

The approach taken by many of the contributors in explaining precarity could also be used to examine the wider implications of migration and the labour market.

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Clément Carbonnier and Nathalie Morel (eds.) (2015), *The Political Economy of Household Services in Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, £51.99, pp. 288, hbk.  
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This collection is about a set of policy instruments, recently developed in northern Europe, that have had little discussion to date. These are public subsidies, most often delivered as employment vouchers or tax concessions, to support the provision of services within private households. The services concerned include both care for children and elderly people and more general household services such as cleaning and home maintenance. The analysis shows these policies to be constructing a new sector of welfare state provision. The policy significance of its creation, and the political claims that have driven it, go beyond social needs to economic concerns with employment and post-industrial economic transformation. The editors and contributors show support for household services emerging from political arguments about fostering employment, especially among low skilled women, curbing informal labour markets, and enabling the economic assimilation of unskilled immigrants.

Focusing on France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Finland and Sweden, the book sees the subsidised development of household services as a response to the post-industrial trajectories of countries with high levels of unemployment yet high wages even for unskilled work. In the case of the northern European welfare states, familism has truncated their capacities to address work-life balance, and subsidised services are largely in care work. In the Nordic states, heavy reliance on public services has made it costly to extend the service sector to household services, and take-up of subsidised arrangements is primarily in cleaning and other domestic tasks. The authors' aim, superbly achieved, is to offer a new political economy of household services. The book is divided into sections containing chapters analysing the politics generating subsidies and tax breaks, the resulting employment, and the distribution of benefits and costs to the public purse in these countries. The introduction and eleven chapters are well written and empirically rich, and the whole is exceptionally coherent. I would have liked to see a concluding chapter from the editors with more extended discussion of the implications of their findings for future welfare state development.

The household services sector that the authors identify stands out in two dimensions, especially viewed from the liberal perspectives of English-speaking countries. First, it defines a universe of service provision that crosses the conventional divide between matters of public and private concern. As governments have responded to new social needs it has become common for states to cross this divide with support for the care of persons dependent on others, as children, in old age, or with disabilities. The wider range of services encompassed by household services, e.g. domestic cleaning, ironing, gardening, home maintenance and repairs, IT support provided without concern for social need, does not carry the same force of moral justification for the expenditure of taxpayer funds. The public subsidies encouraging households to buy such services come without considerations of social need. Taking place in private homes, household services are subject to little regulation with respect to the protection of vulnerable clients or the safety and labour standards of the workers.

Second, the construction of this household services sector is all about women yet not about gender reform. The policy objectives behind these developments revolve around women's

employment, as workers in formal employment, family members assisted with the care of family members, and professional women enabled to make full use of their skills. The aim is to create a market for formal employment, reducing the attractions of informal arrangements and making services affordable. The policy logic gives thin regard to feminist aspirations for equality in the gender division of labour and equal access to career employment and economic independence. The employment is fragmented, with poor pay, part-time engagements and unpaid elements such as travel time. The merging of care and general services in a single sector obscures differences in the skills required in the two domains, undermining the professionalization of care work.

The particularities of policy arrangements vary from country to country. Fewer care services are covered in Belgium, while Austria's scheme supports 24-hour live-in care by migrant carers on two-week shifts before returning to their home countries. Employment arrangements are more closely governed in Belgium, Finland, Germany and Sweden than in Austria and France. The levels and mechanisms of subsidy vary considerably. There is greater consistency in the patterns of outcomes. Employment conditions are generally poor, while the beneficiaries of service provision are disproportionately in higher income groups. Across the countries, the policies themselves are popular with the public and have come to be supported by parties of both left and right. For this reason, they are probably here to stay. If the welfare effects are perverse, the economic outcomes are little better.

The case studies presented in the present volume show that current policies have sought to foster low-end service sector jobs by lowering the cost of labour; in doing this, they subsidize the development of sectors characterised by low productivity and low-quality jobs. Furthermore, this is done at high public cost, relative to the actual costs of such jobs. In many countries, the schemes reach a particularly inefficient level of eligible yearly expenses, the windfall effects being so important that the marginal public cost per job created greatly exceeds the real costs of such jobs (p. 30).

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Ross Fergusson (2016), *Young People, Welfare and Crime: Governing Non-Participation*, Bristol: Policy Press, £70.00, pp. 300, hbk.

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In this book, Ross Fergusson sets about exploring not only the failure of UK youth policy to respond to young people's situations arising from the recent GFC but also how youth 'unemployment' and 'non-participation' has become increasingly marginalised and criminalised by social policy. Drawing on evidence from a wide range of disciplines and international empirical sources and with a strong theoretical framework he sets about illuminating how governments have continually operated in ways that ignore the needs of young people in these difficult and challenging times. In this process he shows how specific understandings, discourses and policy frameworks constantly re-frame young people as a problem to be managed. One of his core claims draws attention to how the disciplines of social science are '... ill-prepared to address the sources of the crisis of non-participation, and unable to propose policies capable of stemming endemic, ubiquitous mass non-participation.' (p. 12) Throughout his analysis he continually shows the ways that academic approaches have