



# **Power and Welfare: Understanding Citizens' Encounters with State Welfare (Rotledge Advances in Health and Social Policy)**

*Nanna Mik-Meyer, Kaspar Villardsen*

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In the welfare provision of today, power takes both the shape of juridical sanctions and of attractive offers for self-development. When state institutions punish criminals, remove children at risk, or enforce sanctions upon welfare recipients the question of power is immediately urgent. It is less readily evident that power is at stake when institutions educate, counsel or 'empower' citizens. This book offers a framework for understanding and analyzing these complex and implicit forms of power at play in the encounters between citizens and welfare institutions.

Taking as its starting point the idea that power takes many different shapes, and that different approaches to power may be necessary in the diverse contexts where citizens encounter welfare professionals, the book demonstrates how significant social theorists, spanning from Goffman to Foucault, can be used for inquiries into these encounters. Guiding the reader from their epistemological foundations to lucid 'state of the art' case examples, the book unpacks each of its six theoretical perspectives, and explains selected key concepts and explicates their potential for analysis. The final chapter discusses the usefulness of the theoretical approaches, their weaknesses and indicates some possibilities of theoretical integration.

Including case studies of patients, nursing home residents, unemployed people, homeless people, and young offenders, from the USA, Denmark, France, Sweden, Canada, and Australia, *Power and Welfare* is designed for students and researchers of social policy, sociology, anthropology, political science, education, nursing and social work.

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