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Review of *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*. Marisa Chappell. Reviewed by John M. Herrick.

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awarded by FEMA went to minority businesses, less than a third of the 5 percent normally required by law.”

The parts of the book discussing the environmental damage left in the wake of the levees' breaking offers cold comfort to communities being damaged by the BP spill. After Katrina, rather than work to clean up New Orleans neighborhoods, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) spent years making the case to leave the contamination as is!

State and federal governments remain ill prepared to deal with massive environmental disasters. The BP debacle and Katrina disproportionately affect the lives of poor and working class people. Just as there were no contingencies in place in August 2005 to handle the assault on peoples' lives, little is being done to make right the uprooted lives of people awash this time in filthy oil. The sorry state of the government's response post-Katrina offers little cause for optimism today as the very same region of the U.S. struggles with what is another preventable environmental disaster, which has the gravest of consequences on low-income communities and people of color.

Robert Forrant, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. \$45.00 hardcover.

The history of public welfare in the second half of the twentieth century, Chappell argues, reveals a complex and unsettling story of policy making based on ideologically driven agendas that used the poor as proxies in struggles to capture the American imagination and the structures of the American state. President Clinton promised “to end welfare as we know it,” and in 1996 when he signed the Personal Responsibility Work and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWOA), he ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), overturning sixty years of federal responsibility for poor children and their caregivers. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), AFDC's successor, provided block grants to states for public assistance, effectively devolving responsibility for

the poor to states and counties. Using archival collections and the vast secondary literature on welfare, Chappell focuses on the years from 1964 to 1984 and unravels the complex social, economic and political factors leading to AFDC's demise. As a controversial public assistance program, AFDC symbolized the nation's old skepticism about welfare and fears about the pernicious effects of assistance on the poor such as dependency and illegitimacy, reminiscent of older anxieties about the need to dispense charity and assistance only to the worthy poor. In Chappell's narrative, the worthy poor are those who conform to a family model consisting of a male breadwinner and a dependent female homemaker with children. AFDC was symbolically important, she argues, since it violated the family ideal by supporting nontraditional families headed by unmarried women.

1960s liberal thought about poverty often coupled race and gender in antipoverty proposals. The influential liberal Daniel P. Moynihan, studying poverty, concluded African American female-headed families could not adequately socialize young men since they needed male role models, resulting in demoralization and antisocial behavior. Despite well-founded dissent from this disparaging perspective on female-headed families, it shaped Great Society antipoverty efforts aimed at perpetuating the male breadwinner family model among welfare recipients. Even in the 1960s, Chappell argues, that model was becoming unrealistic, as fewer male heads of families earned enough to support a traditional family. In the 1970s and 1980s, increasing family diversity owing to divorce and single parenthood and changing gender expectations shaped by the sexual revolution and the women's movement further weakened the traditional family ideal. By the end of the 1980s fewer than 20 percent of families consisted of male breadwinners with dependent family members. Nevertheless, Chappell argues, the preservation of that ideal was central to welfare reform through the 1990s. Many in the loose, liberal antipoverty coalition supported President Nixon's Family Assistance Plan, which promised a guaranteed income to shore up the social safety net by aiding poor two parent families. They deliberately ignored AFDC and its stigmatized recipients, she argues, in order to build alliances with white working class

families to shore up their political base. Conservatives appropriated liberal concerns about AFDC and its supposed pernicious social effects as they attacked welfare during the late 1970s and 1980s. Liberal feminists and welfare recipients did respond to the “feminization of poverty” and argued, unsuccessfully, for a comprehensive strategy of jobs and services to help poor women escape poverty. A fragmented welfare coalition could not withstand the wholesale attack on AFDC and welfare mounted by President Reagan. By the 1990s, “welfare as we know it” had few supporters. The elimination of AFDC and the arrival of TANF saw welfare rolls plummet as accessibility to welfare was restricted.

The Great Recession has created poverty and families headed by single mothers have been especially damaged. What is the future of antipoverty efforts? Chappell finds hope in “living wage” campaigns and efforts to create accessible day care and creative workplace arrangements for working poor women who lost the AFDC safety net in the 1990s. She argues that a renewed social commitment to address poverty based on an ethic of communal social responsibility could overcome reluctance to accept today’s diverse family relationships and a perhaps portend a willingness to acknowledge the needs of the new poor. This book is an important and provocative analysis of our long-standing ambivalence towards the poor.

John M. Herrick, Michigan State University

Birgit Pfau-Effinger, Lluís Flaquer and Per H. Jensen, Eds.,
Formal and Informal Work: The Hidden Work Regime in Europe.
New York: Routledge, 2009. \$105.00 hardcover.

The current economic crisis has again focused attention on the challenge of maintaining a sufficient number of regular, well-paid jobs that generate the incomes families need to meet their everyday needs. As unemployment has soared, governments have scrambled to introduce measures to stem and hopefully reverse the recent precipitous fall in employment opportunities. However, the recession obscures the fact that regular, formal paid employment in the Western countries has been in decline for many years and that increasing numbers of