



Scientific Symposium

**Easing the « rush hour » of life**  
-  
**Diversity of life courses in international  
comparison**

(Final version)

Dates of the symposium:  
Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008 - Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2008  
WannseeForum, Berlin, Germany

Organiser:  
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## **The structure of the symposium**

The symposium is divided in two parts that are in turn examined from international and gender perspectives. The first part is called "Transition to a flexible rush hour of the 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of life – Trends and consequences for the individual and society", the second one "Generation P? The 28-38-year-olds considering an age-specific distribution of income". In short, we will firstly analyse the time budget of the cohorts in question and later on their financial budgets. This approach and the consideration of both aspects allows for comprehensive conclusions.

In consistence with the international and gender perspectives, the experiences of other countries in their attempts to disentangle the « rush-hour » for the individual (both in private and professional life) as well as in relation to the welfare state and society as a whole will be examined carefully in the first part of the symposium. The differing consequences for the sexes will equally be analysed. The second part will focus on the age specific distribution of income, again from international and gender perspectives.

## **Introduction to the topic**

Usually, human beings will experience both a time of youth and a time of old age. This is the reason why it makes more sense to take the whole course of life into perspective than to reduce the field of observation to just one phase (for example the one that begins at the age of 50).

The outlined symposium does not pursue the question "How can we use the life years we gained due to increasing life expectancy?" because there is already a lot of research done (cp. Forschungsgruppe Altern und Lebenslauf, <http://fall-berlin.de/>). Instead it deals with the issue "To what extent should we change the planning of our life right from the start, knowing that our life expectancy is higher than the one of previous cohorts?" This question focuses on the easing of the third decade of life, i.e. the so-called « rush hour » of life between the ages of 28 and 38. During this period, people finish their studies; they take decisive career steps, and have to decide whether or not to start a family. It is this crucial period of time we have to examine to detect the underlying causes for the difference between the desired and the actual number of children in various countries. In Germany, the total fertility rate currently lies at 1.34 children per woman (1.26 in the Eastern part and 1.36 in the Western part of the country), whereas women desire to have 1.74 and men to have 1.57 children (Bib 2005, 36). These numbers already show the importance of a gender-specific analysis of the subject.

The difference between the desired and the actual number of children shows the importance to examine whether a better compatibility of job and family could ease the third life-decade. Besides a better combination of kids and careers during this decade, the possible options for avoiding a double strain by decoupling (postponement of the career, postponement of the starting of a family) will be analysed during the project. But the question of easing the rush hour is not only related to child-bearing and rearing; further possibilities concerning a new allocation of work and free time/hobbies will be taken into consideration as well.

## **Time trickles off...**

Many people feel they don't have the time to combine work, children and leisure. How is this possible if the statistical life expectancy continues to rise by three months per year? First of

all: The average time when women give birth to their first child does not rise similarly to life expectancy but only by one month a year. In the last decades there was an prolonging of the education period in many countries, thus the time slot for having children has decreased: If the decision whether or not to have children has not been answered positively by the end of one's thirties, postponement often gives way to relinquishment.

Some of the recent reforms in Germany have the potential to ease the rush-hour, for example by introducing the possibility to do the final secondary school examinations after twelve years instead of thirteen; another innovation is the introduction of Bachelor and Master Studies. Financial independence can de facto be reached even for academic persons as of the age of 23. However, this applies only if the Bachelor's qualification is being accepted as vocational qualification by employers and the graduates are not being forced to attain a Master's degree as well. Especially the state - but larger corporations from the private industry as well - should act as an example and offer appealing vocational programs for career starters fitted to the new degrees.

The term « sandwich generation » has already been talked about for a longer time now. It refers to the situation of the middle generation who has to take care of both their children and their parents at the same time. The problem of having to quit one's job if one's parents need nursing care has been eased by the introduction of nursing insurance in Germany. In case the child is being born during the « rush hour », the general conditions, such as not enough available day care places, tend to force one parent to stop working for the time being (BMFSFJ: 7. Familienbericht, 2006). In this context we have to note an important imbalance between women and men. Whilst men usually have paid jobs, women do a lot of unpaid work at home and thereby all in all even work one hour more than the men (unpaid work: women about 31 hours, men about 19.5 hours per week; paid work: women twelve hours, men 22.5 hours per week) (Destatis 2003, p. 9).

In Germany, there is a considerable discrepancy between real and desired working time. A comparison of the average real and desired working time shows that full time employed mothers and fathers would like to reduce their working time. Especially full time employed mothers desire a "large" part-time job with 28.3 hours per week. This noticeably differs from their real working time and indicates problems regarding the coordination of career and family.

Contractual, real and desired working time per week according to region, gender and full time/part-time in 2003

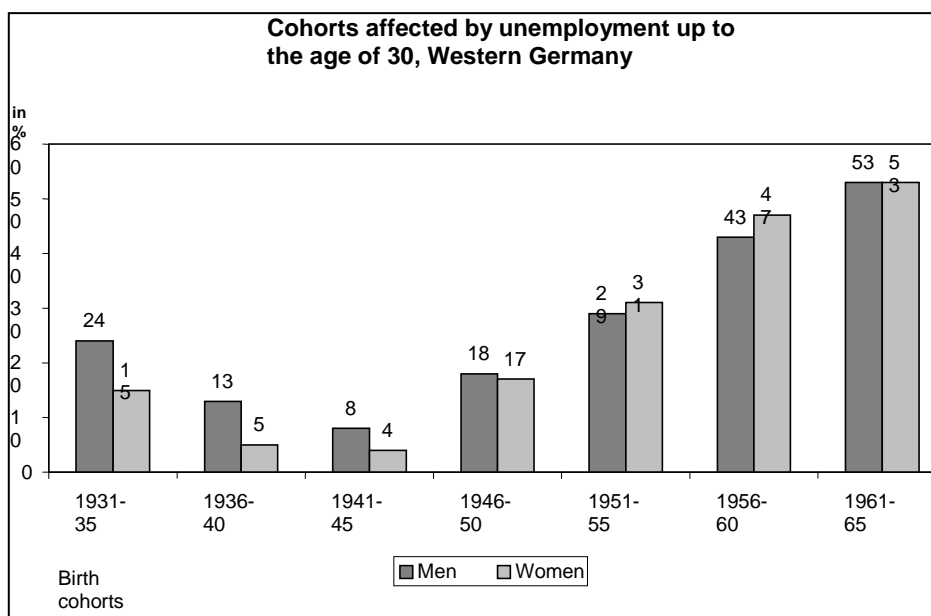
Throughout Germany						
Full time			Part-time			
	Men	Women	In total	Men	Women	In total
Contractual WT	39.1	38.9	39.1	21.3	20.7	20.7
Real WT	42.7	40.9	42.1	22.7	21.9	22.0
Desired WT	39.1	35.8	38.0	26.8	24.1	24.5
Old German Laender						
Full time			Part-time			
	Men	Women	In total	Men	Women	In total
Contractual WT	39.0	38.7	38.9	21.0	20.1	20.2
Real WT	42.4	40.7	41.9	22.5	21.2	21.4
Desired WT	39.0	35.7	37.9	25.6	22.8	23.2
New German Laender						
Full time			Part-time			
	Men	Women	In total	Men	Women	In total
Contractual WT	40.0	39.4	39.8	(23.4)	23.9	23.8
Real WT	44.0	41.3	43.0	(24.3)	25.9	25.8
Desired WT	39.7	36.3	38.3	(35.2)	31.8	32.2

Source: (Rürup/Gruescu 2005).

A relative majority of German men and women, i.e. 37 per cent, favors a role pattern in which one partner works full time and the other works part-time. However, only 26 per cent of men and women are able to put this scheme into practice, whereas the majority of 36 per cent lives the traditional role pattern of a full time employed male breadwinner and a not at all employed wife - although this is role scheme is favored by only 17 per cent of the population.

### The internship generation?

The expression "internship generation" has recently become omnipresent in the media. It is supposed to describe a new class of academics that is simultaneously confronted with growing expectations regarding their educational level and a declining number of permanent employment opportunities (DGB Jugendstudie 2007, p. 6). This concept misses out on non-academic persons, though, who must equally be taken into consideration. Therefore, the French expression « génération précaire », in English "generation precarious" / "generation precariat", or, as an umbrella term, « Generation P », is far more accurate. "Précarisation" refers to types of employment that are either unpaid or lowly paid; the income from these does not suffice to pay the living costs and thus creates the necessity for additional material resources such as side jobs or familial support. This "precariousness" excludes the young generation from lucrative employment and creates a status of permanent material and emotional uncertainty for them. For this reason, the construction of future plans and the decision in favour of children become more difficult. One reason for the increasing précarisation of gainful employment is the downward mobility owing to the transition to a more flexible employment market, because it hits those most who are without assets. French sociologist Louis Chauvel has calculated that the difference in salary between generations has significantly risen during the last thirty years. In 1975, people in their thirties earned about 15 percent less than people in their fifties; today, they earn about 40 percent less (Chauvel, 2002). Freelance jobs are mixed with phases of unemployment; a fate which was much less common for previous generations (cp. chart).



Source:  
Klammer/Tillmann  
2002.



More than the half of men and women regard a secure job as a requirement for (more) children (Höhn/ Ette/ Ruckdeschel (2006)). Still, 40 per cent of an age cohort reach financial independence only after the age of 26 or 28 (Bertram/ Ehlert/ Rösler (2005)). However, an easing of the rush-hour could be achieved most easily if the administration helped young adults to achieve their economic independence instead of leaving them in financial dependence on their family. At this point, the Scandinavian countries can provide role models for Germany. In Finland, young adults receive governmental support, whereas in Germany the parents' financial situation still is the factor that decides on the extent of their support. In this respect, paying child benefit ("Kindergeld") to the parents instead of the children has to be seen as counterproductive.

Moreover, there the inflexible age limits - mostly around age 30 - that are set within our heads and written down in regulations fix the rush-hour as well. For instance, such stern age limits in scholarship programs and programs for career starters seem illogical in our modern knowledge-based society that demands lifelong learning and job-related mobility. The basis for these regulations is, again, an average employment biography which no longer exists.

To what extent could an easing of the life's « rush hour » have an effect on insecure working life biographies? The thesis of an easing of the situation from 2010 onwards due to demographic developments has to be looked into as well. As Easterlin has already stated in his work "Birth and Fortune", smaller birth cohorts have better chances on the employment market, i.e. an improved opportunity to gain wealth and reach self-realisation.

### **The project's aims**

The symposium aims to bring together renowned experts and young researchers from various disciplines dealing with the « rush-hour ». The FRFG's goal is to process basic information in a way that allows for the generation of policy-based conclusions. The language of the symposium is English but the results will be translated in German, too. The results will be published in a policy-based brochure in English and German. 1.000 copies each will freely be sent to researchers and decision-makers in business and politics. An internet version will be available for download on the web site of the FRFG. The brochure is going to give concrete answers to the question of how individuals can - from the very beginning of their lives - plan their life courses differently than previously common due to a longer life expectancy and which political, corporate and social means would support the easing of the rush hour of life. Included in the brochure will be a questionnaire. It is supposed to find out which legislative and other means members of parliament and other decision makers regard as worth supporting or would initiate themselves. The FRFG will make a list of possible measures and thereby raise awareness for the topic.

Parallely, the scientific fortification is going to be promoted through the production of an anthology in German. The FRFG does not only see a deficit in implementation with regard to the answers to the question of how the rush hour of life can be eased but also a deficit in research. At first, the speakers from the symposium are asked to put their presentations down on paper in order to include them into the anthology. The FRFG has already realised similar projects with the Springer Verlag, the Deutscher Universitätsverlag and the oekom Verlag, and will certainly find a renowned publishing house for this book project, too. As soon as the publisher contract will have been concluded other renowned scientists doing research in this area will be asked for contributions, too, in order for us to be able to choose the best articles from a larger pool. These include e.g. Prof François Höpflinger (University of Zurich), Prof Jutta Allmendinger (WZB), Prof Lothar Krappmann (Max Planck Institute for

Human Development), Prof Richard A. Easterlin (University of South California), Prof Wolfgang Lutz (Vienna Institute of Demography), Prof Dieter Ferring (University of Luxemburg), Prof Peter Smith (Goldsmiths University, London) and Dr Simon Chapple (OECD). In spite of the manifold tasks of attending to the speakers, translating and formatting, we plan to publish the anthology in May 2009 at the latest.

### Venue

The symposium is held at the WannseeForum in the Hohenzollernstraße 14 in 14109 Berlin. This convention centre offers both the spatial and the technical requirements. For further information cf. [http://www.wannseeForum.de/index\\_home.php](http://www.wannseeForum.de/index_home.php)

### Organiser

The Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations (FRFG) is a non-profit research foundation working at the interface of science, policy and economy, which has come into existence in 1997. Its aim is research in the fields of intergenerational justice and sustainability. This is being achieved by organising scientific conventions and publishing scientific works. The latter includes the "Intergenerational Justice Review" (press run: 3 000 / quarterly) as well as the "Handbook of Intergenerational Justice". On average, the FRFG's staff consists of three regular employees and freelancers. The idz is an institute affiliated to the FRFG. It is being managed as an independent unit but does not count as a legal person. It engages in the research of demographic topics such as the aging and diminution of the population, the development of the birth rate, internal migration and migration policy.

### Partners

The symposium is funded by:



**HANIEL STIFTUNG**

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**





## Schedule

Friday, 4 July 2008	Title	Speaker
	Individual arrival of the participants	
12.30	Lunch (optional)	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> part: Transition to a flexible rush hour of the 3<sup>rd</sup> decade of life – Trends and consequences for the individual and society</b>		
14.00-14.30	Welcome and introduction	Dr Jörg Tremmel (idz/FRFG)
14.30-15.45	Motherhood at higher reproductive ages: An overdue revolution? Afterwards discussion	Dr Tomáš Sobotka (Vienna Institute of Demography, Austria)
15.45-16.00	Coffee break	
16.00-17.15	When family and job collide. The division of family work within dual-earner couples with young children. Afterwards discussion	Harald Lothaller (Uni- versity of Graz, Austria)
18.00	Dinner	
<b>19.00-22.00</b>	<b>Award Ceremony: 4<sup>th</sup> Intergenerational Justice Prize "Unequal treatment of the old and the young in the workplace" (in German)</b>	
19.00-19.30	Presentation of prize	Tobias Kemnitzer (FRFG)
19.30-20.00	Laudation	Prof Dr Ute Klammer (University of Duis- burg-Essen)
20.00-20.40	Presentation of Felipe Temming's work (first prize), speech Unequal treatment of young and old in the world of employment from a legal point of view	Laureate Dr Felipe Temming (IDEAS, Uni- versity of Cologne)
20.40-21.00	Presentation of Andrea Heubach's, Sven Osterberg's, Andreas Kolbe's and Dennis Räther's work (Honorary prize)	Laureates Heubach, Osterberg, Kolbe, Räther (Nautilus Poli- tikberatung)
21.00-21.20	Presentation of Tabea Schlimbach's and Novella Benedetti's work (Honorary prize)	Laureate Tabea Schlimbach (German Youth Institute)
21.20-21.40	Presentation of Benjamin Weil's work (Honorary prize)	Laureate Benjamin Weil (University of Mainz)
21.40-22.00	Award ceremony including handover of cheques and photos	



Afterwards	Champagne reception, end of the award ceremony	
<b>Saturday, 5 July 2008</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
08.00	Breakfast	
09.00-10.30	The Norwegian way of compatibility of work and parenthood. Afterwards discussion	Prof Ann Nilsen (University of Bergen, Norway)
10.30-11.00	Coffee break with cookies and fresh fruit	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> part: "Generation P? The 28-38-year-olds considering an age-specific distribution of income"</b>		
11.00-12.30	How does globalisation affect the life courses of men and women in modern societies? Afterwards discussion	Prof Dr Hans-Peter Blossfeld (University of Bamberg)
12.30-14.00	Collective lunch	
14.00-15.30	Pauperisation of the young generation in France. Comparison of the relative income ratio between cohorts. Afterwards discussion	Prof Dr Louis Chauvel (Sciences-Po Paris, France)
15.30-16.00	Coffee break	
16.00-17.00	Intervention: Whose ideas count? Generational and organisational challenges of junior staff working in 'Aidland'. Afterwards discussion	Tobias Denskus (University of Sussex, United Kingdom)
17.00-18.00	Intervention: The self-concept of the young generation. Afterwards discussion	Martin Gloger (Kassel University)
18.00	Dinner	
<b>Sunday, 6 July 2008</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
8.00	Breakfast	
9.30-10.30	Age groups and generations – Lines of conflict and potentials for integration. Afterwards discussion	Prof Dr Martin Kohli (European University Institute)
10.30-10.45	Coffee break with cookies and fresh fruit	
10.45-12.00	Flexicurity from the point of view of life courses. Afterwards discussion	Prof Dr Ute Klammer (University of Duisburg-Essen)
12.00-12.30	Résumé and closing remarks	Dr Jörg Tremmel
12.30-14.00	Lunch	
Afterwards	Departure of participants	

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