pp. F1, F4.

60. Michel, *Children's Interests,* 264.

61. *Statistical Abstracts: 1997,* table 612. The figures add up to more than 100 percent because some children participated in more than one arrangement.

62. CBS News Poll, October 4, 1997, "Major changes in women's status over past 25 years," September 18–20, 1997.

63. Gail Sheehy, "The Divorced Dad's Burden," *New York Times,* June 21, 1998, p. D15.

64. Julia Lawlor, "For Many Blue-Collar Fathers, Child Care is Shift Work, Too," *New York Times,* April 26, 1998, p. C11.

65. See Hochschild and Machung, *The Second Shift.*

66. Jeffery Capizzano and Gina Adams, "The Number of Child Care Arrangements Used by Children Under Five: Variation Across States," Number B-12 in Series, "New Federalism: National Survey of America's Families" (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2000), at http://newfederalism.urban.org/html/series_b/b12/b12.html.

67. See, for example, Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890–1935* (New York: Free Press, 1994), for a discussion of earlier public-assistance programs.

68. For a discussion of the influence of race on the redirection of the federal welfare program, see Winifred Bell, *Aid to Dependent Children* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

69. Michel, *Children's Interests,* 244–245.

70. Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

71. Roberta Spalter-Roth et al., *Welfare That Works: The Working Lives of AFDC Recipients* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1995).

72. See, for example, Wendell Primus et al. *The Initial Impacts of Welfare Reform*

on the Income of Single-Mother Families (Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, August 22, 1999), available at www.cbpp.org/8-22-99wel.pdf.

73. P.L. 104-193.

74. Single-mother families in the United States suffered greater want, however. In 1990, 44.5 percent of families with children maintained by women lived in poverty, ameliorated much less by government programs. See Harrell R. Rodgers Jr., *Poor Women, Poor Children: American Poverty in the 1990s* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), table 5.1; U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *1993 Handbook on Women Workers* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 84.

75. David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 101, 103, 116.

76. Gustav Niebuhr, "Southern Baptists Declare Wife Should 'Submit' to Her Husband," *New York Times,* June 10, 1998, pp. A1, A24.

77. Niebuhr, "Southern Baptists Declare," p. A1.

78. Jennifer Lenhart, "Meeting Other Mothers," *Washington Post,* Feb. 3, 1998, pp. C1, C3.

79. Deborah Stead, "Off the Shelf," *New York Times,* October 5, 1997, p. C7.

80. See, for example, Tamar Levin, "Struggling for Personal Attention in Day Care," *New York Times,* April 27, 1998, pp. A1, A13.

81. Levin, "Struggling for Personal Attention."

82. *New York Times Magazine,* May 24, 1998.

83. One example of such coverage: Louise Woodward, who was convicted on October 31, 1997, of the murder of the child in her care. After extensive coverage at the time, the popular CBS television news magazine *60 Minutes* revisited the story on March 7, 1999 (exposing new evidence supposedly exculpating Woodward).

84. "Mother's Working Causes No Harm, Study Finds," *New York Times,* March 1, 1999.

85. Christine Russell, "Only 10% of Day Care is Rated Excellent," *Washington Post Health,* February 23, 1999, p. 8.

86. See Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America,* and David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

87. Richard Morin and Megan Rosenfeld, "With More Equity, More Sweat: Poll Shows Sexes Agree on Pros and Cons of New Roles," *Washington Post,* March 22, 1998, p. A16; the poll was conducted by the *Post,* the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University.

88. Morin and Rosenfeld, "With More Equity, More Sweat."

89. Almost 25 percent of households in 1996 were offering care to a friend or relative age fifty or older. U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *Facts on Working Women,* May 1998, No. 98- 1, "Work and Elder Care." Thirty percent of workers

interviewed by Jody Heymann, director of the Harvard University Center for Society and Health, cut back on work time to take care of a relative; Tamar Lewin, "Taking Care: It's Not Just for Mothers Anymore," *New York Times,* May 13, 2001, p. D14.

90. Jodi Wilgoren, "The Bell Rings but the Students Stay, and Stay," *New York Times*, January 24, 2000, p. D4.

91. Lynette Holloway, "For Preschool, a Wealth of Benefits and a Dearth of Space," *New York Times,* September 5, 2000, p. B3.

92. Steven Greenhouse, "Child Care, the Perk of Tomorrow?" *New York Times,* May 13, 2001, p. D14.

93. The literature on this subject is immense, with titles such as *Families and Work: New Directions in the Twenty-First Century* (Karen Fredriksen-Goldsen and Andrew Scharlach, published by Oxford University Press, 2001). For a sampling, see "Work and family—United States" in the Library of Congress catalog.

94. See, for example, Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values* (New York: New Press, 2001); Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and the many position papers published by the Institute for Women's Policy Research at www.iwpr.org.