Gøsta Esping-Andersen: *The Incomplete Revolution. Adapting to Women's New Roles*

As its title suggests, this book is concerned with women’s changing roles in society (Chapter 1), the implications of the masculinisation of women’s life courses for society at large and especially for patterns of stratification (Chapter 2), and the challenges this development provides for welfare state restructuring (Chapters 3–5 focusing on the design of family policy, early childhood education, and pension reform). The ‘revolution’ is deemed *incomplete* by Gøsta Esping-Andersen, not so much because in contrast to women’s roles those of men have hardly changed. Instead, it is qualified as incomplete because it is mainly women from higher social strata whose roles and aspirations have fundamentally changed, while lower educated women who tend to be married to low income men have remained more traditional in their working and caring behaviour, with the consequence of polarisation dynamics between work-rich (dual career couples) and work-poor households (e.g. single breadwinner families, single parent households, jobless households). Another variant of describing its incompleteness refers to the stalling of the revolution between two ideal-typical equilibria: the traditional arrangement based on ‘gender specialisation’ (in the Beckerian sense, confining women to the roles of home-makers and carers) and the emerging arrangement based on ‘gender equality’ (referring in fact to the ‘Nordic adult worker model’, which is premised on strong involvement of the state and the de-familialisation of care, facilitating continuous lifetime employment of all adults and thus the equal participation of women and men in the labour market). The current situation in many countries is described as an ‘instable equilibrium’ that lies in-between these two poles, one that does not yet allow women to combine motherhood with full-time employment, and in consequence one that results in sub-optimal outcomes such as low fertility rates. Avoiding a pro-natalist stance, the author suggests that the main problem is that many people have fewer children than they desire, although he contends in Chapter 5 that too few babies are also a problem per se for old age dependency ratios.

Over and above the discussions of ‘women’s new roles’ and their ramifications for social inequality, the book embeds the discussion in a broad life-course perspective that goes well beyond what its title suggests. Chapter 4 is chiefly concerned with equal opportunities policy. It first highlights how the growing polarisation between families resulting from increased educational homogamy of married couples hampers the realisation of equal life chances for children from lower social backgrounds. The main argument hinges on the gap in ‘parental investment’ between more and less highly educated parents, which is predicted to grow further (p. 130) unless we succeed in homogenising the learning milieu among families from different social classes. Advocating early intervention programmes (‘what occurs in the pre-school ages is fundamental’ p. 113), Esping-Andersen presents empirical evidence from prior research and his own investigation that suggests that early childcare can compensate for the unequal life chances of lower class kids that are due to the lower social capital of their parents (see p. 136). Early childcare, if it follows the Danish model of high-quality full-day care, is presented as a ‘win-win policy’ (p. 137) as it promotes female employment and earnings as well as better and more equal child outcomes (e.g. educational attainment, cognitive skills).

Chapter 5 then links the discussion of babies (fertility) and social investment (early childcare, efficient investment in the human capital of the future workforce) with
the issue of population ageing. The chapter is illuminating in its emphasis on social inequalities from a life course perspective. It discusses current pension reforms that raise the retirement age in order to reduce old age dependency ratios (counteracting effects of low fertility and greater life expectancy), and points out that such policies will also have the unintended consequence of increased social inequality, due to the fact that higher life expectancy is associated with higher social status (the rich live longer, they have higher pensions that they tend to consume for a greater number of years). A policy that succeeds in securing intergenerational equality (e.g. following the Musgrave rule that divides increasing burdens of pension costs fairly among the active population and the retired), may thus reinforce social inequalities within generations (p. 157). The policy remedy that is suggested by the author includes progressive taxation of citizens according to their life expectancy (p. 158) and the linking of the age of retirement to previous lifetime income (p. 164).

Overall then, the book is an informative and entertaining read. Its major strength is its life-course perspective, which provides the parenthesis that holds the different chapters together and links them in a coherent way. The thread links early childcare policy via the social investment perspective with future old age dependency ratios as well as with equality regarding old age security in the years to come ('pension reform starts with babies'). The issue of women’s roles is linked into this debate from an instrumental perspective. Women’s employment is deemed important as a means to increase parents’ investment into the quality of children. Furthermore, women’s involvement in the labour market and their taxes are needed to finance the welfare state (including the growing pension budget) that plays a very central and active role as a provider of childcare and female employment in the propagated Nordic model. The key to achieving these goals is the public provision of high-quality early childcare, which is shown to foster women’s employment and earnings, and at the same time is argued to tackle inequalities in opportunity for children from different social backgrounds that follows from a polarisation between low and high educated couples in terms of parental investment.

The book has attracted ample attention in the research community and has received numerous reviews, most of which focus on its (non-)treatment of gender issues, however. Prominent feminist writers such as Jane Lewis (review in 2010: International Social Policy, 39 (3)) and Janet Gornick (review in 2010 Contemporary Sociology 39 (6)), comment on the author’s open criticism of feminist work and on his neglect of gender as a central dimension of analysis, warning the reader that s/he should ‘not expect insightful commentary on the position of women, gender divisions, or policies to further gender equality’ (Lewis p. 483). Or as pointed out by Gornick (2010: 699): ‘For a book about women’s roles, women—and gender equality—are remarkably absent.’ From a feminist perspective, the author’s position that the ‘changing role of men’, i.e. a substantial increase in their participation in unpaid domestic work and care that may compensate for the masculinisation of female life courses, is simply an ‘unrealistic scenario’, is naturally a matter of concern. The book provides some evidence showing that in most countries men’s contribution to home production has slightly increased, yet changing relative contributions in the direction of greater equality between the sexes have almost exclusively been driven by the changing behaviour on the part of women (i.e. overall less domestic work is carried out at the household level when the woman works). The book then proceeds on the premise that men’s roles are, in essence, ‘unchangeable’, and thus the decreasing availability of women for home production
and care is (arguably) to be compensated by the state rather than men.

The general message of the book seems to be that the emulation of the ‘Danish model’ should be the goal for all advanced societies. There seems to be no viable alternative to the adoption of the adult worker model: the lifetime involvement in full-time employment for women and men helps to eradicate child poverty, to foster fertility, to increase fathers’ time investment in (the quality of) children, to secure the sustainability of the welfare state, and to decrease the risk of poverty in old age. While there is little doubt regarding these beneficial effects of dual-earner arrangements (and also of the beneficial effect of employment for women’s independence), a weakness of the book is its rather unbalanced discussion of the societal implications of the full adoption of the dual-career model, in particular its complete negation of the potentially negative implications of parental full-time employment, that has led to the highest incidence of time stress and work-family conflict among mothers in the Nordic countries, for instance. This is related to the fact that the degree to which gender equality is already achieved in the Nordic countries is overstated. Nordic women’s roles have not yet changed ‘in revolutionary proportions’ either. They continue to do the bulk of caring work, both paid as (public sector) employees as well as unpaid in the home, leading to very high total working hours—a key predictor of time stress and a negative evaluation of work-life balance—and a continued separation between women’s and men’s work (stratified labour markets).

Moreover, like most feminist writing, the book draws on research only from Western countries. The strong link between women’s employment and their gender attitudes that is assumed by the author (p. 50), for instance, is based on research that has focused on the comparison of the classic three worlds of welfare. This link is much less obvious in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where female employment has traditionally been high, but where attitudes regarding desirable gender roles nevertheless have remained rather traditional. Consideration of the post-communist countries could serve as an interesting point of comparison that would require a more precise definition of the notion of ‘degree of completion of the revolution’ that the author uses to compare the situation in different countries. While in Scandinavia the gender equalisation of labour market participation has to some degree coincided with an equalisation of home production, this is much less the case in the post-communist countries. Their evaluation thus strongly depends on the relative weight put on female employment rates as an indicator of gender equality. Moreover, it is an open question whether the interesting research findings presented in this book regarding, for instance, the growing importance of assortative mating, the spectacular increase in childcare time (only) among more highly educated men, the lower survival rate of marriages among low-income couples, the increasingly positive association between women’s employment and fertility, to name but a few, also hold in a similar fashion for Central and Eastern Europe or other parts of the world.

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There is little doubt that multinational companies are among the most influential, interesting and complex organisations in today’s economy and society, and a privileged
field in which to observe processes of international convergence as well as socio-economic domination. And one place where they are particularly influential is post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, where they constitute the bulk of investment and employment in manufacturing and in core services such as finance, telecommunications and retail.

So it is frustrating that in-depth studies of this institution’s role in Central and Eastern Europe have been very slow to emerge, despite the very early intuition by Michael Burawoy, already before 1989, that East-West workplace comparisons could provide the best insights on the nature of western and eastern societies. There have been some books on local single-case studies of multinationals’ subsidiaries (e.g. Elizabeth Dunn’s ‘Privatizing Poland’) as well as a number of multiple case studies comparisons (e.g. Pollert’s, Tholen’s, Bluhm’s, Contrepois et al.’s, and, if I am allowed, my own). But only now, with this book by Marta Kahancova, have we obtained an in-depth single multinational study, that covers both western and eastern European subsidiaries. Although unfortunately it includes no methodological detail, this is a deserving Central European response to the most important western books on single multinationals (Bélanger et al.’s Being Local Worldwide and Kristensen and Zeitlin’s Local Players in Global Games).

Kahancova’s book, an attentive re-elaboration of a doctoral thesis, portrays an anonymised, but easy to identify, large Dutch electronics firm and four of its plants in Belgium, France, Poland and Hungary. The author’s theoretical aim is to reconcile micro-politics, actor-centred perspectives with institutionalist ones. Such an endeavour (which has been attempted along similar lines by scholars such as Morgan and Ferner) aims to strengthen the sociological critique of neoclassic economists’ view of the multinational as an individual, rational actor simply moved by economic motives.

A multi-level comparison of a really existing multinational undermines such a view as naïve to the point of delusion: Kahancova’s book reveals deeply differing workplaces, in the absence of a clear single rationality. Such differentiation is defined as ‘embedding’: a social process of local adaptation combining institutional constraints with local actors’ social interactions.

What are these differences between the multinational’s workplaces? Wage-setting is (logically) decentralised, even if the company pays everywhere a 10–20% premium above local averages. Employment flexibility is much higher in the Central Eastern than in the Western plants and is achieved through temporary agency work in Hungary, Belgium and France, but through temporary employment contracts in Poland (an obvious effect of local legislations). There are more complex and puzzling differences in work organisation, apparently not following any systematic logic. Employee motivation occurs through pay in the Western plants, but (imaginatively but not irrationally) through a combination of cultural tricks, overtime and cheap social fringe benefits reminiscent of state socialism in the East. Overall, this picture suggests that Electra (as the MNC is renamed), rather than uniformly diffuse a single model (as it could do, given its powerful hierarchy and the permissiveness of local environments, especially in Central Eastern Europe) has chosen to decentralise its employment practices in order to opportunistically utilise different local conditions.

However, the company is not just an opportunistic, profit-maximising unit. It also has ‘corporate values’ and complex network relations with stakeholders. And differences do not simply stem from national institutional settings: there seems to also be deep variation between different subsidiaries (plants) in each country.

Non-economic influences on corporate behaviour, such as trust, social relations,
values, become evident once the author enters the detail of interactions with local actors and with employee representatives. In Hungary, for instance, the company creatively engages with local labour market institutions. In both Poland and Hungary, it promotes a number of cultural and philanthropic activities, something the company has stopped doing in the West for budget reasons. Kahancová concludes that Electra is ‘embedding’ more in Central Eastern Europe than in the West, even if there is no obvious economic rationale for it.

Even more, the limits to the company ‘rationality’ as well as to institutional conditioning emerge in the area of industrial relations. Interestingly, there is no clear East-West divide, in spite of the institutional settings being more union-friendly in the West than in the East. Relations with the unions are cooperative in Belgium and Poland, but adversarial in France and Hungary. It is particularly striking that union involvement in Poland exceeds institutional requirements and local general practice. By applying a game-theoretical analysis of payoffs, Kahancová argues that such disparate outcomes may only derive from different preferences of different actors acting in situations of very limited information. There is no inherent rational superiority of any given industrial relations strategy: managers, and especially unionists, are left to their own beliefs, networks and personal experiences (e.g. a Hungarian unionist having suffered unfair treatment). Observing informal interactions at the micro-level are the only way to understand the social construction, from below, of industrial relations.

The book also asks why not just management, but also transnational union collaboration fails to lead to international convergence. The decentralised company structure, combined to a degree of competition between subsidiaries, but also to the lack of direct comparability between the productions of different plants, is not conducive to strong transnational union collaboration. But in addition to that, Kahancová adds micro-level observation of social interactions in the European Works Council, indicating a lack of trust and profound communication obstacles between the Western and Eastern employee representatives. Again, a game-theoretical analysis is attempted to show the undetermined nature of the cooperation–competition dilemma between Western and Central Eastern European unions. At this point, Kahancová assumes, possibly over-stretching her anti-rationalism, that cooperation is more in the interest of eastern trade unions than in the Western ones, while all rational-choice approaches assume the opposite: it is the well-paid who don’t want to be undercut by the low-paid.

In the conclusion, the author reaffirms her argument that employment practices in multinationals are, above all, actor-driven and socially constructed. But in the last pages she honestly admits the limitations of her work. Apart from the case not being representative, an analytical approach based on social interactions and micro-level observation is more descriptive than explanatory, and is therefore rather complex and not parsimonious. I would put it in other words: if the only way to understand multinationals’ employment practices is to spend three years in fieldwork—as Kahancová has masterly done—in each of them, we should probably give up the task.

This book combines well with Nina Bandelj’s From Communists to Foreign Capitalists: The Social Foundations of Foreign Direct Investment in Postsocialist Europe (2008) in providing a long-awaited economic sociology perspective on foreign capital in post-communist economies, capable to counteract the dominance of orthodox economic thought. Like in Bandelj’s case, it is possible to take Kahancová’s stress on social construction sceptically. For instance, the book makes much of the apparent self-less, non-economic nature of the multination-
al’s involvement with local actors in Central Eastern Europe, and of its collaboration with the Polish trade union. But in the book we also discover that the Polish town has successfully obtained the status of Special Economic Zone, granting investors huge tax advantages; and we also discover that much of Electra’s philanthropic activity is nothing less than donations they can detract from tax; and that its collaboration with Hungarian labour market agencies is to solve labour shortage problems. Why then should activities that cost nothing but produce big saving be economically irrational? Similarly, the good relations with the Polish unions might have something to do with the fact that the union is the weakest of all plants (low membership, and 20% unemployment in the area) and appears to agree with anything the company proposes: this sounds more as self-interested paternalism than enlightened or generous social partnership.

The concept of ‘social interaction’, and even more that of ‘values’, will need more analytical ‘unpacking’ to become operational. This book offers some suggestions on the way to proceed, by defining some typical forms of social interactions. There are two ways this promising theoretical-analytical endeavour can be advanced in the future. One is producing a systematic social interactionist ‘grammar’ of social relations in multinational companies, in a way similar to what ethnomethodologists do, to detect constants and structures. The other way is to look more at power, a concept often mentioned, but rarely considered in depth, by Kahancova: power asymmetries indeed seem to be have major influences on Electra’s decentralised practices, and political economy might help detecting why. In either case, I would pay more attention to specific forms of social relations, for instance gender relations. I could not find any detail in the book about the gender composition of Electra’s workforces and management, but on p. 132 I found this vivid description of social partnership in the Polish plant.

In the 2004 company festivity, the (female) union leader spontaneously danced with the subsidiary’s Dutch general manager with mugs of beer in their hands. Other participants stopped dancing and were clapping their hands. Such practice would be unheard of in Brugge, Dreux or Székesfehérvár.

This detail suggests that gender relations in feminised plants (such as in electronics) may explain some differences from the more frequently studied automotive ones. Yet it also exemplified how much more fine-grained this exemplary description of a multinational is, in comparison with previous studies.

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Barbara Einhorn: Citizenship in an Enlarging Europe. From Dream to Awakening

This book gives an informed account of how gendered difference and inequality has been produced, transformed, and challenged in the past twenty years in the countries belonging to the former ‘state-socialist’ part of Europe, including Russia and its western successor states. Through the loosely defined and applied, yet attentively reflected conceptual lens of citizenship the study discusses developments in the areas of civil society and activism, media-representation, the labour market, social, family and population policy, nationalism, religion, and national as well as transnational governance, including gender mainstreaming and quota policies. While in this paperback edition the original introductory Chapter 1 is kept, there is also a new intro-
duction which expands on some of the themes of the original study, adds a discussion of trafficking and migration, and additional information on Bulgaria and Romania, countries which, while included in the original text, became EU-members only after the publication of the hardcover edition. Among other things the study demonstrates time and again how neoliberalism and, in Barbara Einhorn’s words, the prioritisation of the market over democracy in post-socialist transition have been thoroughly gendered, i.e. how the related changes have built on and produced gendered inequalities and in this way disadvantaged women. One case in point is the labour market (Chapter 7), where hopes that restructuring might create in some sectors at least better or improved opportunities for women compared to men have largely proven illusionary. The chapter on cultural representation explores in a nuanced manner unexpected continuities between various state-socialist representations of women and gender on the one hand and dominant representations emerging after 1989 on the other. Yet it also demonstrates how marketisation and the powerful promotion of consumerist individualism have produced a flood of sexualised, objectifying, and domesticated images of the ‘new women’. Widespread rejection of collectivism and egalitarianism as symbols associated with the state-socialist past have also contributed, so the argument goes, to widespread tolerance for, if not outright approval of, both sexist and traditionalist images of women and gender relations.

The study is built on ‘empirical and qualitative data emanating in the main from within the region itself’ (p. 15). These data to a large extent are taken from a wide array of secondary literature. The book suggests that in order to further gender equitable citizenship in the European Union we on some levels need to prioritise rights-based approaches, re-invent a focus on the fates and fortunes of gender in public governance at both the national and transnational levels, and think critically about gendered ‘traps’ and ‘gaps’ (see also p. 172–175) of civil society activism in Eastern Europe.

Barbara Einhorn’s study is driven by an honest desire to develop research and political perspectives aimed at furthering gender-equitable societies in Eastern Europe and a West-East dialogue that is not based is not based on nor reproduces pre-existing power inequalities or one-sided normative approaches. The book comes closest to accomplishing this task in its nuanced and multi-layered analysis of women’s civil society and feminist activism in Chapter 4. The chapter makes a strong case for recognising women’s activism as well as feminist theory as ‘politically, culturally and historically contingent’ in both West and East (p. 69). The axiomatic, and often normative, claims of Western second-wave feminism are in this way reconsidered as products of specific historical circumstances and it is argued that therefore these claims may no longer be used as lenses through which to look at ‘other’ women and other locals. This in turn enables a sensitive analysis of women’s activism in Eastern Europe which is no longer trapped in what has been called ‘the figure of lack’ or assumed ‘deficiency’. As a result Chapter 4 meets the challenge of going beyond inherited analytical frameworks which leave in place the assumed universality and ‘theorisability’ of the Western experience while relegating findings about social change in non-core world-regions either to the status of the ‘particular’ or, in the words of Dipesh Chakrabarty, to the status of lack, absence, or incompleteness. Yet at the same time the analysis still maintains some stereotypes inherited from the early years of the ‘transition period’, when scholars tried to ‘explain’ the absence of Western-type feminism in state-socialist Eastern Europe. One of these is the idea that due to the un-democratic structure of the public sphere the
private sphere was ‘conceptualized as the sole locus of … independence from state interference’ which in turn ‘excluded any discussion of gender-based inequalities of intra-household conflict’ (p. 66). How widespread were, one may ask, such ‘conceptualisations’ of the private? And how widespread were, in the West, more gender-critical conceptualisations of the private that were triggered by or resulted from rising feminist awareness?

The biggest strength of the approach pursued in Chapter 4 and introduced to an extent in Chapter 1 (pp. 1–4) in relation to discursive constructions is the attention to inequality and unequal relations between Western and Eastern Europe in the past and present. But this attention is lacking from the analytical framework and the narrative in most of the rest of the book. When it comes to large-scale socioeconomic development and transnational governance, Barbara Einhorn’s approach strongly resembles what in international relations would be labelled an idealist perspective. This is true, for example, when she seems to set all her hopes on international human and gender rights politics (as opposed to the questionable powers of the state) (pp. 176, 180 f.). Moreover, nowhere does the study combine its gendered critique of neoliberal globalisation and market-driven politics and developments in Europe with an equally sustained and gendered critique of the ongoing production and reproduction of inequality between Western and Eastern Europe built into these same politics and developments. The study neither engages with the striking degree of intra-European polarisation (and its ongoing reproduction) nor with its gendered and other consequences (let alone driving-forces). This is true, as I will demonstrate below, even on the rare occasions when mention is made of related facts such as the low wages (p. 163 f.) or widespread material deprivation (quoted from Lynne Haney, p. 167), that so characterised the developments in Eastern European countries. Eurostat data –something that could replace such vague and scattered information and illustrate dimensions of intra-European inequality— are easily available on the internet. In Hungary, for example, labour costs add up to an average of seven Euro per hour, while in neighbouring Austria they are quadruple that. Average life expectancy is 69 for men and 78 for women in Hungary, compared to 77 and 83, respectively, across the border. Social expenditure per capita amounts to 3500 Euro per year in Hungary and 8600 in Austria. Barbara Einhorn’s study carefully stays away both from mentioning facts of this type and from putting such data in perspective and building them, as she does in Chapter 4, into an analysis that takes both Eastern and Western European circumstances as a point of reference. This absence is mirrored in how key explanatory terms are used throughout the book. ‘Globalisation’, the ‘neoliberal model’, and the transition to a ‘post-industrial society’ are brandished as though the terms and the socioeconomic processes to which they refer had no geography, i.e. either as if they produce basically the same outcomes everywhere in Europe (and beyond) or as if potential divergent outcomes of ‘globalisation’ or ‘neoliberalism’ were irrelevant for a gendered analysis of the Eastern European transformation and more recently EU enlargement.

The consequences for the ensuing analysis are disastrous. In Chapter 7, the study, for example, manages to talk about the shift toward the ‘post-industrial economies’ in the East and in the West without making any distinction (between them), except for the fact that this shift ‘has … taken place … at a more gradual pace’ in Western Europe. Consequently the argument in this connection is reduced to exploring the gendered dimension of the ‘restructuring’ of labour markets in Eastern Europe, where jobs disappeared in some sectors and new ones
were created in others, so that by 1999 the service sector ‘accounted for the largest share of total employment in all countries of the region except Romania’ (p. 149).

When exploring developments in Eastern Europe the neglect of intra-European inequality is both combined with and enables the straightforward use of concepts that naturalise the underlying, distinctly divergent characteristics of Western European societies. The analysis of the gendered dimensions of social policy is a case in point. The ‘shift from universalist to residual social welfare systems’, which produces pressure especially on women to do even more unpaid care work, probably bears, as Barbara Einhorn argues, some similar traits in East and West (pp. 100 f., 166 f.). Yet, in East European societies, which are (though to varying degrees) characterised by widespread material deprivation and strikingly low levels of social expenditure, welfare universalism has since the 1990s meant that many universal benefits are extremely low and of decreasing value. Consequently, the pressure on women to do unpaid care work, besides wage work, was extremely high well before residual welfare systems gained ground. No attention is paid in the book to these facts, and consequently we are left in the dark about the gendered meaning of the shift towards residualism in Eastern Europe. This lack of attention to material circumstances that crucially, and in gendered ways, inform the fate of welfare and social policy in the region is clearly related to some powerful tacit assumptions contained in Western-centric, though on the surface ‘place-less’, theories of gender and welfare, such as, in this case, the tacit understanding that a system of universal benefits enables survival and is likely to reduce the need for unpaid care and is thus empowering for women. Only if we undo these assumptions, and integrate, for example, as a crucial variable the material (in)adequacy of welfare benefits into theories of gender and welfare will we be able to paint an adequate picture of gendered social policy in both East and West, and this in turn will change our inherited theories about (for example) gendered dimensions and implications of welfare universalism or residualism.

The lack of attention to intra-European material and social inequality has straightforward consequences for the more directly political dimensions of the analysis presented in Einhorn’s book too, for example in the section on gendered migration and trafficking in the newly added introduction. There is a sound argument here against the victimisation of trafficked women through public discourse and policy, highlighting the key role of the lack of formal citizenship and legal status of migrant women in sustaining systems of trafficking and the exploitation of migrant labour. Einhorn sees legal change in this regard as a precondition for ‘empowering women to undertake labour migration in an informed manner’ and ‘assisting them on the route to active and participatory European citizenship’ (p. xxxv f.). How is it possible, I asked myself reading this section, that a vision of intra-European feminist cooperation and of all-European women’s empowerment as presented here completely obliterates the foundational insight that, without economic equality within Europe, or at least economically sustainable lives in the Eastern half of the continent, there will be no empowerment of women from the East to make informed choices about whether or not, and on which terms, they are willing to migrate? Why it is that in Western-dominated academic circles even those who, like Barbara Einhorn, pursue a vision of social and feminist solidarity, largely ignore, at least on the conceptual level, intra-European material inequality and polarisation? Why does research uncovering the intersections of the inequalities of gender, ‘race’, class, and other vectors of inequality, which today is blossoming in the Euro-
European context, largely forget about intra-European material inequality and polarisation as a potential key variable? To me it seems quite possible that much gender research going on in the European context has difficulties tackling the most obvious and pressing political question of intra-European inequality, in which, as European citizens, we are all directly involved on many levels. It is perhaps indeed ‘easier’ to prioritise the category of gender over this one particular intersecting category, even as the intersectionality perspective, with its conceptual openness to include all dimensions of inequality, is ‘mainstreamed’ into gender research with a focus on present-day Europe. Yet Citizenship in an Enlarging Europe convincingly demonstrates, notwithstanding its scholarly achievements, that the inevitable weaknesses of such gender analysis considerably outweigh the questionable pleasures of such avoidance.

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Notes:
1 In the following I use the terms Western and Eastern Europe as a simplifying shorthand for two internally highly differentiated yet, in comparison to each other, in many aspects distinctly different European regions.

Lucia Tunkrova and Pavel Saradin (eds.): The Politics of EU Accession: Turkish Challenges and Central European Experiences

Turkey’s relationship with the European Union has been on a roll for more than forty years, and while Turkey was unanimously accepted as a candidate country in 1999, the membership negotiations only took off in 2005. Since then not much progress has been achieved, and compared to other candidate countries the Turkish experience can be described as sluggish. This highly problematic relationship between Turkey and the EU has raised heated public debates and has become one of the most contentious issues in European politics. The scholarly literature on the subject has boomed in recent years, but most of these studies either weigh the pros and cons of Turkey’s membership from both perspectives or look at the impact of the EU on particular policy areas. Relatively less work has concentrated on the issue of enlargement-led change in Turkey, and under what conditions it can endure.

Lucia Tunkrova and Pavel Saradin examine this question through the lens of social constructivism, which supposes that the candidate countries’ willingness to embrace EU norms and values mainly emanates from the belief in their legitimacy and from viewing them as viable solutions to domestic problems that are nearly impossible to solve without the adoption of these norms and values. The second aim of the volume is to draw parallels between the four new EU member states of East Central European Countries (ECECs)—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia—and Turkey by highlighting the political and social circumstances that were present before the countries joined the EU. Among the many similarities, the domination of the state over society, corrupt politics, imperfect judicial systems, and a lack of independent media are listed. Nevertheless, the volume comes short of meeting both of its central foci, as the choice of theoretical framework, social constructivism, is not fully substantiated, and the attempt to compare the Europeanisation of the ECECs with the Turkish experience is not done thoroughly and systematically.

Kemalist reforms construct the ideological basis of modern Turkey and contemporary politics cannot be evaluated without a reference to Kemalism’s ambition to Westernise Turkish identity. Even
before the onset of the new republic, Eastern cultural elements and ties to Ottoman legacy were abandoned, and a strong effort was put into recreating pre-Islamist Turkish history. In Chapter 2 Kucera illustrates these points by analysing the writings of the prominent literary figures of the early republic. Even though the author provides a historical account of Turkey’s position towards the West and captures it with the term ‘Turkish Occidentalism’, it is not yet clear how the Turkish experience of cultural reinterpretation is any different than what occurred in other countries. Occidentalism and Orientalism need to be defined in unity since one cannot exist without the other, and thus any allegedly non-Western nation has to refer to Europe in its identity formation, albeit to different degrees. Additionally, the chapter overlooks the importance of the strong reactions in the contemporary period, which directly address the Kemalist reforms and detachment from the Ottoman past. Indeed the struggle between the new elite (the liberal-Muslim coalition and green capital) and the civilian-military bureaucracy which is secular and Kemalist reappears in Chapter 4. The author suggests that the securitisation of Turkish politics is maintained by generating fears towards perceived external and internal threats, and until very recently the bureaucratic bloc successfully utilised this strategy to legitimise their decisions with the help of educational institutions and the media. The EU, in Tunkrova’s view, has a strong role in the process of de-securitising domestic issues and political culture in Turkey. This is mainly achieved by altering the domestic opportunity structures and adopting EU norms and values. However, the author does not question the limited power of the EU, especially over the norms and values held by the ‘de-securitisers’, and does not question whether Western ideals are indeed adopted or whether these have been employed for purely instrumental purposes such as re-securitisation. For many, the politics of fear has not diminished with the EU accession process, but has rather shifted its axis from Islam to secularism.

Democratisation and EU integration are among the most widely discussed topics in the Europeanisation literature. Tunkrova, after reviewing the impact of conditionality and the acquis communautaire on democratisation in candidate countries, concludes that consolidation is only possible when political will is accompanied by a belief in liberal democratic values and by strong domestic support. In this sense the EU can act as a catalyst to the process but would be unable to prevent backsliding. Then Tunkrova uses gender equality and corruption as case studies to compare the impact of Europeanisation in the ECECs and Turkey. There are several major problems with this chapter. First, the case studies are not justified and are not linked to the previous discussion about democratisation. No explicit argument is presented as to whether gender equality and corruption have a crucial role to play in democratic consolidation in the mentioned countries, and no discussion of the reasons for excluding other policies is provided. Second, gender regimes and degrees of familialism in the ECECs and Turkey are extremely different, and the underlying domestic factors are hard to compare. Even after EU accession talks and conditionalties peaked, the female labour force participation in Turkey continued to decline, signifying that reconciliation policies have been neglected. By contrast, all the ECECs are improving gender equality, albeit to differing extents and through different policies. Finally, corruption is not defined by the authors, and it is almost exclusively attributed to government actions.

The Cyprus dispute has always been high on the agenda both for the EU and Turkey. Up until 2003, Northern Cyprus with the backing of Turkish National Security Council opted for the two-state solution. However, after the shift in the govern-
ing party in 2003 the single federal state solution was preferred by the Turkish Cypriots. According to Sozen, the EU’s mistake was to grant membership to the Greek Cypriot part, even though they had been uncooperative, and to leave out the Turkish Cypriot side that was ready to accept UN General Secretary Kofi Annan’s plan. This immensely reduced Europe’s leverage, and Cyprus turned into an influential veto player against Turkish accession. The issue is used by the anti-Turkey elites in the EU to stall membership and at the same time it elevates anti-EU sentiments at the domestic level. Sozen then very briefly mentions the ECECs’ stance towards the island and admits that it does not get much attention. Although the chapter is descriptively rich, it does not address how norms and values have evolved with EU accession talks, which is the central premise of the book. Also, Sozen’s detailed account of the negotiations among multiple actors over Cyprus seems to confirm an interest-based explanation. Europe’s intervention into the dispute changed the opportunity structures by strengthening the hands of the Greek Cypriots, but had no profound influence on the way the actors involved view the matter.

The main asset of this book emerges in the final three chapters, which provide a more systematic and complete evaluation of ECECs’s and Turkey’s accession process. Chapter 6 emphasises the importance of public opinion on Europeanisation. Then it describes the variations in Euroscepticism and the possible reasons behind them. Tunkrova mentions economic costs and benefits, domestic political views, and identity politics as the main determinants of attitudes towards membership. Turkish public opinion on EU integration fluctuates, with high support at the beginning, then increasing scepticism, followed by a recovery of support. The ECECs show less oscillation, yet there is a discernible decline in support levels in Hungary and to a certain extent the Czech Republic. Political parties in the two sets of countries also display some similarities, with the more nationalistic and religious parties being more Eurosceptic. Chapters 7 and 8 examine the views on Turkey’s accession to the EU in the ECECs. While Cakir and Gergelova evaluate the elite’s position on Turkish accession and look at the official documents, Saradin focuses also on the more organised and vocal groups. These two chapters are methodologically clear and they meticulously assess the support for Turkish membership or lack thereof. Cakir and Gergelova find out that among all four states, the Czech Republic has the most positive opinion due to the anti-federalist tendencies in the country. Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary have more ambiguous attitudes, but in all cases Christian Democrats are against Turkish membership. Additionally, there are economic arguments challenging further enlargement, as Turkey is expected to receive a big chunk of the structural funds after joining the club. The institutional implications of Turkish accession do not appear to be a substantial concern, though accession could give the country considerable voting power if the EU’s structure were to remain as it is. Nevertheless, Turkish membership is not a salient issue for the ECECs. Chapter 8 enriches the analysis by including the public’s opinion in addition to the views of the governing parties and political elites. It should be noted that Saradin’s findings contradict the preceding chapter, as Hungary and Poland appear to be more accommodating than the Czech Republic and Slovakia. However, the root causes of lack of support are similar; perceived religious, cultural, and democratic differences between Europe and Turkey.

Undeniably, individual contributions carry their own merit and further stimulate the debate on Turkey’s EU membership. However, the book as a whole does not answer some of the vital questions it helps to raise. The existence and the degree
of the adoption of European values and norms are presented, at best, incompletely both in the Turkish and Eastern European cases. I wonder whether the comparison between the ECECs and Turkey is all that revealing, as integration of the former was seen as a return to Europe and despite the socialist legacy these countries were never entirely deprived of their Europeanness. Hopefully, the similarities between these cases and lessons that can be derived from the ECECs’ accession process will be studied more systematically in future work.

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Bent Greve (ed.): Choice: Challenges and Perspectives for the European Welfare States

As Bent Greve writes in his editorial introduction to this book, ‘choice’ has been a buzzword in many welfare states around Europe in recent years. As New Public Management ideals became embedded in the discourse over the ‘modernisation’ of European welfare states, these have become more market-oriented. In many contexts increased user choice has been part of a neoliberal agenda that pushed for the retrenchment of welfare states. However, the call for increased user choice in welfare states did not originate only from the neoliberal side. It also stemmed from groups of citizens that were far from seeking a retrenchment of the welfare state or the transformation of users into consumers. ‘User movements’ of disabled and old-age people, for whom user choice became a synonym for empowerment and increased social rights, also played an important role in the introduction of choice, as mentioned by Rummery’s chapter in this book. Arguments advocating or dismissing choice in welfare states have thus been accompanied by a fierce ideological debate, which may have precluded a serious analysis over the consequences of introducing choice. This book proposes to contribute to the understanding of recent changes with regard to choice in European welfare states, both from a theoretical and empirical perspective. In particular, it looks at the impact that welfare states that incorporate choice elements (dubbed ‘choice welfare states’) have had on equity. It does so by bringing together contributions from several authors that analyse the issue of choice in a number of countries, covering various areas (education, employment, pensions, health and long-term care) and offering different perspectives on the subject (for example, looking at the gender implications of choice).

The first two chapters elaborate on more theoretical considerations regarding choice, while the remaining chapters present more of a case-study approach to the issue of choice, either basing their analysis on a specific country, or on a specific sector. The first theoretical chapter, authored by Bent Greve, discusses the necessary conditions for informed choice to take place without negative effects on equity, which is defined as ‘equality in the ability to exercise choice and gain access to welfare state services’ (p. 6). According to Greve, these conditions amount to: competitive market forces, sufficient and precise information, low transaction costs, precise incentive structure, avoidance of incentives to cream-skimming and trust in providers. By discussing each of these conditions the author depicts in a clear and precise manner the potential (if not necessarily insurmountable) obstacles that stand in the way of achieving equity through user choice. For example, precise information may be costly to produce, but even when available, some users may be better equipped to understand it than others. This can increase inequality in a choice welfare system as rela-
tively worst-off individuals may lack the necessary resources to be able to do an informed choice. Overall the contents of this chapter detail the theoretical fundamentals that one should bear in mind when analysing the impact of choice on equity, thus providing the reader with a very useful toolkit to understand and be able to critically read the remaining chapters.

In the second, more theoretical chapter, Ian Greener and Martin Powell provide a critical review of the writings of Julian Le Grand on the matters of choice and use of quasi-markets in welfare states. According to the authors, Le Grand’s view on the use of markets has changed when comparing his most recent work [e.g. Le Grand 2007] to his essays from the early 1990s [e.g. Le Grand et al. 1992]. There is now a greater support for user choice to be found in Le Grand’s work, as some of the caveats that he previously pointed to the use of quasi-markets (such as asymmetric information, externalities and potential for cream-skimming) are now viewed as less important. At the same time, Le Grand’s views on how citizens use information available to them to make informed choices are now more optimistic. The chapter provides an interesting critique on Le Grand’s work, but one is left wondering what may be the cause(s) of the aforementioned change. Has our knowledge of quasi-markets and their functioning improved over the past decades of experience? Or is Le Grand’s increased support for user choice a sign of a changing paradigm in social policy analysis in favour of the market?

In a choice-based system, users may ultimately have the possibility to ‘vote with their feet’, that is to exit a provider or abandon the system altogether. Two chapters deal with the option to ‘exit’ in the context of choice welfare systems. Deborah Wilson makes the case that in the English educational system pupils act as ‘quality-makers’, as defined by Hirschman [1970]. This means that quality of schools, as measured by their pupils test scores, is dependent on the pupils’ abilities. In the context of the English educational system, where school funding is tied to the number of pupils and parents have some degree of choice over the school their children attend, league tables based on pupils’ performance play an important role in the parents’ decision. Pupils with higher ability are more likely to contribute positively to raise their school’s overall results and therefore the school has the incentive to be highly responsive to the parents (typically middle-class) of these high ability pupils. The issue is that schools are therefore highly responsive to one type of consumer, i.e. to the quality elements that middle-class parents are more likely to value, such as the composition of the pupil population. This could have potential negative consequences in terms of equity, fuelling cream-skimming behaviour by schools (of which only limited empirical evidence is presented) and raises the question of the role played by rankings of providers that do not account for the case-mix of their users, or only do so imperfectly (an issue applicable to quality rankings in schools as well as nursing homes for dependent old-age people).

The possibility to exit in a choice welfare state may also give rise to adverse selection, in which low-risk individuals opt to abandon social insurance schemes, leaving only the high-risk individuals to be covered by those schemes. Thus, Menno Fenger analyses to what extent exit options have been introduced in pension, health insurance, and unemployment insurance schemes and tests the hypothesis that adverse selection has occurred in the cases where opting-out has been introduced. He finds only scarce evidence of adverse selection in the case of health insurance and even there to a limited extent. However, part of his difficulty in testing for adverse selection stems from the fact that opting-out possibilities are a rare feature in European welfare states. This would certainly
merit a more in-depth discussion of the issue of solidarity fostered by social protection systems as a core value or consensus in European societies.

In the analysis on the Italian welfare state, Paolo Graziano identifies choice as an increasingly used argument in the national political debate over the reform of the welfare state. However, the rhetoric of user choice has not really shaped reforms since choice has been mostly a ‘by-product of other goals perceived to be more relevant (modernization, cost-containment, etc.’ (p. 73). Thus, the transfer of responsibilities in health care to regional authorities did come with increased choice for users in some regions, but this was far from being a national standard. Nonetheless, the author is not always successful in establishing or rebuffing the link between the rhetoric of choice present in the political discourse and the actual reforms that took place. For example, it is not altogether clear how the deregulation of the labour market fits into the ‘freedom of choice’ debate, or how it was influenced by it, since the ‘the key argument was ‘modernization’ of the Italian employment protection system’ (p. 66) and apparently employers have now less possibility to choose their preferred option.

In a chapter on choice in the German welfare system, Florian Blank argues that ‘choices citizens face are framed by public institutions that give welfare markets in each field of social policy distinctive features’ (p. 46). The conditions under which choice is exerted by users can exhibit what could be termed as ‘path dependency’. Pre-existing institutions and stakeholders exert considerable influence on how welfare markets function and so do the underlying reasons for the marketisation of certain sectors. According to Blank, health and long-term care services stand as two sectors where a multitude of providers (public and private) were already in place, so that choice in this case was enhanced by increasing competition between existing providers and allowing new entrants. In the case of employment services and pensions (3rd pillar), a market had to be created and nurtured outside pre-existing public monopoly, by providing vouchers or tax benefits. The idea at the heart of this chapter—that pre-existing conditions may shape both the functioning and outcome of social markets—has attracted only limited research thus far, but it could prove important in comparative social policy research.

The introduction of a long-term care insurance benefit in Germany is dealt with by Melanie Eichler and Birgit Pfau-Effinger. German beneficiaries are allowed a great degree of freedom in choosing the care option that best suits their needs. By establishing long-term care insurance the state explicitly recognised long-term care as a social risk for which it should offer protection, sharing a responsibility that until then had been shouldered by the family. The authors, however, point to the influence of the prevailing cultural setting regarding family care (still very much seen and valued as the default option when older people need care) and of notions of ‘good care’ on the choice made by users, and ultimately on the development of the German care market. Thus, contrary to the expectations of policy-makers, users of the long-term care benefit seem to have preferred to use it to compensate their family carers rather than to buy professional care in the market. The market seems to have failed to acknowledge the multidimensional characteristics of care-giving, which incorporates notions such as trust and flexibility. What is missing is how care provided by migrant-carers, which is a prevalent feature of long-term care in Germany [Meyer 2007], fits in this cultural milieu of traditional family-care values and notions of a ‘good quality of care’.

Two chapters are specifically dedicated to the equity implications of choice welfare states on women. Taken together, they
provide an example of how choice can be used to reshape behaviour and gender roles (childcare policies) as much as to crystallise existing roles (cash-for-care policies). In the wake of an emerging literature on cash-for-care benefits in long-term care and gender [e.g. Ungerson and Yeandle 2007], Kirstein Rummery questions to what extent these benefits may be a ‘poisoned chalice’ for women, who traditionally bear the brunt of care. As seen from the example of Germany in this book, the option to pay family carers may entail several benefits and may be the preferred choice by those in need of care. However, as the authors correctly point out, ‘at best an awareness of the gendered dimensions of care work can be said to have informed policy development’ (p. 100), but cash-for-care benefits have not had gender equality as one of their main objectives. On the contrary, the authors argue that these policies have had a clearly gendered outcome, reinforcing the role of women as main caregivers. This arose because budgetary pressures have kept the payments provided by these cash benefits low, which reinforced the option to either internalise care by families (i.e. by women within the family), or employ low-paid carers (where women made a disproportionate share). The issue however is nuanced, for cash-benefits can also have a positive impact on carers by explicitly recognising and valuing their role, freeing them from disempowering obligations and raising their income. Furthermore stressing the limitations of unregulated markets to fulfil welfare goals, it seems that the more state-regulated cash-for-care benefits (such as in France and the Netherlands) may work better to protect the rights of women, disabled, and older people as citizens.

While gender mainstreaming is conspicuously absent from caring policies regarding older people, the same cannot be said of (child) family policies. Steven Saxtonberg elaborates on how promotion of gender equality need not be at odds with increasing parents’ freedom of choice, using the example of family policies (childcare and child-related leaves). The author makes a convincing case that from a theoretical perspective social-democratic policies that aim to promote gender equality by fostering the employment of mothers also provide greater freedom of choice for those mothers that prefer to care for their children full-time (family-oriented mothers). Maternity leaves provided under conservative policies are not generous enough for many family-oriented mothers to permanently stay at home, thus forcing them to work to make ends meet. With limited affordable childcare services and possibilities for fathers to share parental leaves (unlike social-democratic policies), conciliating work and family is thus made difficult under conservative policies, with the end result being that many of these family-oriented mothers will have less children than they would like to. Thus, parental leaves aimed at fathers clearly have a gender-equality purpose, but these policies can also work towards increasing the bargaining power of fathers and therefore increase their freedom of choice. However, if ultimately family policies seek to give parents the choice over the number of children they wish to have, then the gap between the intended and actual number of children, even in social-democratic welfare states [Testa 2006], should be a reason for further research and debate.

Overall, this book makes a valuable contribution to the debate on choice in welfare states and in particular to the implications of choice on equity. It does so by bringing together different approaches to this matter, rather than by taking an in-depth view of just one particular sector or country. Certain overlooked issues regarding choice and market-based mechanisms in social policy are deservingly highlighted, such as for instance the role played by institutions in framing user choice, and
how cultural values may impact the outcome of social markets. The book also elaborates on critical questions such as the use of information (e.g. ranking tables in school performance) or the occurrence of adverse selection. Still, the broadness of sectors and countries covered is also its biggest weakness, as the reader may be left with only a patchy and incomplete picture of how choice is impacting welfare states in Europe. This is compounded by the lack of a conclusion that could bring all the pieces together or help the reader understand the larger picture concerning choice in welfare systems.

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References

Elly Teman: Birthing a Mother: The Surrogate Body and the Pregnant Self

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

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

Birthing a Mother is divided into four sections: Dividing, Connecting, Separating, and Redefining. Each one of these focuses on a part of the surrogacy process and addresses an aspect of embodied practices that the women engage in. Teman argues that they serve to blur the boundaries
between the surrogate and the mother. Furthermore, they enable the surrogate to disengage from the pregnant part of her body, and the mother to experience the pregnancy. They allow them to claim the experience as a part of a personal reproductive narrative and ultimately tell the tale of empowerment and deep satisfaction. Teman’s writing often stands in opposition to the feminist critiques of gestational surrogacy that have on occasions oversimplified the practice as universally oppressive for the women that partake in it.

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

Teman outlines a complex cognitive system that she calls the ‘body map’, which helps the surrogate keep her body under control while it is being occupied by another couple’s child. Distinctions are drawn between available and unavailable body parts; those that are personal and those that are devoid of special attachment. For example, the womb possesses no personal features and is thought of as a temporary home for the highly personalised egg of the mother. On the other side of the spectrum is the surrogate heart, understood as the seat of emotions and love. Consequently, it must be separated from the womb so that no attachments are created. The surrogate is safe from an invasion from the inside, because she is the maker of her internal boundaries. In the author’s own words: ‘The surrogate’s allocation of separate and isolated spaces within the body for her couple to pass through thus enables her to feel that her own self has privacy and remains liberated even while her body is “occupied” by “guests”.’ (p. 74) Body mapping is a defensive act maintained throughout the surrogacy process.

In the second part of the book, ‘Connecting’, Teman describes the formation and properties of the relationship between the surrogate and the intended mother. Teman asserts that the two women work together to maintain the notion of shifting pregnancy between them, while the surrounding community actively participates in designating ‘the real mother’. From this special connection, a close relationship often arises between the women, which Teman compares to romantic infatuation. This relationship is, however, nearly always temporary. After birth, most women quickly disengage. The ‘Separation’, to which Teman dedicates the third part of her book, is promoted by the state that enters the picture as the great regulator immediately after birth. Here Teman makes her biggest contribution to the study of surrogacy. She allows the voices of the surrogates to speak about the moments of birth and separation from the child. Against popular assumptions, most view the final ‘transaction’ as unproblematic. She emphasises that this is a direct consequence of the separating practices during pregnancy. The surrogates, who do not perceive the foetus to be a part of their bodies, see as their biggest loss after birth the disappearance of the emotional bond with the surrogate mother.
This goes against folk assumptions that a surrogate mother will inevitably become attached to the child she gave birth to, so the relationship needs to be broken off as soon as possible. Teman makes an interesting point in saying that the surrogates that experience the abrupt break-off are more likely to manifest resentment and consequently view the experience as negative.

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

In the last section, Teman sets out to accomplish the most difficult part of her mission: to demonstrate why women speak of surrogacy as ‘the most meaningful experience of their lives’ (p. 238). The author writes about the sense of self-worth women gain from passing the stringent tests and evaluations. Furthermore, once a woman makes a connection with a couple and starts IVF, she sometimes behaves as if it were her personal quest to successfully complete the treatment and carry their child. ‘By associating her body’s unpredictable conduct with technological artifice and the intended mother’s nature, the surrogate absolves herself from personal responsibility for that body and deflects any sign of weakness or inability to cope from her personal self. Thus, the surrogate’s act of calling on a “masculine,” militarized script of strength, courage, and determination reflects a clear gender ideology in which courage, power, and authority are exclusively associated with masculinity.’ (p. 261)

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

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

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

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

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

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

There are three main concerns in work-life balance research that remain important throughout: employment issues, gender equality, and the fertility decline. The authors add that ‘better reconciliation between work and family life also needs to be considered in the context of active inclusion policies’ (p. 4) and that ‘work-family balance may be considered as a good predictor of general well-being’ (ibid.). Therefore, their main objective is to explain connections between work-life balance and life...
satisfaction and to look at ways in which to find a better balance between work demands and family responsibilities. Although this topic has been of interest to politicians and scientists for a long time, there are still themes and open questions that have not been sufficiently explored. This publication intends to move further by describing more complex relations and determinants (on micro and macro social levels) of work-life balance and in terms of discovering developmental trends on the basis of international comparisons. However, some parts of the publication contain descriptions of particular phenomena that put less stress on the interrelations between the determinants of the surveyed phenomenon and its manifest features. In these parts more emphasis is laid on suggestions for new policy approaches and measures. Nevertheless, the explicitly formulated suggestions are sometimes either too specific or not very clear or somewhat obscured by the text. For all that, in my view, the commentary on particular phenomena or identified connections (e.g. dependencies, correlations) forms the more interesting and innovative parts of the study.

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

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

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

The second chapter focuses on changes in family life across European countries in terms of three dimensions: household living arrangements over the life course, sharing domestic chores between women and men, especially sharing care responsibilities, and social contacts and support. It describes changes in family behaviour (e.g.
in comparison to EQLS 2003) and differences between generations and by gender. Unlike other such studies, the life-cycle concept is thoroughly applied, allowing more sophisticated explanations of living arrangements and family relationships. Furthermore, the chapter describes the distribution of activities and of time spent on care duties not only between partners, but also within the extended family. Interesting here is the opinion that the change in the division of unpaid housework should happen not only between partners but also between age groups (p. 24).

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

In the third chapter, on work-family arrangements, individual determinants of work-life balance (e.g. work status, job uncertainty, and family responsibilities) in cross-country comparisons are explored. The authors elaborate methodological approaches that have already become the standards for analyses of the reconciliation of work and family demands. Among other things, they seek to find a more consistent interconnection between individual and macro-level factors of work-life balance. For instance, using one of the standardised set of questions that measure the degree of conflict between family and work roles, the authors distinguished two sources of possible tensions: time conflict and strain-based conflict. As in other similar studies, here it was not possible to prove unambiguously that country-specific differences in work-life balance are basically the result of different reconciliation regimes. Individual characteristics are significantly influential and in various ways.

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

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the dependence of life satisfaction on work-life balance, as determined by family status. The basic finding here is that the family remains a very influential source of individual life satisfaction, both in terms of workload by family responsibilities (in a rather negative sense) and of family support (positive aspects). The part of the book devoted to examining the influence of various aspects of work-life balance on life satisfaction provides an overall view of the researched problems. Generally it can be said that being employed and having children contributes to personal satisfaction unless there is excessive conflict between profes-
sional and family obligations. This is not frequently the case, independent of the reconciliation regime. Lone mothers as a very specific group proved to be the least satisfied. While this is neither a new nor a surprising finding, this fact deserves more attention than could be given here.

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

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This book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the great new social challenge in the 20th and 21st century: generational conflict, in particular the (greater) difficulties faced by the current young generation in European labour markets compared to preceding generations. The second part deals with how young people strive to find the right balance between family life and adequate employment. The last part discusses the growing number of elderly in society and the effect of this on other generations, politics, and the economy. In the first chapter, Lefteris Kretzos discusses precarious employment of young people in Europe, which, he says, has increased throughout the 1990s in all European countries. Young people today tend on the whole to work for a low salary, in part-time employment, under atypical contracts or undeclared work arrangements, in bad working conditions, and amidst a very high unemployment rate. That affects the decision of young people to remain longer in
the education system and to delay entering the labour market. Given the rising cost of living, there is a question of who can afford to live on a part-time income performing insecure, unpredictable and risky work. The author emphasises the urgent need to adopt more effective employment policies in order to reduce intergenerational injustice and to promote a decent work agenda for the future generations of workers.

The second chapter mainly provides examples of states that avoid inequities between generations. Louis Chauvel compares four types of countries representing different welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1999): the corporatist regime (France), the liberal regime (US), the universalistic regime (Denmark) and the familialistic regime (Italy). In France, says Chauvel, young adults, women and immigrants experience unemployment primarily owing to the scarcity of decent jobs in the labour market as a result of competition with insiders (a stable workforce with higher seniority and high rate of trade union membership) and to stronger internal competition among the young to obtain scarce positions. High unemployment rates among young people and high earnings gaps between young and senior workers are also the result of economic slowdowns, during which the labour market tends mainly to take care of the middle aged and seniors. Chauvel cites France as an example of the policy 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 new generations. Denmark represents the universalistic regime, defined by a strong sense of collective responsibility and equal protection for all age groups, unlike the familialistic regime, such as that in Italy, which strongly protects seniority rights and leaves the young to be supported by their families [see also Tepe and Vanhuysse 2010]. In France, as in Italy, seniors benefit from a large and relatively generous welfare state, while the younger generations sustain a system in which their own social condition is devalued compared to the older generations. Chauvel concludes that the universalistic welfare regime is sustainable and maintains its own capacity for long-term development.

The third chapter, by Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Melinda Mills, attempts to explain how globalisation impacts the life course of young people in modern societies and increases uncertainty about economic and social developments. The authors focus on employment relations, educational systems, national welfare state regimes, and the family. The first central finding of this research is that, in a globalising world, youth are exposed to increasing uncertainty when they make the transition into employment; this was observed across all 14 countries that were investigated. This is manifested in more precarious and lower quality forms of employment, such as fixed-term contracts, part-time or irregular work hours, or lower occupational standing. Blossfeld and Mills argue that globalisation accentuates or even cultivates inequality by offering better opportunities to the better educated youth and constraining the chances of the less educated. Of course, social inequality among young people is strongly affected by welfare policies such as public support for the less privileged, public sector employment, active labour market policies, and generous safety nets. In countries like Norway and Sweden (social democratic), where there are welfare policies that promote employment opportunities like advanced social services, there are higher levels of female and youth employment. Correspondingly, liberal welfare regimes, conservative, and family oriented regimes do not have policies to support ‘outsider’ groups, increase economic uncertainty, and affect the decision to postpone or even forgo partnerships and parenthood.

The second part of the book discusses the ‘rush hour of life’, defined as the time in one’s life when a person needs to recon-
cile the occupational demands from a new job and familial demands from a newly founded family with young children. Harald Lothaller presents a literature review on the causes of balance or conflict between life domains. The next chapter, by Tomas Sobotka, in turn reviews different aspects of the shift towards later parenthood and of the possible policy actions that may support childbearing decisions at both younger and older reproductive ages. While the medical literature frequently warns about the risks of late childbearing, late parenthood has a number of generally positive effects and consequences, including a stable family environment, less parenting stress, and positive educational and psychological outcomes for adolescent children. Sobotka favours policy recommendations to encourage an earlier timing of parenthood, such as increasing the income of younger workers, making the labour market more flexible, and arranging childcare availability for children below the age of three and for school-aged children.

Chapter eight connects the question of the life course of men and women to the debate about a readjustment of social politics in the light of demographic change. Ute Klammer talks about women with small children in the household who choose to reduce their weekly working hours, in other words, to shift from full-time to part-time work. Klammer offers some recommendations to deal with the ‘rush hour’ of life, when family duties and the general pressures of life are gathering to a peak. This chapter also adds recommendations that refer to the period of the end of professional life and not just the long-term trends of late career entry. The author suggests giving individuals options for distributing money (and time) over their life course with specifically aligned, collectively funded, financial support systems for certain life risks.

Part III, titled ‘On the Path to Geron-tocracy?’ borrows the title of a recent paper by Tepe and Vanhuysse [2009] and deals with the growing number of elderly in society. In chapter nine Martin Kohli deals with generational conflict in the 21st century. Current structural trends—demographic discontinuity, economic insecurity, and welfare state retrenchment—lead to the high and increasing salience of generational cleavages, which offer considerable potential for generational mobilisation. The elderly have become the main clients of welfare state redistribution, mostly through pensions and healthcare [Vanhuysse and Goerres 2011]. Nevertheless, says Kohli, age conflicts have little salience for several reasons. The elderly have increasing weight in public voting not only because they represent a growing share of the population, but also because they have a higher participation rate in elections than the young. Another reason is the function of political organisations such as parties and unions, which created special groups for the elderly, just as for other hitherto neglected categories such as women and the young. They set up these groups as internalised interest groups that mobilise these categories for the goals of the overarching organisation. Moreover, parental altruism, in terms of an orientation towards the special needs of their children, tends to be strong, even though there may also be expectations of reciprocity. Inheritance is another major and substantive concern of the elderly, as even those with modest means usually want to leave something to their children. In the 19th-century family, before the full onset of industrialisation, the elderly were supported by their children, who were seen as insurance for old age. But a revisionist social history of generations now claims that parents have always given more to their children than vice versa. In Chapter 11, Achim Goerres demonstrates the strong demographic weight of older and middle-aged people compared to that of young people within the total population and discusses the lower political participa-
tion levels of the young in Europe in order to explore whether differences in participation matter. With regard to simple participation rates, young people are at a disadvantage in all dimensions of political participation. Compared to the other two age groups, they have the lowest pressure potential on political elites and on political outcomes. However, generational conflicts seem not to be an issue in politics. For Goerres, this lack of conflict may be due to two things: (a) members of birth cohorts have cohorts in their families and (b) intermediary organisations like parties and trade unions have historically mediated varying generational demands.

The last chapter, by Seán Hanley, maps the emergence of pensioners’ parties in contemporary Europe. Hanley deals with all pensioners’ parties that were established in Western and Eastern Europe as well as Israel in the last three decades. He briefly describes how and why pensioners’ parties emerge as new, minor, and fringe parties, and in certain cases succeed at gaining representation in parliament or even entering government as coalition partners (for a longer and more theoretical treatment, see especially Hanley’s chapter in Vanhuysse and Goerres [2011]). Hanley suggests several reasons for the emergence of new pensioners’ parties, including new demands generated by changes in the socio-economic and demographic structure—specifically the need to provide care for the elderly, and the politics of welfare retrenchment and pension reforms. Another reason is the political opportunity structure, which, owing to low thresholds, fragmented and changeable party systems, and long traditions of minor party formation, is favourable to new parties seeking to enter the political competition. Hanley concludes that despite their occasional electoral success, pensioners’ parties operate essentially at the margins of the European party systems and as a result of barriers that block their development into major political actors they will establish themselves as minor parties.

In sum, this book provides a relatively brief insight into the very interesting ongoing transformation of European societies. For more extensive treatment, especially of the political implications of population aging, readers are referred to Vanhuysse and Goerres [2011]. By far the greatest strength of the present book lies in its policy suggestions and recommendations to improve the life of young families. The authors discuss social policies that can help the young and can encourage them to raise children and at the same time to work full time by ensuring a decent life for their family. What is important is this book’s message that in spite of generational conflict, wars between the generations over social benefits and policies are unlikely. It points to the need to develop new social policies that can protect against the general risks that emerge along the life course and against poverty at any stage of life.

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