

how cultural values may impact the outcome of social markets. The book also elaborates on critical questions such as the use of information (e.g. ranking tables in school performance) or the occurrence of adverse selection. Still, the broadness of sectors and countries covered is also its biggest weakness, as the reader may be left with only a patchy and incomplete picture of how choice is impacting welfare states in Europe. This is compounded by the lack of a conclusion that could bring all the pieces together or help the reader understand the larger picture concerning choice in welfare systems.

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**Elly Teman: *Birthing a Mother: The Surrogate Body and the Pregnant Self***  
Berkeley, CA, 2010: University of California Press, 361 pp.

The best examples of social scientific research tend to emerge when a talented scholar chooses a timely topic and pursues her interest with utmost dedication and compassion. Such qualities exist in Elly Teman's *Birthing a Mother*. When Teman began collecting her data a decade ago, gestational surrogacy was only beginning to become a part of public knowledge in Israel. By the time she concluded her study, the community of surrogates and intended mothers had vastly expanded. Surrogacy was no longer perceived as a very unorthodox way to create a family; it became more integrated into the conversation about alternative paths toward parenthood. Teman does not pass judgment. She contributes to the conversation about the ethics of surrogacy by allowing the surrogates and the intended mothers to speak of their experiences in their own words. Then, she helps the reader make sense of their narratives by introducing relevant theoretical arguments.

Teman's ethnographic work took her to support groups and on hospital visits. She collected all of her data in Israel by interviewing mostly Jewish Israeli participants, but she aptly draws readers' attention to international contexts. The choice to limit data collection to Israel works well. Israel, more so than many other medically advanced nations, emphasises motherhood as a form of service to the country; therefore infertile women have even stronger incentives to become mothers and gain social acceptance.

*Birthing a Mother* is divided into four sections: Dividing, Connecting, Separating, and Redefining. Each one of these focuses on a part of the surrogacy process and addresses an aspect of embodied practices that the women engage in. Teman argues that they serve to blur the boundaries

between the surrogate and the mother. Furthermore, they enable the surrogate to disengage from the pregnant part of her body, and the mother to experience the pregnancy. They allow them to claim the experience as a part of a personal reproductive narrative and ultimately tell the tale of empowerment and deep satisfaction. Teman's writing often stands in opposition to the feminist critiques of gestational surrogacy that have on occasions oversimplified the practice as universally oppressive for the women that partake in it.

In the first section, 'Dividing', Teman describes and analyses how surrogates, more or less, consciously separate the areas of their bodies displaying pregnancy from the rest of their selves. She outlines the metaphors surrogates use to describe their role in the birthing. Unlike the women portrayed in North American scholarship on surrogacy, the Israeli surrogates protest against the 'living incubator' notion. They see themselves as much more than a tool of advanced technology. As one of them asserts, her womb is more like a *hamama*, meaning 'a hot house or a greenhouse that makes living things grow' (p. 33). They uniformly claim that they would not sign the surrogacy contract if it involved their own eggs. Violating the rule of using the intended mother's eggs would put the surrogate in a difficult situation, because she would not be able to prevent the parental substance and her own substance from mixing. In this way, she would be putting herself in danger of growing attached to the child inside of her.

Teman outlines a complex cognitive system that she calls the 'body map', which helps the surrogate keep her body under control while it is being occupied by another couple's child. Distinctions are drawn between available and unavailable body parts; those that are personal and those that are devoid of special attachment. For example, the womb possesses no personal features and is thought of as a temporary

home for the highly personalised egg of the mother. On the other side of the spectrum is the surrogate heart, understood as the seat of emotions and love. Consequently, it must be separated from the womb so that no attachments are created. The surrogate is safe from an invasion from the inside, because she is the maker of her internal boundaries. In the author's own words: 'The surrogate's allocation of separate and isolated spaces within the body for her couple to pass through thus enables her to feel that her own self has privacy and remains liberated even while her body is "occupied" by "guests".' (p. 74) Body mapping is a defensive act maintained throughout the surrogacy process.

In the second part of the book, 'Connecting', Teman describes the formation and properties of the relationship between the surrogate and the intended mother. Teman asserts that the two women work together to maintain the notion of shifting pregnancy between them, while the surrounding community actively participates in designating 'the real mother'. From this special connection, a close relationship often arises between the women, which Teman compares to romantic infatuation. This relationship is, however, nearly always temporary. After birth, most women quickly disengage. The 'Separation', to which Teman dedicates the third part of her book, is promoted by the state that enters the picture as the great regulator immediately after birth. Here Teman makes her biggest contribution to the study of surrogacy. She allows the voices of the surrogates to speak about the moments of birth and separation from the child. Against popular assumptions, most view the final 'transaction' as unproblematic. She emphasises that this is a direct consequence of the separating practices during pregnancy. The surrogates, who do not perceive the foetus to be a part of their bodies, see as their biggest loss after birth the disappearance of the emotional bond with the surrogate mother.

This goes against folk assumptions that a surrogate mother will inevitably become attached to the child she gave birth to, so the relationship needs to be broken off as soon as possible. Teman makes an interesting point in saying that the surrogates that experience the abrupt break-off are more likely to manifest resentment and consequently view the experience as negative.

When the Israeli surrogates in this book demonstrate resentment toward the couple, it is typically rooted in violations of the assumptions of the gift economy the women had created prior to the birth. Surrogates long to be acknowledged as altruistic gift givers. When this aspect of their relationship is not recognised, it may become strained. Teman argues that women use the surrogate gift economy as a challenge to the patriarchal market arrangement forced upon them by the relationship. 'When the women speak of themselves as sisters or mother and daughter and form a familial friendship after surrogacy is over, they create a woman-centered "relational economy" that subversively decolonizes the patriarchal commodity economy and state control of surrogacy in Israel.' (p. 232) The forced breakoff is a response to public hysteria that views surrogates as potential baby kidnappers and ignores the tender relationship that usually grows between the prospective mother and her surrogate.

In the last section, Teman sets out to accomplish the most difficult part of her mission: to demonstrate why women speak of surrogacy as 'the most meaningful experience of their lives' (p. 238). The author writes about the sense of self-worth women gain from passing the stringent tests and evaluations. Furthermore, once a woman makes a connection with a couple and starts IVF, she sometimes behaves as if it were her personal quest to successfully complete the treatment and carry their child. 'By associating her body's unpredictable conduct with technological artifice and

the intended mother's nature, the surrogate absolves herself from personal responsibility for that body and deflects any sign of weakness or inability to cope from her personal self. Thus, the surrogate's act of calling on a "masculine," militarized script of strength, courage, and determination reflects a clear gender ideology in which courage, power, and authority are exclusively associated with masculinity.' (p. 261)

*Birthing a Mother* eloquently argues that we should not fall into the ruts in between ethical/unethical or more/less objectifying when we consider surrogacy. None of the women Teman encountered were solely motivated by financial profit or were very vulnerable to exploitation. Instead, 'birthing a mother' and 'making a family' had become a personal quest for them. Teman offers an alternative view of surrogacy as a path toward personal fulfilment and reaffirming social roles. She suggests that surrogates achieve a degree of appreciation through surrogacy that they do not get otherwise from their partners or society at large. They recognise the greatness of their service and come to see themselves as more valuable members of society for that reason. This is a sensible conclusion in the context of a society that conflates women's social worth with active motherhood.

The book would have presented even richer material if it had included some male voices. Only heterosexual couples can legally make surrogacy arrangements in Israel, so the complete absence of male narratives is striking. Although the fathers are not directly engaging in the blurring practices this book is centred on, they have the unique position of close observers. Teman does mention that both prospective mothers and surrogates often experience physical and emotional withdrawal from their partners, in order to prevent violating the female bond between the pregnant dyad. The book would have benefited from a discussion of how they had perceived the

changes in their partners' personhood with the surrogate's pregnancy.

In sum, *Birthing a Mother* is both a passionate and readable contribution to the literature on reproduction. It is tastefully complemented by pictures from Israeli popular media that depict the relationship between the mother and the surrogate, illustrating the popular interpretations of the relationship. I would recommend this book to students of the medicalisation of reproductive technologies who are eager to enter a discussion with the proponents of empowerment via medical technology.

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**Irena E. Kotowska, Anna Matysiak, Marta Styrac, Ariane Pailhé, Anne Solaz and Daniele Vignoli: *Second European Quality of Life Survey: Family Life and Work***

Dublin 2010: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 85 pp.

The processes of enlargement of the European Union bring about complex changes both in the economy and in various aspects of the social and individual lives of people in all member states. The EU/Enlargement has exhibited trends towards convergence, while preserving national specificities as well as seeking common solutions to shared challenges. At the same time all European countries are experiencing two significant social processes: more or less dramatic demographic changes and labour market developments with their complex influence on work and family life. New family formation patterns and growing job instability and flexibility of labour markets create new conditions for combining professional and family roles. These facts imply a great deal of scientifically interesting and politically

important topics for sociological and social research. Reconciliation of work and private life has in a way become a central concept in connection with such topics as employment, gender equality of opportunities, and demographic ageing.

This very current theme has for many years been of interest to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). Its research activities in this field differ from most other projects, in that special attention is paid to the interconnection between objective indicators of living and working conditions and citizens' own evaluations of the quality of their lives and the quality of the society in which they live. The first and second survey of the quality of life (the first one carried out in 2003, the second in 2007 [Trends 2010]) used similar methods and many identical questions, while the main focus and interpretation had changed. However, the basic intentions have remained the same—to reflect on the impacts of the changing economic and social conditions on the lives of individuals and different social groups and to analyse these impacts through international comparisons. A special feature of the second survey is a search for ways of reconciliation of work and family. This second-wave data as analysed in the reviewed publication enable an exploration of the connections between the changes in family structures and both the success of and barriers to reconciliation of work and family life.

There are three main concerns in work-life balance research that remain important throughout: employment issues, gender equality, and the fertility decline. The authors add that 'better reconciliation between work and family life also needs to be considered in the context of active inclusion policies' (p. 4) and that 'work-family balance may be considered as a good predictor of general well-being' (ibid.). Therefore, their main objective is to explain connections between work-life balance and life