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*The Europeanization of Social Protection.* Jon Kvist  
and Juho Saari, Editors.

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Jon Kvist & Juho Saari (Eds.). *The Europeanization of Social Protection*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2007. \$39.95 papercover, \$99.00 cloth.

European social policy is often idealized in international social welfare circles. The so-called "welfare state" with its imagery of generous entitlements and right-based social welfare is largely conceptualized with reference to European social policy. In much of the international literature, the Europeans are regarded as welfare leaders whose achievements should be emulated. Many social policy scholars use Europe as a reference point for analyzing and proposing social policy innovations in their own countries and many think it highly desirable that social policy everywhere should conform to the European "welfare state" model.

Therefore, it will come as something of a surprise to learn that there are, as this informative book reveals, huge differences between the social policies of different European countries and that there is, in fact, no standardized European social policy model. Indeed, the book shows that it is largely due to the European Union that efforts are being made to promote a model of this kind. Actually, these efforts began many years ago but have so far not succeeded in "Europeanizing" social policy and particularly Europe's income protection programs. Nevertheless, through various treaties, conventions and administrative actions, the European Union is making some progress in harmonizing the social policies of its member states and promoting the adoption of a European social model.

The book is based on papers presented as a conference in November 2006, organized by the European Union under the initiative of the Finnish Presidency. The purpose of the conference was to document variations in social security in the Union's different member states, to define the notion of a European social model (or ESM) and to consider the ways in which social policy between the member states could be standardized to conform to this model. The editors point out at the outset that social policy is the responsibility of the member states and that in terms of various European treaties, the Union cannot prescribe the adoption of social policies in these states or even use its legislative authority to require them to

standardize and harmonize their welfare systems. Nor can it establish its own social policies. Nevertheless, member states may voluntarily cooperate to promote greater standardization.

Most of the book consists of country case studies that describe the social policy approaches used in the different member nations and consider the extent to which their governments are willing to foster the greater integration and harmonization of income protection. As was noted earlier, major differences in the social policies of different countries are documented, and the editors suggest that there are significant challenges ahead if the goal of Europeanization is to be realized.

This is an informative book which will serve as a useful reference for anyone interested in developments in social policy in Europe today. The creation of the European Union is obviously an achievement of major international significance and the extent to which social policy can be integrated among its diverse member states will be of great significance to international social welfare scholarship. Although it is clear that the European social model is still a poorly defined ideal, efforts to enhance international cooperation in social policy in Europe have lessons for other parts of the world as well.

Charles N. Darrah, James M. Freeman & J. A. English-Leuck.  
*Busier Than Ever: Why American Families Can't Slow Down.*  
Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007. \$19.95  
papercover.

There has been much discussion in recent years around the increasingly busy nature of American family life, from "overworked" parents to "overscheduled" children. Interestingly, however, there is little consensus in the literature that work is taking over home life or that children are lacking time with parents. Some studies suggest that Americans are working longer hours than ever, while others find Americans enjoying more leisure time than ever; other studies likewise report that parents actually spend more time with their children today than in times past. How does one explain such contradictions?

The authors of *Busier Than Ever* might argue that, in part, it's because busyness has not been studied appropriately, or