

Round 10 Rotating Module

Digital Social Contacts in Work and Family Life

Abstract and Team Composition

Abstract

Digitalization has led to major changes in communication both in work and family life. On the one hand, great optimism exists regarding the implications of digital social contacts, e.g. via smartphone, for increased efficiency of communication and improved relationship quality due to new possibilities of contact. On the other hand, major concerns include a decline in family or workplace solidarity as well as greater distractions from family or work interactions and tasks. Rejecting any technological determinism which forecasts the same consequences from digitalization for all individuals in all countries, we suggest a rotating module for Round 10 of the ESS which 1) identifies different dimensions of digital social contact (frequency, content, costs and benefits involved) to allow for a broader understanding of digital phenomena, and 2) creates new possibilities from a European country-comparative perspective for multivariate analyses of the determinants of digital social contacts (e.g., social inequalities) and their consequences, especially for relationship quality, work-life balance, and well-being. We propose items on opportunities for access to digital communication (e.g., Internet access at home), the need for them (e.g., lower co-residence) and trust in digital social contact (e.g., privacy concerns), as complements to questions on workplace culture and available country information (e.g. on work related state policies) which are likely to shape individual agency to establish digital social contact in a way that it facilitates work-life balance and encourages relationship quality or well-being. We consider digital social contacts both in the family and at work.

Questionnaire Design Team

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