

the idea, but it is possible that that tack may actually be counterproductive to getting a higher adult rate.

There is also an important discussion of the power (and limitations) of voluntary efforts, chiefly those of the Living Wage Foundation in the UK. Wage increases have indeed been won for many workers through these efforts; but are they sustainable without legal action?

In short, for a highly readable, incisive analysis of the state of the living wage as both idea and policy, this is the book to have.

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Caroline de la Porte and Elke Heins (eds) (2016) *The Sovereign Debt Crisis, the EU and Welfare State Reform*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, £89.99, pp. 229, hbk.

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This well-edited book provides a useful and thorough analysis as well as a base for further investigation of the EU policies on member countries' welfare state reforms in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. Editors de la Porte and Heins have managed to gather and put together a series of thoroughly analysed studies for those who are serious about investigating the effects of the financial crisis on the welfare state in the EU member States. Here the need for harsh responses under the institutional framework and structure of the EMU are analysed while their effects on the welfare state are also examined. The authors also have examined the influence of the EU on the welfare state reform, particularly in those member countries most affected by the economic crisis of 2008. The financial crisis which nobody could predict in advance severely affected the Western economies where over-borrowed economies of the eurozone were hit badly with sovereign debt crisis. Addressing the debt crisis by the EU required harsh responses that would demand drastic changes in the welfare policies.

Scholars in social policy research from across the union have contributed to produce this excellent book which helps the readers examine how the European Union responded to the sovereign debt crisis in the member States with some drastic measures, including intervention into domestic welfare states. The findings suggest that the EMU norms were strictly applied and enhanced measures were taken to monitor and enforce the rules of fiscal integration to achieve consolidation.

In chapter 2, de la Porte and Heins, with their own typology of EU integration, explore the development of new surveillance instruments and enforcement mechanism affecting the labour market and social policy during the crisis period. These responses the authors consider as radical alteration in EU integration. But they argue that the nature of the EU intervention into domestic welfare states has changed with a focus on fiscal consolidation while revisiting issues of social equity and social investment through other softer EU programmes. Success of such approach still remain debatable while the authors see the effective nature of the latest EU Social Investment Package launched in 2013 to respond to the post-crisis welfare needs as a welfare modernisation tool.

Jon Kvist in chapter 3 argues that the European social investment strategy developed in the aftermath of the economic crisis has essentially overlooked the gender dimension but believes it holds the promise of renewing the European Social Model. Kvist proposes a comprehensive life-course perspective on social investment in which he emphasises some key gender dimensions that need to be addressed to optimise the formation, maintenance and the use of human capital.

However, some may question the practicality of such a proposal when it comes to implementing it based on a comprehensive life-course perspective.

The austerity measures demanded from some troubled EMU states against large scale financial support by the EU and IMF in the aftermath of the crisis were obviously harsh. But Fiona Dukelow argues in chapter 4 that, in Ireland, such measures did not constitute a change in social policy direction. Whether this would hold true in other affected eurozone states true or not still remains a matter for further investigation.

In chapter 5, Sotiria Theodoropoulou critically analyses the intrusive role of the EU and IMF in Greece and Portugal in the aftermath of the crisis. As detailed in the MoUs, financial assistance was provided against structural reform in both countries but the author points out that there were notable differences with radical policy intervention and extensive reforms in Greece than in Portugal. Through radical reforms, the author argues, it was intended to achieve fiscal consolidation under pervasive austerity measures leading to retrenchment of welfare states in these countries. As the title of the article implies, the author seems to claim that under the shadow of EU bailout conditionality, national social and labour market policy reforms remained the focus.

The crisis-ridden EU states of Italy and Spain come to the focus in the works of Pavolini, Leon, Guillen, and Ascoli in chapter 6. Their contribution under the title 'From Austerity to Permanent Strain? The EU and the Welfare State Reform in Italy and Spain' sheds light on the impact of EU intervention. The authors argue that although the countries were not needed to be bailed out, both member countries came under the 'shadow of conditionality'. The analyses seem to suggest the Italy and Spain were pursuing different approaches before the crisis but the post-crisis pressure from the EU led to take hasty and harsh measures leading to retrenchment in the welfare states in both countries leaving a permanent strain.

Stefano Sacchi on the other hand, in chapter 7, draws our attention to the altered nature of conditionality in the case of Italy. He stresses that enforcement remained weak but policy specificity and surveillance were strong when it came to intervention. The author was convinced that the market forces were the important causal factor intervening in the enforcement of EU reform policies. It also meant informal conditionality coming from such institutions as the European Central Bank.

In chapter 8, the authors Hassenteufel and Palier seem to suggest that welfare state reform remained a key policy area in the EU even before the crisis. Using their longitudinal study in France, authors argue that reforms in the areas of healthcare, pension, and labour markets have been in progress for sometimes. The authors note that such reforms are again linked to overall fiscal consolidation and market reform.

In overall, the authors demonstrate how the intervention represents an unprecedented degree of EU involvement in domestic social and labour market policies. Readers will also discover how greater demands to attain balanced budget have been institutionalised, leading to tensions with the EU social investment strategy. This highly informative edited collection will engage students, social policy practitioners, and researchers as well as scholars of the welfare states and political science.

In the end, it is fair to say that the authors seem to question the validity of European social model which was obviously under attack from the emergence of market forces and globalisation during the last thirty or more years. The weaker economies with strong welfare state principles in the EU could not sustain in the aftermath of the financial crisis which prompted harsher measures by the EU. This book provides a timely and valuable contributions on the impact of EU policies and measures on the welfare states of the crisis-ridden member countries. Lastly, de la Porte and Heins conclude the book with the core findings of the articles and key reform policy areas of labour market and pension along with a direction for future research. One

key question may still remain unanswered would be whether the financial crisis and the EU intervention has helped the EU achieve its overall policy agenda of market liberalisation and labour market reform in the affected member countries.

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This book examines the rise of private homeownership in the context of neoliberalism with a focus on the relationship between housing, housing wealth and welfare. There are nine chapters between the editors' introduction and an epilogue by John Doling. Seven of these chapters cover countries: Ireland; Finland, Norway and Sweden; Northern Ireland; East and West Germany; post socialist countries; Russia and Romania. Two chapters, one on housing wealth over the life course, the other on asset-based welfare considered in relationship to social investment welfare state models, are cross-national.

In chapter one, Caroline Dewilde and Richard Ronald set out the main issues surrounding homeownership discussing the policy shift from housing 'services' – housing's use value – to houses as a commodity; the financialization of housing; housing's enhanced role in asset-based welfare and housing's importance to wealth accumulation. 'Welfare regimes' – with their varieties of 'residential capitalism' – and homeownership politics are also explored.

The salience of 'path dependency' is well-illustrated in the county-based chapters. Bo Bengtsson, Hanna Ruonavaara and Jadar Sørvoll identify strong variations in the role of owner-occupation in Finland, Norway and Sweden and they do not detect asset-based welfare as an issue in the politics of the three countries. Kathrin Kolb and Sandra Buchholz focus on housing wealth differences between East and West Germany illustrating how specific political history influences the social cleavages considered to be worth investigating. Michelle Norris, using Ireland as her example, demonstrates how tenure can be shaped by a number of complex government interventions and how, in Ireland, it was not a device to roll back the state. Alison Wallace's study of Northern Ireland's rollercoaster housing market – prices down over 50% from 2007 peak to 2013 trough – shows how households coped because the primacy of housing as a service over housing as a financial asset helped in managing adversity. Srne Mandič and Maja Mwzal, in their examination of the impact of homeownership on old-age welfare in the transition to post-socialist societies, identify a neglect of old age in the transition but with differences between countries under scrutiny. Jane R. Zavisca and Theodore P. Gerber, having examined experiences of home ownership and housing mobility post privatisation in Russia, conclude that access to homeownership after privatisation is still more a function of family support and private assets than market position. Adriana Michaela Soaita's exploration of owner-occupation in Romania from before 1945 leads her to the conclusion that home transmission down the generations may moderate broader economic inequalities. Romania has a 96% homeownership rate.

Christian Lennartz augments the introduction via examining trends across the OECD countries based on data ending in 2007. He identifies large differences in the increase in mortgage debt, noting that enlarged mortgage debt did not produce higher ownership rates because debt fuelled house prices. He also reflects on how welfare state resources, freed through