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L'enfant d'abord

Claude Martin. ENSP, Rennes, France.

Mission d'information de l'Assemblée Nationale (Président: Patrick Bloche ; Rapporteuse : Valérie Pécresse), *L'enfant d'abord. 100 propositions pour placer l'intérêt de l'enfant au cœur du droit de la famille*. Rapport 2832, Assemblée nationale, XII^{ème} Législature, février 2006, 2 tomes 453 et 534 pages.

The President of the French Parliament decided more than a year ago to nominate a group of 31 MPs to consider childhood and family issues and suggest some procedures for reform. This group has been working for a year. They have organized about 50 individual and collective hearings and have written up this enormous amount of information in two parts: 1/ the report itself, which summarizes the diagnostic about family transformations and defines a list of a 100 reforms, and 2/ the transcription of the hearings. This national report published in January 2006 and entitled "Children first. 100 propositions to place children's interests at the core of family law" is clearly centred on childhood issues but also claims to restore the legitimate family, which is considered as the only means to socialize children adequately. This point of view has provoked a controversy inside the group of MPs, between the majority right wing and left wing members.

In this report, the split between left- and right-wing members of the Commission seems clear. Patrick Bloche, the socialist President of the commission, decided to express his disagreement in the foreword of the report in the following terms: "I don't agree with either the analysis of the report about the evolution of our society, or the juridical consequences that it proposes. When it sets out changes, it is only to regret them immediately. The mission was supposed to see the society as it is, not as it imagines it. I am afraid that the majority of its members preferred to see it as they wanted it because of their attachment to the traditional family model – a father and a mother linked by marriage, living together with their children – a model that is eroding ... Marriage is presented as the only appropriate arrangement for a couple to be able to provide security for their children... The defence of children's rights is used to maintain inequality between couples." (op. cit., p. 4).

Looking at the propositions of this report, it looks as if France is going to adopt a general policy defending and promoting marriage (as has been done in the United States) as the best way to support families. Nevertheless, as Andrew Cherlin underlined recently: "a family policy that relies too heavily on marriage will not help the many children destined to live in single parent and cohabiting-parent families – many of them economically disadvantaged – for some or all of their formative years. Only assistance directed to needy families, regardless of their household structure, will reach them" (Cherlin, 2005, p. 50).

Now we have to wait for these propositions to be implemented. But the debate is stronger than ever. One point is missing: the social dimension of family policy.

www.assemblee-nationale.fr

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Summary of the CHIP Project
Some recent research in Europe about Childhood and Migration

Sílvia Carrasco, Wellchi-CIIMU, EMIGRA Research Group (UAB, Spain).

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The CHIP Project

Project coordinator: Fondazione Censis - Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali
Dr. Jonathan Chaloff.

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The project aimed to both improve the understanding of the various facets of the issue and to search for solutions (practical guidelines) to improve the problem. The work consisted in: a comparative analysis of models and strategies adopted in various EU countries, focusing on (a) the role of professionals (in education, social work, etc.) (b) the impact of educational policies on the social condition of these children and (c) the spread of new and innovative approaches within education; the development of a basic set of common European social indicators aimed at evaluating the impact of policies on the well-being, inclusion/exclusion and equality/inequality of these children

The project began with the observation that children of immigrant origin – defined using various but recognizably similar systems in different countries – are a category at risk in terms of social exclusion in Europe. National policies aimed at supporting these children have not been completely successful in countering the risk factor. There is no shared system for evaluating policy outcomes in different countries, especially one that takes into account the specific needs and rights of children.

The project analyzed national definitions, indicators, and evaluation systems, both in conceptual and statistical terms. It also analyzed specific policy responses in each country, especially in the educational sphere (innovation, training). At the same time, the project reviewed classification and definition systems for the well-being of children, and developed a new definition of well-being for children of immigrant origin according to a hierarchy of basic indicators that could be used for evaluating the condition of children and targeting specific policy. In addition to the child-based measures of well-being, the project developed a series of indicators relevant to policy and policy-motivated services, proposing a policy-centred system for evaluating guarantees of rights, access, and equilibrium strategies.

The definition of children of immigrant origin is not taken from any one national classification system, as none of which were found to adequately correspond to the group at risk; it is based on a recent familial immigration event provoking precariousness in the well-being of the minor. The relevant dimensions of well-being in this case go beyond the basic indicators used in international comparisons and in comparisons of children in general. They include a series of indicators taken from developmental psychology and tested within the project in a longitudinal study of the coping strategies and well-being of 288 immigrant adolescents.

The project drew a distinction between exogenous and endogenous factors in the well-being of children of immigrant origin. The specific policies affecting dimensions of well-being were identified and examined in terms of access to resources and evaluation of results. There is currently no standard statistical system for monitoring the well-being of children of immigrant origin. At the scholastic level, this system should encompass children of immigrant parents and grandparents. Other essential indicators are home language and the possibility of self-declared ethnic affiliation.

The project identified different needs of children of immigrant origin depending on the distance from the familial immigration event. Essentially there are three broad categories of children of immigrant origin: those that arrived after the start of school, those that arrived in infancy or born to new arrivals, and those whose families have been in the arrival country for longer periods of time. These differ enormously in terms of effective exercise of rights. For the first group, further linguistic and orientation support is necessary, as well as improved teacher training for school insertion strategies. Bilingual education, as well as courses in the language and culture of origin, were examined in depth and considered effective but extremely difficult to implement correctly.

For all groups, it is essential that full inclusion be an explicit public choice and a clear message in all services. A pilot study of media representation underlined that current communication strategies do not help children of immigrant origin to plan investment in the society in which they live. The intercultural skills that these children possess are undervalued and little used in most environments and should be reconsidered within social policy and public representation. A new statistical system is necessary to monitor this at-risk population and to guarantee that it is able to exercise its right to social participation

Web site of the project's final report: http://www.om.hu/doc/upload/200506/child_immigration_report_2001.pdf

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A brief cross-national view of the wellbeing of Roma children in multicultural Europe.

Bálint Ábel Bereményi , EMIGRA Research Group (UAB, Spain-Hungary).

A newsletter devoted to the issue of the wellbeing of children in multicultural societies needs to take into account relevant minority situations affecting children. Thus, we include this brief cross-national view of the wellbeing of children belonging to the minority that shows by far the worst indicators concerning wellbeing in all areas of life, one of which is clearly their invisibility, the Gypsy/Roma people.

According to a number of national and cross-national reports in Europe in recent years [The EU Project The Education of Gypsy/Roma children in Europe, A. Giménez et al. 2003, the Commission of the European Communities: Non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all - A framework strategy (2005), the OSCE seminar on Roma, June 2000, Bratislava; the ECRI: Third reports – 2003-2006, and the MG-S-ROM report on activities relating to Roma and Travellers (2004)] The Romani population (with EU vocabulary: *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers and Sinti*) of the enlarged European Union has grown to be the biggest minority group of the EU (about 8 millions). Their situation is an issue that has been recently highlighted by many international agencies and institutions. Recent reports show that Roma communities are systematically excluded from social, economic and political development of European states. This tendency should be challenged by different EU policies and funding instruments, along with local initiatives. According to recent ECRI reports (third reports 2003-2006), most Roma are faced with prejudices, disadvantages and discrimination in education, employment, housing and health, among others. Not all European countries have transposed into national law the "Race directive" of the EU.

Romani children are most directly impacted by discriminatory treatments in public education. EUMAP-OSI reports (2002) on Spain, Germany and other European countries mention that Roma are over-represented in "special schools"; these children show a high dropout rate and only a few of them get to higher post-compulsory education. Gender differences due to cultural reasons are stressed in this concern. Racism and xenophobia among peers and peers' parents is also a generally reported fact. Moreover, the higher-than-average unemployment rate in Roma communities and insufficient housing policies of member states is a problematic question. Even in countries like Spain and Italy there are segregated poor Roma districts or temporary illegal settlements with insufficient sanitary services. Furthermore, the EP Resolution (2005) still mentions that Roma are regularly discriminated against in the provision of health care and social security. This situation must undoubtedly and urgently become a target for public policy concerning the wellbeing of children in Europe.

Scuole e Migrazioni in Europa: dibattiti e prospettive, a cura di Jonathan Chaloff e Luca Queirolo Palmas (2006) Roma: Carocci.

Sílvia Carrasco, Wellchi-CIIMU, EMIGRA Research Group (UAB, Spain).

Two Italian experts in migration policy (J. Chaloff) and culture and education in relation to migration (L. Q. Palmas) have been able to bring together a number of experts on migration and education in several European countries with different past experiences and patterns of immigration, from northern to southern Europe: The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Portugal, France, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, in contrast to the experience in the US. The book explores the impact of immigration on education systems and how education systems may have contributed to shaping and applying public policies on migration through the opportunities and tensions between them. The different national chapters review issues related to colonial traditions and relationships, different paces in economic development and labour force demand, long and recent immigration past experiences, ways to obtain and conceptualize citizenship, effects of more or less open or selective school systems and political debates in the educational sphere that reflect social processes and potential mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion. The comparative theoretical approach undertaken in this collective book aims to develop an idea of children of foreign descent as whole potential European citizens, beyond inherited theoretical frameworks that have acritically fixed the category of 'immigrant students'. Moreover, drawing on previous comparative research on childhood and immigration in Europe in which the coordinators were actively involved (CHIP Project, 2000), the authors look at current risk factors affecting children of immigrant origin both from the viewpoint of the children's present conditions and the future wellbeing of adults as conditioners of social and personal achievement and mobility.

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The children of migration

Karin Wall

Instituto de Ciências Sociais, University of Lisbon

The problems of migrant children are nearly always analysed in the context of the (difficult) integration of second generation young adult immigrants in the host countries. However, the results of two qualitative research projects - one on the reconciliation of work and care for young children in immigrant families, the other on the trajectories of migrant women in current migration flows in Europe – both show that the question of children within migration goes beyond the problems of the second generation and should be looked at earlier on in the migration process.

Findings from the first study (Wall and São José, 2004), based on data from five European countries, show that immigrant families with young children, in particular labour migrant and lone parent families, have difficulties in caring for young children below age ten due to long hours of work, atypical working hours (especially for those working in the cleaning, caring and catering sectors) or, simply, the lack of resources to ensure that young children are being cared for in paid formal or informal services (after-school clubs, baby-sitters, etc.). Alternative arrangements, such as stay-at-home mothers or family care networks, are rarely available as both members of the couple are usually employed and close relatives, such as grandparents, are not in the host country. Immigrant networks are important to guarantee support in finding work and helping out in occasional situations but they are not able to act as social support networks for daily caring. In this context, families are not able to balance work and care: small children are often left alone (or looked after by other children) in the early hours of the morning, in the afternoon, in the evenings or on week-ends. Interviews show that immigrant families with young children need low cost extensive care services, availability of after-school activities, in particular in countries where school finishes early, and specific care solutions when working atypical hours.

In the context of the increasing number of migrant women in Europe, recent research has shown that many women immigrate alone, without their families, often leaving young children in the sending country in the care of close relatives. Findings from the study in Portugal (Wall, Nunes, Matias, 2005) show that many immigrant women come to work in the care sector to look after children and dependent elderly persons. Many are illegal and a large number, in particular young single mothers and divorced women, leave young children in the sending country, with little hope of seeing them again for many years. Even when work and residence become legalized, family reunification is difficult to implement and is a lengthy process (two years in average). Interviews reveal the frustration and disappointment of children who cannot understand why they do not join their parents, as well as family cohesion problems when they immigrate a long time after their mothers or parents; on the other hand, the host countries and new labour market niches in which immigrant women work do not take into account the family needs and identities of the women they employ. This means that immigrant mothers work intensively, sometimes holding two jobs at the same time, in order to try and earn money quickly, during two or three years, in order to go back to their children.

The impact of migration on children is not a new topic in the sociology of migration. However, the changes in and the diversification of current immigration flows seem to show that it is fundamental and urgent to place migrant children as a specific topic both in the research and in the policy agenda.

References

Wall, K. , São José, J. (2004), "Managing Work and care: A Difficult Challenge for Immigrant Families", in *Social policy and Administration*, 38 (6), pp. 591-621

Wall, K., Nunes, C., Matias, A.R. (2005), Immigrant Women in Portugal: Migration Trajectories, Main problems and Policies, *Working Paper*, ICS, University of Lisbon,

http://www.ics.ul.pt/publicacoes/workingpapers/wp2005/wp2005_7.pdf

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Petmesidou, M. & Mossialos E. eds (2005). *Social Policy Developments in Greece*. Aldershot:Ashgate (422 pages).

In recent years there has been much debate surrounding the future of the welfare state in Europe, the complex factors influencing reform, and the extent to which responses to pressures on welfare could lead to irreversible systemic changes in social policy.

The book provides an in-depth analysis of the social policy context in Greece and gives an overview of the major developments as well as their characteristics, impasses and prospects. In addition, this collective work contributes to further understanding of welfare reform trajectories in Europe and in particular in Southern European countries. The authors examine in detail aspects of structural change, challenges and responses in major policy areas of social policy: employment, social security, family and gender, health and social care, migration and policy trends. Research issues that are central to the debate 'on recasting European welfare states', such as structural adjustments with regard to the production, organization, and delivery of welfare, signify changes in the financial side of social protection. The role of political parties, the politics of welfare reform, the position of social partners and other major social actors in influencing (or resisting) policy reform, are at the forefront of the contributions to this volume. The scope and intensity of pressures on the Greek welfare state emanating from the supranational level and the challenges linked to European integration and economic and monetary union are also of crucial importance in the analyses undertaken.

For more details see the Ashgate website:

<https://www.ashgate.com/shopping/title.asp?>

Laura Alipranti, National Centre of Social Research (EKKE), Athens, Greece.

Schiffauer, W. ; Bauman, G. ; Kastoryano R. and Vertovec S. eds. (2004). *Civil Enculturation: Nation-State, School and Ethnic Difference in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and France*. New York:Berghahn Books.

Civil Enculturation lays the groundwork for historians and policymakers alike interested in the changes and challenges that the modern state and its schools have faced since the French Revolution. Public schooling has become a key component of state building and citizenship formation. As Gerd Baumann says in the introduction, "Without state schools, there would be no nations as we know them in northwestern Europe, no national conscience collective, and no effective means of inculcating and rehearsing the conventions of the dominant political culture" (p. 2, emphasis in original). However, as even a superficial observation of any European culture demonstrates, the "dominant political culture" finds itself occasionally at odds with large segments of society. Political historians as well as those educational historians steeped in the literature on school history and theory will find this book to be an important contribution to discussions of possible approaches to educating increasingly diverse populations in four different European contexts. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of this book is the authors' successful attempt to arrive at a clear definition of schools' mission vis-a-vis the state. Where works to date have struggled with vague terms of identity and citizenship formation, or worse, indoctrination and inculcation of national values, Schiffauer, Baumann, Kastoryano, and Vertovec have arrived at a more specific role carved out by the state and the educational system together: civil enculturation. With this phrase, the authors state that schools ideally help pupils acquire the skills necessary to function in their particular society. Some of their findings are not unknown to social scientists, such as the argument that communication is culturally constructed and specific. It is these findings in their context of four schools in four different national and social contexts, however, that give new life to these accepted principles. As the authors demonstrate, the ability to navigate a social system is one that becomes even more important as countries face growing immigrant populations, from both western and non-western cultures.

Silvia Carrasco Wellchi-CIIMU, EMIGRA Research Group (UAB, Spain)

Ackers, L. & Stalford, H. *A Community for children? Children, citizenship and internal migration in the EU*. Aldershot:Ashgate(2004).

Based on important social-legal research supported by the European Commission and the Nuffield Foundation, this insightful book examines the impact of migration on children within the European Union. Set within the framework of the development of 'Citizenship of the Union' and the extension of legal rights to the families of community migrant workers, the research involves in-depth interviews with parents and children of EU migrant families in Sweden, Portugal, Greece and the UK. Examining their formal legal entitlement under community law, it assesses the relevance of European citizenship to children and charts recent developments in EU policy making and the promotion of children's rights. The authors describe the experiences of the children with a focus on patterns of migration, the involvement of children in migration decision-making and the impact of moving on their life chances in the receiving countries. In addition, the book describes and evaluates an innovative approach to the development of interdisciplinary and child-centred methods in comparative research.

Silvia Carrasco Wellchi-CIIMU, EMIGRA Research Group (UAB, Spain).

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Exploration and harmonisation
of statistical sources
Lluís Flaquer
Director of the WELLCHI NETWORK

One of the goals of the WELLCHI NETWORK is to explore some of the ways in which monitoring and reporting on the well-being of children can be improved, to follow up trends concerning the outcomes of institutional arrangements in this field and to devise a common EU system of statistical indicators using the child as a unit of observation and analysis. With this aim in mind we plan to search different sources of secondary information and data regarding health, education, family, social policies, and child poverty among others in order to discover shortcomings, to detect gaps and finally to suggest alternatives in order to collect and analyse data on these topics in a better way. We believe that a number of benefits would be reaped from exploring the possibilities of a harmonisation of statistical sources concerning childhood in terms of enhancing European research in the field, of gaining better knowledge of the problems involved and of drawing public attention to issues that are not often very prominent on the political agenda. It is important to promote the creation of added value by bringing together ongoing research activities in such a field and in this way to be able to provide a European dimension to these research activities in the various participating countries.

Childhood as a social category is statistically invisible. Although it appears in the statistics as an age group, it is seldom categorised as a separate grouping with definite rights and specific needs. This dearth of information makes it difficult to capture features of children which are similar, to the extent to which they share the same status in society, it precludes the understanding of factors underlying commonalities and variations and therefore it also excludes the possibility of comparing the realities of childhood across different societies. The present unsatisfactory situation forces researchers to gather information from disparate sources, which produce a partial and fragmentary portrayal of the relevant phenomena.

The inadequacy of available data on Europe's children demonstrates that the interests of young people are not given full attention in the debate on European integration. Most Eurostat indicators developed as a part of the EU social agenda to monitor the evolution of poverty and exclusion respond rather more to economic concerns (such as efficiency or competitiveness) than to matters of social justice or the well-being of the populations involved. In addition, they are unable to disclose the complexities inherent in the situation of children. We cannot assume that this can be deduced from GDP, unemployment rates and other economic indicators, which provide only part of a necessarily multifarious and composite picture.

Developing childhood as a social category requires, in the first place, being able to carry out analysis using the child as the unit of observation. This means assessing the features under study as a part of childhood in its own right rather than as a part of other categories or phenomena. Introducing the perspective of the child necessitates carrying out qualitative research with children, designing surveys with a sample drawn from the population of children and being attentive to the voices of children themselves rather than to the wishes or representations of adults. If we are to improve our understanding of childhood as a social category, it is important to develop fresh indicators to describe it, to analyse it and to report on it.

With these aims in mind, and under the coordination of the WELLCHI management team, a number of specialists in childhood studies have come together in order to produce a report on such topics. Their main goal is to detect shortcomings regarding the reporting and description of childhood in the EU and to suggest new approaches and ideas in order to enhance the validity of cross-national comparisons in this area. The main rationale for the selection of indicators is the need for equal opportunity for all children in a world characterised by the growth of family diversity which produces several kinds of risks associated with household composition and ethnic origin.

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2nd Conference of the WELLCHI Network

“Well-being of children and labour markets in Europe Different kinds of risks resulting from various structures and changes in the labour markets”
(University of Hamburg, 31 March – 1 April 2006)

The 2nd Conference of the WELLCHI Network was held at the University of Hamburg from 31st of March to 1st of April 2006 was organized by the German WELLCHI partners (Prof. Birgit Pfau-Effinger, Melanie Eichler).

The conference focussed on the structures and changes in labour markets of European societies and the impact on children's upbringing. The conference was divided into two streams which dealt with the following issues:

Stream A: Labour markets and the developments and patterns of child poverty

Stream B: Children growing-up in changing labour markets for parents

Partners of the Wellchi Network and international experts on childhood, family and labour markets were invited to discuss labour market developments in European societies and the impact on children's well-being.

In addition to the paper sessions a poster session was also held. The aim of the poster session was to give students and PhD students the opportunity to present their research in relation to the conference themes.

The papers presented at the conference opened up discussion on the interaction between labour market developments for parents and the well-being of children.

The main findings of the Conference are:

- The increase in child poverty can be seen in almost all western European societies. It has been argued that the transition towards a service economy is associated with new risks for families and is amongst the most important factors leading to the increase in child poverty rates.
- Social networks play an important role for children's well-being. It was outlined that the embeddedness in social networks is very important for children to cope with poverty.
- One session focussed on the situation of immigrated children, who belong to a specific risk group. It was stated that studies which examine the situation of children in migrant families are still scarce.
- Concerning the needs of children to spend time with their parents, it was suggested that beyond care, common time is very important. This time includes rituals, certain events, and common activities in children's lives when children wish to be accompanied by their parents
- The presentations showed that mothers, in contrast to fathers, often reduce their working time in order to care for the child. Differences between the different European societies can be explained by different cultural values and ideas on parenthood and care responsibility.
- The developments of fatherhood show two different trends: On one hand, 'fathers vanishing' can be observed through an increase in the number of children growing up without their fathers. On the other hand, trends towards a 'caring fatherhood' have increased and can be observed mainly in the Nordic countries. It was demonstrated that "daddy's months", introduced in parental leave schemes, have a major impact on the behavioural change of fathers concerning child care.
- The cultural model of an 'active citizen' who is traced by welfare state policies has a fundamental impact on family life. It has become even harder for parents to meet their children's needs and wishes of common time with their parents.

In summary, certain implications for social policy were discussed at the conference:

- quality of education should be promoted
- advancement of child policies and flexibilization policies in order to reduce low income of parents and child poverty
- policies which contribute to reconciling waged work and parent's time with their children should be encouraged
- high level of decommodification as a strategy for avoiding child poverty, expanding public child care provision and an increasing complementary offers of care services for parents
- integration of rights for fathers to care for their children in parental leave schemes strengthening rights for parents to reduce working time temporarily

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WELLCHI NETWORK

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

5th Workshop:

"TRANSMISSION OF INEQUALITIES FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON SOCIAL COHESION"

September, 13th-14th, 2006.

Organized by: Göteborg University, Department of Sociology (Sweden).

Preliminary program:

<http://www.ciimu.org/wellchi/agenda/indexagenda.php>

6th Workshop:

"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN NON RESIDENT FATHERS AND THE IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE"

December, 1st-2nd, 2006.

Organized by: NOVA Norwegian Social Research. Oslo (Norway).

3rd Conference :

"HOW CAN THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN A KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY BE AMELIORATED? CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE PATTERNS IN EUROPE PERSPECTIVE"

February, 8th-10th 2007.

Organized by: CIIMU Barcelona (Spain).

PAST EVENTS

4th Workshop:

"CHILDREN IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES"

December, 2nd-3rd, 2005.

Organized by EKKE: National Centre for Social Research. Athens (Greece).

<http://www.ciimu.org/wellchi/reports/wsh4/wshp4.htm>

2nd Conference:

"DIFFERENT KINDS OF RISKS FOR CHILDREN RESULTING FROM VARIOUS STRUCTURES AND CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKETS"

April, 31st & March, 1st 2006.

Organized by : University of Hamburg (Germany).

<http://www.ciimu.org/wellchi/reports/con2/con2.htm>

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

"On phillias and phobias": From biological to cultural kinship. Adoption, homoparentality and other ways to construct families.

September, 29th and 30th & October, 2nd and 3rd 2006, Barcelona.

<http://www.foruminternacional.ciimu.org>

The Institute of Childhood and Urban World (CIIMU) and the University of Barcelona's Research Group on Kinship and Family (GEFF) organize this I CIIMU International Forum on Childhood and Family devoted to *International Adoption: perspectives and resources* on September 29th to 30th and *Homokinsship/Homofamilies: 'a state of matters'* on October 2nd to 3rd 2006 in the city of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.

The aim of this International Forum is to gather distinguished local, national and international researchers and professionals, technicians and users during a working and reflection time about two childhood and family issues: international adoption and homoparentality.

Spain is the second receiving country in terms of actual number of adopted children in the world after the United States. But, in terms of international adoptions per capita, Catalonia shows the world's highest rate.

Married and single parents, with or without biological children, have been able to adopt from the very beginning in Spain. Furthermore, in April 2005 Catalonia amend the Family Code in order to allow homosexual couples to adopt. In addition to this, in July 2005, the Spanish Parliament approved an amendment to the Civil Code allowing homosexual marriages and, therefore, children adoption by those couples. All those facts have situated Catalonia and Spain in the childhood and family international agenda, and consequently justify the thematic election for this first Forum edition.

Convergence an Divergence of Family Law in Europe
September, 12th-13th, 2006, Vrije, Universiteit Amsterdam.
Contact: m.antokolskaia@rechten.vu.nl

Child in the City. 3rd European Conference
October, 17th-18th, 2006, Stuttgart City Hall, Germany.
Contact: lwatterreus@europoint-bv.com
<http://www.europoint-bv.com/events/?child2006>

III World Congress on children and adolescents' rights
November, 14th-19th, 2007, Barcelona.
<http://www.iiicongresomundialdeinfancia.org>

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1. The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) - USA

<http://www.nccp.org>

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is a non-profit, non-partisan research and policy organization at Columbia University. Our mission is to identify and promote strategies that prevent child poverty in the United States and improve the lives of low-income children and families.

Concentrating on the links between family economic security and child development, we research policies that promote three goals:

- * Economically secure families
- * Children entering school ready to succeed
- * Stable, nurturing families

NCCP has developed a national reputation for policy analysis, academic research, and demographic statistics. We promote the broader understanding that a family's financial situation affects how children develop, their readiness to succeed in school, and ultimately, their ability to create better lives for themselves.

Additionally, our work begins with the premise that family economic security means much more than income above the poverty level. True economic security includes (1) adequate, stable, and predictable income, (2) savings and assets that can help families survive crises and plan for the future, and (3) human and social capital (i.e., education, skills, and support systems) that help families improve their financial status in the long term.

2. The Future of children .USA

<http://www.futureofchildren.org/index.htm>

The Future of Children seeks to promote effective policies and programs for children by providing policymakers, service providers, and the media with timely, objective information based on the best available research.

The Future of Children is a publication of The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and The Brookings Institution.

The views expressed in The Future of Children do not necessarily represent the views of The Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University or The Brookings Institution.

3. Chapin Hall Center for Children –.USA

<http://www.about.chapinhall.org/>

.Building knowledge to serve children is the mission of the Chapin Hall Center for Children. Located at the University of Chicago, Chapin Hall is a research and development center that brings the highest standards of scholarship and the intellectual resources of one of the world's great research universities to the real-world challenges of policymakers and service providers struggling to ensure that children grow, thrive, and take their place in a formidable world. Working behind the scenes with lawmakers and government administrators, as well as on the front lines with program providers, Chapin Hall puts rigorous, non-partisan research in the hands of those who shape the programs and policies that affect all children in their daily lives.

In an environment where policy debates about children are too often driven by ideology and anecdote, Chapin Hall grounds its ideas in facts. We are known for our independent perspectives and our originality, for our willingness to approach old problems in new ways, and for our ability to spot important issues before they emerge. But above all, we are known for our conviction that research must focus on all children if we are to ensure that every child can grow up to be a productive, engaged adult.

4. KIDS COUNT – USA

<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount>

KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.

KIDS COUNT offers four data systems that allow visitors to create free, customized data reports.

KIDS COUNT Census Data Online Creates custom reports on over 6,000 geographic areas including cities, congressional districts, etc. from the 2000 Census on a wide variety of topics affecting children in the community.

5. Campaign against child poverty - Canada

<http://www.childpoverty.com/>

The Campaign Against Child Poverty is a national, non-partisan coalition of citizens from faith-groups, social justice groups, charities, child welfare organizations and others concerned about the unacceptably high levels of child and family poverty in Canada. We are also concerned about the hazards to the future educational, social, physical, developmental and employment success of those children presently living in poor families.

We are affiliated with no political party, and our only special interest is to reduce the numbers of poor children in Canada. We are funded by private citizens across Canada, by foundations, faith communities and NGO's, all of whom share our vision of a poverty-free country.

Partner organizations of the CACP and members of the Steering Committee are: the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, B'nai Brith Canada, Campaign 2000, Canadian Association of Food Banks, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Canadian Catholic Religious Conference of Ontario, Canadian Council for Reform Judaism, Canadian Feed the Children, the Catholic Children's Aid Society, Citizens for Public Justice, Family Service Association of Greater Toronto, Hindu Dharma Mission (Canada), the Hope for Children Foundation, Jewish Family and Child Services, MAZON Canada, Pickering Islamic Centre, The United Church of Canada, United Way of Greater Toronto, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.