



The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State (Oxford Handbooks in Politics and International Relations)

Francis G. Castles, Stephan Leibfried, Jane Lewis, Herbert Obinger, Christopher Pierson

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The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State is the authoritative and definitive guide to the contemporary welfare state. In a volume consisting of nearly fifty newly-written chapters, a broad range of the world's leading scholars offer a comprehensive account of everything one needs to know about the modern welfare state. The *Handbook* is divided into eight sections. It opens with three chapters that evaluate the philosophical case for (and against) the welfare state. Surveys of the welfare state's history and of the approaches taken to its study are followed by four extended sections, running to some thirty-five chapters in all, which offer a comprehensive and in-depth survey of our current state of knowledge across the whole range of issues that the welfare state embraces. The first of these sections looks at inputs and actors (including the roles of parties, unions, and employers), the impact of gender and religion, patterns of migration and a changing public opinion, the role of international organisations and the impact of globalization. The next two sections cover policy inputs (in areas such as pensions, health care, disability, care of the elderly, unemployment, and labour market activation) and their outcomes (in terms of inequality and poverty, macroeconomic performance, and retrenchment). The seventh section consists of seven chapters which survey welfare state experience around the globe (and not just within the OECD). Two final chapters consider questions about the global future of the welfare state.

The individual chapters of the *Handbook* are written in an informed but accessible way by leading researchers in their respective fields giving the reader an excellent and truly up-to-date knowledge of the area under discussion. Taken together, they constitute a comprehensive compendium of all that is best in contemporary welfare state research and a unique guide to what is happening now in this most crucial and contested area of social and political development.

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