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**Review of *Formal and Informal Work: The Hidden Work Regime in Europe*. Birgit Pfau-Effinger, Lluís Flaquer and Per H. Jensen, Eds.  
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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

people now engage in self-employment, temporary work and "informal work."

This book examines how formal and informal work now characterize economic activities in six European countries where concerns about declining job opportunities and related labor market issues have dominated social policy debates for many years. The contributors investigate the nature and extent of formal and informal work and compare differences among these countries. They are particularly interested in how informal work finds expression in care-giving, primarily by women. It has long been known that women make a major contribution to caring not only for children but also for elders and that they usually do so without recognition or compensation. The contributors pay close attention to the way care-giving is associated with informal work in different countries and the extent to which it is recognized by governments and incorporated into official labor policies.

The book begins with an overview by the editors that offers a working definition of the concepts of formal and informal work. They define formal work as regular paid employment regulated by a legal framework involving contracts, tax obligations and membership in statutory occupational retirement and related social programs. Informal work refers to all labor activities that take place outside this legal framework. Generally it takes two forms: first, undeclared work associated with "moonlighting" and the underground economy and second, unpaid work, including care-giving and other labor activities that take place within the context of the family and household. Voluntary work for nonprofit organizations, given within what the editors call the "community economy," is also defined as informal work. However, these different ideal types are fluid and often overlap, particularly as they have become subject to government policy. For example, child care has become increasingly formalized, subsidized and controlled by statutory regulation. The editors note that these definitions need to be linked to wider theoretical interpretations of countries' state welfare and work-family arrangements.

Armed with these definitions and conceptual tools, the contributors review developments in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Britain, Spain and Poland. Each country case study is based

on extensive statistical information about employment trends, augmented with qualitative household interviews. Mindful of the cultural and institutional frameworks governing employment and work in each country, the editors conclude the book by formulating an interesting cross-national comparison showing differences in the extent and types of work in the six countries. For example, they find that informal work is widespread in Spain and Poland and where it is culturally embedded and socially acceptable. There, informal work relates both to undeclared work and to care-giving in the extended family based on cultural expectations concerning women's roles. However, they point out that increasing labor force participation by women is reducing the extent of family-based care-giving. Also, with the extension of government involvement, particularly in Spain, care-giving is becoming increasingly formalized. On the other hand, the incidence of informal work is lowest in Denmark and Finland even though voluntary work is quite common. In both countries, care-giving is widely supported and formalized by the state. Britain and Germany occupy the middle ground between the two with moderate levels of informal work. These findings have significance for social policy in the European nations, where a more nuanced approach towards understanding the nature of informal work and its relation to poverty, especially among immigrants, is needed.

This is an interesting and highly informative book, providing important insights into the nature of informal work in Europe today. Undeclared, informal work has previously been viewed as a phenomenon associated with the developing countries but, as the book reveals, it is also widespread in the Western countries. However, because the extent of undeclared work is not fully appreciated, it remains a neglected aspect of employment policy. The book also makes a major contribution to understanding informal care-giving by women, and it shows that policies are badly needed to supplement and reward these activities. The book is thoroughly researched, well grounded in theory and is an indispensable resource for anyone interested in issues of employment and work today.

*James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley*