

versification of jurisprudence and its programmatic politicisation by the Critical Legal Studies movement. Some themes of the CLS and critical jurisprudence subsequently spill over to the next chapter, which focuses on selected problems of law and culture and cultural diversity. While Deflem's assessment of the theoretical themes of postmodernism and deconstruction in law is disappointingly superficial, sections addressing issues of class, gender, and ethnic legal inequalities are more informed and persuasive. Deflem also highlights the paradoxes of the integrative function of law in contemporary societies when he states: 'Under conditions of increasing diversity, the primary function of law becomes both more necessary as well as more difficult to accomplish. ... In the light of the complex interplay between culture and law, the limits of law's integrative capacities are revealed, and, ironically, law is shown to accelerate cultural debate and conflict over important moral questions. Thus, as much as it was true in the days of Durkheim, modern law remains a crucial indicator of a society's capacity to maintain social integration and preserve the peaceful co-existence of a plurality of lifeworlds.' (p. 224).

Following this fundamental and, indeed, disputable claim, the final part, 'Special Problems of Law', focuses on problems of the enforcement of law (Chapter 11) and the globalisation of law (Chapter 12) and the whole book closes with a very brief summary on the 'Visions of the Sociology of Law'. Deflem's 'visions of a scholarly tradition' contribute a great deal to the historical and systemic organisation of the different schools and theories of the sociology of law in Europe and the United States. These visions are less convincing in terms of the author's choice of theoretical tools and conclusions. However, Deflem's continuing engagement in Parsons's structural functionalism, which is not typical of the sociological theory of law today, is generally interesting because it revives some

perspectives and themes recently neglected by both theorists and field researchers. Emphasising the sociological foundation of analysis of the legal system and its integrative function in modern society, Deflem, nevertheless, is aware of the peculiar ability of law to successfully monopolise its own observation. One of his main efforts, therefore, is to continue in Weber's sociological project and liberate the sociological study of law from its juridical roots. Deflem succeeds in his effort by mainly broadening the different fields of the sociological study of law and reformulating them as part of the sociological rather than the juridical tradition.

Though it may be questioned whether the contemporary sociology of law still needs such a robust and principled defence of its intellectual maturity and disciplinary autonomy, Deflem certainly offers a complex picture of the theoretical richness and historical diversity of the sociology of law and its roots in modern political and philosophical thought. Indeed, theoretical and methodological problems of the relationship between the sociology of law and the legal sciences will not wither away. In sum, Deflem's *Sociology of Law: Visions of a Scholarly Tradition* significantly contributes to the clarification of the disciplinary contours of the sociology of law.

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B. Marin and E. Zolyomi (eds.):
Women's Work and Pensions:
What Is Good, What Is Best?
Farnham, 2010: Ashgate, 321 pp.

In the spate of books and reports about pension reform in response to ageing populations, the effectiveness of pension systems in providing adequate independent pensions for women has generally been overlooked. This book is a welcome excep-

tion. It discusses the many issues surrounding gender, class, and cohort equity in state pensions, with thoughtful contributions from Sweden and Italy and detailed case studies from Poland, Austria, and Finland. The book includes an Annex with a wide range of gender-disaggregated world and European data on women and men – life expectancy, changing family structures, education, employment rates, childcare, parental leave, retirement age, later life income, poverty rates, and much more. The information is provided mainly in the form of 78 colour charts with accompanying figures, making it a valuable comparative reference source.

Chapter 1 considers the types of state pension reform implemented in the context of demographic and socioeconomic changes and examines how reforms can be designed to alleviate the pension disadvantage of women while remaining gender-neutral and fair to both low-paid and high-paid individuals; how pension schemes can compensate women for their childcare years without entrenching domestic and caring work as a female responsibility; how to compensate periods of part-time employment; the effect of a lifetime average earnings basis instead of 'best years' calculation for low- and high-paid women; the gender implications of how past earnings are revalued; whether it is fair to 'penalise' women for their average greater longevity; whether a lower state pension age is as beneficial to women as has often been assumed; and the effect on women of indexing pensions in payment to prices or wages. A summary comparison of reforms designed to curb state pension transfers in different countries shows a mixed picture. Although both women and men are likely to receive a lower return on contributions, women have been better protected from the cuts in some countries (e.g. Austria and Hungary) than in others (e.g. Poland and New Zealand). The effect, for both women and men, of rising life expectancy by 2040

is quantified for ten OECD countries: if life expectancy at retirement age increases by 20%, the total pension amount received during retirement will rise by about 6%, but annual pension income will fall by 11%. The conclusion is drawn that if pensioner poverty is not to increase in the future, part of the gain in life expectancy must be spent in employment. The remainder of the first chapter summarises the subsequent contributions, highlighting the tricky ethical and practical issues they raise.

Sunden's chapter sets out a range of pension design choices, noting that what works best for women now may not do so later for them, nor for future cohorts. Moreover, any one system will not work equally well for women with different occupational statuses, marital statuses, and life-course patterns. Clearly, the kind of pension system women need also depends on employment opportunities for women, the level of the gender pay gap, and the provision of state care services. Sunden rightly points to the ambiguous nature of survivor pensions in defined benefit pension schemes, which are ostensibly women-friendly, yet perhaps encourage women to stay at home and rely on a husband's pension, and which have to be subsidised by both dual-career couples and single men and women. 'Fairness' to women depends on which women are in the frame. Fornero and Monticone address the issue of 'actuarial fairness', whereby pension reforms link an individual's pension closely to their contributions and sex-based life expectancy, exposing women more sharply to poverty and insecurity later in life. They deem it justifiable to depart from actuarial fairness by compensating women's periods of reduced working years/hours while fulfilling maternal roles, listing a range of compensatory measures used in EU countries.

Zaidi et al.'s chapter focuses on poverty in later life, agreeing that while the causes of poverty for current women pensioners – earlier domestic roles and disadvan-

tages in employment and wages – are diminishing, pension reform trends are becoming a new source of gender inequality in pensions. Comparing the highly variable poverty risk for women across countries, this chapter considers what pension policies minimise older women's poverty. While the answer to this question depends on numerous country-specific social policies as well as on pension policy, the residence-based pension of the Netherlands stands out as a simple way of ensuring a low and gender-equal poverty rate. Three case study chapters on pensions and an examination of what promotes or reduces the employment of Finnish women midlife follow. A final, editorial chapter assesses trends in sharing domestic and caring work more equally, how this varies with the educational level of the couple, and the importance of formal childcare provision. The chapter then recapitulates the issues debated in the book, stressing the diversity of women's life courses, which must be accommodated in any policy aiming to create a fairer pension system.

The book has some omissions. While the pension consequences of the fact that women need to ensure their own children are looked after are recognised, there seems little awareness of the dilemmas facing midlife women (age 50 to state pension age). Midlife employment can contribute substantially to pensions, yet many women either leave their job or cut their hours to provide eldercare (informal care for frail older people) or grandchildcare (to enable their daughters to retain their job after maternity leave). Credits in state pensions for these forms of caring in midlife are as important as childcare credits, and raise similar issues about men sharing more equally in care and the need for improved state care services. It is a pity that more scrutiny is not applied to the gender effect of private pensions, where compensatory measures are entirely lacking. The book lacks an index, which is surprising and makes it diffi-

cult to use the book efficiently. Sadly, the copy editor has let the editors and chapter authors down by failing to pick up errors. Numerous irritating mistakes in spelling or grammar remain, such as 'loose/loosers' for 'lose/losers'; 'housewives'; 'private lifes' 'Luxemburg'; 'pyramide'; and 'did they never had any...?'. There is sometimes an odd use of words which is misleading or cumbersome: for example, 'overseen' is used when what is meant is 'overlooked'; 'overproportionally' instead of 'disproportionately'; and 'profoundness' (depth?). Such mistakes and oddities could easily have been put right by the copy editor if s/he had not been asleep at the wheel. Another barrier to clarity and readability is the use of unnecessarily long and convoluted sentences in places. However, the thorough comparative treatment and careful weighing up of the complex 'trade-off' issues surrounding women's work and pensions more than offsets the above problems; and the wealth of comparative data in the Annex is a further reason to buy this book.

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Gillian Pascall and Anna Kwak:
Gender Regimes in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe

Bristol, 2009: Policy Press, 224 pp.

Since the Second World War, female labour force participation across Europe has increased dramatically. In the socialist states, the communist regimes' making of employment obligatory brought about almost the full employment of women. In Western Europe, women's initiation into paid labour proved less inclusive and more gradual, with lower overall participation rates and a higher incidence of part-time activity. This decline of the male breadwinner model in Europe, both East and West, propelled issues of care to the fore. The communist re-