

Abstracts

Bent Rold Andersen

The Public Growth – Yesterday and Today

Since 1960 public expenditures in Denmark have risen from 20 to 52 percent of GNP. This has been explained to be the result of »asymmetry« in the decision process: The political and administrative powers that work in favour of expansion tend, in a democratic, pluralistic society to outweigh the powers that work against expansion. This theory seems to explain the expansion of public services up to 1970. Since then, however, the major contribution to the expansion has come from income transfers, due to the unemployment, and the »automatic economic stabilizers«. Furthermore the expansion of public services beyond GNP after 1970 have primarily been restricted to health, education and welfare, which seem to be closely related to the declining number of housewives, from 829.000 in 1960 to about 200.000 in 1987. On this background attempts to bring down public expenditures by direct budgetting control must be expected to be less efficient than measures to improve the situation of private enterprise by lowering its international costs. It also seems promising to replace gradually the delivery of health and welfare services by measures which strengthen the social networks that have been weakened very much since 1970.

Anette Borchorst

Women, Welfare State and Care Work

The substantial increase in the employment rates of Danish women was caused by alterations of family structures and by extension of welfare state services. Women's status as employees was improved by increase in public commitment for dependent persons. One can say that they formed a partnership with the welfare state, and a large proportion of them was employed directly by the welfare state. The division of labour between the sexes in the family did not, however, change markedly in the same period, and the gender hierarchy of the labour market implicates that women are lower paid and more unemployed than men. Therefore it is still women who solve the contradictions between family life and working conditions at the labour market. Consequently reprivatization of care and increasing payment for public services will result in marginalization of women towards the labour market. This is especially true for low paid groups of women. The weakening of women's user status towards the welfare state will lead to increasing clientilization of women, because marriage does not provide a lasting alternative to women's own supporter role.

Alan Wolfe

The Welfare State and Moral Obligation: The Case of Scandinavia

The Scandinavian welfare states are premised on the notion that the fate of strangers are of direct concern to the individual. The question posed by this article is whether the ability of the welfare state in these countries to maintain that concern can continue to exist when the welfare state becomes more involved in the intimate and personal spheres of society. Intergenerational relations and a general sense of altruism to others, measured either by private charity or a willingness to pay taxes, are used to measure such concern. The possibility that the Scandinavian welfare state may have problems in the future in finding a balance between intimate and distant obligations is raised.