

Abstracts

Flemming Balvig

Distant Violence in Urban Denmark

Stranger violence and the fear of stranger violence have a close connection to the basic character of modern society. Based on victim surveys it is estimated that Denmark experiences about 60,000 cases of stranger violence per year, corresponding to a risk of approximate 1 pct. Most of these incidents are not reported to the police. The victims as well as the perpetrators are mainly drunken young men who use their time in the entertainment districts of the larger cities in the late hours in the weekends. The fear of stranger violence and the reactions to it as a phenomenon can have societal contraproductive consequences, which in turn might diminish the solidarity in society and ultimately generate an actual increase in this form of violence instead of a decrease.

Jacob Gaarde

Violence in the Mass Media: A Social Constructionist Analysis

The apparent paradox between the level of violence and the perception of violence as a social problem in Denmark is analysed from a social constructionist perspective by focusing on the way the mass media portrays violence. The main point in social constructionism is that social problems are social constructions. Best (ed., 1995) focuses on the typification of social problems as an integral part of the construction of social problems, while Hilgartner & Bosk (1988) suggests a model for the development of social problems. The so called „Hiphop-murder“ is analysed as a case study. This social constructionist perspective is supplemented by Zaller's (1992) model of the formation of mass opinion. The analysis points to a substantial influence of the mass media on the public perception of violence and the apparent paradox no longer seems so apparent.

Helle Malmvig

Beyond National and International: Violence within and among States

The distinction between the national and the international sphere is not as clear-cut as it used to be. In the post Cold War era violent conflicts appear to take place within states rather than between states. Consequently, International Relations theorists have come to appreciate internal conflicts' significance, and those international consequences they may cause in the form of instability and inter-state tension. However, internal violent conflict is not a straightforward concept. It is extremely difficult to define and demarcate. Moreover, it is inherently linked to a specific perception of state and society. When dealing with internal conflicts one must also deal with the state-society nexus. In particular, it is necessary to be able to distinguish between weak and strong states. Predominantly, internal conflicts take place in weak states, and therefore we see an international system which moves towards a strict division between zones of peace and zones of conflict. The impact of internal conflicts on the international sphere also seems to have changed following the end of the cold war. Today their consequences are rather regional than global.

Christian Bertelsen

The Strategic Politician

Like other Western countries, Denmark experience a wave of public sector reforms during the 1980s. A common denominator of the public sector reforms is New Public Management emphasising, among other things, the use of contracting out as an alternative to the traditional integrated organisation. Seemingly, most of the reforms in Denmark remain within different forms of hierarchical governance and the use of con-

tracting out has been very limited. It is well-documented that the public sector unions and producers have strong interests in the integrated organisation. However, the literature on the politicians' preferences in the integrated organisation is somewhat limited. The article shows that the hierarchy maximizes political power and particularized control, thus offering an explanation of the institutional inertia in the Danish public sector.

Anders Lundkvist

Democracy in a Market Approach

The market mode of thinking has influenced – or infiltrated – the political theory of democracy. Methodologically, Economic Choice Theory gives to the analysis an individualistic bias, both reducing democracy to an instrument for individual preferences, thereby denying democracy any value in itself, and making the existence of democracy incomprehensible, since selfish voters will not bother to vote. In political philosophy, Buchanan and Hayek have counterposed the freedom of the market with the repression of the majority, though refraining from demanding the abolishment of democracy. It is argued that this is not consistent.