

The Origins of the Scandinavian Welfare State and Its future in a Neoliberal World

Per Selle

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at University of Washington

Communications Rm. 126, 3:30 to 5:00 pm on Wednesday, February 19

The seminar will primarily discuss the crucial role of civil society organizations - as something much broader than political parties - in the formation and protection of the Scandinavian Welfare State. With the neoliberal thinking and market logic moving in - also within the civil society organizations themselves - will civil society organizations be able to play the same important role in the future?

Given the way in which civil society is so closely connected to Scandinavian states, it may not be able to buffer the dismantling of the welfare state as actively as it helped to help build it. In addition the talk will address changing communication discourses that are moving away from equality and representative democracy to a language of "user democracy." Characteristic of many other neoliberal regimes, the new language of market democracy does not vary much over parties or civil society organizations.

Per Selle is Professor of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen and a Visiting Scholar at UW 2013/2014. His main research interest is voluntary organizations and political mobilization, environmental politics, the Welfare State, and the role of civil society in a democracy more in general. Over the last years he has also done extensive research on indigenous politics and especially on how the modern state adapt to this 'new' type of mobilization.



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