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A Reply to Ulf Lindström: Review of *The Social Democratic Image of Society* ⊗

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Polemics about book reviews are seldom very fruitful; particularly where the issues concerned are those of interpretation rather than fact. Whether, for instance, the extent of government spending, public educational expenditures, and infant mortality rates are measures of the 'non-existence of sheer misery', as Lindström would have us believe, or of welfare, as I suggest, is a matter of sublime indifference to me. What matters is that the Scandinavian governments allocate more resources to the common good, spend more on children's education, and allow fewer children to die at an early age than do the majority of advanced democracies.

Indeed, the real trouble with polemics about interpretations is that they rarely proceed from any common framework of understanding. Clearly, Lindström does not understand what I mean by welfare, and, in saying that, I suppose I am really saying that he does not really fully comprehend how the term is generally used in the scholarly literature. Certainly, I can understand using unemployment data as part of an index of welfare, but, then, the figures in Lindström's Table 1 merely bear out my argument; namely, that welfare is higher in Scandinavia. To use data on hospital beds and numbers of physicians is somewhat less legitimate, since neither measure *outcomes* of the welfare system, but, instead, serve as measures of the health care delivery system. For advanced democratic countries as a whole, there is a positive correlation of 0.56 between number of physicians and infant mortality rates, i.e. the more doctors, the more deaths (see F. G. Castles & R. D. McKinlay, 'Public Welfare Provision, Scandinavia, and the Sheer Futility of the Sociological Approach to Politics', *British Journal of Political Science*, April 1979). Again, since my interpretation of welfare tends to favour the life-chances of small infants over and above the opportunities for doctors to acquire gainful employment, I remain unconvinced by Lindström's alternative index of welfare.

I am still less convinced by the inclusion of data pertaining to military expenditure and policing. I am perfectly willing to believe that these variables do differ significantly from one country to another, but my own calculations do not suggest that they are in any way correlated with the independent political variables which appear to offer a statistical explanation of the variance in what I would call 'welfare'. Elsewhere I have demonstrated that there is a 0.89 correlation between increases in Public Income Maintenance Expenditure and decrease in inequality measured by the Gini Index for 15 countries over the period 1962–1972 (see F. G. Castles & S. Borg, 'The Influence of the Political Right on Public Income Maintenance Expenditure and Equality', paper presented at the ECPR Workshops, Brussels, 1979). Lindström argues that 'equality is welfare'. I whole-heartedly agree, but, then, my index of welfare seems to be more related to equality than his.

⊗ See SPS 2:2 (1979), p. 183.