

Abstracts

Power and world order

Georg Sørensen, professor emeritus,
Department of Political Science,
University of Aarhus, georgs@ps.au.dk

Who has power in the world today, and what are the consequences for world order? Are we on a road towards more conflict or will cooperation prevail? What are the consequences for Denmark? In term of material resources the West, in particular the US, is clearly in the lead. But there is no great willingness to take on the responsibility for creating an effective and legitimate world order. Today's political rhetoric points to increasing conflict, but the long term tendency since the end of the Cold War has been towards cooperation in a context of intense globalization. Yet there is a conflict potential in relation to the autocratic great powers, Russia and China. Denmark has significant possibilities for influence in a world that emphasizes cooperation, but domestic political support is a necessary precondition for a higher international profile.

EU's Power over Danish Legislation: Eroding Sovereignty?

Jens Blom-Hansen, professor,
Department of Political Science,
University of Aarhus, jbh@ps.au.dk

Mads Leth Jakobsen, associate professor,
Department of Political Science,
University of Aarhus, mads@ps.au.dk

The European Union encompasses almost all policy areas today. The debate about the right distribution of power between the EU and the member states and about the EU's impact on Danish national self-determination is therefore more relevant than ever. However, this debate is plagued by confusion. In this article, we seek to clarify how important the EU is for Danish political decisions. We discuss what core questions the debate is really about, what evidence exists on these questions, and how further research may enlighten the debate. The central point in the article is that involvement of the EU in Danish legislation is often equated with influence. In line with the Danish Democracy and Power Study, we find that the EU is substantially involved in especially some policy areas, but that the influence of the EU – to the extent that it can be measured – is relatively limited.

The political role of the Court of Justice of the European Union

Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen, professor,
Department of Political Science,
University of Copenhagen, dm@ifs.ku.dk

The political role and power of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) have often been emphasised in both theoretical as well as normative discussion on EU integration. The dominant narrative has been that the expansive interpretations of the European Court are main drivers of European integration and that there is very little EU politicians can do to curb unwanted jurisprudence. This article analyses the relationship between law and politics concerning EU welfare integration and demonstrates that contrary to the conventional assumption, the EU political arena is both actively and often critically responding to legal integration. The political responses constrain the scope and general impact of legal integration, which also condition the ways in which Danish politics is affected by the famed and often shamed European Court.

The power of history in commissions and parliamentary politics

Anette Warring, professor,
Department of Communication and Arts,
University of Roskilde, anew@ruc.dk

The article compares whether, how and with what features history was used in the Social Reform Commission's (1964-1972), the Welfare Commission's (2003-2006) reports and in parliamentary debates on key legislative proposals that followed in the wake of the commission's recommendations. Theoretically, the analysis is based on a Weberian understanding of history as a form of legitimacy and as an orientation tool that links

interpretations of the past with understanding of the present and expectations for the future. It concludes that the power of history was: 1) To legitimize legislative proposals. 2) The narratives, which tied past, present and future together, constituted the political issues that had to be solved, and 3) defined the political space for action as determined by the past. Further it concludes that continuity was more significant than changes over time in ways history was used.

Globalising and Growing Economic Inequality – Economics or Politics?

Jørgen Goul Andersen, professor,
Department of Political Science,
University of Aalborg, goul@dps.aau.dk

At the time of the "Power and Democracy" study, inequality in Denmark was small and revealed no impact from globalization. According to OECD, Denmark remains among the most equal societies, as measured by Gini coefficients. But inequality has increased markedly. Denmark has the lowest relative poverty rate by 2016, but data indicate that relative poverty has nearly doubled. Unlike previously, increasing inequality is also attributable to increasing wage dispersion in Denmark, both at the bottom and at the top. Increasing shareholders' incomes also contribute. Still tax- and welfare reforms remain most important. The tax system has moved towards a flat tax. The highest marginal tax rate remains above EU average, but the reduction in marginal taxes since 2000 for a person earning 167 per cent of an average worker is the second largest in the OECD.

The Champions of Industry
– ties to leaders of other key sectors

Christoph Houman Ellersgaard, adjunct,
Department of Business and Politics,
Copenhagen Business School,
che.dbp@cbs.dk

Anton Grau Larsen, adjunct,
Department of Business and Politics,
Copenhagen Business School,
agl.dbp@cbs.dk

This article analyses the influence of business through social network analysis. In an influence network containing 4,970 affiliations the network between the leaders of the largest organizations within the five sectors that dominate the Danish networks of power – business, politics, state, unions and academia – are described, showing the structurally advantageous position of Danish business as brokers. The connections of the leaders in business to leaders from other sectors – politics, state, science, unions and commission members – are primarily dependent on two fractions of the business world: The CEOs and chairmen of the 100 largest Danish corporations and individuals with positions in affiliations of the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI). The connectivity of the corporate leaders is only marginally affected by the leaders in minor corporations and individuals affiliated with other business associations. Thus, the voice of business in Denmark is dependent on the largest corporations and DI.

The Redactional Power:
Centrifugation of Danish Politics

Anker Brink Lund, professor,
Department of Business and Politics,
Copenhagen Business School,
abl.dbp@cbs.dk

In 1999, the Danish Democracy and Power Study financed systematic content analyses of mass mediated coverage of Danish politics edited over one continuous week. Subsequently, similar research have been conducted over the period 2008-2016, enabling comparisons of editorial practices during two decades. The main tendency has been a gradual move from journalistically synchronized news coverage by way of more segmented targeting of editorial content towards a polarized centrifugation of political news and debate. The vintage news media – daily newspapers, radio and television – still produce the lion's share of original journalism, thereby influencing what other decisionmakers regard as the agenda of the weakly news cycle. But the internet with Google, Facebook and Twitter as competing platforms increasingly supply relatively un-edited news and views. In short, professional journalists and editors have been forced to share their traditional gatekeeper-privileges with spin-doctors and dedicated amateurs.

The power of fake news: Why do we believe them, why do we spread them?

Michael Bang Petersen, professor,
Department of Political Science,
University of Aarhus, michael@ps.au.dk

Fake news about political leaders, groups and events have attained power and shaped key political events such as the Brexit-referendum in Great Britain and the American presidential election in 2016. A central feature of the power of fake news is that we ourselves are responsible for it by sharing the fake news stories on social media. In other words, if we are to understand the power of fake news, we need to understand why people are psychologically motivated to spreading them. In this article, I argue that we can analyze fake news as an instance of a broader psychological phenomenon, namely rumors. I introduce to central perspectives on rumors within psychological and anthropological research and argue that the power of fake news rests on psychological systems for mobilizing one's group for conflict against other groups. This insight has important consequences for how to combat the spread of fake news.

Darkness Descends: Political and Administrative Decision-making

Peter Munk Christiansen, professor,
Head of Department,
Department of Political Science,
University of Aarhus, pmc@ps.au.dk

The first power and democracy study pointed to mediatization, closed and non-transparent decision-making processes, and a weak knowledge base in many Danish policy decisions. Since 2003, the emergence of social media has increased the mediatization of political decision-making. However, social media also allow politicians and citizens to communicate directly, for good and sometimes for worse. There is clear evidence that the amended Public Records Act and stronger political and departmental control of decision preparation have made the political decision-making process even more closed. Denmark's comparatively strong ability to carry out controversial reforms comes at the price of a Machiavellian reform art with strong control of information to prevent mobilization of reform resistance. Politics have to be justified – rationally – which means that political proposals are often written in a somewhat optimistic language. Also Danish decision-makers exploit the art of “alternative facts”.