

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

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

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

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

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 Vanhuyse 2010]. In France, as in Italy, seniors benefit from a large and relatively generous welfare state, while the younger gener-

ations 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 Gerontocracy?' borrows the title of a recent paper

by Tepe and Vanhuyse [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 [Vanhuyse 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 Vanhuyse 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 suc-

cess, 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 Vanhuyse 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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