

Welfare Discourses in Denmark seen in a basic income perspective

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Paper presented at the 10th International Congress on Basic Income Barcelona September 19th -
21th 2004.

Introduction

The paradigm shift in the labour market and in the social policy in Denmark in the 1990s can be found under very different names. Officially it referred to a shift from a 'passive' to an 'active' labour market and social policy. The principles of this new line of policy have been coined in expressions such as 'quid pro quo' ('something for something'), 'work before pleasure' or 'rights and obligations', all of which have been used more or less synonymously.

It is interesting to note how varied the social scientists are in their descriptions of this paradigm shift. Their choice of words, as reflected in their acceptance or criticism of the common sense ideological language, is an indication of which ideological and theoretical perspective they support.

Labour market researchers, who are particularly interested in how the labour market operates, talk about a shift from 'employment protection and support' to 'welfare-to-work and the upgrading of skills' (Jørgensen 2002). In the legal profession, where the main focus is the principle of allocation of social benefits, they talk about how 'the self-support principle' and the 'labour market principle' have been developed and strengthened. (Ketscher 2002). Some political scientists, who are interested in the ideas of the political community, describe the turn as a shift from a liberal notion of citizenship and solidarity to a more communitarian one (Loftager 2002). Economists, who are studying the principle of financing, talk about a turn from a 'tax-transfer model' to a more 'insurance and market oriented model' (Jørn Henrik Petersen 1996).

Nearly all social scientists agree in describing the development as some sort of qualitative shift, where you go from certain basic principles to other basic principles. Still they disagree in many respects, because they are interested in different areas of social reality and because they use different concepts. And there is only rarely any interdisciplinary discussion between the various academic disciplines about the welfare state. Economists discuss with other economists and present their diagnosis, the political scientists discuss with other political scientists and make other diagnoses.

Therefore I would like to compare the indicated change in the Danish welfare state as seen from a legal, economic and political perspective to show that the different disciplines make very different

diagnoses of what the problems are and how they should be solved. The disciplines are influenced by different scientific paradigms and also have an ideological bias. A great deal of social science has played a part in the legitimation of the change from welfare to workfare.

My aims

My paper has three aims:

1. To create a deeper and interdisciplinary understanding of why the various scientific paradigms approach the analysis of the welfare state in different ways? Why do many scientists close their eyes to the gathered knowledge of other paradigms, so that an interdisciplinary discussion becomes a rare phenomenon?
2. To discuss the relation between scientific and political discourses on the welfare state. My thesis is that the politicians nearly always base their ideas on economy, when they discuss the future of the welfare state. Why is it that there is a hegemony of the economic discourse in the political life? And how is it reflected in the Danish welfare debate?
3. Finally to look at the different discourses from a basic income perspective.

My theoretical perspectives

In the first part of the paper I will show that through text analysis it is possible to find what the American sociologist Alvin Gouldner has called ‘the infrastructure or the background assumptions of a theory’ (Gouldner 1970).

Through text analysis of three Danish Social scientists I hope to find a meaningful picture of the systems of concepts as used in their theories. Inspired by Kenneth Burke’s cluster-agon analysis (Foss 1996) I will try to find the synonymous and the antonymous dimensions in the texts, in other words, find the key word and the secondary concepts and see which words are ranked equal, associated, identical or in contradiction to each other.

In general, one does not focus on a theory's background assumptions though they are very important for the use of a theory. These assumptions are conceptions of the basic nature of man and society (the state), the power-relations and views on reciprocity in society. As background assumptions are concerned with some of the fundamental conceptions about man and society, they often 'provide foci for feelings, affective states, and sentiments' (Gouldner 1970: 37).

The implication of this is that scientists - for theoretical reasons - rarely accept background assumptions. Assumptions cannot be chosen deliberately. They are usually internalized, and one can not immediately break away from them. Often they function as relatively conservative stereotypes or prejudices. They don't change in the face of changes in the real world. Rather it is so that any new information is adapted to the already established background assumptions.

Gouldner gives part of the explanation of, why there is so little discussion among theorists with different paradigms. He talks about the 'metaphysical pathos of ideas' (1955). It means that a theory or an idea 'reinforces or induces in the adherent a subtle alteration in the structure of sentiments through which he views the world'. Theories and paradigms create groups of researchers who unconsciously form a closed discussion group.

In the second part of the paper I will discuss the relation between scientific discourses and the hegemonic political discourses in the society, and how the hegemonic discourse is maintained and reproduced especially in relation to the new Danish Welfare Commission.

The function of scientific paradigms and discourses is, in particular, to create new knowledge and understanding in the scientific society, while the function of political discourses is to create identity, support and coalitions for specific political solutions. Politics seen as a hegemonic community and society held together by a hegemonic discourse which in its contrasting interaction with other discourses is reproducing and transforming society (Fairclough 1992). On the one hand a hegemonic discourse is created by excluding alternative discourses and on the other by including potential members in an alliance in the public.

State commissions often have the function of maintaining and reproducing the hegemonic discourse. The work of commissions is often important for the way a society chooses to categorise its problems. It is through the work of the commissions that many organisations and institutions ensure that the problems are adapted to the problem horizon of those institutions. In this way they can ensure the hegemonic discourse.

It was a characteristic feature of all major Danish commissions in the 1990s that attempts were made of arriving at a consensus between the two dominating discourses: the liberal market discourse and the social democratic discourse. The primary goals of the commissions are to create a sustainable common identity and a political coalition. More specifically this is realised by setting the terms of reference for the commission, by the staffing of the commission and through the professional discourse.

A legal perspective on the welfare state

The Danish professor in law (social legislation) Kirsten Ketscher has provided a legal analysis of the Danish welfare state compared with other types of welfare states and the challenge of EU's social rules (Ketscher 2002).

The normative basis for her analysis is what she called the citizen-friendly ('borgervenlig') style of interpretation in contrast to the authority-friendly ('myndighedsvenlig'), due to the growing significance of human rights in social laws (Ibid: 25).

Ketscher's story about the Danish welfare state is that it is changing from a taxpayer concept to a policy-holder concept. This may also be expressed as a movement from a universal to a more insurance-based welfare model, or from the Scandinavian model to the Continental model.

The Danish welfare system is a tax-financed welfare system (Ibid: 46). What this means is that the state functions as a tax collector and that, in principle, all citizens contribute to the rights, upon which the state distributes the rights. This form has the imprint of a mutual insurance. The citizen invests money in the national welfare project, and expects that help is at hand when he or she meets sickness and old age.

Ketscher talks about a special type of legal reciprocity ('retslig gensidighed') (Ibid: 41). During a certain period of time you pay a contribution to the collective account which gives you a right to receive something at another time when you need it, a right to benefit from the transfer payments and social services from the welfare state. The principle of solidarity has a horizontal character (over time), and you can talk about the existence of a contract of generations. Typically you benefit more than you contribute while you are young, while you contribute more than you benefit in the adult life, and finally you benefit more than you contribute in the old age.

In this concept there is an assumption of a correlation between contributions and benefits in the long term. However there is no direct connection as in the insurance contract. Everyone is contributing to a common pool, in which the compensation payments are not connected to the contributions of the individual, but solely to the needs of the person involved.

In the legal perspective the focus is the single citizen's relation to the state. This relation is basically an asymmetric one. The citizen stands as 'a receiver facing a distributor' or as 'a citizen facing an authority'. Therefore Ketscher calls the relation 'unequal', because you have an 'authority full of resources' which has 'the power to make very radical decisions' (ibid.p.28).

The legal position between the citizen and the authority is determined by the basic structure of the public law, the ruling ('afgørelsen'). It is a one-sided legal relationship in which one party dictates the options for the other party. It is the authority who is in possession of what the citizen wants. And the citizen will be in the power of the administration because of the unequal relation between the parties.

This is in opposition to the basic structure of the private law, the contract ('aftalen'), where there exists a reciprocally binding legal relationship between two or more parties, and where the goal is the exchanging of equal benefits. On the market the buyer gets a commodity and the seller an amount of money, each party has something which the other side would like to have, which means reciprocity, exchange and equity.

According to Ketscher the basic principles of the Danish welfare state are under pressure, because they are connected to the national state. There are a few preconditions attached to those principles. They are founded on a homogeneous society in which the welfare project has been perceived as a national project. As a result of this Denmark is being exclusive, maybe even hostile ('fjendtligt'), to foreigners (Ibid: 47). From this perspective Denmark can be regarded as an 'exclusive club'.

In particular Ketscher observes three threats: EU, the increasing number of refugees and immigrants and problems with a number of young people who don't understand the logic of the Danish taxpayer concept.

EU will be a problem because in EU social rights are obtained, not from being a citizen and a taxpayer, but from being a wage earner. Refugees and immigrants also create problems, because they often cannot contribute to the national economy. The trend is therefore heading towards a system resembling insurance, where the labour contract ('arbejdskontrakten') gets a central place in the law of provision. This may result in an increased differentiation of rights and create more inequality. (Ketscher 2000A)

In this case the central relation will not be between the state and the citizen as a holder of rights and as a taxpayer, but between an insurance company and a policy holder. The relation will be more private. It is a relation already known in Denmark in the unemployment insurance fund, the labour market pensions and in the early retirement benefits. It is the change from citizen (taxpayer) to worker (policy holder)

At the same time the connection with the labour market has received a more central role in the social policy. A workfare principle was introduced with the Labour market reform in 1994, resulting in a welfare-to-work programme, in contrast to the previous obligation of only being available for jobs on normal conditions.

In Ketscher's story a critical-ironical tone is traceable. One perceives a dissociation from the provincially national when she draws the picture of the Danish welfare state as an 'exclusive club' which acts 'in a hostile way to foreigners'. In this context the insurance-like systems show 'a higher degree of openness to foreigners'. She expects that the rights lean towards more insurance, but you

also perceive a certain concern that this development could result in ‘unacceptable social differences’.

Ketscher draws a contrasting picture of Danish workfare policy in the 1990s. On the one hand she dissociates herself from the very work-oriented turn of the social policy, when she describes that clients sometimes suffer from an ‘expectation of self-provision’, which they can’t satisfy, and that the demand for provision sometimes are grotesque. This demand may clash with another basic legal value, the integrity and dignity of the individual.

On the other hand she seems to accept the new workfare policy. She says that it builds ‘on the idea of an active citizenship, where the individual is obliged to do something for getting help (Ibid: 228). But she does not explain the logic of the welfare-to-work principle.

An economist’s perspective on the welfare state

The Danish professor in economy Jørn Henrik Petersen has been a member of several commissions about reforming the Danish welfare state, The Social Commission (1991-1993) and recently The Welfare Commission (from 2003).

In Jørn Henrik Petersen’s view (1996) the Danish welfare state has a double structure. On the one hand it is a tax-transfer model, which follows the principle ‘from all to all’ throughout the public sector. It is the picture of the universal welfare state based on citizenship beginning with the old age pension in 1891. On the other hand it is also based on an insurance model - in which one is supposed to save before benefits can be distributed - beginning with the voluntary insurance against sickness and unemployment from 1892 and 1907.

This structure has created a tension in the model, and in the 1990s Jørn Henrik Petersen’s main concern was that an unfortunate shift had occurred in the balance between the core benefits (‘from all to all’) and the insurance element (‘quid pro quo’ – or ‘something for something’) because the role of the insurance element had been played down.

Two characteristic features of the Danish welfare state have been unfortunate according to Jørn Henrik Petersen: 1. the universal coverage in the role as citizen has made the human relation anonymous and weakened the individual responsibility; 2. the tax financing ('pay as you go') has hidden the connection between the costs and the financing of the welfare state.

The unfortunate thing about the Danish model occurred in Jørn Henrik Petersen's optics, when the old age pension 1956 ('folkepensionen') and later the full old age pension law in 1964 were introduced, and the insurance element was reduced in the unemployment insurance in 1972. For Jørn Henrik Petersen it means that the Danish model has lost its balance and no longer walks on two legs. We had created what he called the 'social security state', some sort of guaranteed minimum income. The welfare state had ended up with securing 'something for nothing', and this breaks with the reciprocity, which is the basis for social coherence.

This was the situation in the beginning of the '90s. If the universal aspect of the Danish welfare model should dominate in the future, it could create a possible basic income model, which Jørn Henrik Petersen does not favour. He wants to strengthen the insurance aspect of the model.

To him the tax-transfer model has some disadvantages. It doesn't build on a clear 'something for something' relation or, as he said, a 'reciprocal relation'. It means that there is no linkage between his financing efforts and the benefits received in return. And this fact is a cause for problems of legitimacy of the welfare state.

He also very literally talks about 'an absence of any linkage between the great novel about the project of the welfare state and the many small short stories about the daily life of individuals, which threatens to undermine the welfare state' (Ibid:12).

The strengthening of the insurance part of the Danish welfare model could create greater legitimacy. Contribution to pensions is for Jørn Henrik Petersen a reflection of a more genuine reciprocity compared to taxpaying, which also makes this form more legitimate because it is more protected against political intervention. And generally a linkage between welfare services and contribution means increased acceptability and legitimacy.

Therefore the spreading of the new labour market pensions was also welcomed by Jørn Henrik Petersen, because it strengthens the insurance principle. In this relation he talks about establishing a 'genuine reciprocity' and 'a real principle of right' (Ibid: 26). For him exchange and reciprocity is the same.

A main point for Jørn Henrik Petersen is that social life must remain in force in a reciprocal relation. The mutual interdependence is the basis for the power of social relationship.

However, for Jørn Henrik Petersen, being an economist, our society is predominantly a market society. The man is above all an 'economic man', who follows his self-interest. The market is natural, while politics is something artificial, something constructed.

Jørn Henrik Petersen therefore makes a distinction between two forms of rights, an economic and a political: 'A right derived from payment is for many people a right to a greater extent than a right derived from citizenship. A right based on equity, in which obligations and rights amount to the same, is for most people more acceptable than a right which is received.' (Ibid: 25). The political right can be changed anytime by a majority in the parliaments, which is why it is regarded as weaker.

With this way of expressing himself Jørn Henrik Petersen says that the economic exchange is more important than sociological and political reciprocity, that the economic rationality is superior to the political and social rationality.

A political science perspective on the welfare state

The Danish professor in public administration, Jacob Torfing (1999) has made an analysis of the formation of the Danish workfare-policy. It is inspired by the British Marxist Bob Jessop's (1995) theory about the regime shift from a Keynesian welfare state to a Schumpeterian 'workfare' regime. Torfing uses Jessop's frame to analyse the Danish welfare state in a discourse perspective.

Torfing's analysis takes the form of a story about the Danish job miracle. By the end of the '90s the Danish government - in contrast to a number of other European countries - had success with

reducing the unemployment from 12, 7% to 7.9%, while at the same time successfully keeping the inflation at about 2%. Torfing attributes the success to the new welfare-to-work policy, a special Danish version of the British/American workfare policy. According to Torfing the social democratic government succeeded in developing their own workfare strategy without breaking up the Danish universalistic welfare model, but only repairing it.

On the macro-level Torfing explains the development with a regime shift from a Keynesian welfare state to a Schumpeterian 'workfare' regime. The background for this regime shift is the growth of the new technologies and the globalisation, including a paradigm shift from fordism to post-fordism. However, these factors can't explain the changes. They are due to a specific discursive construction of these structural economic factors. Torfing thinks that the new Schumpeterian workfare regime has formed two new discourses, one about structural competitiveness which has replaced a macro-economic steering discourse, and the other about structural unemployment which has replaced a Keynesian full employment paradigm.

Where the macro-economic steering discourse had an aim of correcting aggregate economic imbalances between inflation and employment through fiscal and monetary policies, the aim and focus in the discourse of structural competitiveness are different. The aim here is to create permanent socio-economic innovation, and focus is on the structural policy on the supply side, where the goal is to make the market functional.

There is a similar aim and focus shift in the view on unemployment. In the classical welfare state effort was made to create a frame of welfare based on redistribution and a safety net, in which full employment was aimed at. In the structural unemployment discourse, however, it is considered impossible to eliminate the unemployment due to the structural rigidities on the labour market.

It is the change of these two discourses which is the background for creating the new welfare-to-work discourse. However Torfing makes a distinction between different forms of workfare. There is a bad and a good form. The bad is the neoliberal British/American, where the principle is: 1. work for benefits; 2. control and punishment; 3. lower benefits. Against this he maintains the good Danish form, where the principle is: 1. training and education; 2. empowerment; 3. skill enhancement and work experience.

His conclusion is that the Danish welfare-to-work system rather strengthens than breaks up the universal Danish welfare state. According to Torfing the Danish case undermines the myth about workfare as being essentially neoliberal, punitive and bad. Workfare is making the clients powerless in a neoliberal residual welfare state but it empowers clients in a social democratic welfare state. Therefore he calls the Danish welfare-to-work policy offensive against the defensive British/American.

In this way his story functions as a clear legitimation of the Danish case both in relation to the British/American case, but also in relation to Danish critics of the workfare, who, according to Torfing's opinion, overlook the role of empowerment in the welfare-to-work policy.

In a later article Torfing (2002) looks at the connection between content (from provision to welfare-to-work), form (from hierarchy to network-steering) and regulation form (from rule steering to therapeutic dialog and social empowerment). The welfare-to-work policy is here viewed as a form of social policy form of regulation in a new form for steering (state). He says that we have a governmental state, whose aim it is to expand and intensify the power for the sake of power, to mobilise wealth, efficiency and order, organizing the level of freedom for the individuals so that it conforms to the superior strategies of power.

Here we see Torfing as the cynic who has seen through it all, that it is a case about 'a subtle steering thought', without trying to develop a critical position in relation to this. He merely registers that we are now no longer given an identity as 'social citizens' but seen as 'entrepreneurs in and for our own lives'.

A Comparison

Why are these three interpretations of the condition of the Danish welfare state so different? Above all it depends on their different professional starting point. The legal profession is interested in law in force, and in the changes in the rules, in the relation between the state and the individual, the private and public spheres. The interest for the economist lies in the economic efficiency, the relation between contribution and cost including the ability to finance the welfare. Finally the

political scientist focuses his attention on how rules are implemented, on who has the power and on what the effects are in the process.

The professional starting point determines the use of specific technical key concepts which are connected with specific dominating theories in the discipline. But all disciplines have different professional paradigms with different opinions on the subject area. For example a political scientist may support a professional political paradigm (e.g. Marxism or the neoliberal public choice) which means that a political scientist and an economist in the same paradigm are more in agreement than two economists supporting two different paradigms.

Comparison of the different scientific discourses

| | Law: Kirsten Ketscher | Economics: Jørn Henrik Petersen | Political Science: Jacob Torfing |
|---|---|--|---|
| Scientific paradigm | Critical normative law | Public Choice | Regime theory, Governance theory, Network theory |
| Paradigm shift | From 'taxpayer concept' to 'policy-holder concept' | From 'tax-transfer model' to an 'insurance model' | From 'welfare' to 'workfare' |
| Concept of the traditional Danish welfare state: Rights and obligations | 'Legal reciprocity' – 'rights to benefits – tax liability' | 'Tax-transfer model' 'from all to all', 'something for nothing' | 'Welfare' – 'unconditional rights and almost no obligations' |
| The main problems in the Danish welfare state | Discrepancies between rules (in the future especially DK and EU) The individual is under threat. | 'Free riding', and 'Moral hazard' 'Legitimacy' 'something for something' is needed | Steering and consensus problems |
| Types of problem formulations | Descriptive, interpretive | Change oriented | Explanatory |
| Problem perspective | Challenge, description of the unresolved problem | Recommendation to solve the problem | Explanation of how the problem has been solved |
| Key concept | 'Rules', 'values', 'state', 'nation', 'ruling', 'contract', 'citizenship' | 'Market', 'contribution', 'benefits', 'incentives', 'responsibility' | 'Network', 'regime', 'discourse', 'steering', 'rights linked to obligation' |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| Individual | Citizen, taxpayer, client | The Economic Man | Self-reflective entrepreneur |
| Reciprocity | 'Legal reciprocity' | 'Market reciprocity' 'exchange' | 'Network' |
| Power relation | State versus individual – unequal relation | Market relation – equity | Therapeutic relation – self-disciplined |
| State | State governed by law, responsive stat | Liberal – minimal state | Governmental state, enabling state |
| International dimension | Challenge from EU, no discussion of globalization | No discussion of EU and globalization | Challenge from globalization, no discussion of EU |
| Normative orientation | Critical-ironical | Political-moral | Cynical-legitimizing |

Three stories

The main problem for the Danish welfare state looks very different for the three social scientists. All declare their support to the Danish model, but their understanding of and stories (normative orientations) about the model diverge. For KK the Danish model is endangered, but she has no ideas about how it should be preserved. For JHP the Danish model is in need of reform, and he has a clear plan. Finally for JT the Danish model has been successfully renewed, so that his project is to explain and legitimate the actual development.

KK tells a critical-ironical story of how this small homogeneous country is under pressure to modify the welfare model from a 'taxpayer concept' to a more 'insurance-like concept' due to our membership of EU. The welfare model has been a national welfare model, and must in the future be an international model.

JHP tells a moral-political story about moral decay in the Danish welfare state. Due to the dominating role of the universal characteristic of the Danish welfare state, the responsibility is collectivized by rules of taxation and transfer incomes and the personal responsibility becomes abstract. He wants to recreate the moral core in the welfare state by creating a clear linkage between contribution and cost for the individual in the welfare state.

Finally JT tells a cynical-legitimizing story about how a small reform-oriented country has successfully gone ahead in EU in creating a special labour market and workfare model. The Danish

model has been capable of introducing reforms which have further developed its universal character.

Behind the very different stories divergent views on the individual, the state and the social relations in society are hidden. The citizen, the market player (The Economic Man) and the self-reflective entrepreneur are driven by very different motivations.

Rights and obligations

This is particularly seen in the various conceptions of the traditional Danish welfare state about the relation between rights and obligations, how the term reciprocity is understood in the three analyses. The concepts of right and obligation are used by several social science disciplines and for that reason they reveal a number of dimensions. The concepts can be understood in a philosophical-moral, political-economical and purely legal sense, and such distinctions are rarely made in the political debate, nor in the scientific welfare state literature.

The rights of one individual create certain opportunities for action which correspond to another individual's obligation to respect this action which at the same time is limiting his own action. In this way one can say that rights and obligations are two sides of the same coin. When one side is entitled to something, the other side has a duty to respect and allow for it. If the sides are the state and a citizen, where the citizen has some rights in relation to the state e.g. the right to vote or the right to free speech or the right to freedom of association, the relation between right and obligation can be expressed as follows: When the citizens have some rights (given by the state) it means that the state - and other citizens - have an obligation to provide these rights for the citizens and respect these rights (for the other citizens).

A popular political phrase in the public in Denmark (as in many other countries) has been: 'Rights and obligations must be connected - no rights without obligations'. And the new workfare rule has been presented as the first genuine implementation of this phrase. It has been essential in the ideological legitimation of workfare.

But the new concept of both rights and obligations for unemployed to work for welfare - upon the workfare reform in Denmark in the 1990s - is in contradiction to the normal legal language about rights and obligations, where the normal situation would be that you don't have an obligation to something that you have a right to. Some would say that a right only is a right, if you have the possibility not to use it. A condition is that you have the freedom to use it.

A clear linkage between rights and obligations existed in the traditional Danish welfare state. Ketscher talks about a legal reciprocity. It has to be understood as a contract of generations, in which one contributes through tax payments and benefits when one is in need of it. The rights to welfare benefits correspond to a tax liability.

Jørn Henrik Petersen supports the widespread misuse of the terms rights and obligations in the public opinion which is conjuring up a picture of the traditional Danish welfare state as a place where you can get 'something for nothing', and the new reform is accordingly designed to create a state of affairs where 'something for something' rules.

His concept of reciprocity is totally different from Ketscher's. He makes reciprocity synonymous with the reciprocity of the market, which should be conceptualized as exchange (by Karl Polanyi). By using such language he subordinates the social and political reciprocity to the law of the market. This is happening when he clearly declares that a political right can be seen as a secondary right in relation to an economic right, and when he says that in a market society 'the virtues of labour and self-support are central', and that they insure that society is conceived as meaningful and acceptable. (Petersen 1996: 24).

Similarly Torfing is also supporting the distorted picture of the former Danish welfare state, when he talks about an existence of 'unconditional rights and almost no obligations' in contrast to 'conditional rights linked to obligations' in the new workfare system. In doing so he indicates the existence of a basic income system. But this has never been the case. The rules in the unemployment insurance system and social assistance system have always required benefit recipients to be available to the labour market and to register as job seekers at the public Employment Service. Like Jørn Henrik Petersen Torfing does not conceive the former Danish

Welfare model as a model with rights and obligations, both as a common obligation available to the labour market as well as a tax liability.

Reciprocity

In his application of reciprocity as a key concept for understanding the power of cohesion in a society Jørn Henrik Petersen refers to the American sociologist Alvin W. Gouldner's analysis of this concept. But it seems he does not understand Gouldner's points. For Gouldner the norm of reciprocity can not stand alone as the fundamental norm in a society, because the existence of different form for inequality. The norm of reciprocity has its limits. In another famous article Gouldner talks about: 'The Importance of Something for Nothing' (1973). Besides the norm of reciprocity, there must exist a 'norm of beneficence', a norm of goodness. In this norm there is an obligation to give without an expectation to receive something in return.

Still, a norm of reciprocity and a norm of beneficence even put together can not stand alone as a moral code for a society, because 'why should I follow these obligations?'. It is Gouldner's view that there must also be a component which he calls a 'moral Absolute', a fundamental obligation to obey the other two moral norms. For Gouldner a good society's moral-ideological code always has three dimensions. The norms one by one are insufficient, because they will alone undermine each other. There will always be some tension between them. The discussion about a guaranteed basic income for all is essentially a discussion about priorities among the norms. Most people (like Jørn Henrik Petersen) today see the principle of reciprocity as the fundamental norm of the society, and they see the norms of beneficence as secondary. In a basic income society a minimal form of beneficence (securing all a basic income) would be of primary importance, and on this foundation a reciprocity norm may dominate.

A basic income perspective

How do they all relate to the idea of a basic income? All of them supported the dominating discourse. Ketscher was critical at some stage, while Jørn Henrik Petersen was impatiently pushing the development in the direction of an insurance market model, and Torfing was praising the new workfare model.

Thus all were against a basic income perspective. As mentioned before Jørn Henrik Petersen was a member of The Social Commission (1991-93) which took part in the exclusion of the growing basic income discourse in the beginning of the 1990s in Denmark. The commission explicitly defined its task as one of preventing that the transfer income system would develop into something like a basic income system (Socialkommissionen 1993: 33). Similarly Ketscher and Torfing have explicitly dissociated themselves from the idea of a basic income (Ketscher 1998, Torfing 2000).

Still it is interesting that even though both Ketscher and Jørn Henrik Petersen are clearly dissociating themselves from the idea of a basic income, in some respects this idea fits with their scientific frame.

Ketscher is also a critical feminist and has constructed a conceptual apparatus to analyze how rules in the labor market and the social system systematically focus on wage work and discriminate care work (Ketscher 1990, 2001). Ketscher distinguishes between money support and care support in describing the total support situation from all individuals in a society, and links it to a distinction between the different social spheres (state, market, family – the so-called support triangle).

However, with the increasing participation of women in wage work the problem of double work has turned up; women still have the main responsibility for care support and contribute to money support. According to Ketscher, this means that they have been forced to choose between two legal obligations, the obligation in the work contract (work duty) and the obligation to care for their children. The difference between the two obligations is that the work duty, in contrast to the care duty, requires personal presence. And the obligation to fulfill the wage contract and the obligation to provide for the family are not equal. In numerous cases, the current legal rules show that ‘the work duty’ takes the priority over ‘the support duty.’

So how can the modern welfare state resolve the conflict between the work and the care duty and – on the basis of the support triangle - distribute time, money and care between the genders in a fair and just way? (Christensen 2002)

The basic income perspective emerges as a logical possibility for the support triangle paradigm. A basic income would make money support and care support equal and partially remove the opposition between the two. By partially decoupling (as far as basic income is concerned) the work duty in relation to the labor market, the new element in money support (basic income) would be available to all types of care. Basic income would therefore constitute a recognition of care work, which is what Ketscher is asking for, thereby giving that kind of work a value in itself.

According to Jørn Henrik Petersen the welfare state is placed in a field of tension between a universal element with core services and an insurance element. He also calls it a value layer and an interest layer. (Jørn Henrik Petersen 1996 A) He knows that the universal element is a century old political and cultural construction, supported by what he calls the common Danish cosmology.

The idea of a basic income fits fairly well into this frame, where a basis income can be seen as the core service of the welfare state. It builds on the citizenship and a tax transfer model. In Denmark one could imagine bringing back to life 'the contribution to an old age pension' (which was used in Denmark between 1971-82) as a new contribution to basic income, so that a clear connection between contribution and performance could be created.

Instead of looking at the universal old age pension as the germ of the decay in the Danish welfare state, it could just be seen as the germ of a new development, the forerunner of a future basic income. Contrary to what Jørn Henrik Petersen says the universal tax-transfer model must be made stronger than the insurance model, not to destroy the tension between the two elements, but to create clear rules and to give the universal element a higher priority.

The new Welfare Commission

In the last year both the scientific and the political debate about the future of the Danish welfare state have been intensified. This took place after the Danish government, in the autumn of 2003, formed a Welfare Commission, which was given the task of analysing the expected development and the current possibilities for reforming the welfare system. It is a characteristic feature of the commission that it mainly consisted of economists, while sociologists, political scientists and social

workers who had been engaged in the welfare policy were not represented in the commission. One of the members was Jørn Henrik Petersen.

The terms of reference, which the government gave the welfare commission, made a frame for the work of the commission. At the same time it defined a particular concept and the solution to the problems.

One of the main problems is the change in the age composition of the population, where the future will bring more elderlies and fewer engaged in active employment. It means an increased need for welfare services. At the same time it is assumed that it is not possible to increase the taxes. Thus it is assumed that, to a higher extent, it will be necessary to target the welfare services to those groups who are in most need of them. This is only possible with reforms which increase the supplies of work and employment.

With such a term of reference the government has already made a diagnosis and indicated in what direction the solutions of the problems should go. They want the universal social democratic model turned into a more selective, liberal one, with an increased implementation of the welfare-to-work policy while, at the same time, giving the whole operation an expert authorization. What they have in mind are state finances and the strengthening of the market.

This expectation was confirmed when the commission, in spring 2004, presented its first report (Velfærdskommissionen 2004). Here it was established as a fact that, given the expected change in the composition of the population, the costs in the public sector will increase significantly faster than the income in the next 10-20 years, the demand for leisure time and better services will increase likewise, while, at the same time, the individualisation and the globalization will continue to develop. The commission discusses several possible options, and conclude that the solutions, which will not increase the taxes, point to higher degrees of employment and to the reduction of some of the transfer incomes and the introduction of self-payment for some public services.

One of the problematic preconditions which the Welfare Commission has put into the projections is that you expect the existence of the same type of welfare services in the future (40 years from now) as to day. No rationalization of benefits (like for instance a basic income structure) and

development of new types of benefits (e.g. in the EU) are expected. An important feature in the report is the focus on the negative influence of the high tax on the national economy. Most economists regard high taxes as a negative (problematic) influence because they are supposed to lower incentives. On the other hand most political scientists regard high taxes as a positive influence, a solution, because it tends to create a more equal and just society. Finally it seems strange that the commission has no trust in the possibility of eliminating the existing unemployment of 6, 5%. According to the commission it is not possible to reduce the unemployment much more, which is why it is necessary to increase the supply of labor.

The first report from the commission is in certain important respects influenced by some of the ideas of Jørn Henrik Petersen. This is for instance the case when it is considered that it is impossible to calculate the price of the several benefits of our tax transfer model. According to the commission this may result in overconsumption of the benefits. They seem to be free, and this tends to lead to overspending. At the same time it is emphasized that the expression 'rights before responsibility' is a problem in the universal welfare model, because it gives the impression that everybody has a right to benefits, and it is the responsibility of society (the state) to take care of the individual.

Social scientific challenges in the welfare debate

Just before the presentation of the report from the Welfare Commission, a discussion book was published in which 13 dominant social scientists presented their views. (Jørn Henrik Petersen & Klaus Petersen 2004) Among the participants were two economists from the Welfare Commission, the chairman Torben M. Andersen and Jørn Henrik Petersen. However, it was a multi-disciplinary book, with contributions from sociologists, historians, and political scientists.

Among them there was a notable consensus on the fact that the universal Danish model could come under pressure on several points: 1. The universal benefits could come under pressure, making them more selective. 2. In the future the taxpayer-funded social system could, to a higher extent, be replaced by insurance market schemes. 3. The high Danish tax burden might be challenged. 4. The high equalization of incomes might be challenged? And finally 5. The Danish welfare system as a national system can not be maintained.

However, there is a clear distinction between the economic diagnoses of the welfare state (as represented by Jørn Henrik Petersen) and the diagnoses of the political scientists (as represented by Jørgen Goul Andersen). Where Jørn Henrik Petersen sees several disadvantages of the universal model, Jørgen Gould Andersen is about to abandon the principle of joint and mutual liability in the welfare state by introducing a higher degree of selectivity and by targeting the benefits to the weak and poor. It means that, to a greater extent, the middle class is left to secure itself in the market. Or, with an expression from the British sociologist Richard Titmuss, this could mean 'welfare for the poor is poor welfare'. Election studies show that needs-tested schemes have the poorest support, and the universal schemes the highest. It means that the foundation of the welfare state changes from solidarity to altruism. (Jorgen Goul Andersen 2004).

The difference between economists and political scientists in an assessment of the effect of the universal model is clear in a comparison between a group of young political scientists and the commission. (Green-Petersen, Klitgaard and Nørgaard 2004). For the political scientists the universal model is seen as an advantage because it secures equal rights and prevents stigmatization. The principle of justice is seen as a basis for fairness and legitimation. In contrast to this view Jørn Henrik Petersen (2004) and other economists emphasize that the principle of rights at the same time may result in a reduced responsibility. Some economists, who the Welfare Commission makes a reference to (Lindbeck, Nyberg and Weibull (1999)) regard stigmatization for receiving transfer income as to some extent useful, because it may reduce the state costs of transfer incomes. These economists assume that the greater the number of people receiving transfer incomes, the less stigmatization is expected from receiving them. The principal difference in perspective shows with great precision that it is a mix of professional and political assessment which determines the result. And even in this context most of the governments choose, above all, to listen to what the economists have to say in relation to political scientists. This fits into the hegemonic political discourse.

In spite of the books being inter-disciplinary, it is striking that none of the participating social scientists emphasize the existence of a permanent unemployment and marginalization as one of the most challenging problems. In the last few years the Danish unemployment has been at about 6 %, and to this should be added approx. 3% of individuals engaged in the welfare-to-work programmes.

The individuals working for welfare are either employed or unemployed, which is why they don't count in the official unemployment statistics.

Also neither the sociologists nor the political scientists, except a few like the political scientist Jørn Loftager, see any problem in the shift of balance between rights and obligations in the citizenship which the new workfare policy has affected. Loftager's opinion is that the welfare-to-work policy violates the fundamental principles of the universal welfare state by imposing on a group that does not have a normal job an obligation to move from welfare to work. The group of young political scientists does not see the negative influence of the welfare-to-work policy on the citizenship. In relation to the universal model, they talk about model-conform and model-destructive reforms. And the welfare-to-work policy reform is not mentioned as a model-destructive reform, while a potential needs-testing of the children's check is regarded as a model-destructive reform.

Furthermore they draw attention to the fact that the universal characteristic of the Danish welfare state of today is the universal service (e.g. education and health) while the Danish transfer system in recent years has moved away from the Scandinavian model and in the direction of what the Swedish sociologists Walter Korpi and Joachim Palme (1998) has called a basic security model, which is different from the universal model in that the compensation level for people with an average income is relatively low.

Conclusion

What has this comparative analysis of the different scientific discourses demonstrated?

Every perspective has its strengths and weaknesses, because they one by one focus on only one part of reality and is blind to other parts. What is not treated in a work is as theoretically significant as its explicit assumptions and hypotheses. Every perspective has its home domain. Every theory is influenced explicitly or implicitly by the particular picture of society (deep metaphors) which the theory contains. Is society perceived as kind of market or is it foremost seen as a democratic community. Herein are also embedded different roles for the individuals.

These more or less hidden background assumptions have great influence on the diagnoses of the problems of the actual welfare state.

To have a real dialogue between different types of social scientists a critical self-reflective orientation is needed, both in the academic discussion and when scientists come up with political recommendations on the basis of their research.

The trend is going towards a hegemonic discourse increasingly influenced by a neoliberal economic discourse. And in the hegemonic discourse there is a tendency to adapting the problems to the institutions, instead of developing the institutions upon a new conception of the problems involved. A basic income perspective would be able to reflect this.

The dominance of the economic perspective has, as one of its consequences, that the perspectives of the legal, sociological and political sciences are suppressed in the political-administrative debate. The citizenship perspective in particular suffers from this suppression. In Denmark it is reflected in the staffing of the central commissions on welfare policy, in which the economists have dominated. At the same time it is worth noticing that many economists don't perceive their participation in commissions as political. (Kjærgaard 1997). They consider their work objective and neutral, a work directed at helping the politicians in improving the basis for making decisions.

They don't perceive their work as a part of the production of a hegemonic political discourse which is excluding other professional and political discourses.

If a basic income perspective shall gain more support in the future, both in the academic world and in the public opinion, a change in the general political neoliberal climate must take place. A significant step would be, if the economists' expert monopoly could be broken in relation to the work in public commissions. It would require that politicians to a much higher extent would start using other social scientists for advice and that they would stimulate a much more pluralistic democratic debate between scientists, the common public opinion and the politicians.

This however would also presume that both sociologists and political scientists were much more offensive and visionary. Today many political scientists adapt to the economists' supremacy and

they have no visions for the development of the citizenship. Like the economists they function as tools for the political rulers, just in their own manner. Technically they provide the politicians with models and arguments for making 'reforms' (e.g. cuts in the existing universal model). Instead it is desirable that they focus on how it might be possible to develop the universal elements in the Danish welfare model.

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