and its pioneering work. Nor is the fact that gay marriages are now legal in 20 countries mentioned. In focusing on just the United States and just progressive states within it, the frame is very narrow; there is much to be learned from the politics and sociology outside their country.

Mothers Unite! Organizing for Workplace Flexibility and the Transformation of Family Life. By Jocelyn Elise Crowley. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 2013. Pp. xii+227. $29.95.

Shira Offer
Bar-Ilan University

Could mothers' groups come together and form a cohesive movement that would sensitize the public to the daily challenges experienced by mothers across the country and push toward reform in the realm of work and family? The answer is clearly yes. In her thoughtful and rigorous analysis of data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and an extensive web-based survey in five nationally active mothers' groups (Mothers of Preschoolers, Mocha Moms, Mothers and More, the National Association of Mothers' Centers, and MomsRising), Jocelyn Elise Crowley finds that of all policy issues confronting women today, workplace flexibility is considered the most important issue that has the potential to bring all women together. *Mothers Unite* shows that workplace flexibility receives support across the board and is appealing to employed and stay-at-home mothers alike, who believe that flexible arrangements could help them better manage their daily lives while providing the best care for their children. Across groups, the most popular options cited by the mothers are "flexible starting and stopping times, compressed workweeks, advance notice of overtime, advance notice of shift schedules, and the option of part-time work" (p. 98).

Crowley shows that the majority of the mothers who participated in her study are not judgmental of themselves or others regarding the decision to work for pay or stay at home. This is good news, according to Crowley, because it dismisses the popular idea of "Mommy Wars" and suggests instead that mothers in different positions are understanding of each other and capable of developing a sense of solidarity, which is critical for collective action. Her findings further indicate that most mothers agreed that the government should be a key actor in pushing for reform by educating businesses about best practices and by financing initiatives such as awarding grants and tax incentives for the development and implementation of flexible programs. A major contribution of Crowley's book is not only that it identifies a unifying concept but also helps reveal the major barrier to mass mobilization. Crowley finds that although a consensus exists regarding workplace flexibility as a unifying issue, with the exception of MomsRising, whose agenda is to raise awareness on policy issues, mothers join the various groups mainly for intrinsic purposes (e.g., to gain emotional support, develop friendship ties, and

obtain advice about parenting issues) and do not believe they are part of a larger mothers' movement.

As an account of mothers' groups, this study inevitably focuses on women, and more specifically married women, since the vast majority of the mothers who participated in the study were married. This fact raises questions about the role of the spouse in shaping mothers' attitudes about workplace flexibility and about how work-family arrangements are crafted at the couple level. How supportive were the spouses of the mothers in the study? How much flexibility did their job provide them and how did it affect their wives' attitudes and career decisions? There are several hints of these issues throughout the text. For example, interviewees such as Jane, a member of Mothers of Preschoolers and mother of two children, mentioned that flexibility was important to her because her husband's job was very demanding and rigidly scheduled, and they decided as a couple to prioritize his career.

The focus on women also highlights mothers' daily struggle to balance work and family demands. I agree that workplace flexibility is highly relevant for mothers, who continue to bear the major responsibility for child-care and housework. However, flexibility is likely to be beneficial also to men. Previous research (e.g., Kathleen Gerson, *The Unfinished Revolution* [Oxford University Press, 2010]) has shown that many men wish to be more involved in the home but face institutional and cultural barriers that make it difficult for them to do so. Flexibility, and its social recognition, could help men achieve this goal and at the same time also promote gender equality. As Jada and Judy, two of Crowley's interviewees, nicely pointed out, flexibility would not only help reduce mothers' burden but also enable men to take a more active role in child rearing. Crowley's book suggests that by acting as "agents of transformation in the realm of workplace flexibility" (p. 9), mothers' groups can play an important role in pushing for a reform that would benefit all workers.

At the end of her book, Crowley provides five concrete recommendations for how these mothers' groups could mobilize around the issue of flexibility at the national level. First, mothers have to recognize that regardless of their affiliation and employment status, they all share the view that workplace flexibility is a unifying concept. They then need to formulate specific policies and initiatives. Diversifying their membership is the next important step. As Crowley rightly mentions, these groups have to address policy issues that are also relevant to low-income mothers, such as low wages, lack of benefits, child-care costs, and discrimination. In their current state, these groups, which comprise mainly white, educated, middle-class mothers, may be alienating to mothers who do not fit the groups' sociodemographic profile. Consider, for example, Kimberley, a member of Mocha Moms, who was embarrassed by her need to work for pay and her family's dire economic situation, which she attempted to conceal from her peers. The next step calls for the leaders to focus their agenda on workplace flexibility and mobilize their members around this issue. Finally, the groups need to "engage more vigorously in promoting their members' identification with a larger mothers' movement that directly prioritizes workplace flexibility" (p. 188). It is thus

crucial that these mothers become aware that their daily struggle is not only a personal issue but a concern with societal repercussions for all mothers and, I would add, all workers. To conclude, *Mothers Unite* is an inspiring and optimistic book that will be most useful to scholars and students. It is also necessary reading for social activists and policy makers who are dealing with one of the most pressing policy challenges: how to promote work-life balance.

Superdads: How Fathers Balance Work and Family in the 21st Century. By Gayle Kaufman. New York: New York University Press, 2013. Pp. x+263. $75.00 (cloth); $24.00 (paper).

William Marsiglio
University of Florida

Drawing extensively on in-depth narratives derived from a fairly diverse sample of 70 fathers living in California and North Carolina who had at least one child living with them under 18 years of age, Gayle Kaufman explores how contemporary fathers navigate their work and family lives. She frames her book by identifying three types of fathers: old dads, new dads, and superdads. The book offers a largely descriptive account of how the three types of fathers manage their lives. Kaufman also devotes special attention to both married fathers and single fathers who are superdads. In addition to considering how men make their initial transition into fatherhood, she overviews the work-family dilemmas fathers face. From a broader perspective, *Superdads* emphasizes how the everyday practice of fatherhood in the United States has been transformed in recent decades for all fathers.

Old dads are presented as traditional fathers who commit themselves primarily to their work and to being the family breadwinner. Many of their decisions stem from their tendency to see their financial obligations to support their family as their top priority. Their stress is often connected to the expectations they have of themselves to achieve more in their work; they tend to expect less of themselves when it comes to nurturing their children. Yet, according to Kaufman, these fathers appear to be more attentive to their children than were the old dads from previous eras.

New dads, on the other hand, see themselves as much more than financial providers and have, in some respects, become the new normal. They have a more balanced orientation toward their work and family responsibilities. Because they generally hold less conventional gendered beliefs, they deliberately try to accept and accommodate their partner's employment activities. At times, they adjust their work schedules and priorities, but they do not fundamentally challenge their work arrangements. Compared to old dads and superdads, new dads are described as experiencing more conflict and stress because they simultaneously have strong commitments to work and family.