

# DOES ENOUGH WORK MAKE WOMEN FREE? PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME WORK STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY

FRANCES OLSEN

This paper presents a critical examination of the effects of work outside the home on the status of women. It compares the exploitation of women in the United States who work full-time while they retain primary responsibility for childcare and homemaking with the exploitation of women in Western Germany, many of whom work part-time. It suggests pitfalls awaiting women of Eastern Germany (and other parts of the world) regardless of whether they adopt the American or the West German pattern for dealing with the double burden of work inside and outside the home. The author maintains that the "Privacy" of the family is a political myth that disempowers women, and she suggests the importance of public policies altering the sexual division of labour to ameliorate the oppression of women.

Frances Olsen is Professor of Law at University of California at Los Angeles. This paper is based on a talk (*Frau, Familie, Arbeitsmarkt: Frauenstrategien in den USA und in Deutschland*) given at Urania in Berlin on May 27, 1992 while she was a Fulbright Senior Professor in Germany.

*In anticipation, and even before unemployment began to rise in the new Bundeslander*<sup>1</sup> as a result of the changes that came with unification, some men were proposing as a solution that the women return to the role of homemaker. They argued that such return would be appreciated by the women themselves as well as by their families and that it would ease the unemployment situation. When surveys showed that the women in the new *Bundeslander* clearly did not want to leave the labour force, the *fall-back* position of those wanting to expel women was to propose that the women *do* only part-time work. This proposal is considerably more popular, since many women would like to work shorter hours and have more time to spend with their families. Part-time work for women had been quite popular among women in the old *Bundeslander* — surprisingly popular, from an American perspective, considering the disadvantages of part-time work.

It has become clear over the past months that women in the new *Bundeslander* are suffering from particularly high unemployment rates. When it is so hard to get a job at all, the question of whether to work part-time or full-time might not seem important or even relevant. Nevertheless, I believe it is particularly important in these difficult times to recognise that women can be oppressed by over-work as well as by unemployment. Drawing on the different attitudes and experiences of women in the United States and in Germany, I want to examine the advantages and disadvantages of part-time work and full-time work.

My basic, underlying question is how women can overcome all of the various forms of oppression under which they suffer. In this paper, I want to examine the relationship between work and freedom for women. Many people believe that through hard work, they can become free. Many people also know, however, that one of the motives for keeping any group oppressed is to appropriate the benefits of their work. Thus, doing hard work may make women free, but it may also simply reward those who take advantage of women's work and do nothing towards making women free. In the United States, although Indians were systematically murdered, they were only rarely enslaved because they seemed to be unwilling to work in captivity. Africans, captured and brought to the

New World worked very hard in captivity, which is why they kept being kidnapped and imported to countries uncivilized enough to tolerate slavery. For most African slaves, their hard work did nothing to benefit them and only encouraged the slave trade. Yet, on occasion — very rare — African slaves were allowed to earn money through extraordinary hard work and buy their own freedom.

Any fair study, done in almost any part of the world, shows that women as a group work harder and longer hours than men as a group. Yet women as a group are also poorer by most measures. Women own less property, earn lower salaries, receive poorer educations, and when food is in short supply, eat less. More public moneys are spent on issues important to men. By most measures men are significantly privileged over women. Indeed, it would seem that women would be quite justified in refusing to work at all — and certainly in refusing to work the especially long hours that so many women do work — until these injustices are corrected. Life expectancy is the one important exception in the United States and throughout much of the world, and that is regularly used against women in a wide variety of ways. For example, women usually get lower pensions — often "justified" by women's longer life expectancy.

Under these circumstances, it would be quite reasonable for women to go on strike and refuse to work at all until these injustices are corrected. Instead, however, women as a group continue to work harder than men as a group. This is especially true in the United States.

Many women in the USA believe that the only way that women will be taken seriously as workers and receive as good job opportunities as men is by working full-time. In a field like law, "full-time" work may mean up to 60 or 70 hours a week for a young lawyer. In most other jobs full-time work will be only 40 hours per week, but many women work another 20 or 30 hours a week doing unpaid work at home — taking care of children, cleaning house, cooking, caring for elderly relatives (the husband's as often as the wife's) and maintaining family connections through letters or phone calls (again, connections with the husband's relatives as often as to the wife's). All this "human maintenance" work is done much more by women than by men.

Women in the United States are much more likely to work full-time than part-time. When American women work part-time it is often because they have not been able to obtain a full-time job. Most part-time work is poorly paid and does not provide any real opportunity for advancement or promotion. In addition, part-time workers are often not covered by unemployment insurance, health insurance or other regular employment benefits.

Because of the discrimination against part-time work, most American women take full-time work and try to reduce the number of hours they have to work at home. Many young women have an idealized image of a two-career family, in which both husband and wife hold well-paying and personally satisfying full-time jobs. The housework is kept to a minimum and shared equally by husband and wife. The children are in day care services when they are young, and, when they are older, in school, with enriching after-school programmes to keep them occupied until the parents return home. In this idealised image, the parents share equally in all aspects of child care. Cooking is generally simplified with pre-packaged meals and micro-wave ovens.

Two-career families in TV series such as "The Bill Cosby Show" or "L.A. Law" function this way. Actually, some families in real life do also. I have some friends where the husband and wife are both professors and they really do view the wife's career as being as important as the husband's and really do share housework, child care, cooking and all the rest equally. Except that both

marriage partners have to work too hard, this life pattern seems to be very satisfying — a promising and worthwhile ideal (at least in the case of comfortable, middle-class families where the parents have personally satisfying jobs).

Far more often, however, the husband in a two-career family will only "help" his wife with the housekeeping and child care, which are still seen to be basically her responsibility. When the husband only "help" with housekeeping and child care, the wife often works incredibly hard, and her health as well as her career may suffer. Sometimes the husband fails to realise or refuses to recognise how much harder his wife is working than he is, and at other times he considers the wife herself to blame, for choosing to pursue a career as well as 'her' tasks in the home. Often the husband is simply unwilling to work as hard as he would have to, in doing half the housekeeping and child care along with his full-time job.

An image that is less satisfactory and more dangerous to American women than the ideal two-career family is the image of the 'Superwoman' — a woman who is full of energy and able to have a successful and rewarding full-time career, run an efficient and happy household, and take good care of her husband and children.

This ideal of 'having it all' — career, family, happiness — has positive elements to it, in that women are not expected to choose between career and family any more than men must choose between them. It also has negative elements, however, in that it accepts as more or less inevitable that women will be doing more unpaid work at home than men. And it is dangerous to women because it puts enormous pressure on them to work unreasonably long hours and to blame themselves personally if they are unable to live up to the "superwoman" image if their career or family life is unsuccessful or if they have a nervous breakdown or otherwise ruin their health. Many American women suffer chronic sleep deprivation, many use drugs to enable them to maintain such an impossible schedule, and many have nervous breakdowns.

Nevertheless, it remains an article of faith to most American feminists that part-time work is destructive and a dead-end and that women must work full-time to be free. Most recognise that women work terribly hard and that men have not actually begun to do a fair share of the housekeeping and child care, but point proudly to a few successes and see full-time work as the only way out of the sexual division of labour, which oppresses women.

Full-time working opens jobs to American women that would not be available if they did part-time work. Women have established themselves in many trades and professions that used to be all-male. The University of California at Los Angeles, where I teach, has more women law professors than there are in the entire country of Germany — even if you include the women law professors that have been fired in the new *Bundeslander* since unification. The image of the professional or executive woman is generally positive in the USA, and it is not too unrealistic an image. Many girls grow up expecting to be able to pursue any career they choose.

Women's full-time work does pressurise some husbands to do more housekeeping and child care. More importantly, perhaps one response that American society has made to women's complaints about housekeeping and child care is to reduce the amount of such work. A variety of household appliances and pre-packaged food simplifies cooking. Houses have been made easier to clean, it is more socially acceptable to have a dirtier or messier house than it once was, and commercial house-cleaning services that do a major cleaning every week or two are more common and

relatively inexpensive. Schools have been organised to make child care somewhat easier. These reforms are both an accommodation to women who work such long hours outside the home that they cannot spend as long as they once did, on work in the home, and also men's response to having to do a larger share of the work. The pattern of full-time work has led to these social patterns that make housekeeping and child care easier and less time-consuming, which in turn makes full-time work possible. This is particularly important to single mothers who generally must work full-time because they could not survive and support their families just on the salary from part-time work.

Thus, American women have more career opportunities than women in many other countries, but they pay a high price for it. They work very, very hard, and still they do not have as good opportunities as their male counterparts.

Most careers continue to be structured in such a way that most women — or any person with time-consuming family obligations — cannot succeed as well as a man whose wife does most of the housekeeping and child care. In reality, both members of a two-career family suffer some disadvantages in their careers if they both share in housekeeping and child care.

Just to give one example, most career ladders in America are structured such that to advance most effectively, one should be able to move several times from one job to another. It is often impossible to change jobs without moving to another part of the country. (Every year, one out of every three American households moves from one home to another — often from one city to another.) In a country the size of the United States, two-career families often have to choose to advance the career of one at the expense of the career of the other. In some cases a married couple will live miles away from each other and see each other only on weekends. (The most extreme case I know of a commuting marriage is a professor in Vancouver, Canada, whose husband teaches at Oxford University England; they spend time together about twice a year, I have heard of a couple in which one lives in Norway and the other in Australia.) Such a commuting arrangement puts considerable strain on both partners and often on the marriage as well. More often, the wife's career will be sacrificed so that the couple can live together.

Jobs in America remain very sex segregated, and women working full-time earn only about two-thirds the salary men earn working full-time. This means that for every hundred dollars women earn, men earn a hundred fifty. Because the husband usually earns more money than the wife, the couple often feels an economic pressure (as well as societal pressure) to advance his job opportunities over the wife's. A family is more likely to move for the husband's job than for the wife's; if the needs of a child or of an elderly member of the family require one spouse to leave work temporarily, it will almost always be the wife who quits her job.

In fact, much of men's 'sharing the homework' has resulted in men skimming off a bit of the most pleasant or least unpleasant work and claiming disproportionate credit. For example, men in the United States do a bit more child care than they did decades ago, and now they expect to get joint custody upon divorce. To men, joint custody often means they pay less or no child support and get to play with the kids whenever they want. If they are rich enough, it means having a spare room for the child in their new home; if they are not, they still claim they are "joint custodians" and renege on child support. Thus, divorce may now be even more unfair to women than it used to be. All too often women will give up the alimony they are entitled to just to be able to reach an out-of-court settlement to avoid the risk of losing their children in a custody battle.

Hard work has not made American women free. Nevertheless, students in my feminist legal theory class at UCLA were astonished and shocked several years ago when Hanne Petersen, a Danish feminist, presented a guest lecture in which she argued in favour of part-time work for women. She suggested that as long as women really did most of the housekeeping and child care, it was grossly unfair to expect them to work full-time outside the home. Her presentation led to an interesting discussion and critique of the American 'superwoman' image of 'having it all.' The image of "superwoman" doing all the work has always been put into practice more than feminism's image of "nurturing man" sharing fairly in the home work. If husbands expect their wives to earn full-time money, argued Dr. Petersen, the husbands should do an equal share of the work at home. Until then, woman would be crazy to work full-time on an outside job.

Given the serious problems with the full-time strategy adopted by American women, it is appealing to look for other possible strategies. In the old *Bundeslander* of the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) part-time work plays a more important role than it does in the USA. One in three women works part-time, and the vast majority of part-time workers are women. Studies done in the 1980s suggested that more German women would prefer to work part-time, if more part-time work were available. A 1984 study found that half the women then engaged in full-time work in the FRG, would have preferred to work part-time, and that 75 per cent of women returning to work after a career break would prefer part-time work. In 1987, there were *over* 200,000 people registered as unemployed and seeking part-time work while the Federal Employment Office had only 17,000 part-time jobs on its books. If we add the women who are not registered as unemployed, but who are looking for part-time work, there may well have-been more than 50 potential part-time workers for every part-time job available.

As long as there is a sexual division of labour, with women doing most of the unpaid housekeeping and child care, there are many advantages for woman to work part-time. It is only reasonable for women to work shorter hours when they work at a "second job" in the home. If women do most of the housekeeping and child care, then they contribute a fair share to household finances when they do part-time work. This strategy avoids many of the problems we identified in the American strategy of working very hard and assuming or hoping that the work would bring freedom. Certainly it would seem to make women's lives less stressful and allow them more leisure to enjoy both their jobs.

Although there has been a history of part-time work being treated poorly in Germany, just as it has been in the United States, adopting rather than avoiding part-time work can be expected to bring about some improvements in the working conditions and some decrease in the discrimination against part-time workers. The European Court is in the process of developing some very interesting legal decisions that would require equal treatment for part-time work throughout the countries of the European Community. The Court's reasoning is that because the vast majority of part-time workers are women, discrimination against part-time workers is or may be indirect discrimination against women, forbidden under European Law. The risk, of course, is that these decisions will eliminate only the most blatant forms of discrimination against part-time workers, not the multitude of subtler forms.

Part-time work is done overwhelmingly by women — at least 9 out of 10 part-time workers are women. Despite the European Court decisions, it is badly exploited. It is under-paid, and part-time workers have less chance to be promoted than full-time workers. Often benefits are inadequate or non-existent. If women remain the main group of part-time workers, improving work conditions will be very difficult. As long as part-time work is "made for women" it is likely to remain as

unsatisfactory as so many other things made for women. Benefits will be minimal, and the expectation of women workers of being promoted will be frustrated.

Part-time work reinforces the sexual division of labour, which defines women's basic role to be in the home and her role in the public world to be secondary and marginal. This makes women a reserve of underpaid part-time workers, financially dependent upon men. It leaves them doing virtually all of the unpaid work at home, since as long as men work full-time, they are not likely to do very much housekeeping and child care. Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that as long as there is a sexual division of labour, men and women will remain unequal.

Housekeeping and child care are likely to remain low status and unpaid. Although various proposals have been advanced for paying women "wages for housework" or "wages for child care," these proposals have seemed impractical. The mere fact that housekeeping and child care are unpaid would not necessarily mean that they are and must always remain relatively low status, but in our society it tends to have that effect. Although some conservatives claim that housekeeping and child care are noble occupations and even now highly valued by society, these assertions seem to amount to no more than false glorification. This does not necessarily mean that they could not be highly valued in some future society, but just that at present they are not. Further, as long as individual women are financially dependent upon individual men, an effective reevaluation of housekeeping and child care seems quite unlikely.

This provides the context within which we should interpret women's attitudes toward part-time work to avoid misunderstanding *the survey* results that *women* prefer part-time work. Most workers, male and female, would prefer to work shorter hours, especially if they could do so without a significant drop in their standard of living. Since women's pay is often low, reduced hours have only a small effect on the family's standard of living. Also, the worse job a worker has, the greater interest the worker would have in shortening working hours. A major reason that women prefer part-time work may be that they so often have relatively unsatisfactory jobs. Unfortunately, this creates a vicious cycle, and their jobs are likely to remain relatively unsatisfactory as long as women remain secondary and marginal workers.

Moreover, it would seem that as long as housekeeping and child care are done predominantly by women, the work will remain unreasonably time-consuming. Running a household requires a tremendous amount of work in Germany. Housekeeping is made to take incredibly long. For example, grocery shopping is a major task that takes absurd amounts of time. It took me three times as long as I take in the United States and perhaps twice as long as in England. It's such hard work that few men do it. And in spite of spending about three times as long shopping, I find that I keep running out of milk. I don't know how mothers manage to keep from running out of fresh milk for their children — with stores closed at 6.30 most evenings and for most of the weekend, and with such terribly long lines on Saturday mornings. I believe that if men liked fresh milk as much as they like beer, or if they cared about milk as much as they care about beer, fresh milk would be available at all the *Trinkhallen*, where one can buy beer after the stores close, at 6:30 in the evening.

Child care is similarly made especially difficult in many Lander (states) in a way that strikes outside observers as crazy. Schools seem to pride themselves on refusing to be reliable child care agencies. Regular school hours do not accommodate parental work, and some schools send children home if, for example, the teacher is ill, simply assuming that there will be a responsible adult there. In Bavaria they sometimes even brag about what they are doing — keeping women in

the home, "protecting" the family. These conditions make working full-time difficult for any women with a family.

An additional disadvantage of part-time work for women is that it reduces the influence of women in the work force, by reducing the number of women working at any given time. Moreover, if men continue to work full-time while women work part-time, many jobs will remain primarily done by men. Years of experience suggest that as long as women are a small minority in any particular field, that field will be difficult for women to enter and be successful in.

This is at least a partial explanation of why women's role in the professions in Germany seems to be even worse than in the U.S. Let me use university-teaching to illustrate the problem. One needs a doctorate and a habilitation<sup>2</sup> to teach in a German university, and professors are usually given essentially arbitrary power to choose to accept or reject any student. Most professors choose people like themselves, often people they think of as being just like they were at a younger age. No reasonable controls exist on prejudice and discrimination. I have been told by many women that the only way they can hope to get accepted is to disguise their actual interests. Sympathetic teachers will advise women not to seem to be feminists.

In law, for example, a woman can afford to express real interest in feminism only after she has become a full professor or has decided to abandon a career in academia. Now, since there are fewer than a half dozen female full professors of law in Germany, and most of them have been correctly identified as not interested in feminism, this does not leave much room for the development of feminist legal theory.

In some fields — again law provides a useful example — you can trace generations of conservatives. Today's teachers are the habilitatees of the habilitatees of professors acceptable to the Nazis. I have been told that at least until quite recently, it has been risky to be too critical of the Nazi law professors (at least during the many years of dependency before full professorship). For these reasons, misogyny and conservative attitudes toward women and women's roles have lasted long after the end of Nazism. In a survey conducted in 1960, at a time when women already made up 20 percent of the student body of universities, 64 percent of the male teaching staff of the universities asserted that women should not be accepted as students. A full 79 percent responded that women should not be hired as professors or even as lecturers. (Kaplan, 1992, 107-08)

An additional problem for women entering university teaching is that the system has been set up in such a way that in order to obtain a doctorate and habilitation, most students must work exceedingly long hours for many years — exactly the years when women are most likely to be beginning a family. It is difficult enough for men to combine *the early years* of an academic career with family life, it is even harder for a women to do so, and the option of delaying a family presents a greater problem for women, since they do not have the option men have, of choosing a young wife.

If it were actually necessary to work such long hours in the early years in order to develop an excellent mind or to learn the skills necessary to be a professor, or if there were any evidence that the present system produced particularly good professors, I could understand it as just an unfortunate happenstance. But I have found no evidence at all that the system serves education well. In fact, in law, the field I know best, just *the opposite* would appear. As far as I can tell, some of the best legal scholarship is being produced not in the universities but rather by people without a

*habilitation who are teaching in the Fachhochschulen*<sup>3</sup> where teaching loads are high and writing conditions less good than at the universities.

Thus, part-time work seems to have just as many potential disadvantages for women as full-time work. It is clear that there are several different ways that women are exploited. Part-time work has one set of problems, full-time work has another. The important question is how to end the exploitation of women.

In order to consider this question, it will be useful to examine three myths that together discourage possible solutions to the problem of combining family and career. The first myth is the (American) view that part-time work is bound to remain poorly paid and low status. The second myth, more prevalent in Germany I believe, is the view that women's full-time work undermines the status of housekeeping and child care. The third myth, more prevalent in the United States, is that questions about who does housekeeping and how it is done are private matters in which the state should not intervene.

The main reason part-time work is so poorly paid is that it is done primarily by women, and because employers have been able to pay poorly. There is no sufficient reason in the nature of the work to justify its poor pay and low status. In fact, there is much well-paid, high status part-time work; it just isn't called part-time work. When men do part-time work, they usually manage to call it full time.

For example, teaching law in Nepal is done by women. It is very poorly paid, and it is considered part-time work. Law teaching in Germany, even more than in the *United States*, is done by men, is well-paid and high status. The job is just as much a part-time job as it is in Nepal, but it is not considered to be part-time.

The job of full professor in Germany offers middle-aged men the opportunity to work *part-time after* they have worked long enough hours during their younger years so that they could not do any reasonable share of homework and child care — thus after they have avoided most of the work women cannot avoid except at a particularly high cost. The more conscientious professors may work very hard, for example some of them hold government posts at the same time they are professors, or they may have second jobs as professors in the United States or some other country. My point is not that they are lazy — though some are — but that their part-time work is called full-time and rewarded as full-time work.

To understand the second myth, that women's full-time work undermines the status of housekeeping and child care, it will be useful to explain some history of the Women's Movement in the United States. Until at least the middle of the last century, married women had no legal right to own property throughout most of the United States; the legal title to any property a woman owned at the time of her marriage transferred automatically to her husband. The children of a marriage were under the husband's control, not hers; when she cared for the children, legally she was doing it under his direction. Many states justified this rule on the basis that a married woman could not provide for her children, since she owned no property. She had no legal right to keep any money she earned while she was married; the law treated her earnings as the property of her husband. Moreover, the fields of employment in which a married or unmarried woman might earn money were quite limited. Until late last century, most states would not permit women to work in a variety of professions, such as law, which were said to be suitable only for men. Until 1920 only a handful of states allowed women to vote. If individual women had power within individual families, it was

despite the law, not in any way because of the law. Similarly, whatever relatively small degree of power women were able to achieve in society, they achieved in the face of laws that systematically disempowered them. All these laws curtailed women's possibilities for influencing society.

Under these circumstances, the women's movement focused its attention on trying to equalise women's power within the family, on providing for some degree of economic independence for women, on obtaining the vote for women, and on opening *careers* to women. Mainly through legislation, one state after another made the mother an equal guardian with the father. The Married Women's Property Acts allowed the wife to keep her own property and earnings. With the 1920 ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, women were allowed to vote. Slowly the formal bars to women were lowered and those women who worked hard enough and were able to overcome the discrimination and resistance they faced, were able to adopt careers that had previously not been open to women.

A new American women's movement arose in the late 1960's and 1970's after decades of relative inactivity. The most important and visible thrust of this movement in the United States was middle-class based. Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystic* both characterized and influenced this middle-class movement. An important focus, in reality and especially in the public imagination, was middle-class housewives, frustrated by the meaninglessness of their lives, adopting or returning to a career for personal fulfillment. Although there was generally no law, as there was in Germany, requiring a husband's permission for a wife to work when the family did not need the money, at first many or most wives sought his approval. Not infrequently, the husband's permission would be given on the condition that the woman did not slack off on her homemaking duties. As long as the husband had a legal or practical veto power over a woman's choice to seek paid employment, she would find it difficult not to agree to do the housework. Over time, this changed and woman not only stopped promising to remain good homemakers, they also began expecting their husband to do a more fair share of the unpaid (and all too unappreciated) work at home.

This focus tended towards an idealisation of work in the marketplace. Such an idealisation seemed often naive to working class women, most of whom would prefer to work shorter hours or not work at all — an attitude shared by many or most people who hold uninteresting, arduous jobs. The image of the idle, bored housewife could be both envied and resented by these woman. Other working-class women enjoyed the improved status the woman's movement gave to their work and (thus in a sense) to them.

Although this phase of the Women's Movement is sometimes blamed for devaluing the role of the housewife and mother, it would be fairer to say that the movement recognized and did not challenge society's devaluation of the housewife and mother. Important segments of society glorified the role of housewife and mother, but this glorification was merely sentimental and not substantial. More bluntly, the glorification was hypocritical. In fact, I would argue that the glorification or idealization of the "woman's role" stood as a barrier to any actual appreciation of the importance of the work that women did. Generally, society's devaluation of this work was exposed but not initially challenged by the American Women's Movement.

An important institution of this phase of the Women's Movement was "consciousness-raising *groups*". There was a tendency on the part of some within the movement to see a teleology to the changes in consciousness. The Urges that individual women might feel to fit the "woman's role"

in the home might well be experienced by the women themselves as indicative that their "consciousness" had not been raised "far enough". Some women, struggling to get over feeling guilty if their houses were not sparkling clean found a new object of guilt: now they might feel guilty that they actually wanted a clean house or that they liked focusing on and taking care of other people. By now an important thrust of the woman's movement was on forcing men to share housework — or as some called it "shit work" and other home tasks in a more equitable manner. Women stopped ignoring or denying society's devaluing of work at home, child care, **and** care-taking in general and began sharing in it.

A significant gap came to exist between the self-conscious overt evaluation of the role expectations of wife and mother on one hand and on the other hand the less conscious lived value placed on these same roles. It was this gap that set the stage for the astoundingly enthusiastic embrace by women, including or perhaps especially feminists, of Carol Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice*. Gilligan's book closed the gap by providing a theoretical basis to reconcile women's political judgement with their life experience and by demanding a reevaluation, by society at large, of the traits that so many women valued in their actual lives.

There is nothing in the nature of women's full-time work that devalues housekeeping or child care. Quite the opposite. It is the devaluation of women that leads to a devaluation of women's work.

One of the first Utopian feminist novels in America, proposed a reevaluation of women's work. In the novel *Herland*, 1901, Charlotte Perkins Gilman describes a feminist Utopia established in a geographically isolated setting after all the men have killed themselves off in war. (One must overlook the implausibility of the miraculous shift to asexual reproduction that Charlotte Perkins Gilman introduced as a mere expediency.) Gilman suggests that in a society in which women had power, housekeeping and child care would not be devalued as they are in our society.

If there were any realistic way for women to go on a housekeeping and child care strike, this might be even more effective than the sex strike women went on in Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata*. In our society, one of the best ways to get work done more efficiently is to make men do it for a while. They simply won't put up with the difficulties women face. If more men in Germany had to do the shopping, stores would become easier to shop in and lines would become shorter. This is not because men have better ideas about how to make work efficient, they just have the power to put their ideas into practice.

Moreover, one of the best ways to improve the status of any kind of work is to get men to do it. Almost any job dominated by women turns out to be low status, and the more female-dominated it is, usually the lower the status is.

The third myth that inhibits useful change is that questions about who does housekeeping and child care and how they are done are private matters in which the state should not intervene. This view has been particularly prevalent in the United States, where claims of family privacy were used to justify state support for child abuse and wife-beating. This kind of misuse of the concept of privacy lies behind the importance that the women's movement of the 1970s and 80s placed on the slogan "the personal is political". Elsewhere, in two law review articles, I dismantle the concept of "state intervention in the family" and show that it is an ideological concept, lacking in analytical coherence. Rather than repeat those arguments here, I want to relate a brief portion of American women's history.

During the Second World War, American industry relied heavily upon women's labour. For women to work in the marketplace was idealized as patriotic, and much of the wartime propaganda emphasized the importance of independence for children. Mothers were warned against being over-protective and were encouraged to feel good about leaving their children on their own during working hours.

After the war, this propaganda was reversed, and women were driven out of industry. Patriotism, which had required their presence, now required the departure of women. Many were fired from their wartime jobs, others were eased out more gently. The theories of child-rearing that were now thrust upon women emphasized the importance of the mother-child bond and the disastrous effects maternal deprivation might have on children.

Movies stopped portraying positive images of strong women. Many of the people most responsible for the earlier films with strong women's parts were blacklisted during McCarthyism and forced out of the movies, and Hollywood became increasingly misogynistic. The heroine was the woman who romantically gave up her career to marry the hero and raise a family. The heroine was always faced with the either - or choice between her career and marrying the man she loved — and to our relief and delight. She always chose to marry the hero. It got so bad that the best images and roles for women were found in horror movies. Although these movies showed women being brutalized, and usually rescued by the male-hero, at least the films related to some of the fears women had and they showed women as more than just housewives and mothers. The government has long influenced who does housekeeping and child care and how they are done, both directly and through its influence on popular culture.

In conclusion, I would like to consider a modest policy suggestion, which is no panacea, but suggests a useful direction. In law, the field I know best, there are increasing numbers of women entering the profession in the USA and there are powerful forces trying to impose a sex segregation within the profession. The most prestigious jobs at present have been structured to make it increasingly difficult to work and to live any normal family life at the same time. Hours are extraordinarily long and young lawyers are expected to be able to work odd hours and to travel out of town on short notice. It is increasingly clear that men and women must struggle to reverse these trends, or else top law jobs will be held primarily by men who either postpone having families or neglect their families, along with a token number of women who also postpone having a family — and in the case of women, the postponement is more likely to be indefinite (permanent) because of the so-called "biological clock."

I suggest we generalize from this example and struggle to shorten hours of work for all people so that they can lead pleasant and responsible family lives. We must restructure career ladders so that neither men nor women need to choose between family and success. We should reduce unemployment by reducing the hours of work for everyone, so that all workers, not just women, have time to do a reasonable share of housekeeping and child care.

How we reduce hours is also important. The choice to cut annual working hours by having longer vacations may well serve men's interests more than women's. Men with 4-6 weeks vacation are likely actually to have 4-6 weeks vacation. Women with 4-6 weeks vacation often just have 4-6 weeks of part-time unpaid housekeeping and child care. They often do not really get a vacation but are only able to work more reasonable hours for these 4-6 weeks, because their work at home does not end. In fact, many women report that they have to do more housekeeping and child care

during so-called vacations **than they do during the rest of the year. As new work patterns develop** in Germany after unification, it is **important for women to have more say in what those patterns will** be.

The current plight of women in the 'Eastern countries should be a major concern of women throughout the world, The current plight of women in the new *Bundeslander* should be a major concern of all women, at least in Germany. Speaking as an outside observer, I urge Western women to support the issues most important to Eastern women, including unobstructed access to abortion, full and equal employment opportunities, and public support for child care. If women in the West unite behind East German women to prevent them from bearing the brunt of unification, then unification may turn out to be an historic opportunity for German women.

#### NOTES

1. There are 15 federal states in Germany, 10 that were part of the former West Germany, referred to as the old Bundeslander, and 5 states, referred to as the new Bundeslander, that were added during the unification of Germany, or the voluntary annexation of the former East Germany into West Germany.
2. In order to teach as a Professor in the universities in Germany one almost always must have the academic qualification known as an 'Habilitation'. This requires a good deal of work beyond the Doctorate degree, it is supposed to represent an original and significant piece of research, usually amounting to a major book. I have coined the word. 'habilitatee' to mean the person who has received an Habilitation.
3. The Fachhochschulen are institutions of higher education below the level of universities. Lawyers often teach courses on practical legal issues in *Fachhochschulen* to students studying to be social workers, etc. One generally needs a doctorate but not an habilitation to teach in these institutions. Of particular significance, professors teaching in *Fachhochschulen* cannot reproduce themselves, in that they are not entitled to give any law degrees and of course cannot give doctorates in law or an Habilitation.

#### REFERENCES

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Friedan Betty<br>1963            | <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> , New York : Dell   |
| Gilliigan Carol<br>1982          | <i>In a Different Voice : Psychological Theory and Women's Development</i> , Cambridge, Massachusetts'. Harvard University Press |
| Gilman Charlotte Perkins<br>1980 | <i>The Charlotte Perkins Gilman Reader</i> edited by Ann.J. Lane, New York : Pantheon Books.                                     |
| Kaplan Gisela<br>1992            | <i>Contemporary Western European Feminism</i> , London: Allen and Unwin.   |
| Olsen Frances<br>1983            | "The Family and the Market: A study of Ideology and Legal Reform", <i>Harvard Law Review</i> , Vol 96: 1497-1578.                |

Women all over the world allocate a substantial amount of time to activities that are not typically recorded as "economic activities". Female participation in labor markets tends to increase when the time-cost of unpaid care work is reduced, shared equally with men, and/or made more compatible with market work. What "labor force participation" means and how it is measured, is discussed in the section on "Definitions & Measurement". All our charts on Women's employment. Are non-pregnant and non-nursing women allowed to do the same jobs as men? The following chart shows average weekly hours worked for women in a selection of OECD countries. As we can see, most countries show negative trends, which is consistent with the trends for the population as a whole. In good times and in bad, women's wages have become an increasingly important component of household income and consumer spending. The shift toward service-based economies in the industrialized world has favored women in the work force "one reason they have poured into the labor market over the past three decades." Full-time female workers earned 79.4 percent what their male counterparts did last year, up from 77.9 percent in 2002, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The proportion of women working part time in Sweden is higher than it is in the United States, and occupational segregation is more pronounced, but the penalty for being in a traditionally female job is also lower. Strong social policies don't guarantee success, either. Nowadays in many countries women have full time jobs. Therefore, it is logical to share household tasks evenly between men and women. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Nowadays an ever-increasing number of women work full time, and in this reality it is widely believed that house chores should be shared between men and women equally. I strongly agree with this statement. Nowadays an ever-increasing number of women work full time, and in this reality it is widely believed that house chores should be shared between men and women equally. I strongly agree with this statement. One of the reasons for sharing housework between is to promote gender equality.