

Recognition of the high level of emotion in a work-obsessed society and the commonplace divisive language now adopted to describe the “new, action-oriented welfare policies” is reflected in this structural analysis of very serious human issues and social citizenship.

Although there is no magic formula, Dr. Bashevkin captures the frustrations expressed by those interviewed calling it a “sickness of heart” among activists and concludes that we are now at a crucial intersection where issues of work and gender meet social policy and that progressive campaigners focused on justice at work may have some hope of altering the harsh face of the new duty states apparent in United States, Britain and Canada.

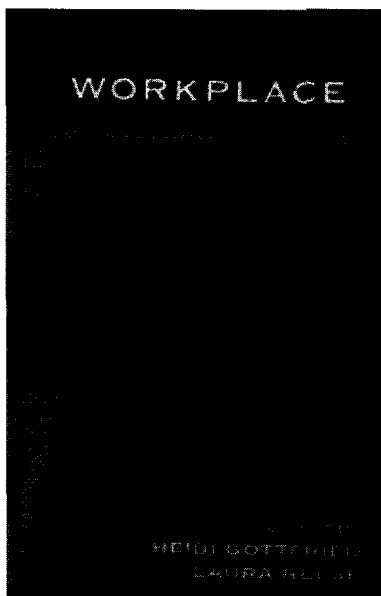
## **EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE: GENDERING WORKPLACE POLICY ANALYSIS**

Heidi Gottfried and Laura Reese,  
Eds.  
Lanham, Maryland: Lexington  
Books, 2004

### **REVIEWED BY NOREEN PUPO**

*Equity in the Workplace* is a collection of comparative workplace policy studies of the United States, Germany, Canada, and Japan. The chapters focus on gender and employment practices and policies, including workplace or employment policies, issues of work-life balance, caregiving, parental leave, and sexual harassment. While at first it may appear that this is simply a collection of disparate case studies on policy issues surrounding the workplace, through this volume the editors have

cleverly demonstrated the importance of comparative policy research for understanding the transformations and alternatives possible under a similar set of global economic conditions. In short, readers benefit from the rich, locally grounded studies, each of which contributes to the historical and



critical analysis of the individual nation state, but even more significantly, from the lessons we might carry from place to place in understanding the breadth of policy options and the strategies employed by women to alter workplace practices.

Following an introduction by editors Heidi Gottfried and Laura Reese, the book is divided into four parts: Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Workplace Policy; Implications of Gender in the Workplace; Reconciliation of Work and Family Life: Maternity, Parental and Family Leave; and Specific Applications of Workplace Policies: Gender Equity in the Workplace. In Part One, the authors move away from exposing the oppressive conditions and gender traps of globalization to consider the emergence of feminist transnational networks and the ways in which feminists working through these networks and related organiza-

tions have participated in the policy-making process. While considering the impact of globalization on women's work experience and conditions, authors contextualize the development of women-friendly workplace policies and the ways in which global economic policies, including re-regulation, have contributed to some positive developments in women's workplaces and in facilitating opportunities for transnational organizations to promote feminist policies.

Issues surrounding the quandary of work-family balance, including tensions between wage-earning and care-giving roles, and questions of work time, are the central focus of Parts Two and Three. The authors expose the ways in which seemingly neutral policies are gender-biased by preserving the male breadwinner role and by diminishing the importance of women's paid work. One of the main considerations here is the impact of feminist politics on the policy process and the ways in which women have not only introduced, but promoted feminist discourses and maintained women's issues on their state's policy agendas.

In the final part of the book, the authors examine particular workplace initiatives, such as sexual harassment policies, ultimately designed to eliminate the “chilly” climate in the workplace for women. The authors make evident the importance of understanding how various approaches to workplace and equity policies reflect the particular state structure. Their analyses invite readers to consider the question of adaptability—whether these approaches may or not work within the constraints of historical traditions, cultural processes, and legal systems—and how they may be adapted within a particular socio-political context.

In general, the articles in this volume are clearly written and well researched. The variety of methodologies employed is welcome. As a required reading or teaching resource for upper level courses in women's studies, social policy, or labour stud-

ies, what is most striking is the way in which the volumes' themes are drawn through the individual chapters. Although the authors are writing from within diverse contexts and analysing distinct policy initiatives, they "talk to each other." While this reflects the tremendous scholarship of this stellar group of contributors, for me, it is the mark of a well assembled collection.

## **MONEY IN THEIR OWN NAME: THE FEMINIST VOICE IN POVERTY DEBATE IN CANADA, 1970-1995**

Wendy McKeen  
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004

### **REVIEWED BY A. JAN JOHNSTONE**

Feminist politics of autonomy and struggle for individualized entitlement were once at the cutting edge of a broader vision for Canadian social policy, and rested on the values of collectivity, community, and social individual autonomy. Thus, one of the principal demands of the feminist movement from the 1980s was the provision of social benefits based on individual rather than family income, in order to allow women to gain "real autonomy" inside the family unit. Yet, this claim slipped from within the universe of federal political discourses, and gender issues and women's concerns became eliminated from the poverty debate around the Canadian Child Tax Benefit.

In *Money In Their Own Name*, Wendy McKeen looks at the relationship between gender equality and social policy in Canada from the 1970s to the 1990s. She provides an in-depth historical account of the

shaping of feminist politics within the field of federal child benefits programs in Canada, and explores the critical issue of why feminists' vision of the "social individual"<sup>1</sup> failed to flourish.

Canadian social policy, like in most western welfare states, had established women's access to social benefits based on their status as wives or mothers, not individual citizens in their own right. In her analysis, McKeen calls our attention to this persistent familialism that has been written and re-written into Canadian social policy, and demonstrates how this approach denies women's autonomy as independent claim-makers on the state. She further reveals the lack of contestation by the women's movement towards this dependent status, and the subsequent erasure of women from social policy.

McKeen effectively entwines sociological theory with substantive examples from political discourse. She uncovers overlooked aspects of Canadian social policy politics and subsequently broadens our understanding of politics and political change. At the same time, by blending the concepts of discourse, agency, and policy community, she offers a new analytical tool for approaching the shaping of political interests. For example, McKeen draws our attention to the struggles both within the context of the social policy community, and over the meaning or interpretations of problems. It is the political choices of left-liberal social policy and anti-poverty organizations, and of women's organizations, which, though well-intentioned, effectively reinforced and legitimated the shift to targeting, particularly for the core area of child benefits. Indirectly, the role of social policy organizations helped shape the discursive turn in social policy discourse towards a renewed focus on the politics of poverty, and was critical in laying ideological foundations for a shift in an anti-poverty model. At the same time, McKeen provides a deeper understanding of the ways

that more radical oppositional groups, such as the socialist-feminist groups with the women's movement, labour organizations, and popular sector groups, were marginalized in the debates on social policy during this time.

I found that McKeen successfully highlights how broad macro-level social, economic, and political conditions, including the prevailing universe of neo-liberal political discourse, also conditioned the policy community environment within which feminists identified and framed their interests and their social and public policy choices. She shows how feminists became increasingly drawn into coalition politics with the dominant progressive social policy anti-poverty organizations. However, McKeen fails to fully explore the effects of changes taking place within the broader women's movement (and NAC particularly), in the late 1980s and early 1990s that affected its overall policy orientation and strategies. While her goal is to show that second-wave women's movement did advance an alternative vision for progressive social policy that recognized the social context of individual lives, I also wanted to understand the ways in which new groups of minority women—who were addressing questions of racism and recognizing the interrelations of racism, sexism, and classist assumptions—shaped the course of struggle and attempted to define the terms of debates on the restructuring of social policy. Moreover, how did these new groups' struggles and goals mesh with the goals of socialist feminism whose rise within the movement in turn focused on and valorized women's paid work outside of the home at the expense of unrecognized and devalued unpaid domestic and caring work?

*Money In Their Own Name* provides new insights into the political processes of welfare state restructuring in Canada. Since social policy is the outcome of political struggle and debate, the book is an important resource for those in the fields of