

Israeli Sociology

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Special Issue on Invisible Work

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English Abstracts

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Rethinking the Concept of Work: Language, Knowledge and Gender

Hanna Herzog

Abstract. This article proposes to rethink the meaning of the concept of work by investigating the changing social worlds that it encompasses. This is an etymological journey through the meanings of work and labour as they are manifested in the Hebrew and English languages. The article examines the place of women in these worlds, retrieves their silenced voices, and investigates their experiences and roles in redefining the concept of work. The etymological quest shows the way in which work is talked about and knowledge is accumulated about the social world and how the genderizing of the world of work has changed and/or has been reproduced in social and historical contexts. Although the routes to meaning are not uniform, nor are they necessarily linear, one of the findings is that there has been a transition from the concept of work as punishment and suffering to work as a basic component of defining and actualizing the humanity of women as an integral part of the definition of what a society is.

Keywords: Work, gender, segmental analysis (etymological), birth

Still Invisible: Trends and Developments in the Evaluation of the Contribution of Unpaid Work to the Economy

Yael Hasson

Abstract. This article offers an up-to-date review of the international literature on the measurement of unpaid work done mainly by women. The review focuses on the absence of unpaid work from the national accounts system and the calculation of gross domestic product while noting the limitations of the latter, among other things, from a feminist point of view. It then discusses theoretical and empirical developments, the challenges of collecting data on unpaid work, and the controversies regarding the allocation of monetary values to it. Also addressed are the analysis of unpaid work in feminist economic research, emphasizing the

consequences of economic crises, including the Covid-19 crisis, which appears to have widened the gender gap in the performance of unpaid work. Finally, the article points to arrangements promoted in different countries to compensate mainly for unpaid care work. However, these arrangements are still controversial and limited in scope.

Keywords: Unpaid work, GDP, economic policy, feminism

The Price of Invisibility: The Monetary Value of Unpaid Work – A Comparative Examination

Miri Endeweld and Amit Kaplan

Abstract. Despite the social importance of unpaid work in the domestic sphere, its monetary value and contribution are not included in official calculations of economic activity (GDP). This study aims to estimate the monetary value of this “invisible” work. Based on household expenditures survey and complementary data, we constructed a simulation in which invisible work hours and their value per individual were calculated in accordance with relevant social characteristics. We estimated that the monthly value of unpaid domestic work ranges from 4,100 NIS to 6,600 NIS (in 2018 prices), with women investing approximately twice that of men. Furthermore, the contribution of invisible work to the GDP would reach about one-fifth to one-third, with women and other disadvantaged groups contributing a larger share than their share in the population. The study highlights the gender blindness of existing indices, which devalues the economic contribution of women and other disadvantaged groups to society.

Keywords: Invisible work, valuing unpaid work, gender, GDP

Inequality in the Family in Paid and Unpaid Work: Do Family Policies Matter?

Haya Stier

Abstract. In order to increase gender equality, many countries have implemented policies to improve work-family balance. This paper examines how these various policies affected the allocation of time to paid and non-paid work, for women and men, and on gender equality in these two dimensions. Two types of policies are examined: those aimed at encouraging women's employment and those designed to increase the time fathers spend with their families. The study was based on the ISSP survey of Gender Roles conducted in 2012 including 30 OECD countries for which information on country-level policies was added. Using multilevel analysis, the findings show that policies affect women's and men's time allocation to paid work, and also women's time in housework. Policies directed at fathers had no effect on their time allocation to housework. The main contribution of the study is in showing how specific policies affect gender inequality in the division of labour.

Keywords: Division of work, housework, paid work, family policy

The Meaning of Changes in The State's Responsibility for Its Citizens for Women Workers in the Social Services: Precarity in the Public Sector and The Coercion to Provide Invisible Work

Einat Lavee

Abstract. Much literature has examined the meaning of welfare administrative reforms, both for state-citizen relations and for the public sector's performance. These changes are linked to other labour market trends, particularly in the context of the changing social contract between employers and employees. As a result, scholars have argued that many locations in the labour market have become precarious – characterized by unstable, unsafe and even oppressive work. An exception is employment in the public sector, which is considered relatively safe

and secure. The aim of this study was to examine the meaning of the reforms for the daily practices of public sector workers. An analysis of 214 in-depth interviews that focused on the interactions between workers who provide social services (welfare, education and health) and their clients, revealed that the workers provide a wide range of informal resources. The provision of these resources is invisible, as it is not recognized nor rewarded by the organization. The main research argument is that the provision of informal resources points to a diffusion of the oppressive elements of precarious work, which up until today were associated with nonstandard employment, also for direct employment in the public sector, and has fundamental gender implications.

Keywords: Precarious work, Invisible work, Public sector, Informal resources

Things Seen from Here Are Not Seen from There: Observations from The Margins of The Labour Market

Sigal Nagar-Ron

Abstract. In this article the term “invisible work” is used as an analytical tool to identify institutional mechanisms that reproduce Mizrahi women’s marginality in the labour market in southern Israel. The study depicts the ongoing efforts of Mizrahi women living in development towns to acquire an academic education, gain appropriate employment and become self-reliant citizens. The study is based on mixed methods: a survey (n=592) among women who live in Negev Development Towns (NDT) and in-depth interviews with 23 graduates of Sapir Academic College in southern Israel. The data reveals that in most cases, the women’s financial, physical, mental and cognitive efforts to acquire academic education as a means for social and economic mobility are doomed to failure. The study exposes the mechanism that reproduces ethno-gendered inequality at the intersection of class and space and reveals a new field – not yet identified in the literature as a field that manufactures invisible work – that of academic and of vocational training.

Keywords: Education, Mizrahi women, development towns, labour market

Robin Hood and Superwoman: The Gendering of Invisible Work in the Era of the Family-Friendly Organization

Hilla Cohen-Nissan and Michal Frenkel

Abstract. Two complementary discourses have aimed to challenge the liberal distinction between the public (and masculine) sphere and the private (and feminine) one: the discourse on “invisible work” and that of work-family reconciliation. Based on 31 interviews with female and male top managers in the Israeli Hi-Tech sector, this paper explores how the two discourses shape the reconciliation that work managers conduct for themselves and for others in the public and private spheres. We map out differences in the types of reconciliation work that men and women do in each sphere, and their attempt to gain social recognition for their contribution. Our analysis demonstrates how, despite the institutionalization and growing legitimacy of the work-family discourse in organizations, both reconciliation labour and their invisibility map remain extensively gendered.

Keywords: Work-Family balance, invisible work, emotional labour

His or Her Resources? The Division of Housework in Palestinian Families in Israel

Maha Sabbah Karkabi

Abstract. This article focuses on the way Palestinian families in Israel manage their household’s division of labour and childcare between spouses, and the way women’s and men’s education and employment challenge the gendered division of labour. While most studies have been carried out in economically developed societies, less is known about the phenomenon in the context of developing societies, in which significant changes in education have occurred while patriarchal norms regarding family and gender roles are maintained. Using data from the Israeli Social Survey (2009 and 2019), this paper uses logistic regression to examine the effects of the relative education of the spouses, employment status, wages, and attitudes of men and women on the gendered division of labour and childcare.

Moreover, this research analyses the way these relationships changed from 2009 to 2019. The main results show that there are still noticeable gender differences in housework performance and that change over time is slow. However, the results also demonstrate that in some cases, individual resources of women and men such as educational levels, women's employment status, and egalitarian gender role attitudes of men (to a greater extent than those of women) – might allow for a more equal division of labour within households.

Keywords: Education, gender equality, Palestinian society, division of labour

Colors of 'Invisible Work': Perceptions of Housework among Breadwinner Ultra-Orthodox Women in Israel

Yehudit Chassida

Abstract. The current study seeks to examine how Ultra-Orthodox women, as sole breadwinners in the household, perceive housework and care for their families. The study is based on interviews with Ultra-Orthodox women who are employed in the high-tech profession as a unique and small group in the Ultra-Orthodox community. The findings show that the perception of housework consists of a conflict between religious ideology and neo-liberal economic logic that creates 'colors' in the invisible work of housework in accordance with the perception of paid work. This conflict is reflected through three perspectives: descriptions of their daily routine, their perception of paid work, and their perceptions about their daughters' future. The analysis reveals that as the more these women are drawn to an economic logic, the more they perceive housework as invisible work and vice versa. The study's conclusions shed light on the concept of 'invisible work' at the intersection of tradition and modernity where the hand of tradition is stronger. But the strength of this tradition is exposed to long-term consequences, and may undermine traditional family by lowering the status of housework. The contribution of this study is reflected in the added meaning of the concept of 'invisible labour' through the intersection of the social position of Ultra-Orthodox women in Israel.

Keywords: Ultra-orthodox women, single breadwinners, invisible work, participation in workforce

The “Active Grandmother” and The “Good Mother”: Israeli Grandmothers between Familism and Neo-Liberalism

Nitza Berkovitch and Shlomit Manor

Abstract. Our research focuses on grandmothers’ childcare, vital but generally invisible work. Based on in-depth interviews with 20 retired Jewish grandmothers, we examine how they understand and negotiate the expectations that they will help shoulder or “cover” the “care deficit” resulting from neoliberal market practices and policy. We show how they maneuver between family ideologies and individualistic cultural imperatives, constituting themselves as subjects acting to determine the conditions in which they will meet expectations while challenging the invisibility of their work. We argue that neoliberalism adds a tier to strengthening the family and familism, that through the invisible work of grandmothers, serves as one of the cornerstones of the neoliberal economy and relieves the state of the need to support families with children. Thus, familism and individualism create tensions and mediate between the political economy and the intimate moral economy based on the love, commitment, and ideology of the “good mother.”

Keywords: Care work, familism, neo-liberalism, grandmothers

The Pandemic is Gendered: ‘Invisible work’ in Sociological Research during Covid-19

Amit Kaplan, Suzy Ben Dori and Hanna Herzog

Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic corresponds to the sociological characteristics of a ‘critical moment’, which contains the potential to change the social definition of a situation. Does this critical moment re-entrench gender norms, or might it also offer opportunities to disrupt them? We use the term ‘critical moment’ as a conceptual tool that can lead a change in social situation definitions, and simultaneously as a methodological tool for examining what is researched, how and what emerges from the research. This review article seeks to understand what was

published in the sociological literature during the first two years of the pandemic regarding invisible work in the domestic sphere, the main issues discussed in these studies, and the organizing logic of this literature. Three main issues were at the heart of this literature: The effect of the pandemic on gender inequality in invisible work in the domestic space; challenging and reflecting on the dichotomy between private and public spheres; and a discussion of Covid-19's implications on the care economy and the opportunity of rethinking and redefining invisible work. We end by suggesting thoughts regarding future directions of research.

Keywords: Unpaid work, housework, care work, invisible work, Covid-19, literature review, critical moment

Israeli Sociology

Founded in 1998, Israeli Sociology is published in Hebrew twice a year. The journal serves as a platform for local research that maintains a dialogue with sociological scholarship around the world. The journal invites manuscripts from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, in line with the heterogeneity of the discipline, as well as review essays and research notes, all subject to a peer review process. The journal also includes an extensive book-review section that offers a wide-range view of the Israeli social science scene. Israeli Sociology was founded by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel-Aviv University and is supported by the Institute for Social Research (established by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University), by the David Horowitz Institute for Social and Economic Research and by the Israeli Sociological Society.

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Instructions for Authors:

- Israeli Sociology invites submissions of manuscripts, from a variety of methodologies and with distinct theoretical and empirical contributions to Israeli sociology in particular and to sociology in general.
- Israeli Sociology will consider publishing only manuscripts that have not been published and are not under review elsewhere, in any language.
- The journal uses an anonymous peer review process.
- Manuscripts should include a cover page with the title of the manuscript in Hebrew and English, authors' name in Hebrew and English, address, phone number, e-mail address, and their academic or professional affiliation.
- Submissions should not exceed 9,000 words in length, including footnotes and bibliography and should include a 150-word abstract in Hebrew and English detailing the research question, method, findings and contribution.
- Manuscripts will be submitted in Word, font David, size 12, double space.
- Tables and graphs should be attached in the body of the manuscript where they should appear, and in an editable format. Pictures that appear in the body of the manuscript should also be attached in a separate image format.
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