

## Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



*Mobile Living Across Europe II: Causes and Consequences of Job-Related Spatial Mobility in Cross-National Comparison.*  
Edited by Norbert F. Schneider and Beate Collet, Opladen and  
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du succès, il faut qu'elle acquière les services d'un professionnel bien formé qui saura prendre les multiples décisions complexes qui s'imposent. En d'autres mots, si certains peuvent encore aujourd'hui prétendre être de bons DRH sans diplôme et savoir bien faire les choses « à la petite semaine », ceux qui aspirent à gérer correctement, éthiquement et stratégiquement des ressources humaines devront de plus en plus détenir un diplôme spécialisé en relations industrielles ou en GRH.

Enfin, troisièmement, ce livre aide le lecteur à comprendre que pour aller au-delà des discours et des effets de mode, il est d'une très grande importance de savoir évaluer les résultats d'une stratégie RH et de montrer aux acteurs concernés l'apport spécifique de cette dernière au succès de l'organisation.

D'un point de vue plus critique, l'ouvrage de Le Louarn comporte aussi quelques points faibles. Nous en avons identifié deux. Tout d'abord, au niveau de la structure, la contribution de l'auteur n'est pas des plus claires. Pourquoi, par exemple, ne pas avoir divisé les onze chapitres en trois ou quatre sections différentes bien articulées entre elles? Aussi, pourquoi attendre au tiers de l'ouvrage pour présenter les stratégies RH génériques et donner un exemple de stratégie RH dès le quatrième chapitre alors qu'il en reste encore sept autres à examiner?

Dans un autre ordre d'idées, nous aurions aimé que l'auteur fasse davantage de liens entre sa propre vision de la GSRH et celle de ses contemporains et cela, afin de nous permettre de mieux en apprécier l'originalité. Il aurait été très intéressant, à titre d'exemple, que Le Louarn fasse les parallèles entre sa contribution et celle de Gazier, l'un des rares auteurs francophones ayant récemment écrit un livre sur le sujet (*Les stratégies ressources humaines*, 4<sup>e</sup> éd., Paris : Éditions La Découverte, 2010).

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## **Mobile Living Across Europe II: Causes and Consequences of Job-Related Spatial Mobility in Cross-National Comparison**

Edited by Norbert F. Schneider and Beate Collet, Opladen and Farnington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2010, 356 pp., ISBN: 978-3-86649-199-1.

Who wins and who loses in a mobile society? Will mobile people have a better life? Can the European Union's goals of a mobile society be realized? Because mobility is ambivalent, these questions are difficult to answer but, for the first time, these issues have been analyzed on the basis of data from a large-scale European survey and the results presented in the book: *Mobile Living Across Europe II*, a complement to the first volume which mostly addressed descriptive findings. The two volumes present the results of the Job Mob and FameLives research project funded by the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Findings were collected in 2007 in France, Germany, Spain, Poland, Switzerland and Belgium to illuminate the issue of spatial mobility, and edited by Norbert F. Schneider and Beate Collet from the Federal Institute for Population Research of Wiesbaden in Germany, to form not only a book worth reading, but also an insightful field guide. Mobility is ambivalent because, while it may promise economic growth, it can bring difficulties for society such as a lack of cultural integration. Despite this, mobility is usually contextualized positively, although no reliable empirical evidence existed about this issue prior to the Job Mob and FameLives survey project.

The book is an attempt to understand job-related spatial mobility. Its first goal is to describe mobility patterns in six European countries and to identify the criteria which actors use to evaluate the impacts and likely consequences of a shifting population. Then, it looks at case studies of particular individuals and families who have recently

moved or are in the process of moving. Such portraits enliven purely quantitative portrayals of changing demographics.

Job-related spatial mobility can be analyzed from different perspectives. The book covers three of these: sociology, psychology and economy in 16 chapters which are grouped thematically. Chapter 1 sets out the main components of the work and chapter 2 outlines the methodological aspects used. In this regard, the writers identify the target population, present a questionnaire and describe fieldwork and other technical considerations. The following chapters (3 to 7) seek to create a clearer picture of job-related spatial mobility by presenting information on its characteristics, advantages, disadvantages and other pertinent issues. They describe the relationships between variables such as gender and social class and how they relate to mobility. In chapters 8 to 14, the book then presents to readers the phenomenon of mobility in the context of private and professional life. Chapter 15 addresses how community support to mobile people may play a role in assisting such groups in their relocation. The last chapter is a summary of the discussion.

Overall, the book paints a picture of mobility by focusing on its various aspects in a detailed way. For example, when it wants to address the relationship between job-related spatial mobility and family structure, it considers the level of human commitment. In addition to the details set out in each section, and to help readers gain a better understanding of post-modern mobility, a conclusion is included at the end of each chapter.

The book is a well-organized, carefully prepared volume which addresses a topical and contemporary issue. There is a paucity of current literature dealing with mobility and, in comparison to other similar literature, this work is unique because it addresses the concept of space in mobil-

ity both comprehensively and precisely. In addition to covering a wide range of information for an original theme, the book adequately defines and contextualizes key concepts and leaves the reader with few unanswered questions. The researchers utilize appropriate means, which assist the reader in understanding the text including: tables, figures, statistics, an informative outline and a helpful and intuitive sub-title structure. The extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter provides a thorough guide to similar related works.

The writing style is well suited to the purpose of the book. While the authors present the results in a technical language, they use simple terminology to explain them; an approach which responds to the needs of many, but perhaps not all, readers.

Although *Mobile Living Across Europe II* is clearly organized and thorough, I have a few criticisms of it. For example, while, within each of its chapters, the work's content is logically laid-out, the order of the chapters is sometimes confusing. In chapter 4, the advantages and disadvantages of job-related spatial mobility are stated. However, before this discussion, perhaps the reader should have been given a rudimentary overview of the concept of mobility. Indeed, the process of becoming mobile is not discussed until chapters 5 and 6.

While the writing style and content of the book is readily accessible to a specialized audience, the work is not, in my opinion, an easy read; something which belies claims made by the editors who say "This book is not a book for social scientists only; it also addresses practitioners, politicians and other interested readers." There are two influences on the book's (apparently unintended) complexity. First, it comprehensively covers its subject matter and, in so doing, inevitably becomes technical and jargon-laden (not necessarily a criticism *per se*). The second cause of inaccessibility is, in my opinion, an overreliance on narrative and prose and a paucity of pictures,

diagrams and illustrative elements. I think that the authors missed some opportunities to enliven and further explain their points because of this oversight.

*Mobile Living Across Europe II* may be able to hold the attention of specialized readers and develop the emerging concept of 21<sup>st</sup> century demographic mobility. The work has potential to become a practical guide for policy makers and legislators and, thus, may go beyond being merely a theoretical contribution. Clearly, the work focuses on the modern European Union and its findings and conclusions have special relevance to that region's planning objectives. The book would probably be engaging for researchers as well as business leaders and policy makers. That said, it may leave others daunted.

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