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## Review of *Changing Welfare States*. Anton Hemerijck. Reviewed by James Midgley.

James Midgley  
*University of California, Berkeley*

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Anton Hemerijck, *Changing Welfare States*. Oxford University Press (2013). \$40.00 (paperback).

How government welfare policies change over time has been a neglected topic in social policy scholarship. Instead, the use of static models and the field's typological preoccupations have deflected attention from the volatile nature of social and economic change and its impact on social policy. This is the case even in countries that are widely regarded as exemplars of stable welfare statism, such as the European "welfare states." Although welfare regime classifications are now widely popular, they have been seen as static, although they have been dramatically affected by change. As the region has experienced the ravages of the Great Recession, the imposition of austerity policies, high unemployment, falling living standards, insecurity and rising tensions over immigration and national identity, there is an obvious need for social policy scholars to focus attention on change.

It is in this context that Hemerijck's book on welfare change in Europe is to be welcomed. Basing his analysis in comparative welfare state analysis inspired by historical institutional scholarship, the author discusses the way European governments, in concert with the European Union, have modified their social policies to respond to change and new economic realities. He points out that much of the earlier literature on welfare change was concerned with the retrenchment of government social policy and the so-called crisis in welfare but notes that European welfare states have been resilient, adjusting to what is sometimes referred to as "permanent austerity." However, he points out that a new approach in European social policy with the potential to transcend the impasse has emerged over the last decade. This approach harnesses the power of economic development for social ends and promotes economic participation rather than passive receipt of welfare benefits. The author uses the term "social investment" to characterize this trend. Reflected in the Lisbon Treaty of 2000, and also in the way a number of governments have adopted active labor market policies and expanded child care, the social investment "turn" offers a way out of permanent austerity.

Inspired by the regime theory framework, Hemerijck conceptualizes the evolution of European social policy from its

immediate postwar “Golden Age” to the recent emergence of social investment in terms of a stadial model in which social policy change is seen as moving coherently through three phases: first, universalism driven by Keynesian economics and Beveridgean social insurance; second, the neoliberalism, dominated by neoclassical economics, marketization and budgetary retrenchment; and third, “the social investment turn.” The three waves, the author suggests, represent an incremental recalibration of welfare regimes reflective of a normative commitment to gradually achieving social policy goals through a process described as open institutionalism. These phases provide a framework for analyzing a number of issues affecting European social policy such as the factors responsible for change, the impact of social policy on standards of living and social well-being, the role of the European Union and the effects of the current recession. The book concludes with a careful examination of the social investment approach, which Hemerijck contends comprises an affordable and defensible normative basis for European social policy.

The author ranges over many complex issues that reveal his mastery of the field and deep appreciation of the complexities of social policy in Europe. He makes a major contribution to current debates about social policy’s historic and likely future trajectory, not only in Europe, but around the world, where much of the literature continues to repeat the now rather tired “welfare crisis” cliché. Although he does not understandably pay much attention to developments in other countries, his interpretation of welfare change has international value. It is in this regard that his use of the concept of social investment is particularly important. However, his analysis would benefit from an examination of the ways this concept has been used outside of Europe and particularly in the developing world. Suggesting that social investment is a new feature of social policy, he does not recognize that it has been used in the social development literature for many decades, encapsulated in the notion of “welfare developmentalism,” particularly by East Asian writers, where debates about welfare productivism have been prominent. This oversight is a pity, because Hemerijck’s commitment to what he calls “affordable social investment” could be enhanced by closer collaboration with colleagues from the developing world who have for many years now

advocated the reformulation of traditional Eurocentric welfare state models to incorporate social investment features.

Nevertheless, this is an important book that will stimulate critical debate on a number of issues. The author's use of data is extensive and impressive, and his thorough knowledge and documentation of European social policy, will be a major resource for international social policy scholars who wish to understand the complexities of recent trends in the region; the author is to be commended for putting welfare change at the center of his account. It is hoped that his book will foster a more dynamic approach in the field that needs to address the volatile and chaotic nature of change in the light of recent events. If combined with the now extensive scholarship on social investment in the developing world, it may also contribute to the formulation of a One World perspective, combining the analytical insights as well as normative commitments of scholars from different nations. This has the potential to inform global social policy and benefit the world's people as a whole.

*James Midgley, School of Social Welfare,  
University of California, Berkeley*

Jennifer M. Silva, *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty*. Oxford University Press (2013). \$29.95 (hardcover).

*Coming Up Short* is a brief, but powerful, update of the status, difficulties, behaviors and distresses that characterize the lives of young working class adults. Based on in-depth interviews with 100 subjects, both White and African American, the book is—among other things—a reminder of the power of qualitative research, where the subjects' statements and the vignettes about them poignantly document a number of themes in a way that statistical tables could not.

Silva is consciously updating the classic sociological studies of Sennet and Cobb's *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (1972) and Rubin's *Worlds of Pain* (1976). Her findings document lives as circumscribed as the subjects of those earlier studies but are totally different: where working class men and women formerly led gendered and role-ascribed lives characterized by narrow choices and feelings of defeat and duty, today's young