**Struggling for equality by insisting on quality jobs:**

**Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic dimensions in the occupational lives**

**of Arab Policewomen in the Israeli Police**

Job quality is typically evaluated according to the extrinsic (remuneration, stability, training opportunities, union protection) and intrinsic (satisfaction, direct participation, autonomy, discretion) characteristics of a specific position. Focusing on employees with caring responsibilities at home, Drobnic (2011) follow Devoine et. al. (2008)’s gender specific conceptualization to clarify the association between job quality and diversity by highlighting the characteristics of working hours and work/life balance, as well as that of protected transitions. These factors are shaped in the context of policy and organizational financial considerations. In the context of the feminine image of caring jobs a dominant institutional framework operates which assumes that employment requires few skills, and that the relevant skills are not scarce. Consequently, very low levels of extrinsic job quality characterize many social welfare service positions (Hebson and Rubery, 2015; Hasle et al., 2004). In line with this, the categories of workers who “opt” for employment in these sectors in many countries are ethnically and racially diverse and a significant proportion of the workers are socially excluded “working poor” (Jacobs and Padavic, 2015).

Against the backdrop of such a narrow opportunity structure commonly opened for women a scholarly debate has surged exploring the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of job quality in women’s occupational lives. The debate is focused on the question of whether the institutional assumption that women are willing to work for their job satisfaction in caring jobs implies that low quality of extrinsic dimensions, suffice for the operation of caring occupations. Already Morgan et al. (2013) showed it is a false assumption by indicating that women expect better quality of extrinsic dimensions and that when these do not stand their expectations, they quit leaving behind, employees with lesser experience and relevant knowledge. This mechanism was found as salient in connecting between low quality jobs and low quality services basically shedding light on the “care deficiency” (the gap between workforce needed and workforce available in education, service and care occupations). Validating Morgan at al.’s (2013) argument, Hebson and Rubery (2015) found that women are willing to prioritize intrinsic dimension of job quality only during times in which they cannot locate occupational alternatives that would embed better quality of extrinsic dimensions.

Directing attention to the parameter of job quality as crucial for job security and stability, Drobnic (2011) identified an association between job quality and diversity. As neither minority- or majority-group women can hold on to their jobs if their caring obligations are not appropriately resolved, job quality is an imperative in order to ensure that employees in this sector—overwhelmingly women—can nurture a sense of belonging with the organization. Likewise, a broader range of dimensions with regard to job quality affects turnover (Craft-Morgan et al., 2014), suggesting that workplace diversity is enhanced by high job quality facilitating employees’ ability to hold on to their jobs. Their findings permit an innovative framing of women’s struggle for equality in the labor market: rather than struggling to gain equal rewards to those of men, they struggle for equality by insisting on attaining better quality jobs. However, not all jobs that appear to constitute better quality jobs, can be practically experienced as of better quality. Diversity policy open up the opportunity structure for ethnic minorities signifying a occupational alternatives, but how significant is the quality of the jobs they promise? What are the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of quality in their experience? And, how minoritized employees justify holding on to jobs of low quality in the context of diversity policy allegedly opening up better quality jobs?

To answer these questions we conducted a study with Arab policewomen in Israel who come from an ethnic minority whose opportunity structure is often limited to teaching jobs or low skill manual jobs. They enter the Israeli police through a diversity policy open to attain a better quality job. However, once recruited to the police they encounter jobs that demand very long hours as the police is the ultimate “greedy institution” (Coser, 1973).

Just over 150 Arab policewomen currently serve in the Israeli police most of whom are Christian and Muslim, with fewer Bedouin and a few Druze, between the ages of 24-45, 16 with seniority of more than 15 years, 33 between 5-15 years and 115 with less than 5 years. Some investigate crimes and domestic violence while others work for intelligence or serve in patrol teams. The 27 interviewees were aged 24-45; 3 are divorced, 11 are married, and 13 are single. 12 are mothers; Most of them are Muslim and Christian and few are Druze and Bedouin. Four hold an M.A., 20 hold a B.A. degree and three have no academic education.

Our findings suggest that in terms of the objective dimensions of job quality Arab policewomen who positively responded to the diversity policy of the Israeli police encountered better quality of certain objective dimensions together with the hurdle of very long hours. Justifying holding on to their jobs despite such long hours, often unpaid, they glorified the opportunity they got to be trained for a skilled job. Likewise, they underscored their high status in their families and some parts of their communities, high levels of occupational development and satisfaction, stable income higher than that of a teacher, their responsibility, and two very important dimensions that were underscored as making their job a substantively quality job: they had a realistic path for promotion and, more important, they were employed by an ethnically mixed organization but did not experience discrimination. We discuss the theoretical significance of these findings for the debated on the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of quality job.