



Joint Seminar

Work-life Balance, De/familisation and Adult Worker Models: Challenges faced by older workers

Date and time: Tuesday, 3 July 2018, 12:30 – 14:30

Venue: CEPS, 1 Place du Congrès, 1000 Brussels

With a rapidly ageing population and extended life expectancy, many older workers across Europe are expected to have a longer working life and take on more caring responsibilities at home. They are likely to be the main carers of relatives at more senior ages, and to provide care for their spouse and/or adult children with special needs and grandchildren. Conventional policies on work-family reconciliation do not pay sufficient attention to the challenges faced by older workers, especially women who are still socially expected to bear the primary caring role.

This seminar aims to raise awareness of issues faced by older workers and to explore how policies could effectively respond to the challenges of their continuous inclusion in the labour market. It contains two presentations. The first focuses on the current development of policy and proposals on improving work-life balance for older workers. While employment rates of older workers are rising, a strong gender gap persists, part of which stems from the provision of informal care to relatives provided by older women. To tackle this issue, better reconciliation of work and family life via legislative measures is just as important as the provision of quality and affordable long-term care services.

The second presentation discusses the concepts of defamilisation, familisation and adult worker models, with a particular focus on the insights provided by these concepts into the analysis of the challenges faced by older women workers and lessons for policy makers. This presentation is based on the findings of an EU-funded research project on work-family reconciliation policies in Europe and East Asia. Participants are encouraged to contribute to the discussion both during and after the presentations. Anyone with a research and/or policy interest in older workers, carers, gender issues, work-life balance, work-family reconciliation and related areas would find this seminar particularly relevant.

Agenda

Chair: Mikkel Barslund, Research Fellow and Head of Ageing Societies Programme, CEPS

12:30 – 13:00 Registration and sandwiches

13:00 – 13:45 Presentations

Work-life balance and older women – How not to overlook them?, Philippe Seidel, Policy and EP Liaison Officer, AGE Platform Europe

Defamilisation, adult worker models and labour participation of older female workers, Ruby Chau, Visiting Scholar, CEPS; Marie Curie Research Fellow, University of Sheffield

13:45 – 14:30 Open forum discussion



About the Speakers

Philippe Seidel works for AGE Platform Europe, Europe's largest network of organisations of and for older people. He is responsible for AGE's policy activities in the fields of employment of older workers and social protection, as well as gender equality. He also coordinates AGE's relations with the European Parliament (EP) and the EP Intergroup subgroup on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. Before joining AGE, he worked on children's rights for UNICEF and the Belgian NGO Child Focus. His academic background is political science and human rights.

Dr Ruby Chau is a visiting scholar at CEPS. She is currently funded by the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions under the EU Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme to conduct a study on 'Social Investment Perspective of Work-family Reconciliation Measures in Europe and East Asia' (SIPEA, Grant no. 708305). The study explores how and to what extent five areas of work-family reconciliation measures (namely childcare, flexible working hours, maternity protection, parental leaves and women's retirement protection) affect women's inclusion in the family and the labour market. Data are collected on five European (France, Germany, Hungary, Sweden and the UK) and two Asian welfare systems (Hong Kong and South Korea). The findings have been published in several journal papers including (with W K Yu, L Foster and M Lau, 2017), "Defamilisation Measures and Women's Labour Force Participation – a Comparative Study of Twelve Countries", *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, (doi:10.1080/21699763.2017.1288157); and (with W K Yu and L Foster, 2017), "The Effects of Defamilisation and Familisation Measures on the Accumulation of Retirement Income for Women in the UK", *Journal of Women and Aging* (doi:10.1080/08952841.2016.1256737). Email: ruby.chau@ceps.eu; c.chau@sheffield.ac.uk