

Abstracts

Louise Andersen

Danish Parliamentary Norms: Continuity or Change?

In view of the 1973-election - which completely changed the Danish party-system - and of the nonconformity to the parliamentary norms in the 1980s, the development of the parliamentary government of Denmark is analyzed. A distinction is being made between legal and political norms and the content of these norms is identified. The conclusion is that no legal norms were violated in the period. The parliamentary practice during the 1980s is not perceived as an expression of a new norm but as an infringement which makes the establishment of new norms possible.

Hans Christian Mikkelsen

Party Cohesion in the Danish Parliament

An update of earlier research on Danish political parties' traditionally strong internal cohesion. It is argued that even though the 1980s were marked by parliamentary unrest, caused among other things by the bourgeois government's minority status and the fact that occasionally it had its policies dictated by parts of the opposition (known as the "alternative majority"), the internal cohesion of parties has not been affected significantly.

Søren Lind Christiansen

Parliamentary Norms Concerning the Budget

Danish parliamentary norms are changing. Until 1989 there was among the four old parties an unwritten parliamentary norm concerning the final vote on the state budget. The norm implied that all responsible parties voted in favour of the state budget when the Government held the majority irrespective of the content. In 1989 the Social Democratic Party renounced this norm as Svend Auken made the Social Democratic Party's attitude towards the final voting on the state budget dependent on the political contents of the state budget and on the political influence of the Social Democratic Party. The decline from 1982 to 1992 of the parliamentary norm concerning the state budget is analyzed and the political and parliamentary consequences of the fact that this norm lost almost all significance in this periode are evaluated.

Jesper Wittrup

Consensual Democracy in Denmark

Denmark has frequently been described as a consensual democracy, and in the past analysis of voting behaviour in the danish parliament seem to have justified such a categorisation.

It is judged whether Danish democracy could still be named consensual in the years 1982-92 when Poul Schlüter was primeminister. The degree of consensus is measured by focusing on actual voting behaviour of the political parties in the danish parliament. That the decision style continued to be consensual in the political era concerned.

A specific problem in relation to the formation of Danish consensus is further highlighted. It is argued that the lack of alternative to consensual government combined with increasingly high political costs of legislative cooperation has lead to ineffectiveness and an increasing number of "non-decisions".

Peter Marker

Do We Need a Second Chamber in Denmark?

The unstable political situation in the Danish parliament during the last decade has impelled several prominent politicians to make a proposal for the reintroduction of a second chamber. According to the prevalent opinion, this would be undemocratic. But that is not necessarily the case. It depends on the composition of the second chamber and the powers that it holds compared with the powers of the first chamber. A *democratic second chamber* elected from universal suffrage at the same time as the first chamber would ensure the division of the legislative and the executive powers as prescribed by Locke and Montesquieu. A *federal second chamber* could guarantee local authorities influence on the national political decisions. However, a reform of the procedures in the present unichameral parliament might be just as effective as a bichameral parliament in solving the problems. Therefore it is not necessary to reintroduce a second chamber in Denmark.

Øystein Gaasholt og Lise Tøgeby

Hostility Toward Immigrants and Asylum Seekers in Denmark. Interests or Ideology?

Contrary to the traditional argument that attitudes toward racial and ethnic minorities and other outgroups are determined by individual characteristics at the psychological level, Scandinavian literature on public attitudes toward immigrants and asylum seekers has emphasized the importance of the individual's social situation. The general conclusion is that intolerance is a function of disadvantage and insecurity in the competition for scarce resources. Our findings indicate that in Denmark the individual's material condition is of only marginal importance as a determinant of tolerance and intolerance. Instead attitudes toward immigrants and refugees rest on social values and beliefs of the kind that identifies a person's broader ideological orientation. The data show that in the Danish public tolerance is closely connected with orientations falling along a left-right dimension and that a central mechanism in securing this connection is education.