

age of five, and that the woman returns to work outside the home when the oldest starts school.

The total time the woman is engaged in reproduction and full-time nurturing is eight years of her life. Given a life expectancy of eighty years, the amount of time exclusively devoted to having and raising children will be reduced to an astounding 10 percent of her life. Childbearing is reduced from a woman's primary activity to one activity among many. Add to this analysis the fact that many women have only one child, and that many use day care and other mass nurturing facilities for their children well before the age of five, and the entire structure of a woman's life is transformed.

We can see the demographic roots of feminism right here. Since women spend less of their time having and nurturing children, they are much less dependent on men than even fifty years ago. For a woman to reproduce without a husband would have created economic disaster for her in the past. This is no longer the case, particularly for better-educated women. Marriage is no longer imposed by economic necessity.

This brings us to a place where marriages are not held together by need as much as by love. The problem with love is that it can be fickle. It comes and goes. If people stay married only for emotional reasons, there will inevitably be more divorce. The decline of economic necessity removes a powerful stabilizing force in marriage. Love may endure, and frequently does, but by itself it is less powerful than when linked to economic necessity. Marriages used to be guaranteed "till death do us part." In the past, that parting was early and frequent. There were a great many fifty-year marriages during the transition period when people were having ten surviving children. But prior to that, marriages ended early through death, and the survivor remarried or faced economic ruin. Europe practiced what we might call serial polygamy, in which widowers (usually, since women tended to die in childbirth) remarried numerous times throughout their lives. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, habit kept marriages together for extraordinarily long periods of time. A new pattern emerged in the later twentieth century, however, in which serial polygamy reasserted itself, but this time the trend was being driven by divorce rather than death.

Let's add another pattern to this. Whereas many marriages used to take place when one or both partners were in their early teens, people are now

marrying in their late twenties and early thirties. It was typical for men and women to remain sexually inactive until marriage at age fourteen, but today it is, shall we say, unrealistic to expect someone marrying at age thirty to remain a virgin. People would be living seventeen years after puberty without sexual activity. That's not going to happen.

There is now a period built into life patterns where people are going to be sexually active but not yet able to support themselves financially. There is also a period in which they can support themselves and are sexually active, but choose not to reproduce. The entire pattern of traditional life is collapsing, and no clear alternative patterns are emerging yet. Cohabitation used to be linked to formal, legal marriage, but the two are now completely decoupled. Even reproduction is being uncoupled from marriage, and perhaps even from cohabitation. Longer life, the decline in fertility rates, and the additional years of education have all contributed to the dissolution of previous life and social patterns.

This trend cannot be reversed. Women are having fewer children because supporting a lot of children in industrial, urban society is economic suicide. That won't change. The cost of raising children will not decline, nor will there be ways found to put six-year-olds to work. The rate of infant mortality is also not going to rise. So in the twenty-first century the trend toward having fewer, rather than more, children will continue.

POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

The more educated segments of the population are the ones where life patterns have diverged the most. The very poorest, on the other hand, have lived in a world of dysfunctional families since the industrial revolution began. For them, chaotic patterns of reproduction have always been the norm. However, between the college-educated professional and business classes on the one side and the underclass on the other, there is a large layer of society that has only partially experienced the demographic shifts.

Among blue- and pink-collar workers there have been other trends, the most important of which is that they have shorter educations. The result is less of a gap between puberty and reproduction. These groups tend to marry