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## Sommario/riassunto

After the optimism following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world has seen more of a democratic backlash. But despite the backlashes, in some societies the stability of democracy does not seem to be threatened. Why is this so? One common answer points to civic culture, a shared feeling of responsibility for the common fate of citizens. An alternative, to be explored in this volume, is that the stability of democratic rule is anchored in its integration in the large set of social institutions with both direct and indirect relationship to politics. These are linked to, give input to and are affected by democratic processes. Where these relations are ubiquitous and strong, democracy is stable. At the same time, institutions are slowly but constantly changing. Hence, in order to understand changes in the functioning of democracy at the level of the state, it is necessary to explore the changes in surrounding institutions and the way they shape a democratic society. The empirical focus of the book is institutional change in the Nordic model, with special emphasis on Norway. There are many reasons to pay closer attention to the Nordic, and Norwegian, case when it comes to analyses of changes in the functioning of democracy. On a par with the other Scandinavian countries, Norway is in the forefront in the world in the quality of democratic governance, as well as social trust and quality of life. As an extreme case, the most corporatist society within the family of the "Nordic Model", Norwegian society offers an opportunity both for intriguing case studies and for challenging and refining existing theory on processes of institutional change. From a theoretical perspective this invites reflections which, to some extent, are at odds with the dominant conceptions of institutional change. Neither models of path dependency nor models of aggregate, incremental change focus on the continuous social bargaining over institutional change. Despite recent processes of differentiation and liberalization, common to the Western world as a whole, corporatism implies a close connection between state, economy, public sphere, cultural life, and knowledge production. This also means that institutions are intimately bundled, in a stronger, subtler and more wide-reaching way than typically assumed in the literature on varieties of capitalism. The volume draws on, but transcends, two prominent theoretical strands: the civil society perspective (a locus classicus being Cohen and Arato 1992), and the more recent work on well-functioning civil service as a precondition for good governance (Rothstein 2011) pointing out the "road to Denmark", (Fukuyama 2014). By embracing more social fields than these two approaches, the institutional approach opens a broader space for democratic reflection. Moreover, institutional-historical case studies situated within Nordic societies as a specific social structural framework, demonstrate the diversity of links between democracy and social life outside of politics in a narrow sense, such as:

- Policies of citizenship as a limitation to democracy
- Democracy in working life
- Democracy and policies of gender relations
- Expertise and democratic governance
- Social elites - a threat to democracy?
- Welfare state institutions as core elements in modern democracy
- Institutional perspectives on the emergence of capitalism and democracy

A detailed outline of contents and contributors is attached. The book rests on and further develops the former two volumes on institutional change. The first volume is centered on corporatist institutions, with emphasis on negotiations by civil society actors in interplay with the state. Concentrated on the public sphere,

the second volume sought to locate processes of social deliberation within the contexts of a public sphere that embraces not only the media, but also fields such as voluntary associations, the arts, and religion. This third volume synthesizes these contributions by bringing them explicitly into the realm of democracy, without mainly focusing on the political institutions as such, but on the surrounding infrastructure.

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