Parenting, Disabilities, and Gender: Mothers of Girls and Boys with Disabilities - A Critique of Disabilities and a Gender Reading

This is a case of a complex structure that bears an unjust attitude towards parents of children with disabilities. This position goes beyond positions which create a negative social mode towards disabilities. The modern state, under the auspices of the market economy and liberal discourse, washes its hands of the challenges brought by girls and boys living with disabilities. Concurrently, state systems justify the relegation of men or women with disabilities to the margins of society and contribute to their position in the community as an economic and social burden. At the same time, parents of children with disabilities are expected and even required to devote their entire lives to provide care, treatment, mediation and representation - all without support, without remuneration and without a voice of their own. In a Canadian study that exposed narratives of parents dealing with disabilities, one of the mothers described matters in the following manner:

*"The general population tells you - you're the parent, you're the advocate. You're the only one who will advocate for your child so you've got the blame on your forehead so my God! If I don't do it… "[[1]](#footnote-1)*

This meshwork also leads to a situation of a lack of social legitimacy for the voices of parents. A voice that will make vivid personal costs, concessions and sacrifices, along with the unique expertise, abilities and knowledge which accompany the position of parents with regard to norms and expectations of a social, economic and legal nature, to constitute a privatization tool of the state for the exclusive support of their children throughout their entire lives. The public and legal system must recognize the unique status of parents dealing with disabilities in order to remedy the systemic flaw and the lack of perspective described above. The critical approach, which underlies my call for the recognition of the rights and status of parents with disabilities, seeks to challenge the traditional assumptions, dichotomies and hierarchies that have imprinted parallel and integrated boundaries. A broad and complete view of human rights, which is called for in recognition of disability rights for parents, blurs the binarism between the public and private spheres, between autonomy and independence and dependence and concern, between civil-political rights and socio-economic rights, and between "human rights" and "group interests", respectively.[[2]](#footnote-2) The theme of ​​the perception of the individual by means of a broad, deep, broad and complex view - *“thickly”,* as an individual and as a social being, as a citizen and as part of a human network of dependency relationships, underlies this approach.[[3]](#footnote-3)

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**NOTE TO EDITOR AT ALE**

1. וקריאה מגדרית

This phrase is not clear – if possible, I would contact the writer to see what exactly he meant

2. הורים במוגבלות

This phrase literally means “parents with disabilities”, but in the context of the article, I have translated it as “parents of children with disabilities”.

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1. Jay A. Goddard, Ron Lehr, Judith C. Lapadat, "*Parents of Children with Disabilities: Telling a Different Story"*, 34(4)Can. J. Couns. 273, 279 (2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Ziv, op. cit. note 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Gavison, op. cit. note 143, pp. 47-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)