This book analyzes the impact of choice on welfare states in Europe and asks whether the shift towards more choice will ultimately benefit the users and providers of the welfare state, and have a positive impact on society as a whole.

• Explores the recent focus on choice in many welfare states, which has created a more market-orientated approach, changed users to consumers, and increased emphasis on private providers

• Examines the impact of these recent reforms on equality, not only from an economic perspective, but also in relation to gender, education, age, and access to services

• Draws on examples from different European countries and sectors of the welfare state, including the UK, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and the Czech Republic

• Informed by theoretical and empirical approaches, and uses a variety of methodologies