

## Book Reviews

Ari Salminen: *Organized Welfare: The Case of Finland's Welfare Bureaucracy – A Nordic Comparison*. European University Studies, Series XXII, Vol./Bd.220, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991, 180 pp.

During recent years several important contributions have offered promising new approaches to the study of the welfare state. There has been a strong trend among them to emphasize the interplay between institutional and organizational aspects of the state apparatus and public policies in the quest for explanations to distinguishing characteristics of modern welfare states. The title of Ari Salminen's book may be read as a promise of a contribution along similar lines with a focus on the Finnish welfare state as a bureaucratic organization in a Nordic comparative perspective. On the other hand, the title might also indicate a focus on welfare bureaucracy as a particular form of organization in public administration.

As it is spelt out by the author, however, the main purpose is to analyze and interpret the historical change and development of the Finnish welfare society in comparison with other Nordic societies. The aspect of change which is of particular interest to the author is '... bureaucratic growth in welfare organizations and other social and economic institutions related to welfare' (p. 3). The concept of 'organized welfare', which more closely defines the topic of the book, is later defined as '... the historical change and development of welfare organizations, and particularly welfare services in the public sector' (p. 41). These general formulations might leave the reader in some doubt as to how the author intends to delimit his research problem, as the relevant public and non-public welfare organisations are never clearly defined. Nevertheless, the process of bureaucratization is obviously singled out as a key process in his analysis.

How then, does Salminen go about the task he has set for himself? In the first two chapters he tries to position his research theoretically and methodologically. Chapter one consists partly of an attempt to delimit the research problem in terms of a clarification of the concept of bureaucratic growth, and partly of a discussion of methodological concerns related to the use of ideal types in comparative studies, as well as some general remarks about the relationship between 'theoretical-interpretative' and 'empirical-statistical' analysis.

This is followed in chapter 2 by a conceptualization of organized welfare. After a discussion of the concept of welfare, four 'welfare and state' models are outlined by means of a cross-classification along two dimensions: according to whether priority is given to economy or to politics in the development of a welfare society on the one hand and to whether the end result is a success case or a failure case. Intuitively, the distinction between 'The Banana-republic model', 'The Czarist model', 'The USA model' and 'The Nordic model' sounds reasonable enough. Nevertheless, the fact that the criteria used to distinguish between the models were not operationalized left me in doubt as to how they are applied in empirical analysis, especially if one includes less obvious cases in the analysis. It would also have been

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of great help to the reader if the attempt to position the Nordic and Finnish cases in space and time had been informed by such important comparative contributions as Esping-Andersen's *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990) or Erikson et al.'s *The Scandinavian Model* (1987) or the extensive literature on welfare state change which has materialized in the last couple of years. The lack of clarity of the problem formulation is reflected in the vagueness of key theoretical concepts, first and foremost in the concepts of 'organized welfare' and 'bureaucratization'.

Half of the empirical analysis, chapters 3 and 4, is devoted to the political and economic history of the Finnish welfare society in a Nordic comparative perspective. A main argument put forward in the chapters is that the Finnish case can reasonably be regarded as a welfare state of the Nordic type. The data, mainly information of a structural and statistical kind, are not very well fitted to the argument. To argue empirically that Finland is a welfare state of the Nordic type, one would need data that could demonstrate that the Finnish case resembles the Nordic countries more than it does other countries representative of alternative models. The Nordic comparison might have been used to position Finland within a Nordic context and demonstrate systematically how Finland compares with the other three countries in the analysis. Rather surprisingly, one finds few if any attempts at an analysis of this kind.

According to Salminen, the second half of the empirical analysis, chapters 5 and 6, is at the heart of the analysis. It deals with 'The Formation of Modern Welfare Bureaucracy' and 'Reforming Modern Bureaucracy: The Finnish Experience'. In relation to his research problem, chapter 5 is of crucial importance to the analysis of bureaucratization. As one would expect, the author starts with a discussion of bureaucratization as an organizational and social process. However, the data presented are mainly various statistical indicators on growth in government expenditures, policy areas, public personnel and legislation and descriptions of the general characteristics of the organization of Finnish welfare services. The author also refers to literature about bureaucratic dysfunctions and about the ills of modern government. He seems to assume on the basis of this literature that problems such as rigidity and unresponsiveness are symptomatic of the Finnish case. The main problem with this line of argument is that no data about behavioral processes at the organizational and individual levels are used to corroborate the assumption. Chapter 6 gives an overview of reforms in the Finnish public bureaucracy. Again, it is assumed that the reforms of the bureaucracy are caused by problems pertaining to bureaucratic organizations as such. The author seems oblivious of the possibility that the reform movement might be seen in the light of an international political-ideological wave that has spurred similar movements in a number of western political systems.

Ari Salminen's book provides interesting information about Finland. In Nordic comparative literature Finland has for a number of reasons often been excluded. As far as this reader is concerned Salminen's book has two main shortcomings. The first is that the research problem is not clearly formulated. The second is that the data presented do not throw relevant and adequate light on the research problem as it is delineated. Although Salminen writes from the perspective of public administration and organization theory, it would have been easier to formulate the research problem adequately if it had been better informed by recent literature on the welfare state, welfare state professions and public service provision. I have already mentioned how the book might have profited from the comparative welfare state literature. By taking into account the professions literature – e.g. the works of Eliot Freidson and Terrence Johnson – it would probably not base itself on the

conception of an almost automatic profession–bureaucracy conflict. Furthermore, reliance on the literature on public service provision – e.g. Charles Goodsell's *The Public Encounter* (1981) or Hegner and Grunow's *Welfare or Bureaucracy* (1980) – would have prevented the author from overlooking the well-established finding that, contrary to popular belief, the majority of people seem to be satisfied with their personal experiences with public service bureaucracies.

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Göran Djupsund og Lars Svåsand (red.): *Partiorganisasjoner: Studier i struktur og prosesser i finske, norske, og svenske partier*. Åbo: Åbo Akademis Förlag, 1990, 318 pp.

At the IVth Nordic Conference of The Nordic Political Science Association, a group on the study of the political party organizations was founded. This book is a result of the work of this group, but it is worth noting that the book is not the outcome of a research project guided by a common framework or a common theoretical approach. The articles are the outputs of the ongoing research projects of the individual contributors. This gives the book a somewhat disparate character and it is therefore not recommendable to read the book at one sitting. The intention of the book is simply to throw some light on different important aspects of the various activities of party organizations in three Nordic countries.

In an introductory chapter Göran Djupsund and Lars Svåsand give a short and concentrated, and therefore indeed useful, summary of the research on party organizations. They distinguish between three categories of studies: (1) structural analyses, which place the main emphasis on the power relationship between the different bodies of the party organization; (2) participatory analyses, with the main emphasis on an analysis of who actually speaks on behalf of the different bodies of the party organization; (3) functional analyses, which raise the question about what role the party organization plays as a part of a greater social movement, as a part of the political system as a whole, and the importance of the organization to the existence of the party as such. These distinctions, then, form the structure of the following presentation of the individual contributions.

In part one Göran Djupsund, Lars Svåsand and Jon Pierre describe the development of the party system and of the organizational structure in the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish political parties respectively. These articles present a great deal of real knowledge and useful information: the 'family tree' of the parties, party organigrammes, membership figures, number of local and regional branches, etc. It is a pity that the actual information is not more up-to-date. Thus the membership figures of the Swedish parties are only presented up to and including 1976. On the whole, these three chapters demonstrate the drawbacks of the long period of time taken to produce the book. Jon Pierre, for example, wrote his article in May 1987.

The second part of the book includes three case studies of the decision-making process at the congress/national conference of the Social Democratic Party in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Viveca Ramstedt-Silén presents a thorough and purely empirical analysis of the Finnish Social Democratic Party's congresses from 1966 to 1984. Knut Heidar has made a vivid analysis of the national conferences of the Norwegian 'Arbejderpartiet' from the middle of the 1960s to the 1985 confer-