and domineering, but horizontally inclined, meaning it can successfully engage social, economic, and cultural agents' (p. 120).

This last quotation highlights the tension which runs through this book and which it is completely incapable of overcoming. This is because the tension actually cannot be overcome. On one hand, Innerarity offers a subtle and insightful sociology of the present and its problems with the future. On the other hand, he does this in order to recuperate a normative understanding of democratic politics that is tied to a functionalist systems theory. On one hand, he seeks to understand the world, on the other, he knows what the system needs if it is to function in and for the future.

Innerarity is extremely fond of statements about 'what is needed', what 'we must' do, and so on. From the point of view of the functioning system, these normative claims make sense. Furthermore, Innerarity's much used category of 'we' does not need to be specified or even conceptualised because it is presumed to be self-evidently identical with the constituency of those who are agents within the system. There is no outside. The problem is that it is quite impossible to identify any basis upon which 'what is needed' or what 'we must' do might possibly be realised. The only basis Innerarity can identify is a 'reasonable hope' (p. 124) that we might learn to treat our future reasonably and 'beneficially' (p. 123). Presumably, the 'beneficial' is to be defined as 'that which is of assistance to the futurity of the reproduction of the functioning system'.

Innerarity is able to avoid any full confrontation with the problem of how the 'what is needed' might achieve the transition to the 'what is done' because he is concerned with democracy as the ideal-typical politics of a functional system. Accordingly, questions of power, economics, interest, mendacity, and corruption are simply ignored. In the contemporary situation, he says, politics has 'the function' of 'the civilized management of disagreements regarding the concerns and conceptions of public interest' (p. 94). From a normative point of view, this claim is understandable. It is indeed the foundation of an impeccably democratic politics. Unfortunately, it is a politics unlikely ever to be practised. In the conditions of neo-liberalism, politics is about state-corporatist hegemony (where the state provides the coercion to defend the corporatist common sense) in the service of the management of the extraction of private profit from public goods.

Keith Tester
University of Hull
K.Tester@hull.ac.uk

Clare L. Stacey: ***The Caring Self: The Work Experiences of Home Care Aids***
Ithaca, NY, 2011: Cornell University Press, 199 pp.

Employed carers providing care in people's own homes are usually covered in a shroud of invisibility because of their gender, relative low-earnings, and social status. The duties they perform are often seen as menial and take place within the confines of the walls of the houses of the people they care for. It is this shroud of invisibility that in *The Caring Self* Clare Stacey aims to unclothe by giving a voice to those working in the home care sector. The book is the result of an analysis of 33 in-depth interviews with workers at three home care agencies, one public and two private for-profit, in the US states of California and Ohio and the close observation of their working conditions and relationships with users.

Stacey begins by depicting the life trajectories or paths of carers: how they came to perform these tasks. For the most part, interviewed carers came from disadvantaged backgrounds and their care trajectories are a tale of constrained choices, often linked to ingrained social norms that still

portray care as a woman's realm: 'But to give myself a title? No. Females *are* caregivers.' (p. 109; emphasis in the original) Paid care is often seen as a natural next step for carers with accumulated experience looking after their own children or relatives. Some have had previous spells of employment working in institutional care. And while sometimes carers shifted to other low-paid jobs outside the care sector, or to unemployment, there is a strong continuity in the life trajectories of these carers. Working in the care sector is thus much more than a stop-gap between jobs, but it is hardly seen as a career either. The carers depicted in this book often change employer, and high staff turnover in this sector is one of the often cited policy challenges affecting long-term care. Still, the carers interviewed for this book linger in the care sector. Not because it is a career choice, but because of what they see as their calling, their natural predisposition for caring: 'I believe that it's a gift. It can be learned but everybody don't have the patience for it.' (p. 108)

The author then moves to depict the conditions under which carers work in people's own homes. There is a palpable sense of care exerting a physical and mental burden on carers. Work conditions are hard, with carers on almost permanent duty, performing tasks that go well beyond their job description or training. One can argue that this is not particularly new or specific to US reality, but what Stacey points out is another side to the work of home carers, the 'emotional work' that care entails. The author rightly links this to Arlie Russell Hochschild's [1983] concept of 'emotional labour'. Carers, similarly to waiters and flight attendants, must manage their emotions in order to create a particular feeling of warmth, of concern and caring for the person cared for. Unlike these professions, however, the emotional labour attached to care runs both deeper and longer, leading carers to forge 'fictive kinships' with patients.

It is clear that this emotional labour can generate alienation, as pointed out originally by Hochschild, and contribute to the emotional burden associated with caring. Furthermore, the 'fictive kinships' forged with patients expose carers to feelings of grief when patients pass way. Given such hardships and the low pay that comes with the job, why do carers continue to work in the home care sector? This is the subject of the book's third chapter. Here, Stacey finds that the emotional labour of care is also central to carers' narratives on the rewards of caring. Sure enough, carers value the functional autonomy that home care allows them, in comparison with the managed environment of nursing homes. But what seems central to the construct of their identity as carers is the relational aspects of care. Carers see themselves as nurturing and servicing others, as caring about their patients, sometimes above and beyond of what the relatives do. It is their gift or calling and not surprisingly this is sometimes narrated using religious associations and images—'a gift from God' (p. 40)—or intertwined with questions of ethnicity such as when carers claim to have a greater predisposition for caring precisely because of their ethnic background. As Stacey is careful to point out, 'such a story affirms that workers can indeed secure dignity and a sense of worth in socially devaluated or "tainted" occupations' (p. 136). It also highlights that working in the home care sector is not only about the (meagre) material conditions, but also about the non-material rewards. The downside to this is that when carers 'are not in it for the money' they risk overlooking the use of levers that could help them to secure higher wages.

The short fourth chapter of the book thus turns to case studies of experiences of unionisation—precisely one of the levers for improving carers' wages—of home care workers in the two US states covered in this study and the views of interviewed carers on unions. It is clear that the unionisation

of home carers faces important challenges. It is not so much that carers disdain higher wages and better working conditions, but this is a fragmented and 'invisible' sector, hard for union representatives to reach. Furthermore, carers do not always have a favourable opinion of unions, seeing them as another imposed constraint on their work. Stacey argues that the relational aspect of care, central to carers, must also become central to unions if these are to succeed in harnessing their support.

In her conclusions, Clare Stacey highlights that the relational nature of home care places it somewhere between paid labour and the filial duties of families. In the US, precisely because providing companionship is so central to the activity of home carers, the sector is not covered by the mainstream legislation that guarantees minimum working conditions and protects workers' health and well-being. We could add to Stacey's arguments that this ironically named 'companionship exemption' is not exclusive to the United States, however. In Austria, recent reforms sought to formalise the status of live-in home carers of migrant background who provide care around the clock and who had previously worked in the grey market. The law that was enacted is in itself an exception, for it allows home carers to work 128 hours over a 14-day periods, well above what is permitted in any other sector.

Clare Stacey's book succeeds in giving a voice to US-based home carers and showing how the relational aspects of care take central stage in their narratives and in the construct of their identities as workers. The author is also very much on target in highlighting the ambivalent impact that the relational aspects may have in shaping home carers' working conditions. On the one hand, it is an important non-monetary reward that policy-makers should bear in mind. But on the other hand, it may contribute to justifying the views of 'why a badly paid nurse is a good nurse' [Heyes 2004] by those that contend that money should not spoil the altruistic motives for caring.

The approach and findings of Clare Stacey's research, relevant as they certainly are, could nevertheless have benefited from a more developed framework of analysis that includes, for example, the discussion around power, mutual dependencies and asymmetries inherent to caring relationships that have been put forward by the disability rights movement in their calls for independent living and the feminist critique, as well as Granovetter's concept of socially embedded choice. This could have contributed to make better sense of the constrained choices made by carers.

For example, Eva Kittay [1999] unromantically pointed out that there are underlying power tensions behind caring relationships, characterised by mutual dependencies and asymmetries. The carer is materially dependent on the patient (or the home care agency acting as the employer) for her wages, but this is balanced by the fact that the patient depends on the carer for the fulfilment of her basic needs. This is far more than a give and take relationship since the responsibility to provide care comes with strong social norms. Precisely because capacities for care are asymmetric, caring may grow to become a moral obligation, with women feeling particularly constrained by these social norms [Andreoni and Vesterlund 2001]. Beyond their altruistic values, strong social norms thus help to explain why carers provide care above and beyond their call of duty or do so even when subject to deteriorating working conditions or abuse by patients or their family members.

The Caring Self provides an important contribution to the understanding of the motivations and constraints facing carers employed by home care agencies. For the European audience it is an interesting supplement to the literature on the commodification of care [Ungerson 1997] and read-

ers will find many points in common with the European reality of long-term care provision, not least since most carers are women and many among them migrants. Unfortunately, lower wages and lower status are also among the common points that readers will find between carers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ricardo Rodrigues
European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna
rodrigues@euro.centre.org

References

Andreoni, J. and L. Vesterlund. 2001. 'Which Is the Fair Sex? Gender Differences in Preferences.' *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116 (1): 292–312.

Heyes, A. 2005. 'The Economics of Vocation or "Why Is a Badly Paid Nurse a Good Nurse?"' *Journal of Health Economics* 24 (3): 561–569.

Hochschild, A. R. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Kittay, E. F. 1999. *Love's Labor. Essays on Women, Equality and Dependency*. New York: Routledge.

Ungerson, C. 1997. 'Social Politics and the Commodification of Care.' *Social Politics* 4 (3): 362–381.

Petr Kopecký, Peter Mair and Maria Spirova (eds.): *Party Patronage and Party Government in European Democracies*

Oxford 2012: Oxford University Press, 434 pp.

Here is a challenge: how would one design the model piece of research in comparative politics? First the topic. It would have to be a foundational but also—and this part is key!—seemingly intractable problem in the field, one that has sparked several generations of literature and debate. This problem should encompass a complex, multi-faceted political phenomenon involving multiple actors; it should be at least partially amenable to (competing) economic and sociological explanations; and it should be something that participants and observers often describe in terms of culture. To really make things interesting, this phenomenon should also possess a whiff of the illicit, making it hard to observe directly.

Having identified such a topic, the next step would be to collect data—original data, needless to say. Because we are thinking in the realm of the ideal here, the data should be cross-national. The number of cases should be large enough to quiet any critics of small-N analysis. Yet because there are strong arguments to be made that case-specific dynamics are in play, the data collection will require deep knowledge of local context, history, and language. At this point, it is clear that we are not talking about a researcher but a research team. Since this is (for now) a thought experiment, let us specify that each country case in the study will have its own researcher, or even researchers, who can collect original data using the requisite languages and who understand(s) each case's intricacies and historical context. To ensure that the case studies are comparable, let us require that the researchers agree on a common research protocol. They use the same definitions; ask the same questions in their interviews; study the same institutions; and employ the same measures.

It is the rare work that meets these standards. Happily, Kopecký, Mair, and Spirova's study of political party patronage in Europe is one of them. Patronage politics is surely the kind of beguiling but elusive topic just described, and equally surely, this book will stand as the most definitive empirical account of the phenomenon, at least in Europe, for the foreseeable future. Simply showing that it is possible to make sense of the hugely diverse range of patronage politics encompassed within Europe using one analytical framework is an act of theoretical daring. Yet, as I will describe below, the authors also make a