

Abstracts

Asbjørn Sonne Nørgaard og Thomas Pallesen

Decentralisation v. Deconcentration of Public Services: Similar or Different?

In theory and traditional administrative thinking local authorities are more capable of accommodating public services to local needs and demands. This is one of the chief arguments for the decentralisation of public services to locally elected bodies. State control, on the other hand, supposedly guarantees equality and uniformity in public services. The article examines the validity of this conception by comparing the variation in hospital services and secondary education, which are under the authority of Danish counties, with the variation in the regional active labour market policy, which is a function of the state, but since 1993 has been considerably regionalised. Today, regional corporatist actors have been delegated the authority to set and make policy priorities. The results show that a regionalised policy under the auspices of the state varies more than the services organised by the counties in a number of respects, and in that sense better accommodates local preferences and needs. The plausible reasons for this somewhat surprising finding are discussed in the conclusion.

Brian Larsen

Local Organisation of Child Oral Health Care: A Choice between Private and Public

The local governments' choice between public or private child oral health care after 1972 is investigated. It is argued that party politics has influenced the local governments' choice of production form, in the formative period of child oral health care (1972-1986). In the period after 1986 the use of private service providers was liberalized, and the private sector became more

competitive, still no local government but one shifted to private provision. Public sector inertia seems to be the main explanation for this pattern. The probable causes of the one successful shift from public to private oral health care is discussed in conclusion.

Torben Buse og Mikkel Sune Smith **Activity – Based Steering as Budget Model – Incentives and Temptations**

The main focus of the article is to describe and analyze activitybased budgetting as an alternative to the traditional blockbudgetting model that dominates the budgetary process of most western countries. The article is based on the results from a rapport on activitybased budgetting in the danish educational system finished in 1998. The effect of the economic incentives on the behavior at institutional level is analyzed. The hypothesis is that institutions act rational and strategically try to maximise their budgets given the different formal rules and governance structures. Finally, the behavioral consequences of activitybased budgetting on actors at macrolevel (among these actors especially the ministry of finance and the ministry of education) is analyzed. The hypothesis is that the system creates several dangerous temptations which strategically is being exploited by the different actors and which in the long run undermines the ability to manage the overall expenditure policy.

Christian Leth Nielsen

Public Sector Contracting in the State

Since the beginning of the decade the use of public sector contracting has spread all over the Danish central administration. One of the main forces

behind this development has been the apparently successful attempt to improve cost efficiency. However, public sector contracts in the Danish sense do not fundamentally change the hierarchical relation between principal and agent. Furthermore the improvement of cost efficiency turns out to be a well-established myth lacking firm empirical foundation.

Peter Werther Andersen og Karina Pedersen

The Danish Political Parties and the 1998 Folketing Election

Interviews with representatives from the Danish political parties show, that the campaigns at elections to the national parliament have become more professionalised, capitalintensive and to some extent centralised but the Danish campaigns haven't fully adopted the characteristics of campaignwork in cartel parties. The political parties control the election campaigns but with extended professional help. The Danish campaigns are still centralised both regarding the process of decisionmaking and the themes of the campaign. The campaigns have become more capitalintensive since capitalintensive forms of campaignwork are emphasized and the amount of money each party spend are enlarged.