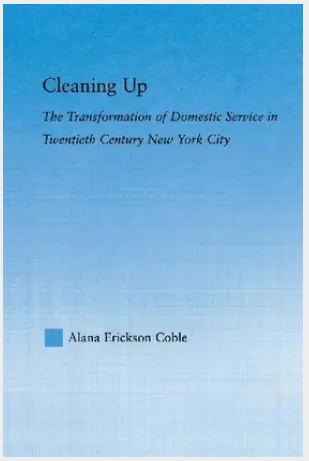
Erickson Coble

Cleaning Up

The Transformation of Domestic Service in Twentieth Century New York

Over the course of the 20th century, American domestic service changed from an occupation with a hierarchical, top-down structure to one in which relationships were more negotiated. Many forces shaped this transformation: shifts in women's role in society, both at home and in the work force; changes in immigration laws and immigrant populations; and the politicization of the occupation. Moreover, domestic workers themselves took advantage of the resulting circumstances to demand better treatment and a say in their working conditions.

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