

Abstracts

Niels Kærgård

The crisis of the political parties and the economic policy

The Danish system of political parties is analyzed. It is shown that the number of voters which change between the parties has an increasing tendency since World War II. It is also shown that the number of voters which are members of the parties are systematically declining. It is argued that this relation between the parties and the voters caused troubles for making an economic policy which is sufficiently stable and consistent.

Mogens N. Pedersen

A Summary of the Development of the Danish Party System

It is argued that party research might benefit from a terminological clarification and an abandonment of the traditional functionalist vocabulary. Using a simpler and a more straightforward classification of party »tasks« and related »strategic questions« the author sketches the development of the Danish party system since 1849, highlighting in particular the era of the mass-party and its decline.

Jacob A. Buksti

The Role and Development of Party Apparatures

Political parties have to adapt to modern conditions, and in this process the role and function of the party organization will play a major part. Therefore, studies of political parties as open organizations are needed. In Denmark, however, there are no such studies. Part of the process of adaptation has been an increasing degree of professionalization of the party apparatus – most visible in the major opposition party, the Social Democratic Party. Specific political cabinets or expertise staffs may be regarded as a threat to the popular roots of the politicians. But in the Danish context the major threat to the political process seems to be the total lack of professional political service and support to the political decision-makers.

Jan Sundberg

Premises for Political Mass Party Membership: The Danish Parties in a Nordic Comparison

The decline of party theory developed by Leon D. Epstein stresses the preview of an unavoidable organizational decline of mass organized parties. Briefly, party membership will diminish because the gap between party leaders and rank-and-file members tend to increase, and because campaigning, the main function of party-members, is more effectively achieved by modern massmedia. This argument, based on the theory of public choice, automatically suggests that party members are driven to maximize their self-interest. The theory of Epstein is widely accepted by political scientists and it seems that it can be applied to explain the phenomenon of diminishing mass organizations in Denmark as well. In this paper, however, the theory of party decline is empirically challenged by comparing party organizations in four Nordic countries. The analysis is based on two variables starting with the amount of public subsidies followed by the supply of politicized public positions. Both variables are regulated by the parties themselves in national parliaments. Public subsidies decrease the costs of party membership activity, and the supply of positions ranging from parliament municipal boards and committees give party leaders an instrument to offer their members individual inducements. The politicization of local government made the public