



# Worklife Balance: The Agency and Capabilities Gap

*Barbara Hobson*

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Across welfare societies we have seen the emergence of policies and norms for worklife balance alongside rising expectations among working parents to be able to participate in employment and caregiving, and to have more time for family life and leisure. Yet despite this value placed upon work-life balance, working parents face increasing work demands, as well as rising numbers of insecure and precarious jobs, both of which produce a deepening sense of economic uncertainty in everyday life, which has been intensified in the current period of financial crises. The agency and capabilities gap addresses these tensions in work-life balance within families, workplace organizations, and policy frameworks. Inspired by Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, this volume considers not just what individuals do, but also their scope of alternatives to make other choices. It includes rich contextualized studies across Western and Eastern European countries and Japan, with a focus on gendered agency inequalities for worklife balance.

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