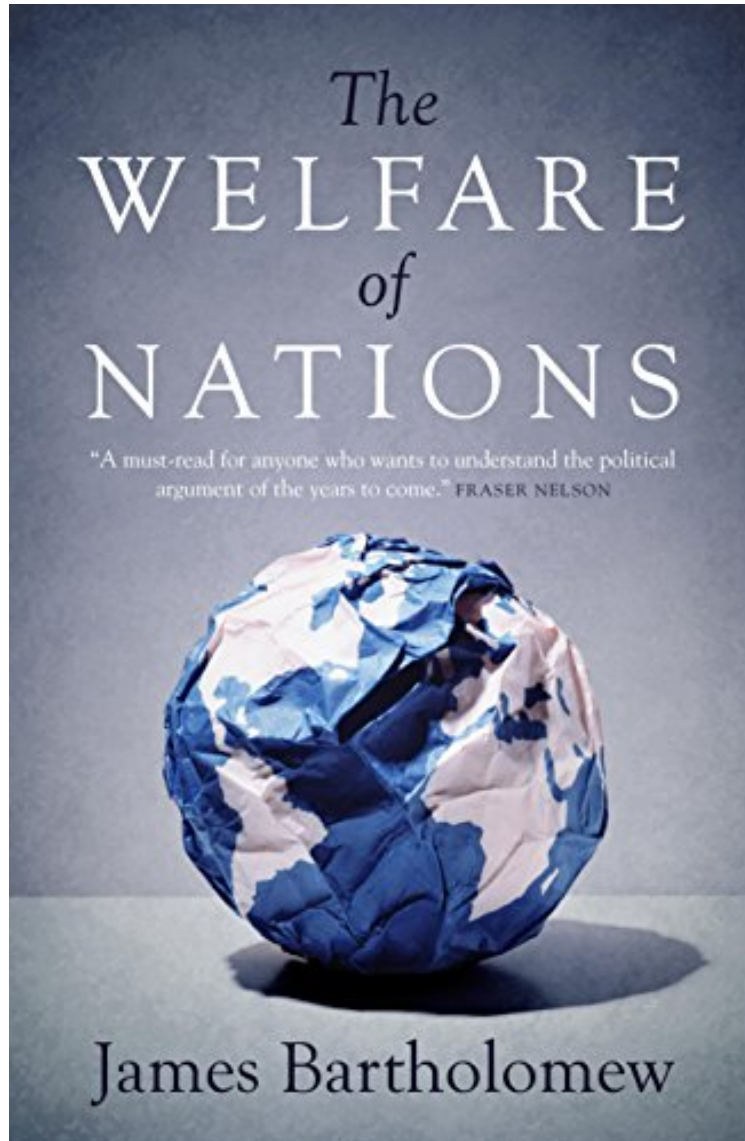


The Welfare of Nations

James Bartholomew

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James Bartholomew : The Welfare of Nations before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Welfare of Nations:

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. A Fascinating Tour de Force.By Ling KhongThis is an incisive and compellingly written review of how countries around the world have struggled with welfare policies. In search of best practice James Bartholomew examines schools, healthcare, pensions, public housing, unemployment benefits and other aspects of the panoply of policies which constitute the modern welfare state. From education in Australia and

Finland to housing policy in France, he persuasively draws conclusions and prescriptions for how well or badly our modern welfare states serve our citizens. Although thoroughly backed up with footnotes and references this is fast-paced, lucid, persuasive and often shocking. The book is packed with fascinating asides, quotations and illuminating personal stories. Never fear, this is not a compendium of dry policy wonk papers. He is particularly good at highlighting the often laughable unintended consequences of well meaning government policies. The discussion of the effects of welfare policies on civil behavior and less tangible qualities such as loneliness and happiness is perhaps the most original part of the book. And don't skip the Appendix. I suppose it is relegated to the back because it is somewhat off topic, but it is nonetheless a trenchant questioning of the currently fashionable belief that inequality is the root of societal unhappiness. Richard Wilkinson (*The Spirit Level*) and Thomas Piketty (*Capital in the Twenty-First Century*), please read this! Bartholomew shows that the evidence is much stronger that the clumsy welfare state is the more likely culprit. The supporting charts and tables are clear, but one quibble is that the photographs are poorly produced. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. he does identify what seems to work best, and comes up with recommendations on a way ...By david lupton A well written and persuasive book. He discusses the strength and weaknesses and the unintended consequences of government welfare policies in various fields - education, health, unemployment, care for the young, care for the aged, etc and illustrates these by comparing the policies adopted by countries across the world and their success or otherwise. Some of his findings maybe we thought we already knew - eg that countries that support unmarried mothers have a higher proportion of single parent families - others are surprising. While it is not difficult to descend into pessimism at times, he does identify what seems to work best, and comes up with recommendations on a way forward. Strongly recommended. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Encyclopedic - everything and more By history buff Everything (and a lot more) than you ever want to know about how welfare, usually with good intentions, has negatively impacted countries and people around the world. Encyclopedic. I thought I was reasonably well informed on the topic. I learned that I was not. It's very long. I had to fast forward sometimes. I find that I frequently search it on my iPad for information and facts.

Welfare states have spread across the globe, transforming modern civilization. But the take-over is often going badly. In Marseilles, armed drug gangs dominate the social housing estates. In America, an outstandingly wealthy country, 45 million people are dependent on food stamps. In Britain, the NHS has one of the worst records for cancer care in the advanced world. Many countries are collecting more than ever in taxes but managing to get deeper into debt because of their burgeoning welfare states. All around the world, culture is being damaged by welfare state dependency while governments become more and more like Big Brother, telling us what we must do. The twentieth century experienced an epochal war between capitalism and communism. Bartholomew argues that, out of the ashes of that conflict, the real winner has been neither communism nor capitalism. It has been welfare statism; the new, defining form of government of our age that has swept across the advanced world. Without any revolution or great theorist, welfare states are changing the nature of modern civilization. But in what ways? And what lessons can be learned before it is too late? James Bartholomew traveled around the world seeing how cultures and lives are being changed; seeing what is going wrong but also looking for countries where they are making better policy decisions. His book is an unparalleled investigation in which he tells the story of the people and places he visited. He takes the reader on a journey, which includes burnt-out cars in France, a tough-minded benefits office in Singapore and innovative hospitals in Spain.

This stands as a book which tells the hard truth about how welfare states are changing the world we live in. (Ron Haskins, Brookings Institution) About the Author James Bartholomew is a journalist and author. He started his career in banking and has since worked in financial, economic and comment journalism for a wide variety of newspapers and magazines. He has made numerous radio and television appearances and spoken at events around the world. He lives in London.