Laura Levine Frader. *Breadwinners and Citizens: Gender in the Making of the French Social Model*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. ix + 347 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-4182-6, $89.95 (cloth); ISBN 978-0-8223-4198-7, $24.95 (paperback).

This fascinating book shows how employers, labor leaders, and politicians from the left to the right collaborated to affirm the ideal of the male breadwinner in France between the two world wars. Examining data across several sectors of the economy, including metalworking, textile production, the automobile industry, and the state-owned postal, telegraph, and telephone service, Laura Levine Frader builds a convincing case that France shared the gender biases in employment and social policy that characterized industrializing nations across the globe in the 1920s and 1930s.

The differential value attached to men's and women's labor may be a universal theme in the history of capitalist development, but Frader situates her story of gender and state formation in its particular cultural, political, and economic context. Frader argues that the demographic crisis set off by France's high casualty rates in the Great War set the stage for pronatalist policies that revalorized men as fathers and wage earners while casting women as mothers first and workers second. While previous scholars have pointed to women's high rates of labor force participation in France as evidence of a relatively weak male breadwinner ideal, Frader argues that "this perspective masks the strong historical ambivalence surrounding women's work and the persistent efforts to contest and contain women's rights as wage earners" (p. 6).

Frader captures the interplay between gender and racial ideology, providing examples of how employers manipulated both to enhance profits and increase flexibility. She describes the historical process through which the archetypal French worker was made and remade as a French man supporting a wife and children despite the increasing presence of French women and male migrants in French workplaces. Depending on their origins in North Africa or Southeast Asia, men from the colonies might be characterized as "beasts of burden," willing to do the dirty work that French workers refused, or feminized in their ability to fit in on production lines. Meanwhile, European men were typed according to nationality and, like French women, frequently relegated to "unskilled" industrial positions.

In seeking to modernize their workplaces, achieve greater efficiency, and head off labor unrest, employers in the 1920s turned to industrial physiologists such as Jean-Marie Lahy who promised to use science to match workers to appropriate jobs. As one might expect, new modes of scientific management affirmed existing beliefs about gender and race. Only French men seemed suited for jobs that required skill, imagination, or management of other men. Jobs that could be picked up with no special training and involved rapid repetition seemed to fit the "nervous" constitution of women, who were frequently employed according to the Bedaux system, which used piecework to speed up the pace of production. Thus, the publicly owned *Postes, Télégraphes et Téléphones* found women uniquely suited for stressful work as telephone operators.

French men not only earned higher wages and greater access to skilled positions but also consistently enjoyed better social benefits, including family allowances for dependent children. Political, social, and economic citizenship reinforced each other, and women (who did not gain the right to vote in France until 1944) remained marginal players in all three arenas. The Depression of the 1930s affirmed rather than challenged the model of the male breadwinner, Frader argues: employers tried to preserve French men's jobs at the expense of married women's positions, and popular sentiment turned against "foreign" workers.

By the 1930s, however, workers on the left had developed a new, more egalitarian understanding of gender relations, and they resisted Catholic and pronatalist calls to remove women from the paid labor force. Men in the metalworking trades associated with the communist *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* (CGTU) campaigned for equal work and unemployment benefits for women. Male textile workers echoed these demands, and women within the CGTU "condemned efforts to return working women to the home as 'demagogic'" (p. 213). Even the more moderate *Confédération Générale du Travail*

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affirmed women's right to work and rejected conservative proposals to provide allowances for mothers who left the labor force.

However, the conservative Vichy government revived plans for family allowances in the Family Code of 1940, which awarded mothers who stayed home to care for their children ten percent of the average departmental wage. As a historian of U.S. working women, I wondered how the ideology of the male breadwinner intersected with workers' daily lives and I wanted to hear the voices of workers affected by these social policies. Did working mothers feel coerced or rewarded by family allowances? Were they insulted that the rates of remuneration for motherhood were set at such paltry levels? Did the growing presence of married women in the labor force lead to any sort of reorganization of household labor?

Breadwinners and Citizens reads as a cautionary tale to feminists inclined to look to the state to insure economic equality. However, I questioned whether social support for motherhood is inherently conservative, as Frader seems to imply. During a similar time period in the United States, radicals such as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Emma Goldman argued that women could not achieve economic independence or parity as workers until the costs of caring for children were born by the state.

Frader is chiefly concerned with how hegemonic ideas about gender were constructed, not how they were challenged. Thus, she tends to discount opposition to the male breadwinner ideal from feminists, female labor leaders, and working women themselves. She characterizes working women's alternative vision of egalitarian gender relations as "utopian" (p. 46). However, she acknowledges some significant victories: publically employed *rédactrices* (chief clerks) won the right to equal pay in the early 1920s, and *dames employées* (female postal workers) secured it by the end of the decade. I wanted to know more about the material and ideological underpinnings of several strikes in which male and female workers joined together to demand equal pay for equal work.

In conclusion, this well-wrought book illuminates the centrality of gender to the history of social policy and labor relations in France and suggests intriguing points of comparison for students of gender, state formation, and capitalist development around the world.

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