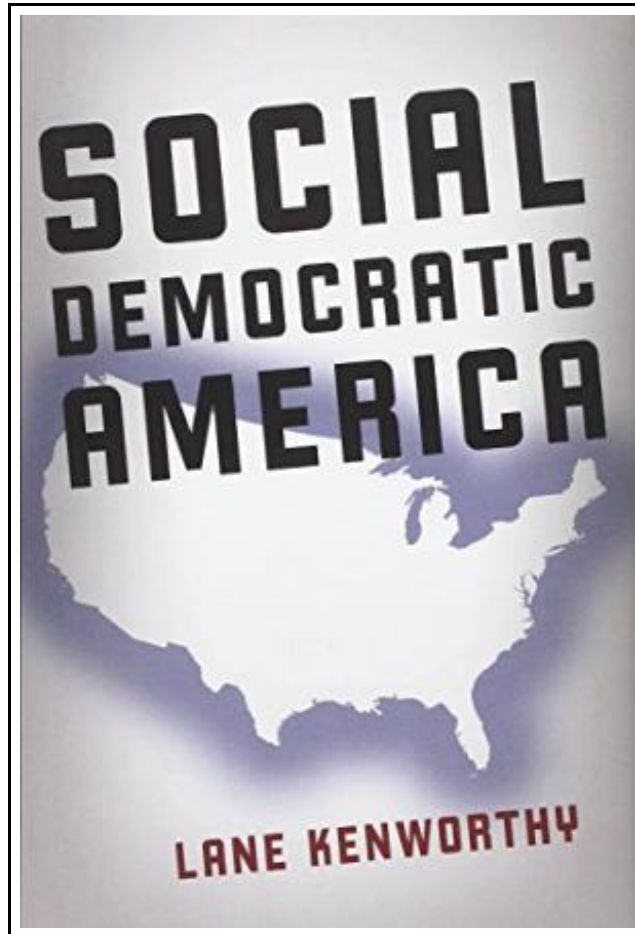


Social Democratic America



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Reviews

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Oxford University Press Inc. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Social Democratic America, Lane Kenworthy, For decades, scholars and commentators have differentiated the US from Europe by pointing to the relative weakness of the American social welfare state. European social democracies-particularly the Nordic ones-have erected broad and deep social insurance systems to buffer the effects of the capitalist marketplace, and as consequence virtually all citizens have access to housing, health care, and transfer payments that alleviate the effects of unemployment/underemployment. In combination, these policies have made Northern European societies among the most comfortable and egalitarian in human history. In contrast, conventional wisdom holds that America's patchwork welfare state, which only grudgingly redistributes income to the least wealthy, is miserly in comparison, more wedded to free market individualism than social solidarity. In Social Democratic America, the eminent scholar Lane Kenworthy has crafted the most definitive rejoinder yet to champions of American exceptionalism. He shows that in fact, the US is well along the path toward becoming a social democratic society. Certainly, it has moved in fits and starts, and our nation's peculiar federal structure has generated a number of cumbersome solutions for delivering social insurance. But over time it has delivered, and for every step backward, policymakers have crafted and passed policies that have moved the nation two steps forward toward social democracy. Built in bits and pieces, the modern US welfare state, while still less encompassing than European counterparts, is not only massive but expanding its reach. The evidence, which has accumulated over three quarters of a century, is now overwhelming: Social Security, national unemployment insurance, AFDC (later replaced by TANF), Medicare and Medicaid, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and-most recently-the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). What's more, almost every conservative effort to undo these programs has failed ignominiously. Along with...

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