

This book fulfils its promise and achieves the goals it sets for itself. The reader is able to hear the voice of the participants and appreciate the author's effort to provide a multi-dimensional, complex, humble, sensitive and less deterministic understanding of the town and its people. Indeed, the author opens a window through which she pulls the reader into the participants' struggles, their ways to cope with marginality, and their attempts to give meaning to their lives. The author succeeds in developing an alternative framework of thinking and writing which provides a different kind of knowledge on the social reality; a model that does not determine facts but prompts the reader to think about social and cultural processes in Israel as she hoped to establish.

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Liat Kulik and Varda Muhlbauer (Eds.). *Working Families – Parents in the Israeli Workplace: Social, Economic and Legal Aspects* (Peles Publishing, The College of Management Economic Studies, Rishon Letzion, 2010), 306 pp.

The collection of articles in the book "Working Families" deals with the familiar issue of combining work and family, but offers an interesting perspective both in the choice of its focus and its multi-dimensionalism. Since the family is the unit influenced by and dealing with this concern, the book places family at the centre of the discussion, rather than concentrating on parts of the family like working mothers. The choice of the family unit is in itself a gender critique, which points to the fact that this issue is shared by both genders and affects the family as a whole. The editors of the book share their difficulties with editorial decisions with the reader, and point out that during the editorial process they realised that the gender aspects and the family aspects of this issue cannot be separated either conceptually or practically.

On reading the book, this dilemma is very understandable but their success in focusing their study without ignoring the existence of additional complex points of view is clearly apparent. In other words: they deal with the family whilst constantly interweaving the gender implications, finally returning to action on behalf of the family both at the level of thought process and the level of social policy.

The book's ten chapters present a wide variety of subjects relevant to understanding the components which influence working families, and the problems connected with the combination of working and having a family. These are taken from the

broadest perspective and combine diverse viewpoints: legal, economic, sociological, media and so on. The breadth of the points of view presented can be appreciated by examining the range of disciplines of the contributors: social work, management, psychology, economics, communication, behavioural science, personnel management, organisational behaviour, gerontology and public health, work studies.

In the first chapter, Haya Stier describes the new reality, in which most families now have two wage-earners, using the dramatic statement “The end of the single wage-earner.” This melodramatic title is borne out by the disappointing reality of parenting and work painted in chapter two by Hadara Bar-Mor and Keren Oginitz. Indeed, in spite of the many changes in the number of women in the workplace and the variety of jobs they now fill, the fact is that conservative forces are still very strong; traditional perceptions continue to dominate both at home and in the family and amongst decision makers. It is impossible not to hear the implied protest in the description of the Vered Peri ruling for the recognition of child rearing expenses as a means of generating income, as described in the article.

In the third chapter, “The family and its portrayal in the media,” Dafna Lemish shows us a reflection of the family as it is presented by the media, especially in popular television series. The chapter examines questions contemplating how television portrays changes in family structure, the tension between family and work, the diversity of ethnic families and more. The investigation is underpinned by a comparison of American and Israeli television series.

The next five chapters concentrate on the relationships between couples within the family. Liat Kulik and Eyal Klonover examine the balance of power between partners, Andrew Shane and Nava Haruvi investigate the short and long term considerations leading to the decision to be a two wage-earner family, and Mina Westman looks at stressful and pressured situations and how these affect couples. The fourth and the eighth chapters explore alternative work arrangements for women, such as working from home and freelancing, and the opportunities and possibilities that these arrangements offer for a renewed assessment of combining work and family. Varda Muhlbauser examines the possibility of working from home, and concludes that “the balance of economic and cultural power does not encourage creating new work arrangements which question gender values and undermine the accepted separation between work and home.” Ronit Waismel-Manor and Ronit Nadiv present the complexities involved in choosing to be a freelancer, both because of the positioning in the work place and the possibilities of combining work and family. In spite of the fact that the article raises the economic risks to which women working freelance (and freelancers in general) are exposed, the question which is not dealt with in this context is the extent and the realistic possibility that this option can offer to women with no economic backing.

The last two chapters deal with special groups: Liat Kulik examines strategies for dealing with the conflict between home and work from a multi-cultural perspective and compares the situation of Jewish and Moslem Arab women. Ayala Malach-Pines, Yafit Hasan, Lesley Hammer and Margaret Neal deal with the group of workers in the hi-tech industry from the “sandwich generation,” whose work – home conflict combine the issues of caring both for children and for ageing parents.

The book is interesting, compelling and relevant for wide areas of interest. It offers a complex, thought provoking view on a subject central to our lives, whose complex aspects are hidden from view and not part of the public discourse. It is impossible to ignore the gloomy message openly apparent in some of the articles and subtly camouflaged in others. The reality is complicated, the forces preserving traditional attitudes are dominant and the road to real change in family life in general and in women’s lives in particular is still very long.

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Sylvie Fogiel-Bijaoui, *Democracy and Feminism: Gender, Citizenship and Human Rights*. (The Open University in Israel, Ra’anana, 2011) ,267 pp.(Hebrew)

An excellent tool for teaching feminism and gender within the framework of citizenship and human rights, this book is a timely contribution to the scholarship and publications accompanying the growing interest in gender studies. The Open University is well known for publications enabling students to obtain general knowledge on subjects not necessarily taught in high school or even BA degree courses. The connection between feminism, citizenship and human rights within western democracy seems to be obvious. Could feminism ever flourish, or even survive without a democratic framework? The answer is complex and not at all obvious. Thus, a book that connects feminism and democracy has the potential to be an eye opener for anyone not yet initiated into gender and feminist studies. Indeed, the book *Democracy and Feminism: Gender, Citizenship and Human Rights*, outlines the basic ideas of feminism within the framework of democratic thinking. Therefore, the discourse remains strictly within the parameters of western democratic thinking. As such, it is a successful attempt to summarise more than 200 years of struggles for women’s equality and freedom. The struggle of women and women’s movements to gain equality and freedom in western