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Nota di contenuto	v. 1. Part 1: Overview -- Patterns and puzzles -- Findings -- Part 2: The rise of social spending -- Poor relief before 1880 -- Interpreting the patterns of early poor relief -- The rise of mass public schooling before 1914 -- Public schooling in the twentieth century : what happened to U.S. leadership? -- Explaining the rise of social transfers since 1880 -- Part 3: Prospects for social transfers -- The public pension crisis -- Social transfers in the second and third worlds -- Part 4: What effects on economic growth? -- Keys to the free-lunch puzzle -- On the well-known demise of the Swedish welfare state -- How the keys were made : democracy and cost control.

Growing Public examines the question of whether social policies that redistribute income impose constraints on economic growth. Taxes and transfers have been debated for centuries, but only now can we get a clear view of the whole evolution of social spending. What kept prospering nations from using taxes for social programs until the end of the nineteenth century? Why did taxes and spending then grow so much, and what are the prospects for social spending in this century? Why did North America become a leader in public education in some ways and not others? Lindert finds answers in the economic history and logic of political voice, population aging, and income growth. Contrary to traditional beliefs, the net national costs of government social programs are virtually zero. This book not only shows that no Darwinian mechanism has punished the welfare states, but uses history to explain why this surprising result makes sense. Contrary to the intuition of many economists and the ideology of many politicians, social spending has contributed to, rather than inhibited, economic growth.

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