

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

satisfaction and to look at ways in which to find a better balance between work demands and family responsibilities. Although this topic has been of interest to politicians and scientists for a long time, there are still themes and open questions that have not been sufficiently explored. This publication intends to move further by describing more complex relations and determinants (on micro and macro social levels) of work-life balance and in terms of discovering developmental trends on the basis of international comparisons. However, some parts of the publication contain descriptions of particular phenomena that put less stress on the interrelations between the determinants of the surveyed phenomenon and its manifest features. In these parts more emphasis is laid on suggestions for new policy approaches and measures. Nevertheless, the explicitly formulated suggestions are sometimes either too specific or not very clear or somewhat obscured by the text. For all that, in my view, the commentary on particular phenomena or identified connections (e.g. dependences, correlations) forms the more interesting and innovative parts of the study.

The main direction of the analyses is expressed in two questions: 'How does the workload caused by one's job and by fulfilling the household duties influence satisfaction with family and work, as well as duality of life in general?' (p. 11) and 'Does this relationship depend on country-specific conditions to combine family life and work?' (ibid.) In other words, this report is generally devoted both to confrontation of objective conditions and subjective perception of one's life chances and to cross-country comparisons. For the latter task the concept of reconciliation regimes based on the Matysiak [2008] classification is used.

The cross-country comparisons are worked out in three forms. The first one is among individual countries, which makes for a complicated effort, but one that is necessary considering the very specific fea-

tures of particular countries in some respects (e.g. a combination of cultural background and the contemporary economic needs of families). The second form of differentiating European countries is based on the succession of their accession to the EU. Three groups are compared: 15 old member states, 12 new member states since enlargement in 2004, and 3 candidate states. Although the authors use this classification mainly in the parts dealing with household living arrangements and proved some basic differences between these three groups, this 'typology' cannot avoid some simplifications. The main classification used in the study is based on the concept of six basic types of reconciliation regimes in European countries and is much more appropriate to the analysed phenomena. The six groups reflect fundamental complex inequalities that are the result of a combination of both subjective and objective preconditions for work-life balance.

In the proposed conceptual framework (described in the first chapter) the authors base their approach on the usual analytical division of the problem. That includes a description of the most important factors of contemporary family life and of the burdens employed people have to cope with in order to combine their professional and family roles. In comparison with similar publications, this one uses an explicitly formulated and systematically applied life course perspective to analyse the differentiating role of household living arrangements (second chapter). It allows the authors to depict the determination of work-life balance by family status more faithfully.

The second chapter focuses on changes in family life across European countries in terms of three dimensions: household living arrangements over the life course, sharing domestic chores between women and men, especially sharing care responsibilities, and social contacts and support. It describes changes in family behaviour (e.g.

in comparison to EQLS 2003) and differences between generations and by gender. Unlike other such studies, the life-cycle concept is thoroughly applied, allowing more sophisticated explanations of living arrangements and family relationships. Furthermore, the chapter describes the distribution of activities and of time spent on care duties not only between partners, but also within the extended family. Interesting here is the opinion that the change in the division of unpaid housework should happen not only between partners but also between age groups (p. 24).

From the point of view of an international comparison the finding that child-care requires a similar amount of time in countries with significantly different developments in institutional day-care seems remarkable. The authors found a credible, but not fully satisfactory, explanation. According to them, the amount of time, for example, in Scandinavian countries is truly parental choice, while in Southeast European countries it results from necessity, and frequently requires the involvement of the entire family (p. 25). The role of the extended family is further discussed, as the greater frequency with which people in Southern and Eastern Europe (i.e. in the new EU member states) live in an extended family in the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe is one of the sources of differences between countries. Their statistical significance is however frequently debatable. The complexity of these relationships is evident in the following part of this chapter devoted to the analysis of family networks.

In the third chapter, on work-family arrangements, individual determinants of work-life balance (e.g. work status, job uncertainty, and family responsibilities) in cross-country comparisons are explored. The authors elaborate methodological approaches that have already become the standards for analyses of the reconciliation of work and family demands. Among other things, they seek to find a more consist-

ent interconnection between individual and macro-level factors of work-life balance. For instance, using one of the standardised set of questions that measure the degree of conflict between family and work roles, the authors distinguished two sources of possible tensions: time conflict and strain-based conflict. As in other similar studies, here it was not possible to prove unambiguously that country-specific differences in work-life balance are basically the result of different reconciliation regimes. Individual characteristics are significantly influential and in various ways.

For instance, while strain-based conflicts really differ according to country groups defined by reconciliation regime and by gender equity among partners in families, the time conflict between work and family life varies significantly regardless of which group the country belongs to. The authors explain the country-specific differences by the cultural diversity of countries (by particular distinct expectations). However, the topic would need a more complex analysis [e.g. cf. Edlund 2007; Gauthier and Philipov 2008]. The analysis of the relationship between work-life balance and family responsibilities as measured mainly by the number and age of children provided interesting but not new or unexpected findings.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the dependence of life satisfaction on work-life balance, as determined by family status. The basic finding here is that the family remains a very influential source of individual life satisfaction, both in terms of workload by family responsibilities (in a rather negative sense) and of family support (positive aspects). The part of the book devoted to examining the influence of various aspects of work-life balance on life satisfaction provides an overall view of the researched problems. Generally it can be said that being employed and having children contributes to personal satisfaction unless there is excessive conflict between profes-

sional and family obligations. This is not frequently the case, independent of the reconciliation regime. Lone mothers as a very specific group proved to be the least satisfied. While this is neither a new nor a surprising finding, this fact deserves more attention than could be given here.

Lastly, the fifth chapter makes suggestions for practical policy measures. Despite the versatile and thorough analysis that summarised complex bonds and connected views on the discussed problems from many angles, here the authors confirm findings of previous similar analyses rather than proposing anything new. The stronger emphasis on the impacts of demographic ageing, namely on supporting the connection of formal and informal care for senior citizens, is one of main advantages of this book over previous studies. Some conclusions are limited to trivial statements such as that the strongest tension observed in the attempt to achieve a work-life balance is found among families with children and the least satisfaction is found among the unemployed. These findings hold similarly simplified implications for governmental and EU policies: for example, the need to support gender equality in the family and to increase the variety of childcare institutions. Instead, the many minor conclusions, observations and suggestions found throughout the text are actually more beneficial for future research as well as practical policy implications. The conclusion that a well-balanced relationship between work-related and family roles contributes to life satisfaction is important but not surprising; the authors do not pretend it is their discovery either. It should be stressed, however, that satisfaction may be reached through diverse ways of work-life balance.

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**Joerg Tremmel (ed.): *A Young Generation Under Pressure? The Financial Situation and the 'Rush Hour' of the Cohorts 1970–1985 in a Generational Comparison***  
 Berlin, Heidelberg 2010: Springer-Verlag, 245 pp.

This book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the great new social challenge in the 20th and 21st century: generational conflict, in particular the (greater) difficulties faced by the current young generation in European labour markets compared to preceding generations. The second part deals with how young people strive to find the right balance between family life and adequate employment. The last part discusses the growing number of elderly in society and the effect of this on other generations, politics, and the economy. In the first chapter, Lefteris Kretsos discusses precarious employment of young people in Europe, which, he says, has increased throughout the 1990s in all European countries. Young people today tend on the whole to work for a low salary, in part-time employment, under atypical contracts or undeclared work arrangements, in bad working conditions, and amidst a very high unemployment rate. That affects the decision of young people to remain longer in