



Challenging the Public/Private Divide: Feminism, Law, and Public Policy

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Western thought has long been characterized by an ideological divide between public and private spheres. In the industrial era, the divide became highly gendered as men dominated the public spheres of politics and work, while women were closely associated with family and home. In the late twentieth century, social and legal policies have promoted equal opportunities in the labour force and shared responsibilities in the family. Despite this progress, inequalities are still evident for women in the labour force and in the family, and for some groups of women in relation to others.

In this collection of original essays, feminist scholars in disciplines ranging from law to geography challenge the traditional notion of a public/private divide. The divide can represent boundaries between state and family, state and market, market and family, or state and community, which shift depending on location, social group, and historical time period. The contributors to this book examine the impact of the divide in respect to four themes: state intervention; the relationship between family, home, and work; the legal regulation of motherhood; and the challenges of privatization, restructuring, and globalization. They show that the impact of the divide varies according to factors such as race, class, (dis)ability, and sexual identity as they intersect with gender.

Challenging the Public/Private Divide provides a wealth of information and analysis on current issues in Canada society, from child care to violence against women. Its impact will be felt in diverse disciplines, such as: law, public administration, political science, sociology, women's studies, and criminology.

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