



# From a Welfare State to a Welfare Society

*John J. Rodger*

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The welfare state is being subjected to fundamental reappraisal. It is now commonly argued that modern Western societies require a new 'moral economy', whether one of rediscovered charity and family values and increased welfare pluralism, or of rebuilt communities and a welfare system which provides a 'hand up' rather than a 'hand out'.

But do contemporary societies have the social solidarity and infrastructure of caring networks to replace the overarching capacity of the state to deliver social welfare? This text critically assesses the range of academic and political argument and analysis that surround the much debated shift in responsibility for welfare from the state to civil society. It both charts the changing economic and political context of social policy at the beginning of the twenty-first century in an era of post-Fordism, post-emotionalism, globalisation and rising social exclusion, and it links its discussion of practical welfare policies with increasingly salient theoretical debates around, for instance, changing conceptions of citizenship, social solidarity and community.

From a Welfare State to a Welfare Society situates its analysis in the conflict between ideas from the present and past about the future. The clash between modernism, anti-modernism and post-modernism as ways of seeing and approaching social policy is a recurrent theme in the text, which centres on questions and debates of interest and value to a range of students of social policy, sociology and politics.

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