Lifetime Disadvantage, Discrimination and the Gendered Workforce

Susan Bisom-Rapp
Thomas Jefferson School of Law, San Diego

and Malcolm Sargeant
Middlesex University, London

"Lifetime Disadvantage, Discrimination and the Gendered Workforce fills a gap in the literature on discrimination and disadvantage suffered by women at work by focusing on the inadequacies of the current law and the need for a new holistic approach. Each stage of the working life cycle for women is examined with a critical consideration of how the law attempts to address the problems that inhibit women’s labour force participation. By using their model of lifetime disadvantage, the authors show how the law adopts an incremental and disjointed approach to resolving the challenges, and argue that a more holistic orientation towards eliminating women’s discrimination and disadvantage is required before true gender equality can be achieved. Using the concept of resilience from vulnerability theory, the authors advocate a reconfigured workplace that acknowledges yet transcends gender.


‘Drawing together this wide a range of data and to present it in such an accessible way is a fine achievement. The wealth of data offered on women’s lifetime disadvantage, all of it drawn from a range of sources from the last five or six years, and demonstrating trends in discrimination and working patterns over the past 50 years, is extremely valuable to any one doing research into the impact of gender discrimination. … [a] thorough, compelling, and valuable book.’

Richard Poole, Feminist Legal Studies