

Intergenerational Justice Review

Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations



Issue Topic: Young Generation Under Pressure?

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I GJR 2/2009 approaches the young generation from two perspectives by exploring their lack of time and lack of money. This is an issue of intergenerational justice if the conditions for today's younger generation, say the cohorts born between 1970 and 1990, are worse than for the cohorts that were born, say, 1950-1969.

Even though life expectancy is continuously on the rise, many people are complaining that they have less time at hand. This is especially true for the 'rush hour of life', meaning the period of life between the mid-twenties and the late thirties in which persons of both genders usually start a job/career and a family at the same time. Concerning the financial situation there are several signs indicating that the young adult cohorts are relatively worse off in an indirect comparison with their predecessor generation. In 1975, people in their thirties earned about 15 percent less than people in their fifties; today, they earn about 40 percent less. This in turn influences young adults' decisions on reproduction.

The first article by Harald Lothaller (University of Graz) defines the term 'rush hour of life'. It then introduces the concept of 'life-domains balance' and explains why the more commonly used term 'work/life balance' does not meet the topic adequately. According to Lothaller, keeping life domains in balance requires the absence of negative effects (i.e., 'conflicts') between life domains on the one hand, but also the presence of positive effects (i.e., 'facilitation') between the domains on the other hand.

The second article by Prof. Dr. Ute Klammer (University of Duisburg-Essen) starts with discussing relevant empirical data on the structure and change of life courses of both men and women on an international scale. Klammer demonstrates that the 'rush hour of life' for women does not have to be resolved by a withdrawal from the labour market. Also discussed in this article is that unlike in past decades, women are no longer at a general disadvantage just because of their sex. In fact the vast majority of labour market flexibility risks i.e. fixed-time contracts, temp work, unemployment etc. are taken by the young generation, the newcomers to the labour market, irrespective of their gender.

Klammer claims that what is needed is social

and political support of transitions in and out of the labour market, support of continuous employment, but also the 'straightening out' of life courses by providing new possibilities to adjust money and (work) time to different life stages with differing financial and time requirements.

Dr. Tomáš Sobotka's (Institute for Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences) article discusses different aspects of the shift towards later parenthood which has affected all industrialised countries. It outlines trends in delayed childbearing and points out the increase in childlessness and growing educational disparities in first birth timing, especially among women. It reviews consequences of delayed childbearing for individuals, couples, their children and society and discusses the limited role of assisted reproduction in offsetting the age-related rise in infertility. Sobotka's thesis is that the individual social and economic advantages of late parenthood may outweigh the biological advantage of early parenthood. The article outlines possible policy actions that may support childbearing decisions at both younger and older reproductive ages.

The fourth article by Prof. Dr. Louis Chauvel (Sciences Po, Paris) focuses on inter- and intra-cohort inequalities of living standards in a comparative perspective, underlining the diversity of national responses to the challenges of globalisation and economic slow down. These effects have had different implications on different age groups. Chauvel's aim is to make a connection between national welfare regimes and the emergence of specific cohort-based economic constraint patterns in different countries. The article highlights the emergence of 'scarring effects' which are the irreversible consequences of (short term) social fluctuations in the context of socialisation on the (long term) life chances of different birth cohorts.

The article by Prof. Dr. Martin Kohli (European University Institute Florence) claims that although the old 'social question' – the integration of the industrial workers – seems to have been resolved, new cleavages appear, for example between generations. These emerge from historical or macro-structural changes but also from economic cleavages between generations. According to Kohli the reason why age conflicts are not more pronounced is the me-

diating function of political parties, unions and families. Furthermore, Kohli criticises the statement that the welfare state is increasingly dominated by the elderly. According to his article, in terms of economic well-being, both the young and the old fare worse than the middle age group. He concludes that in terms of political decision-making, there is no evidence for an alleged movement towards gerontocracy.

Prof. Dr. Steffen Hillmert (University of Tübingen) analyses transition patterns from the education system to the labour market in his article. Successful transitions from school to work are decisive for later success in life. The situation of young people at this stage is therefore an important issue not only for scientific research, but also for public discussion. His paper asks whether and to what extent there has been a de-structuring of the transition to the labor market in Germany – and, linked with it, of the transition to adulthood – as it has been proposed by theories of individualization. The results indicate that significant changes in transition patterns can be related to the expansion of education and training since the 1950s. This is especially obvious in the case of young women. Both attaining a vocational or an academic degree and entering the labor market have become universal life events. One of the consequences is the prolongation of educational careers, which has led to later entries into employment.

In IGJR 2/2009, the FRFG addresses an issue that has so far been neglected in the discussion on intergenerational justice. From a moral point of view, the contract between the generations in businesses needs to be re-negotiated between old and young employees.

Please take a look at our calls for papers for the upcoming issues of the Intergenerational Justice Review at the end of this issue. The upcoming topics include 'Children's and young people's rights', 'Intergenerational Justice and the scourge of war' and 'Possibilities and limits of party cooperation in democracies'.

I hope you will enjoy the excellent articles in our current issue.

Yours,
Jörg Chet Tremmel
Editor-in-chief



On the Way to Life-domains Balance: Success Factors and Obstacles

by Harald Lothaller

Abstract: During the 'rush hour of life', people face various challenges from different life domains simultaneously: they have to fulfill a number of different obligations at their workplace, at home, and elsewhere of life (e.g., getting a job and starting a career, establishing a family, moving towards getting their own home, but also meeting people, part taking in leisure activities, etc.). The article examines the factors that have positive and negative effects on the transition from one life domain towards another. In addition, by focusing on the situation of dual-earner couples with young children it briefly illustrates why life-domains balance is significantly linked to the 'rush hour of life'.

A certain phenomenon appeared in political as well as scientific discussions in the last decade – the so-called 'rush hour of life'.¹ It is defined as "a certain stage of life, ranging from the mid-twenties to the late thirties, when persons of both sexes who have just completed their education enter the labour market in addition to starting a family, and therefore have to deal with both job/career demands and family/private demands at the same time [...]".² As a corollary to this, many seem to face overwhelming demands from apparently conflicting life domains since "every employed person is faced with the task of defining the relationship between work and family in his or her life".³ Balancing several life domains, occupation and family in particular, might especially be a challenge for dual-earner couples with young children.⁴ Reasonably, one may assume that dual-earner couples with young children are prototypes of people in the 'rush hour of life': "Both families and work careers go through identifiable stages, which vary according to the degree of involvement they require. The difficulty at this vulnerable point in life stems from the fact that stresses in both cycles characteristically peak then: both seem to require maximum attention."⁶ Sociologically and biologically this is the optimal time to have young children, hence family demands are maximal. It is also the time in their employee's lives when employing organizations tend to make decisions about future placement, decisions at least partially based on the degree of involvement and commitment to work demonstrated by the employee".⁷

The relevance of the 'rush hour of life' and life-domains balance increase

There is clear evidence that the 'rush hour of life' and the issue of life-domains balance are major challenges nowadays in particular, and more people have to face them in comparison to former generations. This proposition can be illustrated easily by numerous indicators such as the following selection:

- Women's participation in the labour market has increased within the last decades, while men's participation rate has remained constant.⁸
- Only small changes have been observed in the structures of households and the great majority consist of at least two persons.⁹
- The great majority of employed mothers live together with their partner.¹⁰
- The age at starting a family has increased as well as the mean age of women at childbearing as well as the mean age at first birth have increased by several years over the last decades.¹¹
- The mean age at marriage as well as the mean age at first marriage have increased in Europe by several years over the last decades.¹²
- Between the mid-twenties and the late twenties is the time for the majority of people to leave their parents' home and move into their own.¹³
- The portion of higher educated people increased over the last decades, with a much stronger increase for women than for men.¹⁴
- The division of tasks between men and women has become more equal over the last decades (but nevertheless they are still unequal). More egalitarian divisions of tasks with both partners being involved in both domains raise the issue of reconciling within a partnership rather than resorting to traditional divisions of tasks in which one partner (usually male) is the breadwinner and the other the primary caregiver (usually female).¹⁵

These indicators point to an increase in the number of dual-earner couples in general, particularly those with young children. In addition, both sexes are more involved in fulfilling demands from several domains. Therefore, many of these people will find themselves right

in their 'rush hour of life' where they have to keep the different life domains in balance.

The aim of this article is to give an overview on life-domains balance and the related factors that lead to more or less balance. It might be useful to shortly explore the term itself before dealing with the possible causes of life-domains balance.

What is life-domains balance?

The term 'life-domains balance' refers to a concept that is widely used. More commonly, it is called 'work/life balance' or 'work/family balance'. Yet, these two terms are to be criticised for several reasons. One of them being, that within these two terms other life domains are either neglected or not differentiated. For instance, 'work' is used for paid work and the occupation domain only, but a lot of (unpaid) work is carried out in addition to a job. To overcome the given points of criticism, we should better call the concept 'life-domains balance' as occupation, family and partnership,

When we long for life without difficulties, remind us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure.

/ Peter Marshall /

education, leisure time, voluntary social work, etc. are all different domains in people's life and have to be reconciled and kept in balance.¹⁶ Regardless of the terms, the issue of life-domains balance lacks comprehensive theories. Empirical work in the field relies on evidence-based models rather than on theoretical concepts. There is neither an explicit and comprehensive definition nor an explanation of what it means to have different life domains 'in balance'. Most authors seem to take its meaning as self-explanatory and "for many writers, work-family balance represents a vague notion that work and family life are somewhat integrated and harmonious".¹⁷ This still holds, particularly for textbooks and political statements. However, in the last years an increasing specification can be found, at least in empirical research.

The two components of the terms can help us to approach the concept. The first one regards the considered life domains. Along with an "over-emphasis on the work domain"¹⁸, there is hardly any empirical evidence concerning

other domains than the occupation domain and the family domain with regard to balancing life domains. Over and above, some authors criticise the inclusion of other domains in the debate. They explicitly insist on focusing on the complex interaction of occupational demands and family-related demands only because “playing a game of golf or two may be good for one’s morale, but it is not an obligation as such”.¹⁹

The second component of the term is ‘balance’. The widely used view of balance is the absence of conflicts between the different life domains. Balance can be jeopardised due to overwhelming demands from different life domains, or in other words due to conflicting life domains. In that, prior studies raised the concept of ‘work/family conflict’ and defined it as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by the virtue of participation in the family (work) role”.²⁰ More recent literature distinguishes two kinds of conflicts between these two life domains²¹: on the one hand, the family domain can cause obstacles for the occupation domain (i.e., family negatively interferes with job), and on the other hand, there can be obstacles derived from the job for the family (i.e., job negatively interferes with family). Once again, it might be better to use the terms ‘family-to-job conflicts’ and ‘job-to-family conflicts’ instead of other common terms that use ‘work’ for paid work only. Anyway, recent research suggests that balance is more than just a lack of conflicts. Grzywacz and Marks take the “generally accepted assumption that the interface between work and family is best characterised in terms of strain”²² as one of the most significant limitations in this respect and they note that the consequence is “an almost exclusive empirical focus”²³ on conflicts between life domains. But it seems reasonable to assume that there are positive effects from one domain on another too. Experiences, skills, and positive effects gained by doing family-related activities can make it easier to fulfill demands in the occupation domain and vice versa.²⁴ Being involved in several domains can provide resources and opportunities. For instance, having a partner to talk with might help to overcome strain from the job. This supportive impact is named facilitation, enhancement, or positive spillover in current literature. Taken together, life domains should be more balanced the less conflict there is between the demands from different domains and the more the participation in a domain facilitates dealing with demands from other domains. Both conflicts and facilitations between the life domains are bidirectional: Each do-

main can conflict with or be hindered by other domains. In addition, each domain can also ease the strain on another domain or benefit from the resources provided by another domain.

He who is of calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition youth and age are equally a burden.

/ Plato /

Causes of life-domains balance

Life-domains balance is characterised by the extent of conflict and facilitation between life domains. Consistently, some aspects of a person’s situation can cause conflicts and decrease balance, while others enable facilitation and increase balance. Frone (2003) summarised factors leading to life-domains conflicts and postulated two general categories, namely role environment and personality. With regard to the first, he furthermore distinguished between several kinds of role-related predictors of conflicts between life domains: behavioral involvement, psychological involvement, role-related stressors and effects, and role-related resources. Frone focused on (a) conflicts and (b) the occupation domain and the family domain only when presenting these systematically. In any case, on the superior level focusing on life-domains balance, the role-related resources in particular as well as positive effects should be supportive and causes of facilitation. Also, equivalent causes from life domains other than job and family should have equivalent effects on life-domains balance.

The following overview is inspired by Frone, but considers facilitation in addition to conflicts between two life domains. As the majority of prior studies with regard to life-domains balance focus on the two domains occupation and family with a “virtual omission of non-work domain variables”²⁵, I focus mainly on these two life domains below. Role environment variables (i.e., originated in a certain domain) are considered with reference to life-domains conflicts first and life-domains facilitation second. Personality is discussed afterwards.

Generally speaking, demands and pressures originated in domain A as well as personal characteristics of the individual cause A-to-B conflicts. When A is the occupation domain and B is the family domain, job-to-family conflicts are caused by demands and pressures from the occupation domain or by certain individual aspects of the person. Similarly, family-to-job conflicts are caused by demands and pressures from the family domain or by certain individual aspects of the person.

Behavioural involvement represents the amount of time spent on the one or other domain. A lot of studies have shown that the more time a person spends on the occupation domain the more job-to-family conflicts he/she experiences, and the more time a person spends on the family domain the more family-to-job conflicts he/she experiences.²⁶ In other words, “the more hours a person worked per week the more difficulty they had combining work and family”.²⁷ Regardless of a lack of empirical evidence, we can assume that time demands of the obligations from other domains lead to similar effects, e.g. spending time for voluntary social work, for maintaining friendships or for regularly doing sports.

Psychological involvement refers to the subjective importance of a domain to a person. Generally speaking, the higher the subjective importance of the occupation domain the more job-to-family conflicts one experiences, and the higher the subjective importance of the family domain the more family-to-job conflicts one experiences. Higher subjective importance is also linked with higher perceived demands because the importance of a domain goes along with, for instance, people’s role expectations, career salience and family salience. And when a person is overwhelmed by life domains, he/she will reduce efforts in the less important domain or will withdraw from it altogether.²⁸ Psychological involvement in hobbies or voluntary social work might act the same way. Role-related stressors and negative effects refer to both objective and subjective aspects. On the one hand, there are requirements within a domain such as mentally demanding tasks and other characteristics of the tasks, changing situations or certain stressing events as well as within-domain conflicts or work load in general. Such stressors or “strain-based demands are linked to work-family conflict through a process of psychological spillover in which the strain associated with participating in one domain is carried over to another domain such that it creates strain in the second domain, thereby hindering role performance in that domain”.²⁹ The more stressors that are linked with the occupation domain the more job-to-family conflicts a person experiences, and the more stressors that are linked with the family domain the more family-to-job conflicts a person experiences.³⁰ With respect to the occupation domain, insecurity or fear of losing one’s job³¹ as well as shift work³² are additional sources of life-domain conflicts, while the number of children is repeatedly shown as a significant predictor to increasing family-to-job conflicts.³³ On the other hand, experiencing distress, feeling overwhelmed, taking domain-related duties as a burden, within-domain dissatisfaction or other negative effects

from the occupation domain increase job-to-family conflicts as much as they increase family-to-job conflicts when they are linked with the family domain.³⁴ We can imagine that voluntary social work or engaging in organisations outside of job and family for instance can also bring distress or mental demands regardless of a lack of formal obligations.

While the former role-related predictors of life-domains balance increase difficulties in balancing the domains, the below mentioned role-related resources and role-related positive effects decrease difficulties and support balance by means of facilitation. Although the first group of variables predicts conflicts and the second predicts facilitation as two separate sub-concepts, one might presume that on the superior level, the latter can compensate the first with regard to life-domains balance.

Job-to-family facilitation is furthered by supportive resources and positive effective consequences from the occupation domain or by certain individual aspects of the person. Similarly, family-to-job facilitation is furthered by supportive resources and positive effective consequences from the family domain or by certain individual aspects of the person.

Concerning the occupation domain, respective resources can be work schedule flexibility to handle family responsibilities, social support from supervisors or co-workers, and supportive policies and family-friendliness of the organisation. When it comes to the family domain, such resources, particularly from the partner, can be a social support within the family. Assistance in carrying out household and family tasks from one's partner or from other persons like domestic helpers,³⁵ and a division of tasks between both partners is recognised as being needed for a feeling of satisfaction.³⁶ In addition, some competences and skills acquired in one domain can serve as resources and be positively transferred to the other domain, such as time management, conflict management, coping strategies, problem-solving competences or manual skills. Taken together, resources from one domain ease the situation in the other domain by means of transferring positive aspects or preventing the transfer of negative aspects. The latter means that resources can help in keeping one's mind free of a problem related to one domain and thereby enabling one to concentrate on tasks in the other domain. This goes beyond the fact that the amount of resources linked with a domain decrease the conflicts resulting from this domain.³⁷ Competences retrieved from leisure time activities or a social network outside the family and social support from friends might add further benefits.

Contrary to the negative effects mentioned above, positive effects can strengthen people

and cause life-domains facilitation. For instance, psychological rewards and personal enrichment, within-domain satisfaction or perceived autonomy, variety, and control in the occupation domain in particular were indicated as relevant predictors of life-domains facilitation.³⁸ Relaxation and other positive effects should follow from pursuing a hobby, meeting friends, voluntarily doing social work or further leisure time activities.

Frone's second general category besides the role environment is personality. A differentiation should however be added to his systematisation: personality aspects often lead to more of both job-to-family conflicts as well as family-to-job conflicts, when there are individual deficits (e.g., neuroticism or Type-A behavior): emotional instability with a tendency to experience negative emotional states or time urgency, impatience, and being a highly competitive stress junkie increases both kinds of life-domains conflicts. Personality aspects often lead to more of both job-to-family facilitation as well as family-to-job facilitation when there are individual resources (e.g., mastery, self esteem or extraversion). Taking oneself as being able to deal with one's situation, having a positive and valuable image of oneself or enjoying social interaction and being talkative goes along with increasing facilitation and, consequently, a balance between life domains.³⁹

Generally speaking, more individual resources should enable persons to better deal with overwhelming demands in comparison to persons with less individual resources or even more individual deficits. In contrast, the latter can complicate the situation and often might make a mountain out of a molehill.

Human society is like an arch, kept from falling by the mutual pressure of its parts.

/ Seneca /

Gender differences in life-domains balance

Some studies examining the differences between women and men indicate more job-to-family conflicts and more family-to-job conflicts with women than with men.⁴⁰ For instance, Voydanoff has shown that "women [...] report higher levels of work-to-family conflict, whereas these characteristics are not related to facilitation".⁴¹ Anyway, in his review, Frone clearly rejects the existence, or at least the relevance, of sex differences in the extent of such conflicts as he summarises: "Across a variety of samples [...], men and women report similar levels of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Moreover, Grzywacz and Marks found that this lack of gender difference also extends to reports of work-to-family facilitation

and family-to-work facilitation. Although some studies with large samples may report statistically significant gender differences, the absolute size of these differences is typically not large enough to be of practical importance".⁴² In addition to the extent of life-domains conflicts, differences between the sexes in the relevance of certain predictors have been shown in some studies, but rather inconsistently and hardly systematically, and some other studies have rejected respective assumptions.⁴³ For instance, Bedeian, Burke and Moffett conclude from "the fact that the hypothesized model did not operate in a substantially different manner for men and women" that "future research should focus less on sex differences and more on factors mediating work-family conflict".⁴⁴ However, most studies either did not examine the issue of the differences between women and men, or only focused on one or the other. Anyway, bearing Frone's words as well as the fact that there are no clear findings with regard to sex differences in mind, it might be more reasonable to set priorities on other topics in life-domains balance-related research and reviews than on sex differences. This does not mean that future research should not consider both sexes simultaneously, because according to Poelmans, "one should by definition be suspicious of studies that do not distinguish between men and women, because they are probably ignoring the fact that the underlying mechanisms of work-family-conflicts are fundamentally different".⁴⁵ In other words, we should not seek for sex differences, but we should be attentive if there are some.

Conclusions

The literature review above has shown in short what contributes to more or less life-domains conflicts or life-domains facilitation. From a narrow view, one success factor in this respect seems to be that by reducing conflict between the life domains increases facilitation. The time spent on a domain, the psychological bond with a domain, and the felt stressors or negative effects from a domain are crucial for the extent of conflict from this domain to other domains. But over and above, success might be more than reducing conflicts but positively influencing and easing the situation. These success factors point particularly to a person and his/her role environment. Supportive measures can be settled on three levels: societal level,⁴⁶ organisational level,⁴⁷ and individual level.⁴⁸ Some starting points to increase life-domains balance can be derived from the above-mentioned causes, but discussing the levels as well as reasonable measures in detail would go far beyond this article.

The stage of life that we call the 'rush hour of life' is considered as a current challenge for the

young generation. Yet, it will be one in the future too. Easing the 'rush hour of life' and enhancing life-domains balance is a societal issue. Fertility rates are below the reproduction rate in most European countries and current surveys indicate aspects related to occupational work and career as major reasons for having less to no children.⁴⁹ There is a need for structural measures (e.g., public childcare fitting families' requirements with regard to opening times), financial measures (e.g., child-related subsidies to overcome financial burdens from parenting instead of a fulltime job), and attitude-related measures (e.g., promoting the high value of children and multi-children families for our society). This requires top-down measures such as agenda setting and awarding prizes with the aim to open eyes, as well as bottom-up initiatives and small contributions by everyone. It is not about 'the others', it is about us.

Notes:

1. Bittman / Wajcman 2000.
2. Lothaller 2008: 4. Translated by the author.
3. Bailyn 1977: 1.
4. Hammer / Allen / Grigsby 1997; Kinnunen / Mauno 1998.
5. Bailyn 1977; Lothaller 2008.
6. Wilensky 1961; Troll 1975.
7. Bailyn 1977: 18.
8. De Jong / Broekman 2003.
9. Schipfer 2003.
10. Schipfer 2005.
11. Schipfer 2005.
12. Schipfer 2003, 2005.
13. Schipfer 2003.
14. Statistik Austria 2008.
15. Bailyn 1977; Baxter 2002; Byron 2005.
16. Lothaller 2008.
17. Frone 2003:145.
18. Eby et al. 2005: 185.
19. Edgar 1999. Citation from Russell & Bowman 2000:5.
20. Greenhaus / Beutell 1985.
21. Byron 2005; Frone 2003.
22. Grzywacz / Marks 1999:4.
23. Grzywacz / Marks 1999:4.
24. Frone 2003; Grzywacz / Marks 1999.
25. Eby et al. 2005:185.
26. E.g. Frone / Yardley / Markel 1997; Voydanoff 2004.
27. Fine-Davis, n.d;16.
28. E.g. Poelmans 2001.
29. Voydanoff 2004:400.
30. E.g. Frone et al. 1997; Voydanoff 1988.
31. Voydanoff 2004.
32. Voydanoff 1988.
33. E.g. Greenhaus / Beutell 1985; Poelmans 2001.
34. E.g. Frone et al. 1997; Poelmans 2001.
35. E.g. Fine-Davis, n.d.; Luk / Shaffer 2005.
36. E.g. Himsel / Goldberg 2003.
37. Frone et al. 1997; Frone 2003.
38. E.g. Grzywacz / Butler 2005; Voydanoff 2004.
39. E.g. Frone 2003; Voydanoff 2004.
40. E.g. Hammer et al. 1997.
41. Voydanoff 2004:410.
42. Grzywacz / Marks 2003:149.
43. Byron 2005; Eby et al. 2005.
44. Bedeian / Burke / Moffett 1988:489.
45. Poelmans 2001:24.
46. E.g. Barkholdt 2005. Proposed a lifetime account of occupational working time to flexibly deal with.
47. Frone 2003. Family or couple level e.g., Baldock / Hadlow 2004, highlight 'scheduling problems' as crucial.
48. E.g. Wierda-Boer / Gerris / Vermulst 2008. Point to the role of adaptive strategies.
49. Market 2005.

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The 'Rush Hour' of Life: Insecurities and Strains in Early Life Phases as a Challenge for a Life Course-Oriented, Sustainable Social Policy

by Prof. Dr. Ute Klammer (Edited by Dan Sylwain and Hannah Taylor-Kensell)

Abstract: Empirical data proves that, in Germany, the majority of flexibility risks in the labour market (such as fixed-time contracts, temp work, unemployment etc.) are taken by the young generation and by unskilled workers. If uncertain labour market attachment occurs in the stage of family planning, the resulting insecurity and uncertainty can lead to special challenges where professional and private demands have to be reconciled (the 'rush hour' of life). The extent to which precarious employments and other labour market risks in early life phases affect the people concerned in the long run can only be determined by looking at entire biographies, in particular at life and labour courses. This article discusses relevant empirical data and describes possible approaches to tackle strains of specific work groups and life phases, in order to develop a life course oriented, sustainable social policy. This includes the support of continuous employment, but also the 'straightening out' of life courses by providing new possibilities to adjust money and (work) time to different life stages with differing financial and time requirements.

From Cross-Sectional to Longitudinal Data

In order to get a wider scope, one should not only look into different income patterns and familial time arrangements at a certain point in time, but how these patterns develop through a respective life course. Certain working time models, such as regular or marginal part-time, must be analysed regarding the long-term effect on the workers employed under such conditions. Are these short episodes of employment only temporarily accepted at certain points of time e.g. at point of career entry or during times of increased need? Or, are these work forms permanently obtained – be it 'voluntarily'¹ or not? In certain strata of the work force, is there a concentration of problematic working time models, such as part-time employ-

In the game of life it's a good idea to have a few early losses, which relieves you of the pressure of trying to maintain an undefeated season.

/ Lee Trevino /

ment? Which financial consequences for the income and social transfers are there for unemployment or part-time work in the long run? Do uncertain labour perspectives lead to

delays or even to the renunciation of parenthood and family – and do uncertain labour perspectives, in this respect, have a direct impact on the demographic 'problem' of low fertility rates?

A longitudinal perspective enables the viewing of different distribution of time necessities in individual biographies and identifies stages of time pressure, such as the 'rush hour' of life. This term coined by European time researchers describes the challenge of middle age when small children have to be cared for and time has to be invested in a professional career simultaneously. At the same time, the analysis of time distribution over the life course allows for an interpersonal comparison – not only do certain time necessities, for example for care tasks, occur for different people at different stages in their lives, they also may cumulate to large 'time masses', while, in other biographies (of both sexes), they hardly occur at all. These results put forward different demands to social politics to influence the intertemporal and interpersonal distribution of time and money. Some European countries, as well as the European Union, have recently shown an increased interest in these and similar questions. In the European Union, the life course perspective

has gained importance due to the discussion about 'life-long learning' and the generally increased interest in education in the context of a 'social policy of investing'. At the same time, the aims of the European Employment Strategy of raising income rates for women and elderly people, as well as profoundly raising the actual retirement age, poses questions for the course of employment records and the options to influence economic and social politics. Consequently, the European Directives for National Employment Policies have been demanding for several years that a comprehensive national strategy be developed based on the life course approach.² This was explicitly confirmed in 2005 by the new employment guideline Nr. 18, *Promote a life-cycle approach to work*.³ Thus, this article connects the question of (different and changing) life courses of men and women to the debate about a readjustment of social politics in view of demographic change. The first section will provide some empirical data on the structure and change of life courses of men and women both in Germany and on the international scale.⁴ The following chapter discusses approaches for a sustainable, life course-oriented social policy.

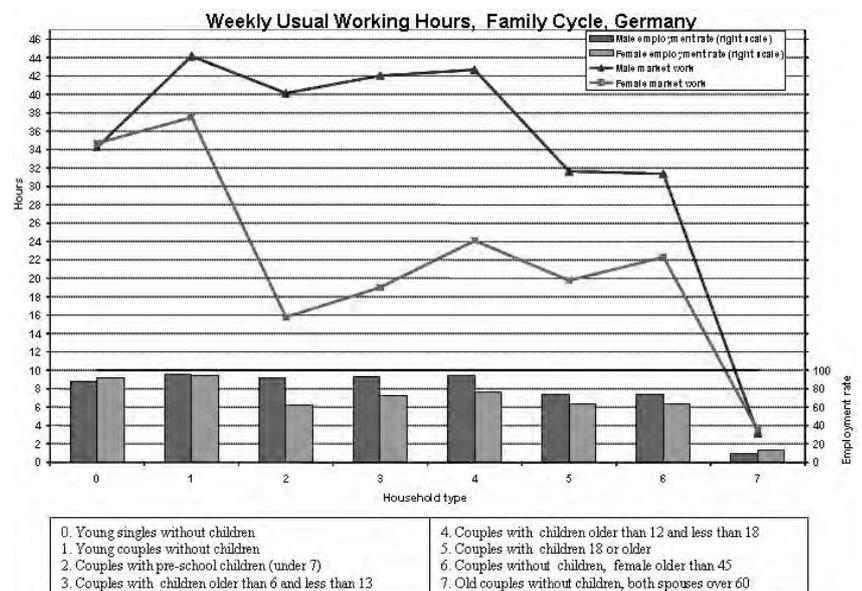


Figure 1: Labour market participation rates and average weekly work hours of men and women during the family cycle: Germany. Note: Average weekly working hours refer to ALL members of the respective household type, including inactive persons (working time = 0 hours).⁶

Changing income records of men and women – some highlights

Abundant empirical data analyses from my own projects and others prove that labour market risks are unbalanced in Germany and that discontinuities in professional life are exten-

sive.⁵ This suggests that there are different possibilities and strategies to deal with the special challenges of different life phases.

Sweden differs significantly from other West European countries. The labour market participation of Swedish women decreases only mi-

part-time job', i.e. 27 hours per week, as the ideal and East German women prefer a 'short full-time job', i.e. 34 hours per week.

The changes in the labour market entry phase in Germany in an intergenerational comparison

Regarding the life course in Germany, one can see that, among younger cohorts, about 80 percent of all women will have phases of part-time work of at least one year in their lives. This is compared to only a small number of men. Fewer women pause their careers because of childcare and this is a continuing trend. However, of the women born from 1951 to 1955, about two thirds withdrew from employment for at least one year because of childcare. On the other hand, a significant number of men – depending on the birth year (1936-1955) about 16 to 20 percent – had one or more periods of self-employment, which is often accompanied by social insurance gaps.⁸

But women are no longer at a general disadvantage just because of their sex. The majority of flexibility risks (e.g. fixed-time contracts, temp work, unemployment etc.) are taken by the young generation, the *newcomers* on the labour market, as well as unskilled people – irrespective of their sex.

Therefore, the youngest cohorts on the labour market are seven times more likely to have a temporary position than the oldest cohorts. All cohorts born after 1945 had to face an increased risk of unemployment in the early years. Among the cohorts of 1961-1965, already 53 percent of all men and women had experienced unemployment at least once before the age of 30 (see figure 3). This is dangerous as a prolonged labour market entry phase (when compared to earlier times) with (financial) uncertainties often cuts into the potential phase of family planning. One has every right to assume that this has a significant influence on young people's decision of whether or not to have children.

Although the average job tenure is surprisingly

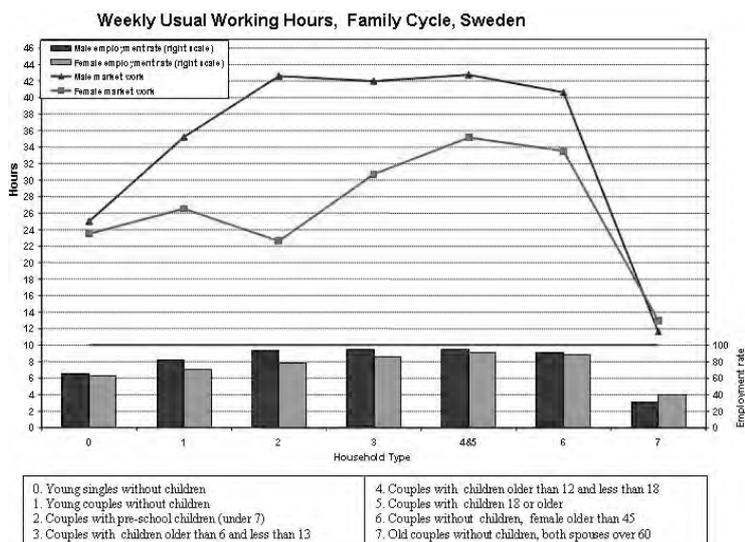


Figure 3: Labour market rates and average weekly work hours of men and women during the family cycle: Sweden. Note: see figure 1.⁷

Using cross-sectional data to analyse different life and family stages one finds that young partnered women without children today work on average 38 hours per week, whereas the average drops to 16 hours among partnered women with small children (below the age of 7) in the household (see the lines in figure 1 below). This average reduction (referring to all members of the household type) results from both a reduction shift from full-time to part-time work as a drop in labour market participation rates (see columns in figure 1 below). The 'rush hour of life' is thus alleviated by women through lower labour market participation. But even after school enrolment, the weekly work hours of mothers are considerably lower than those of fathers. Actually German mothers on average do not reach the same level of labour participation and average weekly work hours of their male partners in any later life phase.

As the figures of Sweden (see above) illustrate, there are differences between the employment courses of men and women in every country, especially when it comes to the 'rush hour' of life, when small children have to be attended to. Nevertheless, the welfare states differ significantly in terms of the level and the continuity of labour market participation and the average work hours of men and women in different life stages – during as well as after the 'rush hour'

nimally after childbirth or when small children have to be attended to; on average they only cut down by about four hours (from 26 to 22 hours). Later on, their labour participation rises almost to the level of male labour participation, far more than in other countries. This suggests that, apart from different role models, institutional factors such as legal and company work time arrangements and leave options for certain life stages are of importance in the Swedish welfare state. Together with the general accessibility of public childcare, these options lead to fewer 'compatibility problems' in the first stages of family life than in other countries. As demonstrated here, these 'problems' do not have to be resolved by the mothers' withdrawal from the labour market.

In Germany, desire and reality differ significantly when it comes to working hours – this goes for both sexes, but especially for women. Men's desired work hours are at the norm of a full time job, whereas their real working hours are often at times higher because of extra hours. Many women who work long hours would like to work less, but women with short part-time jobs wish for longer working hours (with the accompanying income). West German women regard a 'long

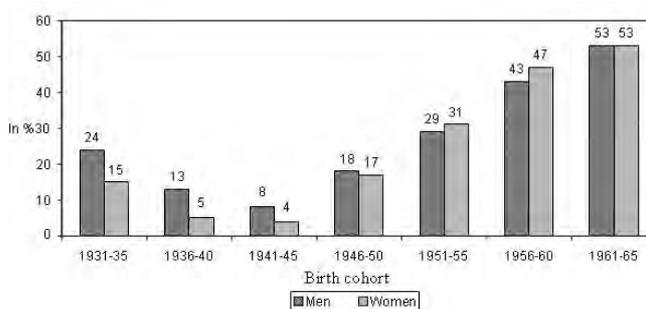


Figure 3: Occurrence of unemployment under the age of 30,⁹ sorted by cohorts, West Germany.¹⁰

stable in Germany, no less than 15 percent of all employees have already had five employers or more – and often they were unemployed in

between. Among temporary employees, the ratio is 22 percent, which means that temp workers have a higher risk when changing from one temporary position to the next.

Even if two thirds of all job changes are voluntary and the majority of all job changers claim to have improved themselves, one notices an increasing number of involuntary job changes (e.g. employer-initiated) from cohort to cohort, and ever fewer job changes actually lead to professional improvement.¹¹

Concerning the accumulation of labour years during the life course (based on data of the AVID), one finds a significant decline for men and a moderate increase for women. Of the men born from 1936 to 1940, 42 percent had a 'complete' (in terms of old-age pension claims) labour record, whereas in the cohorts of 1951-1955, the percentage will only be about 30 percent. The female ratio increases from about eight to around 13 percent. Today's 50 year old females will still have around seven (in West Germany nine) years less on their work records than their male contemporaries. This shows that there are still gender-related labour and income gaps, which continue to affect retirement income.

Looking at the labour courses of the cohorts from 1936 to 1955, an increasing 'compression' of life income becomes apparent – mostly on the male side. The long-term trends of late career entry and early retirement have led to a concentration of labour income in the middle phase of life. That is problematic, because this

function, or, in the case of East Germany, a hinge function, between full-time employments.¹³

Policy response I: Socio-political support of transition

Changing life courses and in particular the problems identified during the 'rush hour of life' requires a re-orientation of social security systems. One important task in this respect is the shift from securing status to securing (and promoting) transitions. According to the theory of transitional labour markets,¹⁴ this includes: transitions from (further) education, household tasks or unemployment towards employment and vice versa, transitions into retirement, changes from full-time to part-time work, other job changes etc. An increased concentration of social state provisions on securing transitional phases has to include securing both voluntary and involuntary transitions, and not just financially stabilising life standards in case of loss of income. Examples include help for re-entering the labour market after parenting or care tasks, offers for support and financial provisions which enable people to change jobs or start their own business. Other possibilities include the development of more flexible ways to retire and further improvements in transferring company pension claims in case of employment interruption or job changes.

In most European countries, the support of transitions is strongly connected with the (re-) integration of people into the labour market,

which might be called the heart of the 'activating welfare state' paradigm. Compared to other European countries, the German labour law entered

this path relatively late, but in the past few years it has made an impact.¹⁵ In terms of activation terminology, parallels can be observed internationally. This is probably due to the European employment strategy (EES). However, there have been major differences in applying the activation paradigm, varying from paternalistic approaches to those which emphasise the autonomy of the individual¹⁶. However, knowledge about long-term effects of activation is still insufficient. For the time being, it appears that the chances of re-entering the labour market primarily depends on the general situation of the economy (the ratio between labour demand and labour supply), and only in addition to a favourable relationship between staff in the job placement and labour agencies and those seeking employment as well as to the existence of local and target group-oriented programs.¹⁷ In Germany, each and everyone of the aforementioned points shows deficits – despite the improved aims of

the Hartz laws.

German research studies on the approach of the transitional labour markets have already identified numerous elements and structures which could function as support for the change of status.¹⁸ The transitional labour market approach has to be developed further in order to create criteria for 'good' and 'bad' transitions and the accompanying supporting measures – by taking into account specific needs of specific life stages.

What should be viewed as especially demanding tasks are the beginning and the end of professional life, which have more and more developed into entire phases of work life.¹⁹

As mentioned above, the entry phase into professional life often lasts for several years and is characterised by unstable jobs and short interims of unemployment; the exit phase can also be accompanied by unemployment, or by illnesses, invalidity or partial retirement. Bearing in mind this shortening and compression of professional life as an increasing trend, a future key task is to work towards once again 'straightening out' professional life. Shortened school and study phases might be one way, but there also has to be a sustainable employment policy. Such a policy is a prerequisite for later retirement, as targeted in the European Union's Lisbon strategy. Introducing *real* old-age part-time models would improve the flexibility of retirement transition as these would lead to an actual reduction of working hours in the latest labour phase²⁰. It is not the author's intention to promote a higher amount of working hours during the life course by opting for earlier work entries and later exits. The priority of 'straightening out' the labour record is to better distribute the income risks over the life course and to alleviate the 'rush hour(s)' of life by giving way to other time necessities during the life course, e.g. care tasks and further education.

Policy response II: Financing-individual options for distributing the life income and for readjusting the collective support systems

In many European countries a concentration of social policy on the activation and reintegration of all people fit for employment into the labour market can be observed. However, this trend has not rendered monetary transfers for certain life phases obsolete. On the contrary – new discontinuities and time necessities over the life course raise questions about how to ease the financial needs in such life stages. A currently discussed approach²¹ concentrates on giving individuals more options to dispose of their estimated life income. Up until now, the Netherlands have done this the most effectively. Since the beginning of 2006, there is the so-called *levensloopregeling*, a new framework

An active welfare state must provide a floor below which no one should be allowed to fall, but its primary role must be to enable people to provide for themselves.

/ John Hutton /

period of time is the 'rush hour' of life, when family duties and the general pressures of life are gathering to a peak. Furthermore, because of the concentration of life income at this stage, discontinuities – for example unemployment – become dangerous as they have an even greater impact.

Econometric data on the effects of labour interruption shows significant deficits in long-term income capacity and human capital. These are often underestimated by the people concerned.¹² When discontinuities occur in early life phases, the loss of human capital is normally lower and the damage is limited. The assessed postponing of motherhood to a later point in life is critical in this respect. Several surveys ascertain that those part-time jobs that are subject to social insurance contribution (not including marginal employment) are better than their reputation when it comes to long-term human capital and income losses. In addition to that, they often have a bridging

legislation which enables employees to save up part of their salary (up to 12 percent of the gross monthly salary and overtime up to a total of 210 percent of their gross monthly salary) and also time, e.g. extra hours, privileged by taxes, in order to use this credit later on, for example to finance sabbaticals, a family break, further education phases, old-age part-time or even an early retirement.²² In order to use this credit in earlier life phases – in the ‘rush hour’ of life – when only small savings have been acquired, it is possible to take out a loan on the estimated future income (for example company pension claims).

Without doubt, such approaches could improve the individual’s possibilities to manage their specific time needs according to personal necessities. However this should be viewed critically, as younger cohorts – contrary to today’s pensioners – will anyway have problems in gaining a poverty-defying income and in building up decent pension claims. A premature consumption of potential income and pension claims could therefore increase the pressure on the further professional life and also pose a risk of poverty in old-age. Also problematic is the fact that these models promote the further privatisation of social risks – such as childcare and care for frail elderly family members. If we argue that everybody can compensate for ‘life risks’ by re-arranging their personal life income from work, we may very well assume that a collectively funded scheme for the coverage of social risks and socially important forms of unpaid work was obsolete. But as income risks and care tasks are unequally distributed among the population, such schemes are in fact indispensable. However, there has to be a renewed discussion about *which* life phases legitimate an interpersonal reallocation by collective systems. There are arguments for giving time options with monetary support (‘integrated options’) preferably to people in the ‘rush hour’ of life, who have care tasks and are short on time, instead of using them to provide an easier retirement, as is still primarily the case in Germany. One approach would be a collectively supported model of ‘part-time work for people with care tasks’. Financial means for this could be gained from the expensive and questionable family support system of the married couples tax splitting.²³ Therefore, it makes sense to combine and adjust improved, individual options of redistributing money (and time) over the life course with specifically aligned, collectively funded financial support systems for certain life risks.

In addition to the aforementioned developments, the readjustment of support systems requires a broad access to social security systems. In Germany, contrary to those European coun-

tries that have more of a general security system, certain flexible employment forms and gaps are accompanied by gaps of social secu-

The message increasingly is that you can have one or the other, but not both. And men, well, they get both.

/ Jennifer Weiner /

rity coverage.²⁴ Although part of the risks are still alleviated through marriage-associated rights. As numerous surveys have shown, the most recent of which being the AVID data published in November 2007,²⁵ young people, through cutbacks in the statutory pension insurance, are more and more confronted with the risk of old-age poverty – even if they use governmental aid for private retirement plans. In order to build up sufficient social security claims with the aim of a population-wide coverage for certain social risks, which have yet to be defined, we recommend an extension of the statutory insurance duty. This should include a (basic) health insurance. In terms of old-age provision there has been the pension reform of 2001 which has introduced a means-tested minimum standard. However, this is only meant as a repair mechanism for – as compared to the norm – ‘failed’ biographies.²⁶ The actual reasons for the lack of pension entitlements – namely employment and insurance interruptions – are neither identified nor remedied. Any answer to altering the labour and life course, based upon a general insurance obligation over the life course, would have to decide who would bear the costs of maintaining such an insurance status in certain labour and life conditions.²⁷ The aim here has to be to make it possible for every individual to independently obtain non means-tested pension entitlements at least as high as the socio-cultural minimum standard. Not only would this help to avoid old-age poverty among men and women with discontinuous employment records, it would also help raise public awareness for the long-term risks and costs of such discontinuous employment records. It may also help to impede the *free rider behaviour* and raise acceptance for the collective support of those still in need. This would invoke trust in the social security system amongst younger cohorts enabling them, in spite of increased labour market risks, to rely on the social security system.

Notes:

1. The quotation marks denote that ‘voluntariness’ depends on the predominant framework as well as cultural norms.
2. Council of the European Union 2003: Paragraph 15, highlight UK.
3. European Commission, Guidelines 2005, 2005 / 600 / EC.
4. The results were partly taken from longitudinal analyses of AVID data (Old-Age Provision in Germany) and from

the IAB employee sample of a research project supervised by the author: Klammer / Tillmann 2002.

5. E.g. Klammer / Tillmann 2002.

6. Calculations based on data of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) for the project ‘Towards a new organisation of working time throughout working life’: Anxo et al. 2006; Klammer et al. 2005. The construction of the family cycle based on cross-sectional data (here: 2000) is advantageous because every household type can be shown in a specific point in time – and in the context of a specific institutional framework. However, the disadvantage is that this does not show ‘real’ life courses with potential cohort effects having to be taken into account (which means that men and women who have small children nowadays may possibly show different income patterns later on than those who are in a later life phase today).

7. Anxo et al. 2006; Klammer et al. 2005.

8. Klammer / Tillmann 2002, based on AVID data.

9. Percentage of employees who have experienced unemployment at least once before the age of 30 as related to all employees under 30, sorted by cohorts.

10. Additional sample I of the IAB employee sample, project calculations for Klammer / Tillmann 2002.

11. Klammer / Tillmann 2002.

12. Among others: Beblo / Wolf 2002.

13. Klammer / Tillmann 2002.

14. E.g. Schmid / Gazier 2002.

15. Klammer / Leiber 2004.

16. Berkel / Hornemann-Moeller 2002: 54.

17. Cebulla 2002.

18. E.g. Rabe / Schmid 1999; Schmid / Gazier 2002.

19. Gautié 2003.

20. The existing old-age part-time work model – contrary to its original purpose – is mostly used as a block model for early retirement.

21. E.g. in the Netherlands, but in the European Commission as well: Stuurgroep Verkenning Levensloop 2002; Naegele et al. 2003; Klammer et al. 2005; Waas 2004.

22. SZW 2006.

23. German Bundestag 2002: 257–260.

24. Klammer 2000.

25. Rische 2007, in critical reference: Hauser 2007; Klammer 2008.

26. Consistently, this has been included in the social security law of the new SGB XII.

27. Vielle 2001; Vielle / Walthéry 2003.

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Shifting Parenthood to Advanced Reproductive Ages: Trends, Causes and Consequences

by Dr. Tomáš Sobotka

Abstract: This article discusses different aspects of the shift towards later parenthood which has affected all industrialised countries. It outlines trends in delayed childbearing and points out the increase in childlessness and growing educational disparities in first birth timing, especially among women. It reviews consequences of delayed childbearing for individuals, couples, their children and society and discusses the limited role of assisted reproduction in offsetting the age-related rise in infertility. The individual social and economic advantages of late parenthood may outweigh the biological advantage of early parenthood. In conclusion, I outline possible policy actions that may support childbearing decisions at both younger and older reproductive ages. Such policies should recognise wide heterogeneity in needs and lifestyle preferences of individuals and should not explicitly aim to encourage early parenthood.

Introduction

In the last four decades women and men in in-

dustrialised countries have been delaying parenthood towards ever later ages. This persistent trend, termed 'postponement transition'¹ has become characteristic for a wide range of countries with diverse cultural and economic conditions. Other milestones traditionally linked with adulthood, such as finishing education, leaving the parental home, and forming a couple, have also been postponed towards later ages. However, the postponement of births receives particular attention due to the concerns about the associated health risks and because of the fears of persistent low birth rates that are now common in most parts of Europe and in East Asia.

The decision on the right time to have a child has become increasingly difficult for men and women who try to find the best way of combining their education, work, and leisure activities with their partnership life and family plans. On the one hand, efficient contraception and the declining normative pressure for parenthood provides 'freedom from children'

at younger ages, when most individuals prefer to focus on non-family activities. On the other hand, the notion of the biological clock and the awareness of the possible future deterioration of one's health or partnership situation provide incentives for not postponing parenthood until it becomes too late for having children.

This article reviews different aspects of the shift towards later parenthood. Although most of the issues discussed here pertain to both men and women, much of the empirical evidence explicitly focuses on women, for whom considerably more statistics and studies exist, and whose 'biological clock' ticks faster. I emphasise that there is a mixture of positive as well as negative aspects of later parenthood and that the frequent negative views on childbearing postponement are exaggerated.

The article is structured as follows. The shift towards later childbearing is outlined alongside an increase in childlessness and wide educational differences in fertility timing. Subsequently,

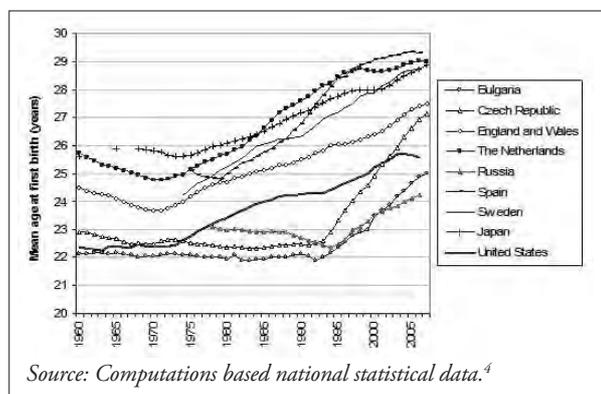
I review consequences of delayed childbearing for individuals, couples, their children and society, and discuss the limited role of assisted reproduction in offsetting the age-related rise in infertility. In conclusion, I outline possible policy actions that may support childbearing decisions at both younger and older reproductive ages.

The pressures of being a parent are equal to any pressure on earth. To be a conscious parent, and really look to that little being's mental and physical health, is a responsibility which most of us, including me, avoid most of the time because it's too hard.

/ John Lennon /

The shift towards later parenthood and the forces contributing to it

The trend towards later parenthood was first initiated in the early 1970s in Western and Northern Europe, Japan and the United States, and by the late 1990s had spread to all industrialised societies.² At present women in Western, Northern and Southern Europe as well as Japan give birth to their first child on average between the ages of 28-29 (Figure 1). Fathers have also 'aged' considerably; men on average have their first child at ages 2-4 years older than women,³ which is in line with their later home leaving and partnership formation. The United States constitutes an important exception with an earlier first birth pattern fuelled by the relatively high rates of teenage motherhood. Also women in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe still bear their first child at younger ages (typically at ages 24-26) than their counterparts in other parts of Europe. In Japan and in most parts of Europe teenage births have become marginal, whereas the frequency of births at late reproductive ages (40+) has increased sharply since the late 1980s, bringing a reversal to the long-standing downward trend.



Source: Computations based national statistical data.⁴

Figure 1: Mean age of mother at birth of first child, selected countries of Europe, Japan and the United States (1960-2007).

The expansion of higher education, especially among women, constitutes the main driving force of delayed parenthood, contributing approximately one half to the observed rise in the age at first birth.⁵ Given the general incompatibility between studying and having children, a later age at school leaving directly translates into later childbearing.⁶ The relative decline in the economic position of young adults and the rise of temporary jobs, combined in many countries with high youth unemployment, also contributes to parenthood postponement.⁷ 'Women's liberation' from domesticity and economic dependence on their husbands made combining career and parenthood paramount for their childbearing decisions. Unlike for men, improvements of women's labour market prospects may stimulate further postponement of first birth.⁸

The contraceptive pill is the major technological innovation that has become instrumental for most couples planning (and postponing) marriage and parenthood.⁹ In addition, norms and values related to family have changed rapidly and parenthood has gradually ceased to be the main and universal goal in life. Consequently, the option of having children competes with other activities available for self-realisation, including leisure and consumer activities, which become legitimate reasons to delay or forego childbearing.¹⁰ Having children has become a carefully planned decision of the couple, who considers various potential positive and negative effects of parenthood on their relationship, lifestyle, and economic well-being.¹¹ In this context, partnership instability and the disagreement between partners may further delay couples' childbearing.

The highly educated lead the shift to late parenthood

Different factors driving the trend to delayed parenthood are most pertinent for the highly educated women, for whom the competition between parenthood and other life choices is most intense. Women with a university education not only postpone motherhood due to their long study period, but after completing their studies they wait longer than other women before having a child. Consequently, a growing social status differentiation in the timing of parenthood has taken place among both men and women.¹²

Women with tertiary education have frequently shifted the birth of their first child to after the age of 30, whereas women with low qualifications usually give birth to their first child at an early age, often as teenagers.¹³ This rising heterogeneity in first birth timing is illustrated in table 1 giving Norway as an example. The shrinking group of the low-educated women has hardly shown any signs of birth postponement, while the highly educated women displayed the most pronounced shift in their age at motherhood.

	Year			Difference
	1980	1990	1998	
<i>Highest achieved education</i>				
Primary and lower secondary	23.3	23.9	24.0	0.7
Upper secondary	24.0	25.3	26.4	2.4
University, 1st stage	26.5	28.1	29.5	3.0
University, 2nd stage	28.5	30.0	31.6	3.1

Table 1: Mean age at first birth among women by the highest achieved level of education in Norway (1980, 1990 and 1998).¹⁴

The rise of social status heterogeneity in first birth timing has been most pronounced in the countries that are characterised by larger social disparities – England and Wales, Ireland, outside Europe, and the United States. McLanahan (2004) argues that the divergence in partnership, family, and work trajectories of low-educated and highly educated persons is linked to an increasingly disadvantaged economic position of the former group. Lochhead (2005: figure 3) shows that income differences in Canada by mother's age at first birth became pronounced between 1971 and 1996.

The contrasts in family trajectories by social status lend a nuanced perspective to the notion of the 'rush hour' of life. In the 1970s and the 1980s, the 'rush hour' in industrialised countries was still concentrated at young adult ages, with a very high density of major life events (leaving parental home, school graduation, marriage, first birth, acquiring employment) occurring between ages 20 and 30.¹⁵ At present, such a concentration of major events at young adult years remains typical for the low-educated segments of the population (and some immigrant groups), who often experience complex and non-standard partnership, employment and family trajectories. For the group of higher-educated men and women, the 'rush hour' has increasingly moved into their thirties.

Consequences of later parenthood for individuals and couples

The most obvious consequence of delayed pa-

renthood is a rapid rise of childlessness at ages below 35. It has been most pronounced among highly educated women. In the Netherlands, nine out of ten women with a high level of education born in 1965-74 remained childless by age 28, a sharp increase from about one half in the 1940-49 cohorts.¹⁶ Most of these women will eventually have a child, as the higher-educated usually display elevated rates of childbearing in their mid-to late thirties and early forties,¹⁷ but many will also remain permanently childless.

In contrast to women, childlessness among men is especially high among the lower-educated.¹⁸ This apparent paradox can be explained not only by a higher risk of infertility with age for women and a high 'price' paid for parenthood by the highly educated women, but also by the fact that, for men, lower social status often means an exclusion from the partnership market.¹⁹

For women, ages 36-42 may be thought of as a critical window for their last pregnancy attempts, when their biological clock ticks particularly fast. By postponing childbearing until their thirties, highly educated women risk, more than other groups, being unable to reach their reproductive goals. Infertility starts rising markedly after age 35 and then accelerates after age 40. At that age 17 percent of women are estimated to be permanently sterile (unable to conceive) and 35 percent of women will not eventually be able to have a child when starting their pregnancy attempts (see figure 2).²⁰ Men's reproductive capacity declines slower with age;²¹ men are nevertheless often 'responsible' for couple's inability to conceive.

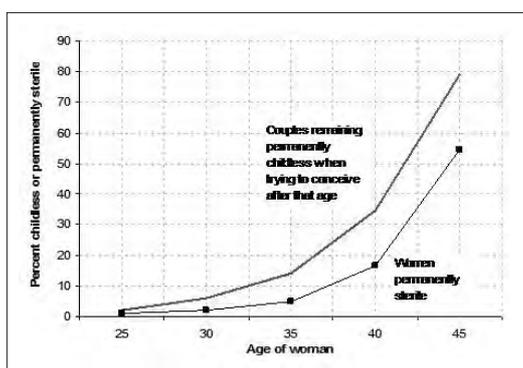


Figure 2: Percentage of women who are permanently sterile and of couples remaining childless at age 50 when trying to conceive after a given age.²²

Still, many women that are approaching their critical window desire to have a child in the future. Including somewhat uncertain responses ("probably yes"), 17 percent of Austrian women aged 35-39 and 6 percent aged 40-45 intended to have a child within the next three years; at that age, as many as 17 percent of men intended to have a child.²³

The psychological consequences of permanent sterility are most serious for women who are childless.²⁴ Late pregnancies are associated with a rapidly increasing risk of miscarriage, higher risk of pregnancy complications and negative health outcomes for the mother, and also with an elevated risk of stillbirths, premature births and foetus malformations, such as Down Syndrome.²⁵ Some of these negative outcomes can be reduced or prevented by an extensive use of prenatal screening and selective abortion. However, motherhood at ages above 35 has not been consistently found to pose long-term health risks for the mother. Mirowsky (2005) concluded that women having their first child in their early thirties subsequently display better health conditions than the younger first-time mothers. Men's age may also negatively influence reproductive outcomes. After age 40, fathers face an increased risk of genetic abnormalities in their children.²⁶ De la Rochebrochard and Thonneau (2002) found that women who become pregnant by men above age 40 have a substantially higher likelihood of miscarriage, and that the combined effects of a woman's and man's higher age produced particularly high risks.

Late parenthood also has a number of generally positive effects and consequences. Most children born to 'older' couples are strongly desired and born into a stable family environment. Men becoming fathers after age 30 become more involved with their children and express more positive feeling about fatherhood.²⁷ Garrison et al. (1997) found that couples having their first child after age 35 were more satisfied with their marital life and reported better family functioning. Few older mothers are living without a partner at the time of birth. The likelihood that a woman would give birth as a single mother declines rapidly with age until about age 30. Partnerships and marriages are considerably more stable among couples in their late 20s and 30s than among younger couples, reducing the risk that children will experience family disruption that has become common in the majority of developed countries.²⁸

Late parenthood is also associated with economic and career advantages. Joshi (2002) concluded that birth postponement could reduce income loss associated with motherhood, particularly among women with a university degree. Miller (2008) found a significant increase in women's earnings associated with each year of birth postponement; especially college-educated women benefited from delaying births.

Consequences of late parenthood for children and intergenerational links

Later parenthood also affects children, their interaction with parents and wider family relationships.

The impact varies for children at different life stages. Overall, late motherhood does not appear to have any serious effects on behavioural or physical outcomes of children after controlling for the socio-economic status of mothers and birth-related risk factors. Adoles-

You have these highly educated, high-powered women adjusting to being mothers and they are determined to be the best mothers.

/ Jennifer Weiner /

cent children of older mothers may display better educational achievement and lower drug abuse, possibly due to better parenting practices and family functioning.²⁹ The effect of father's age on child health and cognitive outcomes may be more pronounced due to a higher risk with age of mutations in sperm cells. Saha et al. (2009) reported that paternal age has a negative effect on a range of measures of neurocognitive performance (such as concentration, memory, learning, and reading) until the age of 7 years. Late fatherhood has also been linked to long-term health outcomes such as a higher risk of schizophrenia, autism, dyslexia, and Alzheimer disease.³⁰

Delayed parenthood may also affect intergenerational relations. As the time span between generations increases, parents and grandparents are more likely to have difficulties communicating with their children and grandchildren and to share common values and interests. Older parents are less likely to survive until the time their children reach adulthood, marry or have their own children; they also have a higher likelihood of suffering health problems at a time when they are still caring for their teenage children. The risk of not surviving to see one's own grandchildren is much higher for men, who have, at any age, a higher mortality than women and are on average about three years older when having children. Finally, later parenthood may lead to a better availability of childcare in the form of help from grandparents: at a time when most women remain in employment until their late fifties or early sixties, more of them will retire and become available to help with childcare when their daughters or sons become parents at age 30 and above.

Societal-level consequences of delayed childbearing

On an aggregate level, a shift to a later timing of childbearing brings a temporary decline in birth rates, even if the number of children that women have over their life course does not change. One can also think of this effect in terms of an expansion of an interval between generations during which fewer births fall into

each calendar year. Estimates produced by the Vienna Institute of Demography³¹ show that in the absence of the ongoing increase in age at childbearing the total fertility rate (TFR; this is the most commonly used indicator of period fertility) for the European Union in 2003–2005 would reach 1.72 instead of the observed value of 1.48. This effect was most pronounced in Central and Eastern Europe, where the observed TFR was as low as 1.25, whereas the estimated TFR in the absence of the tempo effect was substantially higher, 1.64 (figure 3).

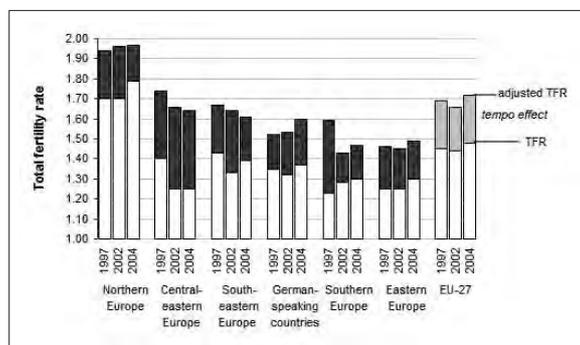


Figure 3: Total fertility rate, observed (TFR) and in the absence of changing age at motherhood (adjusted TFR), major European regions 1997–2004.³²

Besides the temporary effect on the number of births and fertility rates, delayed childbearing also leads to permanently lower fertility rate as a result of the rising infertility at higher ages (see also above). The magnitude of this effect is difficult to estimate. Kohler et al. (2002) estimated that one year of delay from the mean age at first birth reduced the complete fertility rate of women in different European countries by 1.6 to 5.1 percent. Noticeably, this effect was smaller for younger cohorts that experienced motherhood later in life. This is not a small effect, but a comparative analysis suggests that delayed childbearing has, so far, played a minor role in the observed shift to low fertility levels and that other factors are responsible for the very low fertility experienced especially in Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, and German-speaking countries.³³

Is assisted reproduction a solution to the infertility caused by postponement?

Medical treatment of infertility might be perceived as a potential solution for women who have postponed childbearing for ‘too long.’ The use of assisted reproduction technology (ART), which involves surgical removal of woman’s oocytes (‘eggs’), has been increasing rapidly in developed countries. However, with current knowledge and technology, the ART remains ineffective in coping with infertility caused by childbearing postponement. For each cycle initiated with the use of woman’s

own oocytes, success rates, as measured by the chances of achieving a live birth decline steadily from about age 32. Pregnancy rates and live birth rates are particularly low for women aged 40 and older: In the United States, where ART industry is very competitive, only 16 percent of attempts using fresh non-donor eggs result in live birth at age 40.³⁴ Given that these women have little time left to try many more ART cycles, the overall chances of getting pregnant through assisted reproduction are rather low. Leridon’s (2004) simulations estimated that after the age of 40 ART is only marginally more successful when compared with pregnancy attempts through sexual intercourse. Consequently, costs of treatment per one ART child born are prohibitively high after age 40.

Many infertile women wishing to have a child after age 40 achieve high success rates of around 50 percent per cycle by using donated oocytes. Remarkably, the use of donated oocytes, commonly originating from much younger women, does not diminish chances of achieving successful delivery with the age of woman undergoing ART. This suggests that using cryopreservation (‘egg freezing’) at younger ages may give many women a chance to get pregnant with their own fertilised oocytes later in life. However, at present, this method is – in contrast to the commonly used sperm and embryo cryopreservation – still in an early stage of technological development³⁵ and only a few cases of its successful use have been documented. Consequently, the potential impact of ‘egg storing’ on late birth rates remains low for the next two to three decades.

This race was just feeling my way through. I'm 39, but I'm not over the hill yet. The one title I didn't have was motherhood. Everything I've ever wanted, I have. ... I'm blessed to have a healthy baby.
/ Gail Devers /

Concluding discussion and policy recommendations

Medical literature generally perceives delayed childbearing negatively, emphasising high risks of infertility and high rates of negative pregnancy outcomes and foetus deformations. However, the biological rationale for early childbearing is increasingly in conflict with social and economic rationales favouring late childbearing. Late parenthood has a number of potentially benefiting effects for both parents and their children. It is also a strategy consistent with the decline in the relative im-

portance of children and family life at younger ages and with the general extension of life span, prolonged education and delayed economic activity.³⁶

Educational, social and economic policies may affect decisions on fertility timing. Lutz and Skirbekk (2005) outline two ways in which policies may support earlier timing of parenthood: (1) by reordering life course events (e.g., by having children before finishing education) and (2) by shortening different phases that lead to parenthood (e.g., by shortening the time spent in higher education), but maintaining the ‘usual’ sequence of events. Rindfuss and Brauner-Otto (2008) have recently investigated this issue in detail and discussed how policies and regulations related to education, labour market and housing market may stimulate earlier timing of births.

Large individual heterogeneity in living arrangements, family life course and the timing of childbearing need to be taken into account by policy actions that aim to ease the work-family combination during the ‘rush hour’ stage of life. Arguably, policies assuming uniform needs and preferences might be counterproductive as they may lead to different reactions among individual men and women. For instance, the policy stimulating an extended period of generous parental leave without offering an alternative option of short work interruption and easily available institutional child care may discourage career-oriented women from having children earlier in life. Policies for the 21st century need to reflect heterogeneous lifestyle preferences and, at a very general level, should aim to spread “more innovatively paid and unpaid duty-free time over the entire life course”.³⁷ Taking these general observations as a starting point and drawing on the existing research, a stylised ‘wish list’ of policy recommendations can be formulated as follows:

- Aim to reverse trends in relative income of younger workers below age 35, which was falling in comparison with the older workers (aged 45–54) between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s.³⁸
- Make the labour market more flexible and open for young adults, and limit employment policies favouring older workers, thus reducing youth unemployment rates.
- Give both men and women greater flexibility over their employment and family time. Allow broad choice in the length of weekly work time, duration of parental leave (including a system of short family leaves for parents) and its sharing by both partners. Similarly, allow wider choice in retirement age.
- Make institutional childcare inexpensive and well accessible and with full-day coverage, also for parents with children below age 3 and for school-aged children.

- Enable an easy and cheap access to all types of infertility treatment to women and couples who are infertile and have a non-marginal chance of becoming pregnant.
- Support affordable and accessible housing, both rental and privately owned.³⁹ The ability to establish an independent household is one of the most important preconditions for parenthood.

These policies should not explicitly aim at reducing age at childbearing, as there is no clear support for the notion that an earlier timing of births should be preferred. To some extent, the outlined policy actions would prop up childbearing at younger ages by facilitating parenthood among younger couples who wish to become parents and face obstacles to realising this desire. At the same time, some of these policies may also encourage 'recuperation' of delayed childbearing at later reproductive ages and thus lead to a continuous increase in fertility rates of women past age 30.

On balance, the shift to a late childbearing pattern does not need to be perceived negatively, especially when most women have their first child at ages when they can achieve their desired family size, which is in most countries and in most social groups centred at two children. In other words, as long as a majority of women, including those with a high education, have their first child before age 35, age-related decline in fecundity may not have a very strong effect on their ability to achieve their plans and on aggregate cohort fertility rates. As Stein and Susser (2000) suggest, the 'social advantage' of late parenthood may outweigh the biological advantage of early parenthood, as older parents are more experienced and knowledgeable, have better economic situations, face lower risk of divorce, and can more easily afford child-care. The persistence of the current institutional and cultural framework in most developed societies, which favours non-family orientation at younger ages and postponement of stable partnership and family formation is likely to contribute to a further shift towards later parenthood. The late parenthood 'revolution' is not over yet.

Notes:

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1. Kohler et al. 2002.
2. Kohler et al. 2002; Sobotka 2004.
3. Coleman 2000.
4. Eurostat 2009; Council of Europe 2006.
5. Beets et al. 2001.
6. Blossfeld / Huinink 1991.
7. Mills / Blossfeld 2005; Adsera 2005.
8. de Cooman et al. 1987.
9. Goldin /Katz 2002.

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11. Liefbroer 2005.
12. Ravanera / Rajulton 2004.
13. McLanahan 2004.
14. Lappegård / Ronsen 2005.
15. Rindfuss 1991.
16. de Graaf 2008: 20.
17. Rendall /Smallwood 2003.
18. Toulemon / Lapierre-Adamcyk 2000; Coleman 2000.
19. Toulemon / Lapierre-Adamcyk 2000.
20. Leridon 2008.
21. Kühnert / Nieschlag 2004.
22. Adopted from Leridon 2008: Tables 1 and 2.
23. Generation and Gender Programme survey conducted in 2008.
24. Gilbert et al. 1999.
25. ESHRE 2005.
26. Kühnert / Nieschlag 2004.
27. Cooney et al. 1993.
28. Heuveline et al. 2003.
29. Fergusson / Woodward 1999.
30. Saha et al. 2009: references.
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32. VID 2008. Years shown in the graph refer the following periods: 1997 to 1995-2000, 2002 to 2001-2003, 2004 to 2003-2005. Adjusted TFR computed with using the method by Bongaarts and Feeney (1998) approach. See more details at <http://www.oew.ac.at/vid/datashet/box2.shtml>.
33. Billari / Kohler 2004.
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Comparing Welfare Regime Changes: Living Standards and the Unequal Life Chances of Different Birth Cohorts¹

by Prof. Dr. Louis Chauvel (Edited by: Hannah Taylor-Kensell, Patrick Wegner and Dan Sylvain)

Abstract: This article focuses on inter- and intra-cohort inequalities of living standards in a comparative perspective, underlining the diversity of national responses to the challenges of economic slow down, stronger economic competition and globalisation and their implications on different age groups. The aim is to make a connection between national welfare regimes and the emergence of specific cohort-based economic constraint patterns in different countries, which are about to produce specific social generations.² I highlight the emergence of 'scarring effects'; that is the irreversible consequences of (short term) social fluctuations in the context of socialisation on the (long term) life chances of different birth cohorts. These scarring effects can affect specific birth cohorts in countries where the welfare regime provides the context for increasing polarisation between middle-aged insiders and young outsiders. This is characterised by a lack of

resilience to early career difficulties faced by cohorts of young adults.

Consequences of the welfare states reforms for the different generations

This article focuses on generational sustainability in welfare states and aims to analyse the long-term consequences that the reforms⁴ carried out by these states have on the different cohorts. I show that in the context of conjuncture fluctuation, from the 'economic miracle' (1945-1975) to the slowdown in economic growth (1975 until today),⁵ a gap appeared between those who were exposed to a high rate of youth unemployment and its resulting consequences and those who were not, namely generations born before 1955 (the early baby boomers) and the generations born after 1955. This gap between generations would often be denied by the politicians in the

public debate. These points of view imply that these generational dynamics could have major consequences for the stability of our welfare states. Furthermore the emergence of strong inter-cohort inequalities at the expense of young adults that we observed in France is not seen in America. In America the same stressors (economic slowdown and increasing competition) have resulted in a less visible inter-cohort, but a more obvious intra-cohort inequality.

I base my reflections on the Esping-Andersen (1990) trilogy of welfare regimes, completed by the post-Ferrara (1996) controversy. My argument is that in the intrinsic logics of different welfare regimes, the probable set of socioeconomic responses to contemporary common challenges or stresses (economic slowdown, social distortions in the face of globalisation, obsolescence of unqualified or industrially-qualified labour, etc.) could be

significantly different. As a clue to these differences, we notice strong cohort specific 'scarring effects' in France and in Italy. Such 'scarring effects' are not evident in Nordic countries and almost non-existent in the Anglo-Saxon or liberal welfare regimes.

This article will add to a theory on the intra- and inter-cohort⁶ inequalities in an international context, and provide states with the strategies to avoid such inequalities. In the welfare states in which cohorts of young adults assist an intergenerational decline of their position, accumulating the difference between generations, the risk of a long-term destabilisation of the middle-class remains.

Different Responses of Welfare Regimes to Economic Stresses

To analyse more precisely the probable responses of different welfare regimes to the challenges of postindustrial societies, consider the standard typology of Welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1999); that distinguishes four types of regimes: corporatist (or conservative), liberal, universalist (or social democrat), and familialistic:

- Since it is based on the recognition of long term and institutionalised social rights of members of protected social groups, the probable response of the corporatist regime (including France) to economic slow down, international competition, and economic shortage of the welfare regime as a redistributive agency, as a ruler of the labour force, and as an employer will be a more expensive protection of insiders namely employees with higher seniority and high rates of trade-union membership. Such a response would be at the expense of young entrants into the labour market, women and immigrants, who have less opportunities to defend their interests. Youth unemployment results primarily from the scarcity of decent jobs in the labour market. Such scarcity is due to a lack of competition with insiders and a stronger internal competition of the young for obtaining less available positions. An internal competition of this nature generates a decline in relative or absolute wages, and specific renegotiations and retrenchments of social rights of the new social generations. If older employees have to retire early, they benefit from better protections of incomes and opportunities to access comfortable pensions schemes and/or acceptable conditions of pre-retirement (generally better than the usual unemployment schemes of younger adults). The social generations of seniors are more equal because they are the homogeneous cohorts of the 'wage earner society'⁷ of the Golden Period of 1960s-1980s. This period that brought better pensions schemes for all has resulted

in an increase in senior's relative income. Conversely, the new cohorts of adults face a stronger polarisation between winners and losers.⁸ Another aspect we do not face here is the declining value of education. Working in tandem with a lack of improvement in labour market entry, a probable collective answer to the difficulties of the young is a massive increase in the postsecondary education of young cohorts.⁹ However a trend of strong educational inflation in the form of declines in the nominal value of grades, particularly for the less selective ones, can be observed.¹⁰

The hardest thing in life is to know which bridge to cross and which to burn.

/ David Russel /

- The *liberal regime* (including the United States) is characterised by another probable answer to the same challenges: because of the centrality of market in this regime, the response to economic shortage is Welfare State retrenchments, limitation of redistributions to worse-off populations, stronger market competition, denunciation of former social rights considered as rent-economy devices, and distortions for market equilibrium. The logic, therefore, is to strengthen competition between juniors and seniors (who have less intangible rights) in order to renegotiate better positions for seniors which were previously obtained in the context of affluence. The consequence is smoother inter-cohort inequality (the new cohorts benefit relative to the seniors). However, strengthening competition means stronger intra-cohort inequalities.
- The *universalistic regime* (including Denmark) is defined by a collective scope for long-term stability, progress, and development for all with a strong sense of collective responsibility. The quality of integration of newer cohorts is then considered as a priority, since a failure in the early socialisation of young adults is clearly seen as a massive problem for future development of society. Strong rates of youth unemployment and economic devalorisation of young adults could go with long-term risks of anxiety, sentiments of self-devaluation of the young, increasing suicide rates, or a decline in the fertility index. More generally, a better control of social risks over the complete life course is a central dimension of the Nordic welfare state model.
- The *familialistic regime* (including Italy) shares many aspects of the corporatist one, but families here are a legitimate institution in the process of redistribution of resources,

both culturally and for the regulatory activities of the state. More precisely, in this regime, some sectors of the economy are strongly protected (mainly the core sectors of the public economy and of large companies such as banks, insurance, etc.) and most of the labour regulations are based on seniority rights. In most middle and small size companies, the regulation is based notably on family interconnections, where both localism and long term fidelity of workers are fundamental institutions. In the context of post-affluent societies, and of scarcity of jobs, housing, and other resources, parents of young adults are supposed to offer help and protection, and most families act in conformity with these social pressures. The consequence is a trend of increasing dependence of young adults up until the age of thirty-five (or even over) in a context of declining levels of wages and standards of living for the cohorts of new entrants into the labour market. Consequently, seniors exert a political pressure to obtain better pensions in order to support their own children. The context of dependency generates stronger constraints for young families, increases the social pressures on women to choose between work and children, and is accompanied by a strong decline in the fertility rates. This decline in fertility rates creates a paradoxical context of 'familialism without families,' and becomes a major problem in the long-term sustainability of the pensions and welfare regime (shorter and less affluent careers of juniors, generational collapse of one child families, etc.). Conversely, the decline of incomes for young families is offset by the reduction of family size. In this regime, the national homogeneity may be weaker compared to other regimes since the inter-provincial imbalances i.e. strong unemployment rates in some localities could go with a lack of appropriate workforce in others, are structural traits of a labour market where localism and strong ties are important aspects of social regulations. This implying less geographic mobility.

Once you agree upon the price you and your family must pay for success, it enables you to ignore the minor hurts, the opponent's pressure, and the temporary failures.

/ Vince Lombardi /

While the welfare regime logics and transformations are central issues, other factors could influence these results. These include:

- economic acceleration: even in the short term, a better economic situation could diminish pressure for welfare retrenchments; quality of the transition from school to work:

- close relations between the educational system and the labour market, organised internships, strong network of alumni, etc, limit the risk of 'outsiderisation' of young adults;
- shape of demography: a boom in fertility rates may have an 'overcrowding' effect on the labour market in 20-25 years or more.¹¹

The combinations of these factors are much more complex than expected.

Due to the diversity of potential configurations, we should expect that the welfare regime explanation outlined here is only a part of the real history of each nation. While the welfare regime offers strong constraints, historically ascribed configurations (demography, level of development, and opportunities for growth, etc.) and achievements of social policies (educational booms, structural reforms on the labour market, etc.) could also be important explanatory factors.

The multidimensional 'fracture générationnelle' in France

In France, the economic slowdown has provoked a dramatic multidimensional *'fracture générationnelle'* since the late 1970s.¹² This portrait is grim, but it is founded on a strong empirical base, with alternative sets of micro-data offering convergent results. Three principal topics will be highlighted here: first, the economic marginalisation of new entrants into the labour market and its direct effects on social structure; second, the long-term consequences of this deprivation in terms of socialisation and life chances; and finally, the consequences for the political participation of these cohorts and their support for the contemporary welfare regime.

The economic decline of youth

The first aspect of the dynamics of social generation in France is the change in the cohort distribution of economic means. A large redistribution of earnings and incomes occurred between the seventies and today. In 1977, the earnings gap between age groups thirty to thirty-five and fifty to fifty-five was 15 percent; the gap is now about 40 percent. During the 'economic miracle' the young wage earners generally began in the labour market with the same level of income as their own parents at the end of a complete career. For the last twenty years, we have observed the stagnation of the wages of the young while wages for older people have grown by 20 percent or more. In 1997, the workers received the highest incomes when middle-aged. Today, they receive it only shortly before retiring (cf. Figure 1).

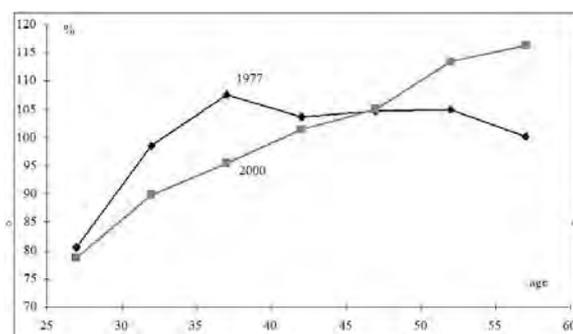


Figure 1: Salaries of the age groups, in 1977 and 2000 (100=average age group in France)¹³

There is also a new trend between the age groups, whose consequences in social sciences have been up to now barely studied. The changing of the relative positions of the age groups are now double. During their youth, the members of the older generation (those who are around 55 years old) were in a better position in comparison to their parents. The same applies nowadays, if we compare today's older generation with the young. The gap between generations is a result of a doubling in privileges as well as disadvantages.

The unemployment risk of the different cohorts

How could we explain this increasing gap? In fact, this is a consequence of a changing collective compromise which occurred during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. This transition in the social value of generations brought from a relative valorisation of newer generations, as a positive future we had to invest in, to a relative valorisation of the protection of the adults' and seniors' stability, even at the expense of the young. This is the main factor in the redistribution of well-being concerned unemployment. High unemployment rates were socially acceptable for young workers, provided that adult employees with dependent children could avoid these difficulties. In 1974, the unemployment rate of those who left school twenty-four months before or less was about 4 percent; by 1985, those who left school recently had an unemployment rate of 35 percent, which remained the case through to 1996. In 2002, at the end of the recent wave of economic recovery, it was close to 18 percent. The unemployment rates of recent school leavers are strongly reactive to the economic situation, whereas the middle-aged and senior rates remain more stable. An economic slowdown has serious consequences for younger adults, and recovery firstly benefits new entrants in the labour market. Evidently, the perverse consequence of that collective compromise for the protection of adults at the expense of newcomers is a lack of socialisation of

the new sacrificed generations. Due to some kind of 'scarring effect', even if they are now adults with dependent children of their own, their unemployment rates remain much higher, and their earnings abnormally low when compared to other age groups.

Scarring Effect

The assessment of the long-term impact of these early difficulties is central to the interpretation; if young, deprived generations do not catch up, a somewhat long-term *hysteresis* effect appears that we can call a 'scar' or 'scarring effect'. This can be deemed an appropriate title as the handicap seems definitive. The age-period-cohort analysis shows that co-

My generation had to be taken seriously because we were stopping things and burning things. We were able to initiate change, because we had such vast numbers. We were part of the baby boom, and when we moved, everything moved with us.

/ John Hughes /

orts who experienced a difficult entry into the labour market, because of recession, continue to suffer from a relative delay in upward mobility when they are compared to those who entered in an average situation.

The hypothesis we present here for France is that cohort-specific socialisation contexts imply long-term opportunities and life chances for individuals and for their cohorts; when the difficulties disappear, the cohorts who faced these problems continue to suffer from long-term consequences of past handicaps.

In more concrete terms, the cohorts born during the forties, who benefited from the economic acceleration of the late sixties, were relatively privileged compared to the previous cohorts when young and are relatively advantaged when compared to the newer ones due to the lack of progress for the young from 1975 to the present day.

The devaluation of education

An important point we cannot develop at length here is the consequences of educational expansion. If the level of education has increased in the cohorts born in 1950 to 1975, that positive trend was accompanied by a strong social devalorisation of grades.¹⁴ More specifically, the first cohorts of the baby boom have benefited from an expansion of education at a time when the rewards to education remained stable. Even if there were twice as many *Baccalauréat* recipients in the 1948 cohort than in the 1935 one, their likelihood of access to higher social or economic positions did not shrink. On the other hand, the generations

that followed had to deal with a strong trend of devaluation in terms of the economic and social returns to education. The first consequence is a rush to the most valued and selective grades (in the 'Grandes écoles' of the elite such as *Ecole Polytechnique*, *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*, *Sciences-Po Paris*, etc.) whose value remains stable, but whose population becomes more and more specific and may be discriminatory in terms of social origins. The second consequence is a strong devalorisation of less prestigious universities, which are less exclusive but have much smaller per capita endowments in comparison to the *Grandes écoles*. In the same way, the best secondary schools become more selective with major consequences in terms of urban segregation. In the French case, the school system was traditionally the central institution of the republic and at the heart of its idea of progress, providing the strongest support for French-style social democracy and meritocracy. The collapse of the value of grades implies a destabilisation of this myth and a pessimistic outlook on developments that we can expect to have political consequences.

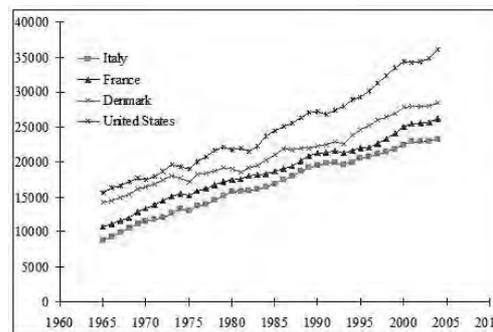
The 68's Generation as profiteers

Now that we are nearing the end of this long-term slowdown, which began twenty-five years ago, we can compare two social and genealogical generations.¹⁵ For the first time in a period of peace, the youth of the new generation are no better off than their parents were at the same age. In fact, the '1968 generation,' born in 1948, are the children of those born in 1918 who were young adults in World War II and worked in difficult conditions at the beginning of the 'Economic miracle'. The condition of the baby boomers was incomparably better than their parents. However, the following genealogical generation, born around 1978 – that is now between twenty-five and thirty years old – faces diminished opportunities of growth, not only because of an economic slump, but also because of their relatively poor outcomes in comparison to those of their own parents who did very well.¹⁶ We now observe rising rates of downward social mobility connected to the proliferation of middle-class children who cannot find social positions comparable to their parents. Consequently, France offers an ideal typical example of a failure of a corporatist regime as it sacrifices the interests of large fractions of its population and is unable to organise its own transmission to newer generations. As a result it is unable to distribute its benefits to young adults. This case is very interesting since in France we have a country that presents specific traits. France is defined by a homogeneous cul-

ture, notably by a political culture of refusal of market rules. It is homogeneously governed by a centralised system of governance about to produce for long periods the same erroneous diagnoses and decisions on the totality of the territory. The country is based on a culture of stop-and-go policies of alternate periods of excessive and scarce investments which are about to create backlashes and counter-backlashes. France is also a country where the first years on the labour market are key for future life-chances of individuals.

Is France an Exception? An International Comparison of Cohorts

A way to test the idea of a possible French exceptionalism is to compare the dynamics of incomes on the life course in contrasted nations. Four countries will be considered here: France, Italy, Denmark, and the United States. This choice gives an example of four typical welfare regimes. The four countries are characterised by similar levels of development and their trends are roughly parallel, despite the Ameri-



can economy doing somewhat better during the 1990's (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Annual Per Capita GDP of Four Countries (in PPP \$ Purchasing Power Parity Dollars)¹⁷

The four selected countries pertain to samples of micro-data available in the *Luxembourg Income Study Project*,¹⁸ but other typical countries could have been selected with consistent results. Since in this chapter the major concern is about consumption, the focus will be on household level standards of living and not on personal earnings. The LIS project data offers the possibility to compute adjusted disposable income (total net income after taxes and transfers, adjusted by household size, where the equivalence scale is the square-root of the number of residents of the household) in order to compare the living standards of age groups at four different periods, respectively around 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000. The lines in figure 3 represent these four years. Line 1 is 1985, line 2 represents 1990, line 3 is 1995 and line 4 stands for 2000.

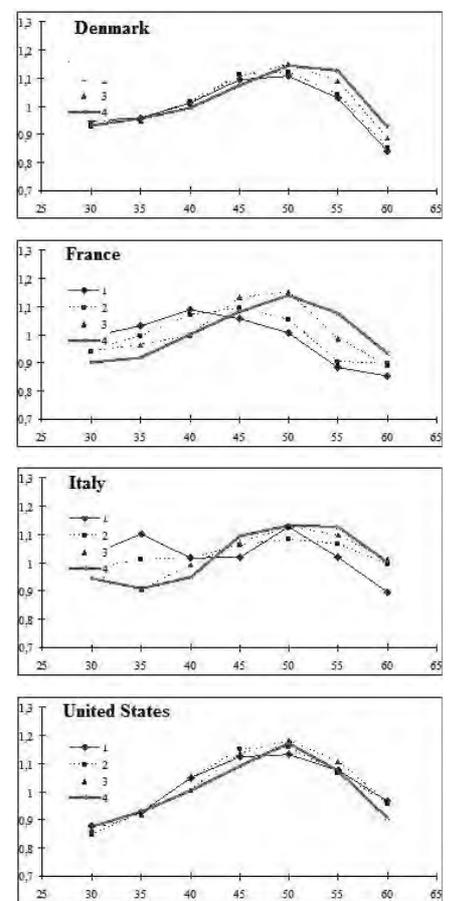


Figure 3: Relative Adjusted Disposable Income (RADI) by Age Group for Three Periods¹⁹

The main results of the comparison of the relative adjusted disposable income (RADI, figure 3) are:

- In 2000, the shapes of the age distribution of the average RADI are similar with an ascending slope to age fifty-five and a declining standard of living after (decline of earnings or retirement).
- From 1985 to 2000, except in the United States, we note a general increase of the income of seniors, more modest in Denmark and very significant in France.
- France and Italy are characterised by a strong relative decline of the age group thirty-five to thirty-nine; the French dynamics pertain to a very clear cohort wave (there is a progressive shift of age at maximum income from age forty to age fifty).
- In Italy, the decline of RADI at age thirty is less significant, but note that at age thirty most Italians are not head of their own household, and most of them continue to nominally benefit from the affluence of their own seniors.

Let us look at the situation in France a bit more precisely (cf. figure 4): those at age 33 had the highest relative loss of incomes. Those who were 33 years old about 30 years ago were lucky. The ones born after 1965 had the first

'scars' that could not be healed. On the other hand, we know for sure that those who are 60 today have known – of course on average – a relatively perfect labour market situation and have had fair incomes.

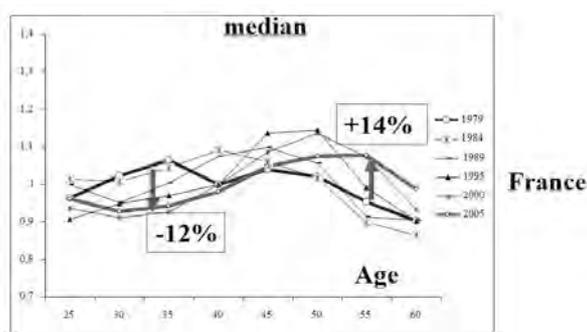


Figure 4: Relative Adjusted Disposable Income (RADI) from 1979 to 2005 by Age Group²⁰

The main point is that France and Italy show profound redistributions of living standards to the benefit of seniors and at the expense of younger and mid-aged adults when Denmark and the United States face no massive transformations. When both the Nordic and Liberal welfare regimes are about to smoothen inter-cohort inequalities, the corporatist and the familialistic regimes generate visible imbalances between age groups.

Welfare Regime Ruptures and Consumption

The main conclusion is that the answers of the different welfare regimes to the economic slow down of the post 1970s period differ substantially. The Danish model of welfare faced the challenge with a universalistic objective of stabilisation and protection of all age groups equally; the young adults are not the specific victims of any kind of retrenchments in the model. At the opposite part of the inequality spectrum, the United States did not diverge from their principle of competitive market, and both the young and old face a similar life course.

Conversely, the French and the Italians have decided to answer to the new challenges with a stronger protection for the more affluent positions of seniors resulting in more difficulties for their younger cohorts. This decision created a paradoxical situation where social democracy seems to improve in the older cohorts while the young are destabilised. The French diagnosis of double victimisation of younger generations (victims of both fake liberalism, which give freedom only to those who have the economic means, and fake socialism, which has forgotten the young) is relevant in Italy also.

Conclusion

The central point of my conclusion relates to

the long-term sustainability of welfare regimes. To be stable in the long term, a social system must arrange its own reproduction from one generation to the next. In France and Italy, today's seniors benefit from a large welfare state, but the vast social rights they were able to accumulate were the consequence of their relatively advantaged careers; I assert that the new generations, when they become seniors themselves, will not be able to benefit from the same rights, and the large size of the present welfare state will mechanically erode with cohort replacement – since the reproduction of the welfare regime is not ascertained.

The key question is: will younger generations in France or Italy continue to sustain a system where their social condition is devalued compared to the older generations with no clear prospects of improvement? For the moment, these intergenerational inequalities are accepted, since they are generally unknown, their social visibility is low and their political recognition zero. These examples of the corporatist and familialistic impasse show that if we want solidarity, there is no other way than in a universalistic model (similar to the Nordic one) that supports equally the young, the middle-aged, and the elders in a long-term perspective of socialisation. In terms of consumption, these results give a better understanding of differences in the national life course perspective of standards of living.

In France, compared to the United States, the young generation faces real difficulties, and at the opposite, the nowadays seniors benefit from a specific economic boom and from economic homogenisation (more equality). In France, seniors appear attractive targets for marketing products while the young are often framed in terms of social problems. The Italian situation is similar, but the demographic collapse of young generations of adults (less numerous with less children) and their increasing degree of familialistic dependence reduces the degree of immediate visibility of the social problem, but this problem will evidently appear raising the question of who will care for elders. At the opposite end, Denmark seems to be a stable model of development of a universalistic solidaristic regime of collective improvement. The social problems that appear elsewhere (deepening gaps between the rich and the poor, accumulation of social problems for the newer generations, destabilisation of the young educated middle class, etc.) seem to be relativised and smoothed, and the general atmosphere is more propitious to a socially homogeneous

and the development of a 'wage earner middle class' in a knowledge-based society. While recognising there are limitations to the welfare regime model approach, this analysis suggests the universalistic welfare regime is sustainable and maintains its own capacity for long-term development.

Notes:

1. Parts of this article appeared also in: Jones, Ian Rees 2009: Consumption and Intergenerational Change, Transaction Publishers, Piscataway, New Jersey.
2. Mannheim 1928.
3. Previous works, among other, are Chauvel: Chauvel 1998; Chauvel 2000; Chauvel 2006.
4. Compare, e.g. Esping-Andersen et al. 2002.
5. France and the United States both experienced a period of post-war affluence: the American 'Golden Age of Capitalism' (Maddison, 1982) and the French 'Trente Glorieuses' (Fourastié, 1979), which contrast with the subsequent period of economic slowdown and 'diminished expectations' (Krugman, 1992). See, notably: Chauvel, 1998 (second ed., 2002).
6. Mayer 2005.
7. Castel 2003.
8. Brzinsky-Fay 2007; Bell et al. 2007.
9. Van De Velde 2008.
10. Dura Bellar 2006.
11. Easterlin 1961; Easterlin et al. 1993.
12. Chauvel 2002: Préface.
13. Enquêtes Emploi 2000 et Formation-qualification-professionnelle 1977, INSEE; archives LASMAS-Quételet.
14. Chauvel 2000.
15. During the twentieth century, an average age gap of about thirty years separated parents and their children.
16. These parents are about to help their children in different ways with the intensification of 'solidarités familiales' (transfers and transmissions between generations including financial, in kind, cultural, and material) that Attias-Donfut (2000) describes, but at the collective level, the first and the most efficient solidarity would consist of a redistribution of social positions.
17. Source: Penn World Tables 6.2 (Heston et al., 2006). The dotted lines refer to the four periods of analysis.
- Note of the editorial staff: PPP \$= average connection availability of purchasing power in Dollar.
18. Source: Microdata of the LIS-Project (www.lisproject.org), evaluation of the Authors. : Relative Adjusted Disposable Income (RADI); RADI=1 is related to the average of the 30 to 64 years old of the relative periods; Period 1, 2, 3 and 4 are related to the LIS-Data of 1985, 1990, 1995 und 2000. In the figure, the 30-year-old are part of the group 30- to 34-year-old. Working population: according to household-RADI
19. Chauvel 2007.
20. Source: www.lisproject.org.

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Age Groups and Generations: Lines of Conflict and Potentials for Integration

by Prof. Dr. Martin Kohli

Abstract: *At the beginning of the 21st century, the old 'social question' – the integration of the industrial workers – seems to have been resolved, but new cleavages appear, for example between generations. These emerge from historical or macro-structural changes but also from economic cleavages between generations. The reason why age conflicts are not more pronounced is the mediating function of political parties, unions and families. Furthermore, although it is often claimed that the welfare state is increasingly dominated by the elderly, this is far from being the case. In terms of economic well-being, both the young and the old fare worse than the middle age group. In terms of political decision-making, there is no evidence for an alleged movement towards gerontocracy.*

Introduction

The 'rush hour' of life may be regarded as a manifestation of cleavages between age groups or generations. Cleavages inherent in social structure create the potential for conflicts; whether and to what extent these conflicts manifest themselves openly depends on the mobilisation of the actors on both sides of the rift. However, there are also links which reach across the cleavages. In our societies marked by demographic discontinuity we heavily depend

on these links in order to maintain societal integration. They are created by a range of institutions, above all, political institutions such as parties and unions on the one hand and families on the other. The potential for generational integration is threatened, though, by the current changes in social structure and the welfare state. This chapter will treat both the cleavages and the potentials for their integration.

Old and new inequalities

The 'social question' dominating the end of the 19th century was the integration of the industrial workers, in other words, the pacification of class conflict. This was achieved by giving workers some assurance of a stable life course, including the institutionalisation of retirement as a normal stage of life funded through public social security.¹ At the beginning of the 21st century, class conflict seems to be defunct and its place taken over by generational conflict.² The new social question consists in maintaining a balanced generational contract, which should protect the elderly and invest in the young while being financially sustainable and socially just.³ This is due both to the success of the welfare state, which has created age-graded claims and obligations and turned the elderly into its main clients, and to the demographic

challenge of low fertility and increasing longevity.⁴

Are we thus moving from class conflict to generational conflict?⁵ Such an assertion needs to be qualified in two ways.⁶ First, it should be noted that conflict or competition between young and old over scarce resources is by no means new; it is a common theme in historical and anthropological accounts of pre-modern societies as well. But with the evolution of the modern welfare state the form and arena of this conflict have changed. Secondly, and more importantly for our present concerns, it remains

The family is changing, not disappearing. We have to broaden our understanding of it, look for the new metaphors.

/ Mary Catherine Bateson /

essential to assess the extent of the generational cleavage per se and the extent to which it masks the continued existence of the class cleavage between wealthy and poor (or owners and workers). There are moreover other cleavages that are usually categorised as 'new' dimensions of inequality (in distinction to the 'old' ones of class), such as those of gender and ethnicity (or 'race'). Emphasising the generational

conflict as the new basic cleavage in society tends to downplay other inequalities, and by this, risks being ideological: it may function as a way to divert attention from the still existing problems of poverty and exclusion within generations, e.g., those based on class or gender.⁷ Age is the foremost basis for public entitlements and obligations. Public redistribution over the life course has been one of the strongest elements of what I have called the institutionalisation of the life course as a sequence of clearly delimited periods of life, each with its own profile of social roles and positions, of cultural expectations, and of legal obligations and claims.⁸ As shown by life course profiles of benefits and contributions, the elderly have become the main clients of welfare state redistribution, mostly through pensions and health care. In terms of legitimacy and distributional justice redistribution among age groups is (relatively) unproblematic because we can expect everyone to live through the different stages of life. Unlike gender or ethnic groups, age groups do not have a fixed membership but a regularly changing one where all individuals progress through the life course from one stage to the next according to an institutionalised schedule.⁹ Thus, differential treatment of age groups is morally acceptable,¹⁰ and maybe justified by the different needs that age groups have, or by reasonable political goals.¹¹ The only problem here is posed by the fact that people do not all live equally long. This differential longevity is socially stratified, and thus constitutes a massive social inequality that is compounded by demographic aging. Generational redistribution, on the other hand, is inherently problematic. ‘Generation’ can be defined in terms of position in the family lineage or, at the societal level, in terms of being born in a certain time period and sharing the same historical experiences. Thus, societal generations have a fixed membership,¹² and there is no legitimisation for an unequal treatment of them – indiscriminately of the question of how far into the future (or into the past) the standard of equality should be extend-

ed. The intergenerational sharing of burdens and rewards is just or fair to the extent that each generation can expect to receive the same treatment as the preceding and following ones while moving through the stages of life. Financing the elderly during one’s professional life through a pay-as-you-go system is not problematic as long as one can expect to have one’s own retirement funded by the next generation as well.¹³ Unfortunately though, this is rarely the case; generational differences are the rule rather than the exception.

The impact of historical and macro-structural changes

The reason for this phenomenon is linked to the experience of historical watersheds such as wars or system changes. These have varied massively from country to country and were more numerous in some countries than in others. Switzerland is an example for a rather fortunate country which has had a less eventful recent history than others, and the U.S. is another such example with much more continuity than most European countries. Like most social science literature, the literature on generations is still to a large extent an American literature and therefore does not take into account what people across most of Europe have experienced in terms of historical discontinuity. The inclusion of a European perspective is therefore highly necessary.

As an illustration, here is some data on how Germans view the impact of historical events on their past lives.¹⁴ It is taken from the German Aging Survey of 1996, a nationally representative survey of the German population aged 40-85 and living in private households.¹⁵ The two major events in recent history for the respondents were World War II and the ‘turn’ (‘die Wende’), i.e., the demise of socialism and German reunification. Whereas West Germans attach more importance to World War II, in the East of the country the ‘turn’ has been the key event (cf. table 1). Other events or changes that are mentioned to some extent in the West, but almost by no one in the East, are the cul-

tural and political transformation of the 1960’s (‘1968’) and the nuclear accident and fallout of Tchernobyl.

	West	East
World War I	0.7%	0.8%
World War II	55.1%	31.6%
‘Turn’ (unification)	30.0%	80.7%
Tchernobyl	5.6%	0.3%
‘1968’	4.1%	0.8%

Table 1: Historical watersheds in West and East Germany Answers to the question “This question concerns how people think about their past. There have been many events or changes in our country and in the world in this century. Please name one or two such events or changes that have left a special imprint on your life” Own calculations based on the German Aging Survey 1996

The economics of demographic discontinuity

Cultural shifts such as those of the 1960’s as well as changes in institutionalised life course patterns leading to age-graded experiences, obligations and entitlements are other factors that create generational cleavages. Richard Easterlin (1980) has offered a poignant analysis of

If men were angels, no government would be necessary.

/ James Madison /

economic cleavages among generations based on the demographic discontinuity of baby boom and baby bust. His argument is that large birth cohorts face more competition in schools, labour and marriage markets and will thus remain relatively disadvantaged over their life course. As a consequence, they also produce fewer children; for these smaller birth cohorts, the opposite holds, so that they will have more children again. The argument has not been corroborated in countries other than the U.S., but is an important reminder of how demographic and economic fortunes may interact with each other to produce different cohorts. David Thomson¹⁶ has treated the welfare state as a generational conspiracy. He tried to show for New Zealand that there was one generation which played the system so well that it reaped all the advantages while both those living earlier and those living later had to pay for it. This generation first created a youth-state with housing subsidies and benefits for young families and then, over its own life course, turned it into a welfare state for the elderly.¹⁷ This is a challenging assertion which, however, has not found support from other countries so far.



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Country	Year	Age 0 - 17	Age 18 - 25	Age 26 - 40	Age 41 - 50	Age 51 - 65	Age 66 - 75	Age 76+
Australia	1999	87.6	120.4	108.6	122.0	92.0	67.0	63.5
France	2000	93.4	98.2	99.7	111.6	114.6	88.5	86.4
Germany	2001	90.0	95.8	100.2	113.1	112.0	88.8	83.8
Hungary	2000	92.9	109.2	105.7	109.2	107.8	80.3	82.3
Italy	2000	89.1	101.8	105.6	105.3	112.8	86.2	77.2
Japan	2000	90.6	104.3	98.5	109.2	113.0	90.6	88.8
Sweden	2000	98.3	91.7	99.1	111.8	125.3	88.3	68.6
Switzerland	2001	85.5	109.2	101.2	109.5	114.5	91.0	78.2
United Kingdom	2000	88.4	106.2	108.0	121.3	108.5	77.2	71.0
United States	2000	86.7	93.6	103.5	113.9	121.4	96.8	80.6
OECD 25	2000	90.7	103.2	104.5	112.8	111.9	86.7	79.8

Table 2: Relative incomes by age groups, ca. 2000¹⁹

Country	Time period	Age 0 - 17	Age 18 - 25	Age 26 - 40	Age 41 - 50	Age 51 - 65	Age 66 - 75	Age 76+
France	1984 - 1994	0.4	- 5.0	- 5.9	2.7	6.5	7.4	0.4
	1994 - 2000	- 1.5	1.6	- 0.3	- 3.0	5.1	- 5.2	4.0
Hungary	1991 - 1995	- 6.2	1.9	- 2.2	2.9	3.8	6.6	1.7
	1995 - 2000	- 0.6	- 1.8	3.5	- 9.9	6.4	- 5.0	3.8
Italy	1984 - 1995	- 3.4	- 2.2	- 1.3	0.9	3.5	5.7	5.4
	1995 - 2000	2.3	- 2.8	0.6	- 1.4	1.6	- 1.8	- 6.1
Sweden	1983 - 1995	- 2.2	- 10.7	- 4.7	0.8	7.7	5.8	8.8
	1995 - 2000	2.9	0.5	1.4	- 2.8	2.9	- 5.0	- 7.5
United States	1984 - 1995	2.5	- 5.1	- 1.8	0.7	3.1	- 0.3	- 2.4
	1995 - 2000	2.6	0.0	1.2	- 4.3	- 2.3	- 2.0	- 1.5
OECD 17	1985 - 1995	- 0.1	- 5.7	- 1.3	2.6	2.7	2.4	0.0
	1995 - 2000	0.5	- 1.3	1.0	- 3.7	1.6	- 1.0	- 0.3

Table 3: Changes in relative incomes by age groups, ca. 1984-2000

Country	Year	Age								Total
		0 - 17	18 - 25	26 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 65	66 - 75	76+		
Australia	1999	11.6	5.6	8.0	8.6	14.0	20.6	28.8	11.2	
France	2000	7.3	7.6	5.6	5.2	6.6	9.9	11.3	7.0	
Germany	2001	10.9	13.7	8.4	4.1	7.9	9.7	10.7	8.9	
Hungary	2000	13.1	7.1	7.5	8.2	7.2	5.5	4.8	8.1	
Italy	2000	15.7	14.0	11.0	11.7	10.7	14.6	16.4	12.9	
Japan	2000	14.3	16.6	12.4	11.7	14.4	19.5	23.8	15.3	
Sweden	2000	3.6	14.4	4.9	2.8	2.4	4.6	11.5	5.3	
Switzerland	2001	6.8	5.5	5.9	3.7	7.6	10.4	12.7	6.7	
United Kingdom	2000	16.2	11.9	8.7	7.9	7.6	11.4	19.2	11.4	
United States	2000	21.7	19.1	13.8	11.0	13.0	20.3	29.6	17.1	
OECD 24	2000	12.3	11.5	8.7	7.5	8.9	11.4	16.5	10.4	

Table 4: Relative poverty rates by age groups, ca. 2000

Country	Time period	Age								Total
		0 - 17	18 - 25	26 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 65	66 - 75	76+		
France	1994 - 2000	0.2	- 0.7	- 0.4	- 0.7	- 1.2	1.5	- 3.5	- 0.4	
Hungary	1995 - 2000	2.8	0.0	0.8	2.2	2.2	- 0.2	- 6.2	0.8	
Italy	1995 - 2000	- 2.9	0.4	- 3.1	1.2	- 1.2	- 0.1	0.2	- 1.3	
Sweden	1995 - 2000	1.1	2.0	1.5	0.6	0.4	2.2	6.2	1.6	
United States	1995 - 2000	- 0.6	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.0	3.4	4.0	0.4	
OECD 24	1995 - 2000	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.1	- 0.2	0.5	

Table 5: Changes in relative poverty rates by age groups, ca. 1995-2000

How do the different generations fare in terms of economic well-being? The best comparative overview over the income positions of age groups or cohorts is available in an OECD paper by Michael Förster and Marco Mira D'Ercole.¹⁸ It contains unified data for the beginning of this century for different countries, some of which are selected for table 2. The relative disposable incomes are equivalised, i.e., individual incomes are adjusted for household size. 100 is the average for the population over all ages. The children and partly, but not always, the young aged 18 to 25 are below this average as well as the elderly.

A precise differentiation between life course (age) and generational (cohort) effects would require data over time for corresponding age groups. A first approximation is given by table 3.²⁰ In France, as an example, the age group from 18 to 25 has clearly lost in the decade from 1984 to 1994 and then has made up some of it again. Other countries have gone through a different evolution. In Italy, for instance, this age group has lost in both periods, and this is also the composite pattern for all 17 OECD countries for which such data are available.

Overall, there has been stability in the relative income of children and adolescents (those aged 1 to 17) in the decade from 1985 to 1995 and a slight increase in the half decade from the mid-1990s to 2000. Young adults have lost ground over both periods, which may be the result of the expansion of higher education, in other words, the later transition into the labour force. Children have lower relative equivalent disposable incomes than the active population, whereas for young adults the picture is uneven. In most countries incomes peak in middle adulthood and then decrease again. The elderly fare worse than the active population, and also somewhat worse than children; the U.S., as well as Switzerland, is again an outlier in this respect. The 'old olds' (75+) have especially low incomes, considerably lower than those of the 'young old' (65-74). The incomes of the elderly grew from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s due to the expansion of old-age security; this trend was however reversed after the mid-1990s.²¹

A different assessment of the economic well-being of the age groups and cohorts is given by the poverty rates, measured here as the proportion below 50 percent of the median equivalent income. Overall, the rate at the beginning of this century amounted to 10.4 percent in the OECD 24. In the liberal countries – Australia, the UK and the U.S. – both children and the elderly have much higher poverty rates than the population at working age. This is not the case in most other countries. 17 percent of the population of the U.S. live in relative poverty compared to five percent of the

Swedish population. This clearly shows that welfare states make a difference (cf. table 4 and 5).²²

The welfare state has succeeded in smoothing life time consumption chances, and thus in keeping economic cleavages between generations at bay. The stylised picture presented above shows a massive variation of relative poverty rates among nations, and especially between the two welfare regimes at opposite ends, the 'liberal' (Anglo-Saxon) versus the 'social-democratic' (Scandinavian) regime. Children and the elderly fare worse than the active population in the liberal regime but not in the social-democratic regime. The other two regimes – the 'conservative' regime of continental Western Europe and the 'familistic' regime of the Mediterranean – are situated somewhere in between. As an example of the latter, Italy does not have a 'residual' welfare state but a welfare state which is focused on the male breadwinners. In spite of some recent changes, pension levels for these male breadwinners are still very high. In a longer overall perspective, poverty has remained stable or increased among children. It decreased among the elderly after the 1970s but this trend stopped in the mid-1990s; one can already detect some effects of recent pension 'reforms' – or rather retrenchments.²³ The fairly even distribution of economic resources is now threatened both by the primary distribution of income on the labour market and by its redistribution through the welfare state. Increasing labour market inequalities as well as welfare state retrenchment may deepen economic cleavages. In policy terms, it is necessary to target support for children (and their parents) but there is no reason to strip the elderly of their benefits considering how they fare compared to the total population.

Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.

/ George Bernard Shaw /

Moving towards gerontocracy?

Age differences in party voting are absent in the U.S. and counterintuitive in Germany, if one assumes that older people should support the party most in favour of the welfare state, i.e., the Social Democrats. Through the pension reform of 1957, the CDU succeeded in capturing the agenda of welfare. This has translated into higher vote shares for the CDU/CSU among the elderly than among other parts of the population. Although the Left Party currently profits from protest votes mainly by the elderly, age effects have favoured the CDU/CSU, which in Federal elections has always been above the mean for the 60+.

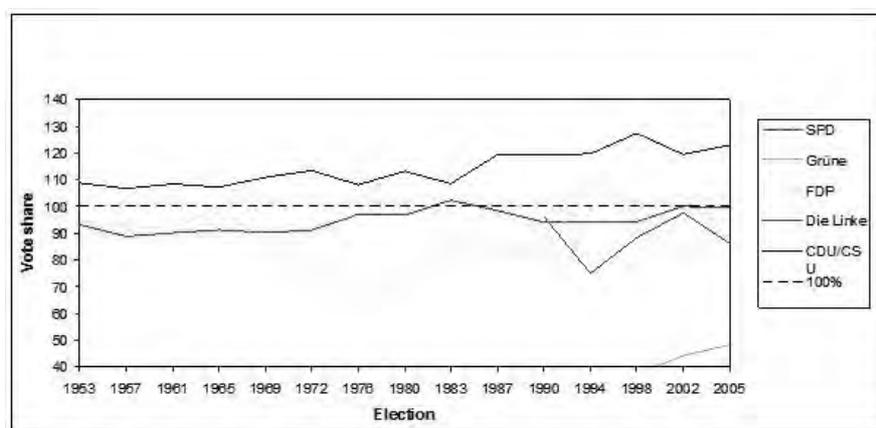


Figure 1: Old-age conservatism? Party vote shares in German federal elections (share among 60+ as a percentage of total vote share)²⁴

The elderly have an increasing weight in public voting not only because of their increasing demographic share, but also because they have a higher participation in elections than the young.²⁵ A similar pattern emerges for party membership. The ageing of party members and party elites is uneven. The Greens are basically a one-generation party which has aged with its generation. Their elites are now between 40 and 50 years old. The PDS has been mostly a party of retirees, but since the formation of the Left Party there has been some infusion of younger members as well. All parties except the Greens are faced with a higher membership among retirees than among the active population.

But party membership does not necessarily translate into power. In the German case – unlike apparently in France²⁶ – there exists a paradox of representation: The elderly have a much lower representation in parliament and government than their population share, and since the 1960s the mean age of the members of the *Bundestag* has even decreased somewhat. Non-traditional participation is also low but to some extent growing, and we may assume that these new forms of old-age activism will gain in importance with the aging of the 68ers.

Some proponents of 'generational equity' argue that the window of opportunity for implementing reforms of the welfare state is closing because the older population increasingly dominates the political arena by its sheer voting weight. They see a point of no return when the power of the elderly will be such that they will be able to block any attempt at reducing their benefits. In a model for Germany, Hans-Jürgen Sinn and Silke Uebelmesser²⁷ took into account both demography and age-specific voting participation, and made a projection of the median age of voters and of the 'indifference age' where one is affected neither positively nor negatively by a pension reform. Above

this threshold people are more likely to profit from improvements in old-age security, below it they are more likely to have a negative payoff with the costs outweighing the benefits. The assumption is that reform will be feasible only if the median voter favours it. The authors conclude that until 2016 a reform can be democratically enforced because a majority of the voters will still be below the indifference age. 2016 is 'Germany's last chance'; after that year it will be a gerontocracy, with no possibility of cutting old-age benefits anymore because the majority will vote for them. Such a model of self-interest is of course highly flawed; it presupposes that people's votes are based only on their current individual interest position and that voting shares fully translate into specific policies – both of which is manifestly not the case.²⁸ There is among the elderly an interest in the following generations, in one's own family but also on a societal level, and thus possibly an even stronger tendency for group-oriented ('socio-tropic') voting than among the general population. A simple rational choice model which assumes that voters maximise their own perceived current interests does not provide a valid account of the act of voting.

Parties and unions as mediating organizations

Why are age conflicts not more pronounced? One reason – at least in the corporatist pattern of Germany – is the mediating function of political organisations such as parties and unions.²⁹ These organisations have created special groups for the elderly, just as for other hitherto neglected categories such as women and the young. They have set up these groups as a form of internalised interest groups that mobilise these categories for the goals of the overarching organisation. Another advantage of such groups is that they offer further possibilities of participation for political cadres beyond the main organisational hierarchies. Those who, e.g., leave the *Bundestag* and have to hand over their mandates to younger colleagues can then take over functions in the *Senioren-Union* or in

similar groups of other parties. The idea is to appropriate the demands of these population categories by giving them a special organisational niche, and thereby hoping that they will neither mobilise outside the party nor find their way into its core business. This is even more the case for unions, where the dilemma is heightened by the fact that unions' avowed purpose is directed to the working population. But unions also depend on their retired members for support and as a signal to their active members, and therefore offer them special groups for organising within the union but detached from its core business.³⁰ The shifting generational agenda is mirrored by the weight of these groups. In the CDU/CSU, for example, the past years have seen a shift from privileging the young to aiming for a balance between the generations. In the build-up for the coming election, the heads of the *Junge Union* and *Senioren-Union* have therefore been called upon to cooperate on an agenda of generational integration. Special groups are successful to the extent that age conflicts remain within the organisational reach of the parties and do not manifest themselves on the open political market. The exception are the grey parties, which have had some electoral success in some countries, especially in the Netherlands. But as with most one-issue parties, they have usually not lasted because either other parties took up their issue or because they self-destructed over their own internal issue divisions. The only successful one-issue party in Germany so far have been the Greens, and they were successful by broadening their agenda.

Family relations

Another reason for the low salience of age conflicts is family relations and inter-family transfers. Families are the prototypical institutions of age integration. An example is given by Uhlenberg's analysis of data from the U.S. General Social Survey that asked adult respondents to identify up to 5 other adults with whom they had discussed important matters over the past six months. The result was very clear: the discussion partners were either age peers or family members. No one under age 30 identified any non-kin over 70 as a discussion partner, and vice-versa. In other words, no members of other generations and ages were mentioned except within the family. The importance of the family for age integration is corroborated by data on residential patterns and support. While household co-residence of adult family generations in Western Europe today has become rare, except for some Mediterranean countries, geographical proximity is high. The same applies to emotional closeness and to social and financial support. The other side of the coin is a surprisingly low prevalence of intergenera-

tional family conflicts. In Germany these issues were first studied through the *German Aging Survey (Alters-Survey)*³¹, and at the European level through the *Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)*³². Elderly parents are net givers in terms of *inter vivos* financial transfers; their net contribution to their descendants in Germany in 1996 amounted to nine percent of the yearly pension sum. Volunteering and family support activities of the elderly made up another 21 percent.³³ Parental altruism in terms of an orientation towards the special needs of their children is strong, even though there may also be expectations of reciprocity.³⁴ Inheritance is another major and substantive concern of the elderly, as even those with modest means usually want to leave something to their children. There is a systematic difference between the generations here: parents have a stake in continuation by transferring their social, material and cultural capital to their children, while children have a stake in becoming autonomous. Both family sociology and evolutionary theory concur on this.³⁵ It is often argued that this is a recent development. In the family of the 19th century, before the full onset of industrialisation – so the ar-

Other things may change us, but we start and end with family.

/ Anthony Brandt /

gument goes – the elderly were supported by their children, and children were seen as an insurance for old age. But this is less evident than it seems at first sight. A revisionist social history of generations now claims that parents have always given more to their children than vice-versa.³⁶

Figure 2 shows the variation among welfare regimes in the amounts of intergenerational support. This balance of giving and receiving combines financial transfers and social support; each hour of social support has been calculated with a wage rate of 7.50€. The overall pic-

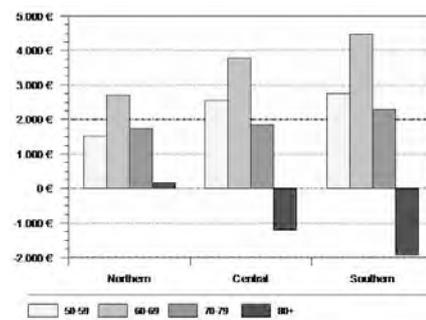


Figure 2: Balance of financial transfers and social support among adult family generations by age group and regime³⁷

Data source: SHARE 2004 release 1, own calculations

ture confirms the evidence presented so far: Up to age 80 people are net givers, whereas after this age they become net recipients, at least in Central and Southern Europe.

Generation and class: cleavages and integration

In Western societies, social stratification in terms of labour incomes and welfare (transfer) incomes is historically increasing. The aging of the population is likely to deepen class inequalities because important dimensions of the life course such as morbidity and mortality, functional capacity, pension income, as well as social participation and embeddedness are socially stratified. Inter-individual variation is to a considerable extent socially stratified variation, and it increases with age: the class divide matters more in old age than at any other time of life. The historically increasing stratification also increases inequalities within age groups. This historical (period) effect interacts with the age effect with regard to the lifetime accumulation of benefits and deficits, vulnerability and resilience. But while class cleavages deepen, class mobilisation seems to fade away. Class mobilisation is still institutionalised in the systems of industrial relations as well as in most party systems. However, industrial relations are nowadays characterised by weakening union power and weakening corporatist arrangements. Stable party attachments as well as traditional left-right cleavages are also weakening.

As generations, current structural trends – demographic discontinuity, economic insecurity and welfare state retrenchment – lead to a high and increasing salience of generational cleavages, which offer a considerable potential for generational mobilisation. Nevertheless, the likelihood of a gerontocracy is low and support for the public generational contract is still broad among all age groups. The age-integrative effects of family solidarity are strong, and political organisations play a key mediating role. However, the increasing salience of class cleavages may change this picture. The salience of class is especially high among the elderly and also among the young, i.e., among the more vulnerable parts of the population. This interaction of class and age or generation may create new lines of mobilisation as new cohorts grow up and enter old age.

Notes:

1. Kohli 1987.
2. Bengtson 1993; Kaufmann 2005.
3. Albertini / Kohli / Vogel 2007: 319.
4. Kohli 2006: 1.
5. Hernes 1987; Mirowsky / Ross 1999; Esping-Andersen / Sarasa 2002.
6. Kohli 2006: 1.
7. Kohli 2006: 13.

8. Kohli 2007.
9. Kohli 2006: 3.
10. Daniels 1988.
11. Esping-Andersen Kühnemund / Motel / Szydlík 2002; Esping-Andersen / Sarasa 2002; Preston 1984b.
12. Kohli 2006: 3.
13. Kohli 2006: 9.
14. Scherger / Kohli 2005.
15. Kohli et al. 2000.
16. Thomson 1989.
17. Kohli 2006: 13.
18. Förster / Mira D'Ercole 2005.
19. Source for Tables 2-5: Förster/Mira d'Ercole 2005.
20. Förster / Mira D'Ercole 2005.
21. Förster / Mira D'Ercole 2005.
22. Förster / Mira D'Ercole 2005.
23. Liebig / Lengfeld / Mau 2004.
24. Kohli / Neckel / Wolf 1999.
25. Binstock 2000.
26. Louis Chauvel's text in this issue.
27. Sinn / Uebelmesser 2002: 155.
28. Kohli 2006: 12.
29. Kohli / Neckel / Wolf 1999.
30. Wolf / Kohli / Künemund 1994.
31. Kohli 1999; Kohli / Künemund 2005.
32. E.g. Albertini / Kohli / Vogel 2007.
33. Kohli 1999.
34. Kohli 2006: 18.
35. Giarrusso / Bengtson / Stallings 1994; Low 1998.
36. E.g. Ehmer 2000 (Austrian Science Fund, FWF), Belgium (through the Belgian Science Policy Office) and Switzerland (through BBW/OFES/UFES) was nationally funded. The SHARE data set is introduced in Börsch-Supan et al. 2005; methodological details are reported in Börsch-Supan / Jürges 2005.
37. from Kohli et al. 2007.

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Long-term Trends in the Transition to the Labour Market in Germany

by Prof. Dr. Steffen Hillmert

Abstract: Successful transitions from school to work are decisive for success later in life. The situation of young people at this stage is therefore an issue not only for scientific research, but also for public discussion. A high level of institutionalised coordination has traditionally been a core element of the German institutional system, not least with regard to education, training and employment,¹ and this has been associated with comparatively smooth transition patterns.² Discussion in recent years has, however, increasingly focused on the problems occurring at these transitions.³ When assessing this situation, it is not only important to know how many people finally make successful transitions, but also how extended and complex transitions are. Against this background, this paper asks whether and to what extent there has been a de-structuring of the transition to the labour market in Germany – and, linked with it, of the transition to adulthood – as it has been proposed by theories of individualisation.⁴ Possible indicators of such a de-structuring would be a de-standardisation of transition patterns, a decreasing social differentiation and a declining significance of school-to-work transitions for other domains of life.

Macro-level conditions of school-to-work transitions in Germany

Our discussion of the (West) German ‘transition system’⁵ follows a model that distinguishes analytically between two kinds of macro-level conditions that shape transition patterns and influence their changes and long-term trends: institutions and market conditions.

Institutional configurations

Transition processes are guided by a whole number of rules, notably those associated with a wide range of state institutions and their regulations.⁶ Together these rules form typical *life-course regimes* shaping individual life courses.

Education and training system: The main characteristics of the German educational system include a stratified tripartite secondary school system, relatively standardised tertiary education and a standardised vocational training system in which combined school and workplace training (*Duales System*) is prominent, but where there are also forms of full-time school-based training (*Berufsfachschulen* and other vo-

ational schools). There appears to have been considerable continuity in the German educational system over the second half of the 20th century. Qualification paths have been clear and well-established, which has allowed for individual planning with a high level of information and a long time horizon.

While there are institutional differences among the various federal states, secondary school education essentially follows selective tracks, although in some states there have been major attempts of introducing comprehensive schools. In higher education, the ‘Bologna process’ – i.e. the idea of harmonising university degrees throughout Europe – has recently led to a shift from the conventional *Diplom/Magister* system to a system of *Bachelor/Master* courses. This shift is beginning to have an impact on career patterns, but it is too recent to affect the cohorts whose transition patterns are analysed in this paper. Vocational training has remained the standard experience of most young people, with an increasing number of

This indicates that the education and training system is embedded in broader institutional settings, which also have a direct influence on the *labour market*. Political economies differ with respect to internal coherence, for example, between the financial sector, firm co-operation, and production strategies.⁷ Germany may draw near to the model of a ‘flexibly coordinated market economy’. This is generally characterised by corporatist decision making and long-term trust relationships. The qualification system and industrial relations also have a strong influence on work organisation. Germany can be regarded as a model for a combination of a widespread skilled occupational labour market, but also (higher level) internal and lower-level labour markets.⁸ Relatively rigid vocational tracks may, on the other hand, be an obstacle in meeting the increasing needs of retraining and, although the German training system is widely observed as an integral part of a ‘high skill’ production regime, it has recently come under increasing pressure to be

When people can fulfill their potential they become innovators. The innovative economy is competitive and makes it possible to finance the welfare state, which is not just a cost, but a sustainable basis for the economy, producing new innovators with social protection.

/ Pekka Himanen /

school leavers with upper secondary education being included. The need for vocational training is commonly acknowledged and initial vocational training forms the basis for further skill acquisition. The German ‘training culture’ has led to a normative standard, giving high preference to vocational training instead of a fast transition to the labour market at any cost. The German employment system organises human capital in the form of vocations (*Berufe*), which allow individuals to perform a broad range of related, complex tasks and incorporate the concept of a long-term career with prospects on the basis of initial vocational training. Vocational training has been regulated by legislation. Both employers and the state have a long tradition of taking responsibility for a high level of transferable skills. Responsibility for training and certification is shared among different institutions; instructors are required to meet the standards, and formal qualifications are, therefore, widely recognised by employers.

more flexible. The employers’ willingness to provide vocational training has obviously decreased. This is due, partly, to competition resulting from an expansion of higher education where academic training only partially follows clear occupational boundaries.

Deregulation and flexibilisation of the labour market have in general been a heavily debated issue in German politics for years. The most important step to deregulate employment contracts came with the Employment Promotion Act (*Beschäftigungsförderungsgesetz*) introduced in 1985, which was followed up by various amendments. It made it easier for employers to use fixed-term contracts, thus allowing the circumvention of dismissal protection.

Besides a broad qualification system and a qualification-based labour market, there are additional features of the German institutional model which are directly relevant for transitions; many of these features can be associated with a specific *welfare regime*. According to the popular typology introduced by Esping-

Andersen (1990, 1999), Germany belongs to the 'conservative' welfare regime type. One implication is a significant gender-specific division of labour. This arrangement is supported by a number of institutional features. Public childcare for children has been rather limited; schools have in most cases offered no supervision in the afternoon; parental leave legislation provides an attractive option of an employment interruption; tax regulations give strong incentives for an unequal distribution of working hours within the household. All these features foster a "male bread-winner model". Thus, not surprisingly, women with young children are likely to be housewives or to work on a part-time basis.

As a result of the institutional arrangements in Germany, the links between qualification and employment can be expected to be relatively close,⁹ providing advantages for the majority of those who hold such formal certificates and carrying risks for the minority of those who do not. Another aspect concerns *cohort relations*. Depending on the institutional situation in a society, structural changes can affect cohorts differently, giving preferences to either intra-cohort mobility or changes across cohorts.¹⁰ Welfare arrangements and labour-market regulations in Germany are likely to have a specific consequence in this regard:¹¹ historical changes will not so much affect the mid-career phase but mainly events in the early life course such as labour market entry and family formation and events in the later life course like retirement. This may lead to observable differences across cohorts particularly with regard to the transitions at labour market entry.¹² Finally, patterns of transitions from school to work are influenced by the fact that Germany has had military service (or alternate service) most of the observation period. For the life courses of young men, this has often led to a further extension of the phase of transition to the labour market.

Market conditions

Important as institutions are, they are not sufficient to fully explain patterns of transitions and their developments. Individual life situations are also a function of available resources, opportunities and constraints which receive their significance from situations of competition. This illuminates the importance of specific market conditions, i.e. factors of supply and demand on the training and labour markets. These conditions change over time, so that single cohorts may be confronted with very specific situations leading to discontinuities in the transition from school to work. Historical trends of the supply side of the German labour market during the last decades can be summarised under the following headings: demogra-

phic changes and cohort fluctuations; educational expansion and qualificational upgrading; and increasing female labour market participation.

After World War II, there has been significant variation in the size of birth cohorts, and as a result of that, in the size of the cohorts that left the educational system. Together with demand side (business-cycle) effects, this may have led to considerable differences in the labour market situation of particular cohorts beyond long-term trends.¹³ The birth cohort 1964 was the largest cohort ever born in the Federal Republic of Germany, so it might have been confronted with a particularly difficult situation at labour market entry.

However, the main trend affecting the supply

The best performers in Europe are those who use their welfare states to help people adjust to change.

/ John Monks /

side of the labour market has been educational expansion since the 1950s, characterised by qualificational upgrading and gender equalisation. It started with higher rates of participation in the intermediate and upper tracks of the general school system, but then it affected higher education as well. What is sometimes overlooked is the massive expansion also in the vocational training system. Another important aspect is gender equalisation. Since the 1980s, girls have overtaken boys with regard to success in the general school system. The close of the traditional gender gap in education has manifested itself also in the steadily growing participation of women in vocational training. Regarding the overall trend, educational expansion was successful: The proportion of people attaining non-vocational training has decreased quite dramatically across cohorts, especially in the case of women. However, the remaining minority of the low-qualified increasingly faces the risk of stigmatisation. Another consequence is growing selectivity of particular (lower-level) educational tracks.¹⁴ A sufficient level of general education is a major precondition for successful transitions to vocational training and employment. This directly raises the issue of social inequalities in education. Such inequalities were already one of the major topics of the public debate on education in the 1960s. Since then, some dimensions of inequality in education have been greatly reduced, including gender, region or religion. It is just over the recent years that the major educational inequalities related to the migration background of students have received attention in both the scientific and the public discourse. Most persistent have been educational inequalities with respect to social

origin. In absolute terms, educational expansion did increase the attainment rates in all social classes, but relative differences have remained significant. While sociological research has for a long time reported the close association between educational attainment and social background, large-scale comparative studies like PISA have recently brought this phenomenon to public attention again. There is evidence that origin-related inequalities in education decreased considerably during the major phase of educational expansion until the 1970s, but then leveled off.¹⁵

The demand side of the labour market has also followed both long-term structural change and short-term fluctuations (business cycles). Structural change in the system of available jobs has been associated with fundamental shifts in the economy, like the downsizing of the agricultural sector and a trend towards services. Compared to other Western countries, these shifts happened relatively late (and the latter to a minor extent), but they were significantly driven by technological developments and rising productivity. The level of formal qualification has become increasingly important for recruitment. Most of the new arising jobs require specific skills as well as high educational attainment, while job losses mainly occur in unskilled segments. After a problematic phase in the immediate postwar period, the German labour market was almost balanced for around 15 years. Since the 1970s, the overall situation on the German labour market has become increasingly difficult. Along with cyclical fluctuations, unemployment has followed a clear upward trend. However, there has been a clear and growing differentiation by level of qualification. Returns to education as measured by indicators like income and job status have on the whole been relatively stable, especially with regard to higher-level qualifications, though there are also specific developments in particular sectors.¹⁶ Not least as a consequence of educational expansion, women have increasingly taken part in the labour market. Given their more unstable employment careers, they may have particularly been subject to the increasing demands of firms for an even more flexible work force.

As a consequence of these varying market con-

The best performance improvement is the transition from the non-working state to the working state.

/ Anon /

ditions, a long-term trend towards prolonged transitions from school to work can be expected. However, our considerations also suggest that members of particular cohorts may have faced specific conditions for transitions even

against the long-term trend. This applies to both large cohorts and cohorts whose members have entered the labour market in times of economic downturns.

Transition patterns

The following analyses take a closer look at the consequences of these long-term aggregate changes for individual transitions from school to work. Central is the question of a possible de-structuring of labour market entry as it is indicated by the life-course aspects of timing, activities and work content as well as social differentiation of transition patterns.¹⁷ Indicators of a de-structuring on the individual level would be that transitions become less universal and specific sequences less typical; events become temporally de-standardised, i.e. less time-specific; the impact of social differentiation diminishes; and there is less significance of the school-to-work transition with regard to other dimensions of the transition to adulthood.

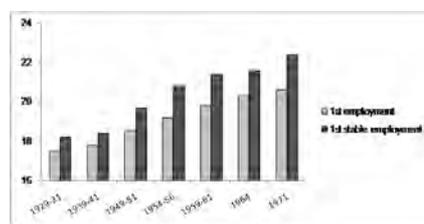
An obvious consequence of educational expansion since the 1950s has been that more people have spent longer times in education and training and, as a consequence, have entered the labour market at a higher age than in older cohorts. One indicator is the rising median age for the attainment of a first vocational or academic degree (if any); median age reached a level of 21 years in the 1971 birth cohort.¹⁸ Again, the change across cohorts has been much more significant in the case of women of whom only a minority had attained vocational qualifications in the older cohorts. Another important aspect which contributes to relatively high ages at labour market entry is the phenomenon of multiple episodes of training: In the younger cohorts, about one third of the cohort members have completed two or more different episodes of training when they reach the mid 30s; in many cases this has meant that they have further upgraded their level of qualification.

Overall educational expansion should, however, not hide the fact that particular groups have found it increasingly difficult to gain access even to basic forms of vocational training. Today the majority of school leavers without school qualifications – but also of those with lower secondary school degrees (*Hauptschüler*) – do in fact not enter a regular form of vocational training in the form of an apprenticeship (*Lehre* in the dual system) or full-time school-based training (e.g., at a *Berufsfachschule*). Rather, they move into training measures which may allow making up for deficits in general qualifications or basic vocational skills, but which do not offer regular vocational qualifications on the apprenticeship level.¹⁹ Such measures may consist of a *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*, special training programs, etc. This

so-called ‘transition system’ or auxiliary system has grown considerably in its volume, nowadays accounting for a significant share of more than one third of yearly entries into the vocational education and training system.

A data source which provides detailed individual-level life-course data and allows making long-term comparisons between cohorts is the *German Life History Study*.²⁰ This project consists of a series of retrospective cohort studies which were conducted at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, since the mid-1980s. A specific way of analysing transition is looking at the timing of specific transition events. The analyses presented in figure 1 distinguish between two different definitions of ‘entry’ into the labour market, the very first job (i.e., the first employment ever) and the first ‘stable’ job (i.e., the first employment with a minimum duration of 24 months). On the basis of these definitions, they compare the median age of labour-market entry across cohorts.

Figure 1: Median age (in years) at entering (stable) employment, by birth cohort



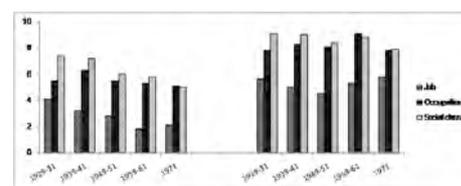
Product-limit estimates. First ‘stable’ employment: first employment with a minimum duration of 24 months. Data: West German Life History Study, own calculations

One can see that from one cohort to another, entry into the labour market has happened at a later age, not least due to longer periods of education and training. However, there is also an increasing difference between the beginning of first jobs and first stable jobs. This means that a growing number of young people have experienced an extended period of ‘settling in’ in the employment system before reaching some degree of stability in their careers. In addition to long-term trends, there have also been rather short term fluctuations in the transition behaviour. At least at the very beginning of employment careers, the life course situation of specific cohorts has often been influenced more by these specific circumstances than by long-term trends.²¹

The analyses now turn to employment subsequent to labour market entry and also draw various dimensions of employment careers together. Figure 2 shows the stability of first employment as indicated by the dimensions: first employer, entry occupation and entry class po-

sition. The median durations are presented for these dimensions, again on the basis of both the very first job and the first stable job. It can be seen that the stability of (very) first jobs has declined at least across the first four cohorts that have been sampled. Most interesting is a comparison of the various configurations formed by the three dimensions. The median durations of entry occupation (and social class) have been much longer than the equivalent entry jobs; at least at labour market entry, occupations (and even more so, social class positions) have been much more stable than jobs. This indicates that, on average, people have stayed in their occupation (and their class position) when leaving their first employer. Strong occupational labour markets do exist and occupation-specific human capital can be transferred between different employers. The basic pattern of the three median durations has been remarkably stable over time, especially regarding the first stable job. In separate analyses for men and women (that are only summarised here), the results become even clearer. It can be seen that, compared to the time in their first job, most German men remained in their initial occupation for a very long time.

Figure 2: Median durations (years) of various characteristics of first job (left), first stable job (right), by birth cohort



Product-limit estimates. Job: Median tenure with first employer; Occupation: Median tenure in entry occupation (two-digit international standard classification); Social class: Median tenure in entry social class (11 categories according to the Erikson/Goldthorpe/Portocarero classification): First ‘stable’ job: 24 months minimum duration. Data: West German Life History Study, own calculations

The phase of entry into the labour market has become more extended and the difference between transitory and stable entry jobs has increased significantly for the younger cohorts. Apart from this period of ‘settling in’, however, the first position at labour market entry has proved to be highly significant for the quality of the further career. This means that basic structures of the labour market entry – salience of formal qualifications and occupational labour markets – have been quite stable over time. Institutional regulation and coordination has remained relatively strong, at least with regard to the labour-market ‘core’ of skilled wor-

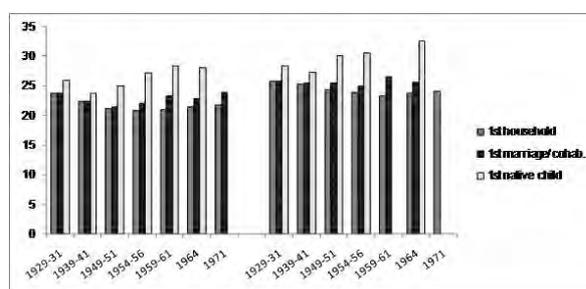
kers. Differences in career patterns and characteristics like income, occupational status and risk of unemployment remain highly correlated with formal qualifications, with higher-level qualifications providing relative advantages and deficits in formal education carrying risks of exclusion.²² Hence, there is a high degree of endogeneity in life courses, meaning that experiences and positions earlier in the life course (starting from early stages of family life and education) are significant predictors for later stages. Furthermore, as a consequence of both the significant social inequality in education and stratified returns to education, social inequality is transferred across generations through the educational system. Moreover, since a number of successive birth cohorts have experienced this stability, the system of qualification which supports long-term investments in occupation-specific human capital has been legitimised and established as a social standard and has allowed for the organisation of collective interests along these lines.

The stability of employment patterns and qualification-related differences should, however, not hide the fact that new demands of flexibility and risks have been shifted to labour-market entrants in general. Most notably, the use of fixed-term contracts has spread especially among young employees under 30 years of age since the mid-1990s.²³ This again supports the assumption that structural change and demands of flexibility are absorbed by entering (and retiring) cohorts to a higher degree than by the whole labour market. In this case, not just the low-qualified have been affected. Rather, fixed-term employment has also become a characteristic of the labour market for graduates from higher education.

The objective long-term effects of fixed-term employment on employment careers may be smaller than expected,²⁴ but in any case, they carry a high amount of insecurity. The flexibilisation pressures on individuals have increased also in other respects. Employees become increasingly forced to act more flexible with regard to space (e.g. commuting distances), time, income and the updating and management of skills. The aspect of insecurity maybe especially important when interpreting other important transition events beyond the area of education and employment.²⁵ Among these life events are leaving home, union formation and marriage, and becoming a parent. In a role-oriented perspective, attaining the relatively stable status of a 'full adult' member of society has two major dimensions. Economic independence is reached by acquiring qualifications and entering gainful employment; emotional and social independence is primarily reached by leaving home and forming own families.

For both men and women, the median age of the event leaving home has shown a long-term decline, at least until the cohorts born around 1960 (cf. figure 3). Leaving home has become an individualised life event which is no longer bound to marriage and family formation. The median age of union formation has remained rather stable across cohorts, but cohabitation has increasingly taken the place of marriage. The most striking changes concern the event of becoming a parent. This has been clearly postponed since the 1960s, and it has become decoupled from both household and union formation. The postponement of fertility can reasonably be interpreted as a consequence of the extended periods of education and training but also increasing discontinuities and insecurities that confronted the younger cohorts on the labour market.²⁶

Figure 3: Median ages (years) of important life events, by birth cohort
Women (left) – Men (right)



Product-limit estimates. In some of the younger cohorts less than 50% (of the women or men of the particular cohort) had experienced the specific event at the time of the interview. Data: West German Life History Study, own calculations

Summary and conclusions

On the basis of long-term, inter-cohort comparisons, our analyses have demonstrated both significant changes and remarkable continuities regarding processes of transition to the labour market in (West) Germany. So let us finally turn back to the general question: is there evidence for a de-structuring of school-to-work transitions and transitions to adulthood in general? There is obviously no simple answer to this question,²⁷ but there are a number of important elements:

(1) Significant changes in the patterns of labour-market entry can be associated with the remarkable expansion of education since the 1950s. This is especially obvious in the case of young women. For both genders, attaining a vocational or an academic degree and entering the labour market have become universal and, together with leaving home, the first events in the sequence of transition to adulthood. The prolongation of educational careers has led to

later entries into the labour market. This means that first transitions to the labour market can no longer be equated with 'youth transitions'; they may also concern young adults at age 30 (and, in some cases, even beyond). Another consequence is increasing selectivity of educational tracks. Together with a general upgrading of educational attainment this has led to unequal starting positions at labour market entry and has constantly degraded the labour market position of the low qualified.

(2) Problems of getting entry into (stable) employment have increased, leading to extended periods of 'settling in'. After a period of rather high mobility at the beginning of their careers, however, most people have experienced relatively stable forms of employment. In many cases, individual mobility may be interpreted as an individual solution against the background of institutional stability. These patterns have remained relatively stable across cohorts. Major differences in career patterns remain highly correlated with formal qualifications,

and deficits in formal education carry risks of exclusion. As a consequence of both social inequality in education and significant returns to education, social inequality is transferred across generations through the educational system to a high degree. These 'traditional inequalities' have

remained strong.

(3) In addition to such long-term trends, there have also been rather short term fluctuations in the conditions that members of particular cohorts faced for their school-to-work transitions. At least in the short run, the situation of specific cohorts has often been influenced more by these specific circumstances than by long-term trends. The same is likely to be true for cohorts that are younger than those in our sample, so their specific situations always need to be evaluated in detail.

(4) In spite of a clear inter-individual differentiation of labour market risks, associated most prominently with formal qualifications, subjective insecurity – deriving most prominently from the labour market – is experienced by a large share of younger cohorts, including the high qualified. Such 'new insecurities' are a likely cause of external effects like the postponement of fertility decisions.

How could at least the most dramatic inequalities and external effects be attenuated? There is certainly no definite solution, but traditional inequalities like social inequalities in the school system remain high on the agenda. However, while the renewed public interests in questions of education may be productive, there are some doubts whether demands for

'more education for everyone' define a reasonable strategy. Under the present institutional circumstances, this would probably entail both new selectivities and extended phases of transitions for many young people. Necessary supplements would therefore be adequate and recognised job opportunities, also for the lower qualified, as well as intensified efforts to enhance the compatibility of work and family life on all qualification levels.

Notes:

1. Hillmert 2002.
2. Shavit / Müller 1998; Müller / Gangl 2003; Scherer 2005; Brzinsky-Fay 2007.
3. Hillmert 2008.
4. Most prominently, Beck 1992.
5. Hillmert 2002; Raffé 2008.
6. Mayer / Müller 1986; Mayer 1997.
7. Hall / Soskice 2001.
8. Carroll / Mayer 1986.
9. Allmendinger 1989; Kerckhoff 2003.
10. Ryder 1965.
11. DiPrete et al. 1999.
12. Buchholz 2008.
13. For a study on such demographic effects see: Easterlin 1980.
14. Solga 2005.
15. Schimpl-Neimanns 2000.
16. Müller 1998; Becker / Hadjar 2006.
17. Hillmert 2002.
18. Hillmert / Jacob 2003.
19. Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006.
20. Brückner / Mayer 1998; Hillmert / Mayer 2004.
21. Hillmert / Mayer 2004.
22. For an overview, see Hillmert / Mayer 2004.
23. Buchholz 2008.
24. McGinnity / Mertens 2004.
25. Modell et al. 1976; Hillmert 2005.
26. Tölke / Diewald 2003; Blossfeld et al. 2005; Brose 2008.
27. Also Hillmert 2005; Mayer / Brückner 2005.

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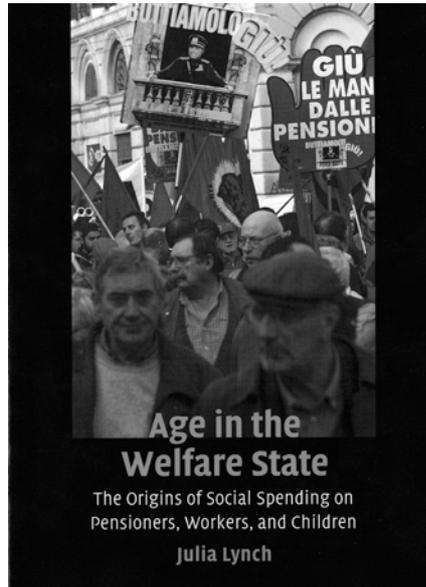
Julia Lynch: Age in the Welfare State

Reviewed by: Jörg Tremmel and Patrick Wegner

In the past decades, age has been the forgotten variable in the research on welfare states and social politics. Instead, scholars focused on class, gender and occupational divisions. Nowadays age has become too important a factor to further exclude it from serious social policy research. The demographic developments in most western welfare states have catapulted the topic to the attention of politicians and the public. In numerical terms, the political balance between different age cohorts has shifted in favour of the elderly in ageing Western democracies. For about 15 years, political scientists have considered the possibility that these states are on the path to gerontocracy (see, for instance, Bengtson 1993; Esping-Andersen/Sarasa 2002; Kotlikoff/Burns 2004). A correlate of this is the hypothesis that population ageing increases old age related expenditure. The debate is whether distributive conflicts over state resources are more and more played out along generational lines. According to political economists, the increasing age of the median voter will drive politicians to shift the spending priorities to meet the interests of the elderly, which is to allocate more money for pensions, survivor's pensions and incapacity. The aspiring concept of generational justice has also done its part in raising the awareness for these age factors by addressing questions of just distribution between generations and age groups.

Together with Disney (2007) and Castles (2008), Lynch's empirical work helps in corroborating generational inequality in the spending patterns of welfare states.

With her book *Age in the Welfare State* Julia Lynch presents one of the most comprehensive comparative analyses of how the distribution of social services differs among age groups in the OECD states, published to date. Based solidly on statistical data and empirical research, the book delivers an absolutely essential foundation for further research on the age factor in modern welfare state politics. Even though the author does not directly address questions of intergenerational justice, the relevance of the book for intergenerational justice research is obvious. A comparative approach surveying the available data is a necessary basis for determining the roots of generational inequality and for developing workable concepts for welfare state reforms.



The first part of the book unfurls the data base for later chapters. The author shows conclusively how present theories and typologies of the welfare state fail to explain why some states spend much more on social services for elderly people than others. Lynch points out rightly that solid empirical data is needed in order to determine if the elderly are really the main beneficiaries of some welfare states at the cost of the working population, and especially of children and career starters. What do the numbers presented by Lynch tell us? The author edits OECD data and manages to provide the reader with clear spending figures for different groups by displaying spending for each age group as a percentage figure of the GDP per capita. By providing numbers for spending on education, unemployment, elderly people, children and health care, the author shows that the gaps are quite extreme in some cases like Austria and Italy which are both strongly elderly oriented. The author combines these attributes and develops a new and innovative indicator for expenditure for the elderly and the non-elderly (p.29/30). She calls it ENSR (elderly/non-elderly spending ratio) and calculates it as follows:

$$\text{ENSR} = \frac{(\text{pensions} + \text{other_services}) \div \text{population_over_64}}{(\text{family_services} + \text{unemployment} + \text{active_labour_market}) \div \text{population_under_65}}$$

The ENSR allows for an informative ranking of OECD states: Japan spends most on services for the elderly with an unbelievable ratio of

42.3, it is followed by the US with 38.5 and Italy with 28.9. Germany is somewhere in the middle with a ratio of 16 and Denmark, 5.75, has the lowest ratio (all averages 1985-2000). But for statements on intergenerational justice, the changes over time are more relevant than the international comparison. Here, Lynch's findings are quite mixed (p.50). In the four decades between 1960 and 2000, eleven states had rising ENSRs while eight experienced even falling ones.

The ENSR measure is refined by analysis of the effects of taxing on the different age groups, thus boosting the reliability of the figures presented. The author also includes housing policies as an indicator for elderly-oriented spending and uses the ratio of elderly/non-elderly house owners as a measure. In this case the concept is somewhat flawed, since it does not consider that young people nowadays have to be more flexible regarding mobility to make use of career chances and thus in some cases prefer renting premises until a certain age or stability in the professional life is reached. The most remarkable feat of the statistical analysis is definitely the ranking of OECD states, contributing a useful overview of the age orientation of these states.

Upon this empirical data Lynch conducts a comparison of the welfare systems of the Netherlands and Italy. She introduces her main thesis, deducted from this comparative case study, that the main difference lies in the implementation of a universal citizenship based versus a fragmented occupational oriented social welfare system. She claims that these different systems of welfare states are connected to different types of political competition modes, oriented towards a programmatic approach or a particularistic approach of clientelism (see p. 12). While a programmatic approach advocates a citizenship based system, clientelism advocates a fragmented occupationalist system and vice versa. The innovative aspect of this approach is that it leaves old welfare state typologies behind to include the

competition modes of political systems and highlights the way politics and social welfare systems influence each other. This perspective

is especially important when we try to assess the reform prospects of different welfare systems and the chances to redistribute social benefits according to requirements of generational justice in the scope of these reforms.

Lynch chooses Italy and the Netherlands as cases for this study for several reasons. First both states chose to adopt an occupationalist system in the early 20th century when social systems were first broadly implemented. After the Second World War the Netherlands adopted a more citizenship based model while Italy conserved its occupationalist model. The author argues that this early split is already due to the different modes of political competition in both countries. While the Netherlands have programmatic political competition, the competition in Italy is particularistic. While the competition modes are one of the main differences, the countries have a number of other similarities. These include both countries being rated as conservative-corporatist models by scholars, their shared male-breadwinner model and similarities in their economies during the post World War II period, which depended

heavily on small firms and farms (p. 68). These similarities allow for a focus on the relevant differences in a comparison of the case studies. The case studies were chosen well, because the comparison of Italy and the Netherlands allows for a concentration on the reasons for different developments in social systems since both countries initially started as occupationalist systems.

Nevertheless it would have been a good idea to include a state that scores low on Lynch's ENSR. Italy is one of the top scorers, with a high elderly bias, while the Netherlands score lies roughly in the middle. Including an example of the other extreme of a very low ENSR could have led to more universal results.

By comparing spending patterns and historical developments in Italy and the Netherlands for family allowances, unemployment benefits and pensions after World War II, Lynch manages to demonstrate her main thesis. She stresses the importance of existing institutional variables for the development of more elderly oriented occupationalist systems and generally more youth oriented universalist systems,

pointing out how the fragmented tax system in Italy made it impossible to establish a universalist system due to financial reasons. On the other hand the universal tax system of the Netherlands, including taxation of self-employed, made paying universal benefits possible. As soon as occupationalist and universal systems were put in place, they were reinforced through the prevalent competition modes of politics in both countries. While clientelism in Italy led to a raise of pensions for voters of the governing party, reinforcing the fragmentation of the welfare system, the combination of programmatic competition and a universalist model made it impossible to favour single groups in the Netherlands. A rise of allowances always benefitted everyone. Italian clientelism was additionally furthered by the financial intransparency of a fragmented system, allowing for a rise of allowances for single groups while hiding the costs (p. 177). During this analysis the author manages to prove that the factors scholars often named as the main reasons for different age orientations of social systems are not nearly as decisive as those older findings

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suggest. By thoughtful comparisons of the case studies Lynch puts into perspective the influence of social power resources, pressure groups and the political orientation of the government. Her findings implicate that clientelistic politics, while not determining the age orientation of a system, are a strong hindrance to welfare state reforms. As a result it has to be expected that the demographic development will make it even more difficult to dismiss clientelism towards elderly people and old employees in the future. Lynch affirms these expectations by pointing out, that power resources of social groups like elderly pressure groups are especially efficient when fending off cuts of current benefits or allowances (p. 169). This becomes relevant since pensions are the highest matter of expense in modern welfare states, and thus some form of pension cuts will be inevitable in the scope of fundamental welfare state reforms for a just distribution across age groups.

The author conducts her research with an impressive attention towards details and takes care to discuss all possible third variables that could distort her findings. This attention to details is at the same time a slight weakness of the book. Due to the nearly obsessive correctness of the analysis undertaken in very small steps the book becomes redundant as the author carefully proves an already known thesis for the third or fourth time. When trying to grasp the essential findings of the book, this style of analysis can result as wearisome and obstructive. Nevertheless these deficits in accessibility and structuring are a small price to pay for the lucid explanations and solid findings the book offers. The most remarkable result of the book at hand is the exposure of the resilience of age orientation of social spending. Early institutional decisions and political competition modes reinforce each other and make the system increasingly resistant to change. These

findings are especially important when discussing the possibility to reform biased welfare states. As Lynch shows, much effort has been put into the reform of the Italian welfare state, especially into the reform of its pensions system, that provides a close to 100 percent compensation of wages for some fortunate groups while not even ensuring a decent living standard for groups receiving the minimum rate. The prevalent explanations, attributing these changes to pressure groups and political orientations, suggest that a reform of the welfare state is just a question of a shift in the power balance of pressure groups or of a change in government ideology. But Lynch's approach of including institutional paths is much better suited to explain the remarkable difficulties some countries have to reform their inefficient social systems. In fact the author goes as far as stating that a profound reform of welfare states is only possible with the help of exogenous shocks that open up possibilities for the political system to breach the mutual reinforcement of institutional structures and competition modes. As examples for such exogenous shocks she names the fall of the Iron Curtain and the creation of the Common European Market and the monetary union. This emphasis of political opportunity structures for decisive reform steps is a known concept in sociology, for example referring to opportunity structures of social movements. It is a pity that the author does not offer a more in-depth analysis of the role these opportunity structures play. It would have been especially interesting to analyse why Italy failed to capitalise in its reform efforts on the recent opportunities in terms of the fall of the Iron Curtain and the creation of the European Monetary Union. Further research on this matter is both necessary and of practical relevance for determining successful reform approaches. To sum up *Age*

in the Welfare State by Julia Lynch is a valuable source for any scholar planning to work on the age orientation of social spending and offers a high-quality example for in-depth comparative studies that comes with helpful statistical data calling for further research.

Julia Lynch (2006): *Age in the Welfare State. The Origins of Social Spending on Pensioners, Workers, and Children*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 223 pages. ISBN: 0-521-61516-X. Price £15.99.

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Martin Kronauer / Gudrun Linne (ed.): Flexicurity. Die Suche nach Sicherheit in der Flexibilität.

Reviewed by Jörg Tremmel and Isabel Wolff.

Translated by Karsten Gödderz. Edited by Hannah Taylor-Kensell

A term that you will not find in a dictionary has created a furore in the last years: 'flexicurity'. This term connects flexibility, which is requested by employers due to the growing pressure of globalisation, to social security. This is necessary as even employees in flexible working conditions such as part time or temporary jobs, or people with discontinuity in their employment bio-

graphy should not slip into insecure or precarious working conditions.

The European Commission in particular propagates this new approach in order to create an advantage of location for Europe over the American and Asian labour market (especially the Chinese). Since the European Social Agenda of 2000, flexicurity has become a major part of the Lisbon Process.

But is 'flexicurity' just a foul compromise to bridge contradictory terms with a neologism?

The authors of this German anthology (edited by Martin Kronauer and Gudrun Linne in the research papers of the Hans-Böckler-Foundation) still see substantial gaps in both the theoretical foundation and the practical implementation of the concept. Thus they start their introduction with a definition of flexibi-

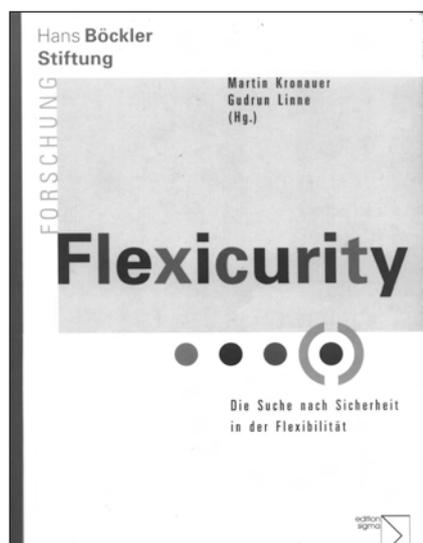
lity and conclude from there that this term has different meanings on the macroscopic, the mesoscopic and the microscopic level. On the level of companies, organisational and control structures, work sharing and working layouts, cost structures and human resource allocation are adjusted to the requirements of globalisation. Politics usually reacts to this with deregulation. For single people, the adjustments become noticeable in the fields of organisation of working time, labour organisation, wages, change in the required mobility and qualification and the security of employment.

Terminologically there has to be a difference made between external flexibility, such as hiring, dismissals or labour leasing according to market conditions, and internal flexibility, which demands flexibility regarding working hours, allocation of tasks etc., from permanent workers.

Next to the analysis of the relation between flexibility and security in the working environment, this book has the goal to identify possible options of action to the protagonists like individuals, companies and the public domain. Flexicurity, an instrument for Labour market policy, shall create a scope of action in which the protagonists can insist on their different interests which do not have to be homogenous inside of these groups. Ideally, this would create a win-win-situation – this is at least a promise of the term flexicurity.

The book itself seeks for an interdisciplinary debate with each of the authors coming from a different discipline: economics (especially social and economic politics), sociology, political sciences and law (especially employment law).

The book is divided into four parts (I: Liberating or menacing flexibility?; II: Change in ways of working and employing: Insecurity and need for security in case of a transition to more flexibility; III: Change of biographies and engagements: Individual claims for job related flexibility and security; IV: Change in law and social politics: precursor or safety net of flexibility?) and includes 17 articles written in German. However, the allocation of the articles to the four parts is not always stringent. The perspective of gender is often considered, but an intergenerational perspective, except for the paper by Ute Klammer, is not explicitly adopted throughout the book. Nonetheless, some contributions maybe implicitly interesting from the intergenerational perspective. Bernhard Bookmann and Tobias Hagen investigate in their article if temporary jobs can serve as a springboard to permanent employment, or whether or not people who are temporarily employed have to be prepared to stay their whole life in an insecure, precarious area of the labour market. The fact that young labour market entrants nowadays are offered tempo-



rary contracts far more often than 30 years ago, makes this question from an intergenerational perspective very interesting. The authors arrive at the conclusion that almost 40 percent of all non-permanent workers get a permanent contract the year after. This is a surprisingly high figure which argues for the springboard thesis (p. 155). But temp workers face a significantly higher risk of unemployment than their colleagues with permanent contracts (10 percent vs. 2.5 percent). The risk of subsequent unemployment is however smaller for young employees, than for the older ones.

In the article of Antje Mertens and Frances McGinnity a question even more important from the life course perspective is investigated: do temporarily employed people earn less in the long run, than people who are permanently employed?

The first difference between these two groups is that people with a limited contract cannot hope for a redundancy payout after two years, but may become unemployed nonetheless (with a correspondent loss of income). But even while employed, temporary employees earn less than permanent employees with similar personal and working characteristics. The authors provide us with an overview about available empirical studies, which feature an astonishing spectrum: from three to 28 percent loss of income. However, the investigated groups, time slots and methods differ greatly. A problem is that the studies do not deduct the actual seniority. But if the wages rise with seniority, a part of the difference in income can be explained in terms of this single fact. Following Mertens and McGinnity the variety in income would melt down to just six percent if you were to use proper methods. Men from Eastern Germany and women from Western Germany earn just four percent less than permanent jobholders; for eastern Germans no negative influence on income levels can be found (p.181).

Finally a time limit does not necessarily have to imply a loss of income – but a higher level of insecurity is implicated. Temporary jobs can most frequently be found in universities and in some service sectors where they are used as an extended probation period with regard to complex tasks. In addition they are commonly found in the low-wage sector for low qualified or seasonal jobs.

The other articles in the book deal with more or less innovative aspects of the range of topics. Marcel Erlinghagen argues in a critical way about the actual predominant discourse on flexibility and asks the question: if the promotion of measures for flexibility is an inevitable consequence of the global labour market, or just a reaction to the constant demands of the entrepreneurs? He pleads for a welfare state which is reliable, well developed and financed on a solid basis.

The author Klaus Dörre investigates insecure employments as a challenge for labour market policy. He creates a typology of gainful employment into the zone of integration, the zone of precarious work, and the zone of decoupling. Furthermore he investigates empirically how the relevant people see their own situation and their expectations about their further working life. His diagnosis is, “[...] that dependent work is about to loose its function as the main ‘binder’ of society”.

Keller and Seifert want to point out strategies in their article, which are supposed to reduce social risks in flexible forms of employment. For this they go into the regulations of law and collective labour agreements. They propose to choose internal flexibility over external flexibility (i.e. time accounting instead of temporary or limited employments).

Finally, thoughts about how to deal with non-typical forms of employment are listed, such as company internal demands, public promotion and corporate forms of organisation. However, at this point more detailed information on these concepts is missing.

The authors Köhler, Struck, Krause, Sohr and Pfeifer gather from different empirical studies which perception of justice employees have when it comes to dismissals. Here it becomes apparent that the requirement of the population towards the employers and the state to provide job security, is very high. Dismissals are only considered as just, if they secure jobs and not if they are to solely benefit the company. Here the article states a problem of acceptance of the demanded flexibility of employees which is not solved by the flexicurity concept.

In the concluding fourth part of the book there is, among other things, a comparison of measures to improve flexibility in different European countries.

Fink and Tálos diagnose huge deficits in social protection for non-typical employment relationships. In conservative welfare states like Germany and Austria, the temporary workers come off badly, as the social protection is still focussed on steady employment. These systems were not made for those groups who are maybe unemployed for longer periods between different limited employments. The article delivers a good insight into labour market policies and the different approaches in the different countries.

With regards to the contents, this anthology offers detailed and complex information about the increase in flexibility of labour markets and

the concluding consequences. If 'flexicurity' is just an empty phrase it will ultimately not provide any answers. Yet this opus makes clear for the reader that the implementation of these promising concepts is still in its infancy. Many requirements at present are not available to create an advantage of location for the European labour market.

The reader is well advised to get an overview of the topic in advance. This will facilitate the reading and understanding of single articles, particularly in light of the use of specific technical language and terminology that can in parts be difficult to understand. Although the promised approaches are merely indicated, the

book still provides a good empirical overview about how our working environment is about to change.

Martin Kronauer / Gudrun Linne (ed.) (2005): Flexicurity. Die Suche nach Sicherheit in der Flexibilität. Forschungsreihe der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, Vol. 65. Berlin: edition sigma. 423 pages. ISBN: 3-89404-996-0. Price 19,90 €.

Call for Papers for Intergenerational Justice Review

W We are looking for articles in English for the upcoming issue 4/2009 of the IGJR with the topic **Children's and young people's rights – with a focus on the right to vote.**

The topic:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the basic human rights that children and young people everywhere have. The four core principles of the Convention as detailed by UNICEF are: non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; as well as respect for the views of the child. This convention is legally binding and fundamental to the lives of children today. As these basic human rights are held as a standard across the world, is there a need for further development of children's and young people's rights? Are children and young people today really treated as individuals who have opinions of their own?

In policy and society it is required and expected that youngsters and children act responsibly and deliberately and form their lives. However, it is refused to them to take over such a responsibility within the scope of a franchise or to participate actively in political developments. In the election program in countries world wide, young people do not have a say and cannot vote due to age restrictions. In fact it can often appear that children and young people are only seen as personalities in their own right, independent from their family, when they commit a crime. Should children's and young people's rights be expanded to in-

clude the right to vote considering that individuals may work at 16 and pay taxes, but are still not, in many countries, able to have a say in how these should be spent?

Deadline for the submission of full articles is 1 August 2009.

.....
We are looking for articles in English for the upcoming issue 1/2010 of the IGJR with the topic **Intergenerational Justice and the Scourge of War.**

The Charter of the United Nations signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945 starts with the words '*We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind [...]*'. The Charter was obviously formulated and signed under the impression of the recently ended Second World War, which was the single event with the sharpest decrease of human welfare in history. The priorities have since shifted during an era of unprecedented peace in the OECD world and on a global scale. But even though as many as 192 states have signed the UN Charter, starting with an expression of determination to rid the world of the scourge of war, conflicts still ravage large parts of the world, particularly in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. According to findings of the AKUF (Working Group on the Causes of Wars) in Hamburg, Germany the number of conflicts has even steadily risen since the end of

the Second World War, while inner state conflicts increasingly dominate the statistics.

The negative consequences of wars for the future of societies are obvious. Apart from the people dying, traumatised soldiers and victims pass down the psychological damages they sustained in war times to the future generations as parents. Additionally new forms of inner state conflicts have a much longer duration in comparison to classic interstate wars and leave the economies, state structures and societies of the states they ravaged in ruins for decades to come. Thus modern inner state conflicts are more likely to affect future generations than classical wars with clearly defined warring parties that usually end with a truce or a peace treaty.

Evidently the problem the 'scourge of war' poses to mankind is far from being solved. In this context it is remarkable that studies on intergenerational justice have so far neglected the topic, especially considering that the UN Charter specifically pointed out 'succeeding generations' as the beneficiaries of its determination to rid the world of wars.

The upcoming issue 1/2010 of the Intergenerational Justice Review addresses this issue, with the aim to establish the groundwork for a comprehensive discussion of peace policies in the scope of intergenerational justice. The issue aims to clarify the relation between the rights of present and future generations for a peaceful life, the role of humanitarian interventions based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter and interventions in general. This includes interventions for conflict management, peacebuild-

ding, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, state and nation building. Weapons of mass destruction pose an exceptional danger to the future of mankind. Therefore the ban and demolition of nuclear arms as well as the elimination of chemical and biological weapon are important elements of the topic.

Deadline for the submission of abstracts is 1 July 2009.

Deadline for the submission of full articles is 1 September 2009.

.....

The editors are seeking articles in English for an upcoming issue in 2010 of the IGJR with the topic **Possibilities and limits of party cooperation in democracies.**

Every democratic system requires the competition of political parties and parliament factions, and to a certain degree it is part of the democratic role play to maintain such competition. Nevertheless, in a democratic system it is important, in order to achieve the majorities for necessary decisions, to aim for as much competition as needed and as much cooperation as possible. Democracy is always a struggle to balance between cooperation and competition. Across the globe there are many different approaches to finding this balance; the British Majority system, the concordance system in Switzerland, the coalition system in Germany and the Presidential democracies of France and the USA. All can be said to have their advantages, but do any of these systems ensure that not only the current needs are addressed in order to please voters and win votes,

but that long term interests are implemented? Do any of these systems practice sustainable politics?

Take for example the complicated decision making in the political system of Germany, a system that requires the consensus of many actors often recompensing blockades. The non-appearance of costly reforms, for example in climate protection, are examples which illustrate that measures often oriented to the future can and are being blocked by single parties. In this case future generations in particular are disadvantaged by the absence of material-oriented collaboration of parties.

Deadline for the submission of abstracts is 1 November 2009.

Deadline for the submission of full articles is 1 December 2009.

Updates of Board Members

Following our introduction of our editorial board members in issue 1/2009 'Historical Injustice' we present to you below an update.

New members:



Dr. Ingolfur Blühdorn

is associate professor (reader) in politics and political sociology at the University of Bath, UK. His research connects aspects of social and political theory, political sociology and environmental sociology. He has published widely on social movements and their organisations, Green Parties, and the transformation of the political in advanced consumer democracies. His most recent book publications include *Economic Efficiency – Democratic Empowerment. Contested Modernization in Britain and Germany* (with Uwe Jun, Rowman&Littlefield, 2007), *The Politics of Unsustainability: Eco-Politics in the Post-Ecologist Era* (with Ian Welsh, Routledge, 2008) and *In Search of Legitimacy: Policy Making in Europe and the Challenge of Societal Complexity* (Burdich, 2009).



Ph.D. Huey-li Li

is professor of educational philosophy at the University of Akron, Akron, Ohio. She was born in Taiwan and studied the Chinese classics at the National Taiwan University. She served as a high school teacher in Kaohsiung, Taiwan before she pursued and earned a doctoral degree in philosophy of education in the U.S. Her current research areas are ethical foundations of environmental education, ecofeminism, ethics in teaching, post-colonial studies in education, and global civic and citizenship education.



Prof. Dr. Eckhard Jesse

studied political science and historical science. He was stipendiary of the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation and, from 1978 to 1983, he was an assistant professor at the University of Trier. In 1982, he wrote his dissertation on the right to vote in Germany. From 1983 to 1989, he was a lecturer at the University of Trier, where he habilitated. After some substitutions, he became a professor at

the TU Chemnitz in 1993, where he holds the chair for political systems and political institutions. Since 2007 he is the chairman of the German Society for Political Science.



Prof. Dr. Hartmut Kreikebaum

is director of the Institute of Business Ethics at the European Business School, International University, Schloss Reichartshausen. He teaches corporate ethics, strategic management, and international management at executive education level. His main research interests include: business ethics, conflict management and multinational companies, strategic management in international corporations and environmental protection strategies. Kreikebaum is reviewer for the German National Scholarship Foundation, Goethe Institute, German Research Foundation, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and the Volkswagen Foundation. In addition he is Ombudsman at the European Business School, International University, Oestrich-Winkel, Germany.



Prof. Dr. Dr. Udo E. Simonis

was born in Hilgbert, near Koblenz. From 1959 to 1963, Simonis studied economic and social sciences at the University of Mainz, Vienna and Fribourg. From 1964 to 1967 he took part in the seminar for economic politics at the University of Kiel as a scientific assistant. In 1967, he was promoted in economics. From 1967 to 1969, he was the personal advisor of the president of Zambia. From 1970 to 1972, he was a research fellow at the University of Tokyo. In 1973, he received a professorship of economics at the T.U. Berlin. From 1981 to 1987, he was the director of the International Institute for Environment and Society at the Research Centre of Berlin (RCB). From 1988

to 2003, he was a scientific professor for environmental policy at the RCB. In 2003 he had an honorary promotion to Dr. rer. nat. at the University Lüneburg. His main research fields are: ecological changes in the structure of economy and society - international (global) environmental policy.



Prof. Janna Thompson

is a reader and associate professor in the Philosophy Department of La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. She is the author of *Justice and World Order, Taking Responsibility for the Past, and Intergenerational Justice*. She has also written articles and chapters on environmental ethics and social philosophy.

Updates:

Prof. Nandita Biswas Mellamphy and Prof. Dr. Julian Nida-Rumelin

due to other commitments have sadly had to leave our editorial board. We would like to thank them for all their work throughout the time they were with us.

Anna Lührmann leaves the board of trustees to follow her husband to Sudan where he will be taking a post as an Ambassador. We wish her the very best of luck and thank her for her guidance and support.

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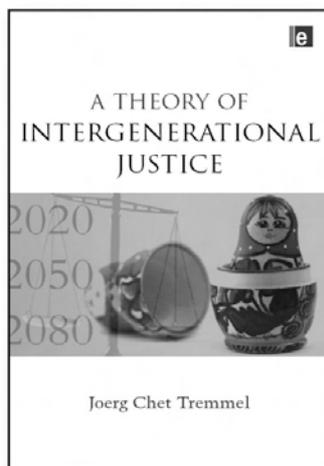
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