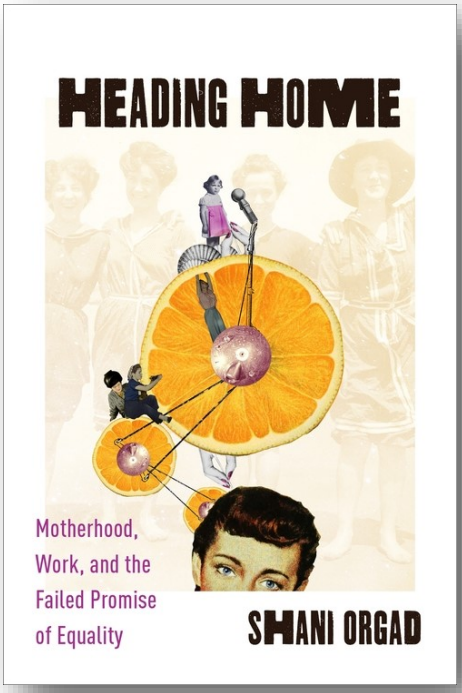
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS



£24.00 Hardback
ISBN: 978-0-231-18472-4

Available January 2019

20% Discount with code ORG19

Order from Wiley:-
Tel:- +44 1243 843291
Fax:- +44 1243 843302
E-mail:- customer@wiley.com
P&P Charges Apply

For more information on this and other publications from **Columbia University Press** please go to
cup.columbia.edu

Heading Home

Motherhood, Work, and the Failed Promise of Equality

Shani Orgad

Women in today's advanced capitalist societies are encouraged to "lean in." The media and government champion women's empowerment. In a cultural climate where women can seemingly have it all, why do so many successful professional women—lawyers, financial managers, teachers, engineers, and others—give up their careers after having children and become stay-at-home mothers? How do they feel about their decision and what do their stories tell us about contemporary society?

Heading Home reveals the stark gap between the promise of gender equality and women's experience of continued injustice. Shani Orgad draws on in-depth, personal, and profoundly ambivalent interviews with highly educated London women who left paid employment to take care of their children while their husbands continued to work in high-powered jobs. Despite identifying the structural forces that maintain gender inequality, these women still struggle to articulate their decisions outside the narrow cultural ideals that devalue motherhood and individualize success and failure. Orgad juxtaposes these stories with media and policy depictions of women, work, and family, detailing how—even as their experiences fly in the face of fantasies of work-life balance and marriage as an egalitarian partnership—these women continue to interpret and judge themselves according to the ideals that are failing them. Rather than calling for women to transform their feelings and behavior, *Heading Home* argues that we must unmute and amplify women's desire, disappointment, and rage, and demand social infrastructure that will bring about long-overdue equality both at work and at home.

Shani Orgad is associate professor in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is the author of *Storytelling Online: Talking Breast Cancer on the Internet*(2005), *Media Representation and the Global Imagination* (2012), and *Caring in Crisis? Humanitarianism, the Public and NGOs* (2017, with Bruna Seu).

"This book tells a story about sacrificing career for family that resonates far beyond the lives of the women in London Shani Orgad has interviewed. Orgad makes a powerful argument about the denials women experience, precisely because the author does not rant. She is a gifted explorer of adulthood in all its promises, twists, and disappointments. Shani Orgad is one of the finest sociologists of her generation."

Richard Sennett, author of *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*