



# **Normative Foundations of the Welfare State: The Nordic Experience (Routledge Studies in the Political Economy of the Welfare State)**

*By Nanna Kildal, Stein Kuhnle*

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This is a sharp analysis of the unique Nordic welfare system with urgent lessons for governments and societies across the globe.

Welfare programs and institutions tend to be analyzed as instrumental arrangements, overlooking the fact that welfare programs are essentially expressions of moral conceptions and values. This book recognises this distinction and offers analyses, perspectives and interpretations of the normative foundation of the 'Nordic welfare state model'.

These authors examine the main normative principles in this model, exploring their origins and the relationship between them. Paying particular attention to the principles of 'universalism', 'public responsibility for welfare', and 'work for all', they consider their significance for current welfare policy and question whether external economic and ideological pressures are threatening these principles. The book is divided into three clear parts:

- \*Part I considers the historical trajectories behind the Nordic welfare model
- \*Part II looks more specifically on normative tensions and dilemmas in current welfare policies with a focus on women friendly welfare, attitudes to basic income and alcohol and drug misuse
- \*Part III focuses on the possible change in the normative foundation of the Nordic welfare states

This book will be essential reading for researchers and students of the welfare state and also to those in the fields of social policy, comparative politics and political economy.

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#### Review

**'This is an important book as a valuable resource for policy makers who want to study and maybe appropriate the Nordic welfare model. Its in-depth material transmits the message that such a transformation is not straightforward. But it does provide the information to assess such a process.'** - *Yitzhak Berman, European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research*

**'The collection as a whole will be an invaluable resource for Scandinavianists and comparative welfare state researchers, especially the editors own introductory essay on The Nordic Welfare Model and the Idea of Universalism, which is quite simply the best chapter-length treatment of that topic I know.'** - *Political Studies Review*

#### About the Author

**Nanna Kildal** is a Researcher at Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies, University of Bergen. Her current research interests are normative studies of welfare policies and studies of policy transfer. She has written a number of articles on the 1990s welfare reforms in Europe and USA. **Stein Kuhnle** is Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Bergen. Among his recent publications in English are (ed.) *Survival of the European Welfare State* (Routledge, 2000); *The Nordic welfare state in a European context: dealing with new economic and ideological challenges in the 1990s*, European Review, Vol. 8, No. 3, 379-398 (2000); and *Democracy and Productive Welfare: European and Korean Welfare Policy Development in Perspective*, and *The Journal of the Korean Economy*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 59-83 (Spring 2002).

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