

Abstracts

The Nordic Welfare State and Globalisation – The case of Sweden

Joakim Palme, professor, Department of Government, Uppsala University, Sweden

This article examines reforms and changes in different areas of the Swedish welfare state and discusses the importance of external and domestic factors for recent developments. Three of the areas have been subject to ‘big’ reforms; pensions, social services and taxation. One area has been dominated by piecemeal changes and non-decisions; social insurance. Among the examined ‘big’ reforms, there is no case that appears to have been primarily driven by external factors. However, policies have been indirectly affected by not least globally diffused ideas and there has also been a kind of domestic moulding of these ideas.

Migration and the Nordic Welfare Model

Torben M. Andersen, professor, Institute of Economics, Aarhus University, Denmark

The financial viability of the Nordic welfare model depends on maintaining a high

employment rate. At the same time the Nordic labour markets are characterized by high minimum wages and therefore qualification requirements. These characteristics pose particular problems for immigrants with low qualifications and/or other norms and preferences with respect to labour force participation. These aspects are discussed with a particular focus on the possibilities of ensuring a high employment rate, also for immigrants, via active labour market policies. Moreover the paper discusses the implications of making social entitlements contingent on length of residence or previous employment records.

Migration as a challenge to the Nordic welfare model

Anne Skevik Grødem, senior researcher, Fafo, Institute for Labour and Social Research, Norway

How does immigration challenge the Nordic welfare model? This article discusses two of the “weak spots” of the Nordic welfare model in relation to migration. First, the commitment to gender equality in the Nordic model may prove problematic when faced with immigrants from more traditional cultures,

who hold other ideals of family practices and gender roles. Second, the Nordic welfare model is expensive, and when societies become increasingly diverse the political support for such comprehensive welfare state may erode. The discussion highlights how these challenges may be more pronounced in the Nordic welfare states than elsewhere, but also that the Nordic model has unique strengths to overcome them.

**Nordic labour market models in changing international contexts:
Crisis, consolidation and new challenges**

Jon Erik Dølvik, senior researcher, Fafo, Institute for Labour and Social Research, Norway

Focusing on the Nordic labour markets, this article, first, accounts for the shift from mass unemployment in the early 1990s to the top of rankings of employment and equality in the 2000s. The explanation, it argues, was no 'magic bullet' but positive interaction effects of coordinated adjustments in wage setting, economic policies, activation, and skill formation. Second, it reviews the impact of the financial crisis and of the surge in labour immigration since 2004. The Nordic models have weathered the crisis quite well thus far, but are divided on how to cope with the rise in low wage competition.

Development or Dismantlement of European Social Investments? The European Union, the Debt Crisis, and National Welfare Reforms

Jon Kvist, professor, Centre for Welfare State Research, Department of Political Science, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

What is the changing nature of contemporary European welfare reforms and the impact of the crisis? Using a macro-comparative framework of social investment policies and returns across the life course this paper analyse EU 27 developments since 2000. In the pre-crisis period most European countries expanded childcare and tertiary education, but some countries halted pension reform. Since 2008, the scope of childcare and tertiary education has remained remarkably stable, except in a handful of countries, although the quality of these policies may have gone down. Increasing shares of youth neither in employment, education or training, indicates a polarisation of youth. Pension reforms everywhere leads to longer period of returns for those in work. The effects of the current crisis will have long term implications and the development towards any one European social model seem more distant today than in 2000.

The market for trade unions – price differences and shifts between trade unions

Flemming Ibsen, professor, Institut for Statskundskab, Aalborg Universitet

Laust Høgedahl, PdD-stipendiat, Institut for Statskundskab, Aalborg Universitet

Steen Scheuer, professor, Institut for Ledelse og Virksomhedsstrategi, Syddansk Universitet

From 2002 to 2012 a number of political-institutional amendments have liberalized the Danish market for trade unions, professional organizations and unemployment insurance funds by creating more competition between them. These amendments have facilitated large shifts between trade unions mainly from the agreement-bearing organizations under the main organization LO to the alternative

unions. The article analyzes these ‘membership shifts’ by using survey data. Why do workers opt out of the agreement-bearing LO organizations turning to the alternative organizations instead and which segments are most likely to opt out? The pivotal reason given by workers for opting out is ‘because of the price of the membership fee’. Hence, we analyze the price differences between the agreement-bearing organizations and the alternative organizations in close relation to the range of services these organizations provide for their members. Thereafter, we analyze the market form for this particular market by using micro economic theory. Finally, we present and discuss various strategic options available for the LO-organizations in order to face this new market for union members.

The Prime Minister got the Floor – the history of the Danish Speech from the Throne

Peter Heyn Nielsen, BSc i statskundskab, kandidatstuderende, Institut for Statskundskab, Københavns Universitet

So far, there exists no exact account of the institution of Danish openings addresses. During the first period from 1850 onwards, we occasionally had a Speech from the Throne delivered by the King. In the year of 1925, which marks a beginning of the second period, the prime minister delivered an address on behalf of the government. It was an objective account, including next year’s legislative initiatives. From 1966 and onwards, the opening address assumed another character, becoming to a still larger extent the prime minister’s personal address, characterized by low LIX and a great use of identification rhetoric. The address has always been intensely covered by the media and consequently, it can indeed be an interesting, political tool. Further studies of the opening addresses could con-

tribute to the understanding of the changing character of the Danish Prime Minister’s Office and its officeholders.