the earlier chapters and do not plunge straight to the promised (but unfulfilled) guides in the final chapter.

There is an assumption, made explicit in the book, that a growth in global population and especially urban population forms the context for a growing concern about urban sustainability. Intriguingly, and probably much like the forthcoming COP26 summit, discussion on whether such population growth is itself sustainable or desire is not addressed!

I finished reading Norman's book on my return to my home city of Glasgow, soon to be host to the COP26 summit where world leaders will congregate to report on their progress to the Paris Accord of 2015 and consider the next of their responses to climate change. It would be good if on their travels from across the globe, many of them and their advisors also take the time to read this book.

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Anthony McCashin (2019), *Continuity and Change in the Welfare State: Social Security in the Republic of Ireland*, £59.99, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 282, hbk.
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The former Irish Prime Minister, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, a distinguished academic and public intellectual, commented on the paradox of Irish development: 'the contrast between our newfound wealth and pathetic inadequacy of [health] and other public services is frankly disgraceful' (*Irish Times 11th October 2008)*. The failures of the Irish Welfare State, notably in health and housing, dominated the 2020 General Election. The perennial question is: 'How can such a wealthy society justify a residual welfare state regime'?

Anthony McCashin's book is a welcome invitation to view the Irish Welfare State through the prism of social security. The book adopts a broad canvas in three-dimensional form: (1) a historical overview of the evolution of the Irish Welfare State; (2) Ireland's comparative location within the diversity of European welfare regimes and models, and (3) a detailed analysis of the Irish social security system between 1981-2016. McCashin is an acknowledged expert on the topic of social security, dating back to his role in the Commission on Social Welfare, 1986.

The author was faced with a challenging task because the Irish Welfare State model is difficult to define and locate. The National Economic and Social Council, in 2005, commented that the Irish Welfare State is both 'hybrid' and 'complex'. NESC's penetrating observation is the nub of the intellectual challenge that faced the author of this book. It is a task analogous to resolving a riddle within an enigma. At the core of this enigma is the historic failure to achieve separation between Church and State, the acid test of a functioning modern Western democracy. The Catholic Church continues to control over 90 per cent of schools in Ireland, which has become a multicultural society since joining the European Union in 1973. A recent dispute over the location of the new National Maternity Hospital on the site of Church-owned land, involving sensitive issues regarding the protection of reproductive rights, remains to be resolved. The impact of historic child abuse scandals, in which a series of inquiry reports have exposed the dark side of institutional care of vulnerable children and single mothers, has greatly diminished the moral authority and spiritual power of the Catholic Church.

McCashin offers a historic overview of the role of the Catholic Church in the formation of the Irish Welfare State during the twentieth century. He concludes, mainly drawing on secondary sources, that suggestions that Ireland was a 'welfare laggard' are based on a 'misinterpretation' of the historical facts. However, the narrative is somewhat more complex than this Panglossian account suggests.

In the Independent Irish State, established in 1922, the Catholic Church assumed the role of moral arbiter of social policy. The 1937 Constitution enshrined the supremacy of the Catholic Church in the basic law. Catholic social teaching relegated women to the sphere of domesticity. The Conditions of Employment Bill, 1935, effectively excluded women from the labour force, through the infamous 'marriage ban'. Both divorce and contraception were outlawed in the new state. Abortion (while not legally available) was outlawed in 1983 through a Constitutional Referendum and has only been legalised in 2018, once again through a Constitutional Referendum, with 66 per cent of voters supporting the amendment. Much of the apparatus of the social state and civil society remained under the control and management of the Catholic Church during the twentieth century, creating a residual welfare state, resting on the architectural principles of charity and the colonial legacy of the Poor Law State.

A collision between Church power and democracy was inevitable. It occurred in 1951, when a reforming Minister for Health, Dr Noel Browne, sought to introduce his famous Mother and Child Scheme. The Church objected and the Government fell. Dr Browne courageously published the secret correspondence between Church and State in the *Irish Times,* exposing the hollow roots of Irish democracy in a major public scandal. It was a watershed moment in Ireland's path development – leading to a change of political direction, in the form of economic and cultural modernization. But the influence of Church power remains evident, in particular in the education system, in the form of a worrying ethno-nationalist legacy issue that ironically may stand in the way of the historic dream of a United Ireland. Yet, McCashin questions whether the Catholic Church was a 'veto player' in the formation of the Irish Welfare State and points to other influences, notably the medical profession's opposition to socialised medicine (which was pecuniary rather than ideological) and the ghost of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster – a bit of a historic stretch! The truth is that Irish nationalist politicians before and after Independence have been supine in the face of Church power. If we don't fully acknowledge the failure to separate Church and State, we are likely to privilege political myth over social reality, driven by unquestioning patriotism.

On the other hand, McCashin offers an insightful and penetrating analysis of the policy realities of the 'hybridity' and 'complexity' of the Irish Welfare State. In his deconstruction of these deep policy issues the author demonstrates his empirical knowledge, offering a *tour de force* account of the Irish social security system. He draws on the definitive work of Gosta Esping Andersen, questioning his classification of the Irish Welfare State as part of the liberal model, characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon cultural world. A prominent cleric, with Hayekian resonance, castigated the British Welfare State as 'The Silken Tyranny'. McCashin asserts that 'there are features of the Irish Welfare State that are distinctly non-liberal' (p. 96), meaning Catholic Corporatist.

Contemporary Church commentators, using the religious intellectual organ *Christus Rex,* praised Southern Corporatist regimes, such as Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal, as a virtuous civil society. McCashin identifies and discusses the role and influence of the Catholic concept of subsidiarity (that is favouring the family, community and voluntary association as the primary source of welfare over the state). However, the author concludes: 'the Catholic hierarchy did not deploy its moral power to translate the rhetorical content of Catholic social teaching into specific social security policies. Catholicism we can conclude had a significant indirect influence on social security' (p102). Bishop Dignan's 1945 Plan was outlined in a pamphlet

entitled *Social Security,* a Christian alternative to the popular UK Beveridge Report. Instead Dignan quixotically advocated the removal of social security, hospitals and community health services from State control. It failed because of Dignan's archaic ideas that did not have popular appeal. His proposal suffered a similar fate of popular and political rejection to Bishop Browne's 1943 *Commission on Vocational Organisation* that advocated a corporate state, which was greeted with political silence. The fledgling Irish State was not ready to abandon democracy for an authoritarian form of government. But Ireland's modernisation was to prove both uneven and problematic.

McCashin's encyclopaedic knowledge of the social security system and familiarity with the policy context is clearly in evidence in his case study analysis of social insurance, child income support, state pensions, and job seekers allowances, which he explores in microscopic detail in the latter part of his book. He also raises the growing influence of marketisation on the Irish Welfare State, which has led some critics to call it a 'Competition State'. Clearly, there are also Asiatic influences as the Celtic Tiger metaphor suggests. It would have greatly added to the value of the book if the author had addressed the potential consequences of marketisation, including the concerns of critics of the Irish Welfare State that it is a 'failure' or a 'Competition State' or a development-led welfare productivist model like the Far East? It is undoubtedly an enigma. McCashin deserves credit for seeking to explain the Irish Welfare State in his worthy contribution.

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Kelly Bogue (2019), *The Divisive State of Social Policy: The 'Bedroom Tax', Austerity and Housing Insecurity*, Bristol: Policy Press, £75.00, pp. 204, hbk.
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Who has suffered most under the austerity agenda in the UK? Kelly Bogue makes a powerful case for the claim that social housing tenants have experienced the greatest hardship. She sets the Coalition government's 'bedroom tax' — otherwise known as the 'under-occupancy charge' or 'spare room subsidy removal' — in the contexts of 'Life without State-supported housing'; 'Living in a state of insecurity' and 'Community and belonging', to name some of the chapter headings.

The housing literature is replete with accounts of the bedroom tax and its impact but the distinctive contribution of 'The Divisive State of Social Policy: The 'Bedroom Tax', Austerity and Housing Insecurity' lies in the detailed narrative of how the tax influenced the lives of the people living in an area where social housing was the dominant tenure.

Bogue's research methods were participant observation during bedroom tax implementation, interviews with selected tenants and meetings with key officials. The approach has produced a vivid account of the impact of the bedroom tax from the tenants' perspective and has captured the complex interactive decision-making processes involved in downsizing or staying and paying.

The bedroom tax rationale was an attempt to make better use of the national social housing stock, to be achieved by imposing financial penalties on under-occupied homes. However, downsizing was not an option for households with rent arrears as the local authority had an 'arrears, no move' policy and moving was very difficult for all due to the shortage of smaller houses. People who managed to downsize lost a home and sometimes an association with