



The Conflict: How Modern Motherhood Undermines the Status of Women

Elisabeth Badinter

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In the pathbreaking tradition of *Backlash* and *The Time Bind*, *The Conflict*, a #1 European bestseller, identifies a surprising setback to women's freedom: progressive modern motherhood

Elisabeth Badinter has for decades been in the vanguard of the European fight for women's equality. Now, in an explosive new book, she points her finger at a most unlikely force undermining the status of women: liberal motherhood, in thrall to all that is "natural." Attachment parenting, co-sleeping, baby-wearing, and especially breast-feeding—these hallmarks of contemporary motherhood have succeeded in tethering women to the home and family to an extent not seen since the 1950s. Badinter argues that the taboos now surrounding epidurals, formula, disposable diapers, cribs—and anything that distracts a mother's attention from her offspring—have turned childrearing into a singularly regressive force.

In sharp, engaging prose, Badinter names a reactionary shift that is intensely felt but has not been clearly articulated until now, a shift that America has pioneered. She reserves special ire for the orthodoxy of the La Leche League—an offshoot of conservative Evangelicalism—showing how on-demand breastfeeding, with all its limitations, curtails women's choices. Moreover, the pressure to provide children with 24/7 availability and empathy has produced a generation of overwhelmed and guilt-laden mothers—one cause of the West's alarming decline in birthrate.

A bestseller in Europe, *The Conflict* is a scathing indictment of a stealthy zealotry that cheats women of their full potential.



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