


Book Review: Feminism's Forgotten Fight: The Unfinished Struggle for Work and Family by Kristen Swinth

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Swinth, Kirsten, *Feminism's Forgotten Fight: The Unfinished Struggle for Work and Family*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018. 339 pages. Hardcover, \$35.00

In *Feminism's Forgotten Fight: The Unfinished Struggle for Work and Family*, historian Kirsten Swinth explores the illusion of women having it all by engaging the persistent struggle that continues for social, economic, and political change. Swinth examines the second wave of feminism, the progress made toward women's equality and the challenges that still persist, including a lack of equality for non-white women and women in poverty. The focus of the text highlights the journey of women seeking to attain a healthy balance between home and work. Additionally, the author notes that the "motherhood penalty" does truly exist, as women pursuing this illusive balance have greater stress and lower wages (251).

Swinth explains that the second wave of the feminist movement reconstructed the way individuals see personal, family, social and economic identities, but failed to sustain progress for women to achieve the totality of their aspirations. Such movements afforded women the right to work and earn wages but did not fully address core issues such as childcare, housework, and inequality among groups of females of color, immigrant status, and those in poverty. The concept of care work is discussed thoroughly in chapter five, highlighting the inequality of the value of women's work, which remains a pertinent issue in addressing the wage gap and unequal pay today. Gender studies enthusiasts would benefit from this work, as it provides a comprehensive and historical perspective of feminism's victories and unfulfilled promises. Swinth's discussion of advancements made by the feminist movement, and the areas that still require further critical analysis, encourage readers to think more about what can be done to achieve equality in the workforce and equal value of women's work.

There is also an emphasis on the economic side of feminist's forgotten fight, as the author discusses flextime arrangements aimed at achieving both employment equity and family or domestic responsibilities. Historians, sociologists, economists, and political scientists should find value in Swinth's work, as she calls for the need to re-evaluate how legislation addresses the needs of working women and the feminization of poverty. Social scientists reading this work may begin to conceptualize ideas of how to best address the myth of women having it all. While Swinth calls for further research to set the agenda for more extensive policy creation and development to address the feminization of poverty, the approach to successfully doing so remains unclear. As Swinth writes, "it became feminism's legacy to produce stressed-out superwomen"(237), a reality that should lead readers to recognize the need for further reform.

In sum, Swinth presents feminism's successes in achieving some forms of equality for working women while also pinpointing areas that still need improvement. The conflict of work and family remains a major challenge of working women, and the incremental approach to policy development continues to fall short in fully addressing women's equality and an appropriate balance between work and family obligations.

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