

Scandinavian history and society politics essay



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Scandinavian countries have enjoyed an international reputation for combining generous welfare state entitlements with rapid economic growth, low unemployment and very high levels of labour force participation, particularly among women.[1]The Path for the emergence of Scandinavian countries to becoming a welfare state was not easy and it is different from each other country Scandinavian countries. Throughout the twentieth century, the scope of social planning in Scandinavia continuously expanded, with the aim of achieving balanced economic and social development-that is to say, economic growth as well as social justice. Thus, fighting poverty went hand in hand with state institution building for social and economic growth as well as political democracy, and was pioneered by broad-based popular social movements[2].

Sweden: Sweden has become known as the prototype for the Social Democratic welfare state. Since around 1960, the modern Swedish social security system was built on a combination of universalism, i. e. that social rights encompassed all inhabitants and income security, guaranteeing the standard of living for those who for some reason could not continue to work[3]. The late 19th century for Sweden brought lots of interior problem which were connected with the social issues such as poverty, emigration, economic and social lack of assurance, industrialization, urbanization and capitalistic system for wage labour. As other Nordic countries Sweden was also dominated by the big proportion of rural population more than 50 % who were the tax payer and had a key role in the political system mostly live in the country side had farms and basically dependent upon agricultural, fishery and forestry with some insurances but the question raised for the

urban working class who were the suffering one. This struggle was strictly genderized. Social welfare and more economic efficiency were the main motto during 1946-1950 with a proper public pension and general health insurance with compulsory schooling for the children. 1950-60 were the part of economic crises in Swedish history. 1960-70 child care, old age people health care was specially focused by the government and also “ blocket” in 1968 with a 4 week vacation and expansion secondary school and universities. 1970-80 oil crises which expanded the problems in Sweden. 1980's- 2000 where the era of economic development or we can say more focused on economic development. Changing the society, medical development and neo-liberal Ideas of Carl Bildt has supported the emergence of Swedish welfare state.

Norway: The emergence and the development of a welfare state in Norway as associated with the labour party government after the Second World War. The Norwegian welfare state is a product of the policy of the Norwegian Social Democratic Party. Such an assertion has certain relevance, but it must be considered in the light of the time-span within which one places the establishment and moulding of the welfare state[4]. Period from 1935-1978 were considered as the golden age of Norway and the 1880-1935 were the foundation of welfare state in Norway. The local councils play an integral part in Norwegian welfare system because local autonomy was very much appreciated and democratized of politics taken at early stage. At early stage farmer were the dominating political factor support the local autonomy and establish the laws how the community is going to develop. A concept was developed in farmers and general public to helping people to help

themselves which drive individual to work by own pay their debt by own self and be self-reliant. The social care act bill (1845-1964) self help and self reliance was the core of the bill which was for the mutual support and responsibility among the families. The Norwegian welfare model is type of comprehensive because it is based on universal principle it is benefiting each and every strata of the Norwegian society. Another important feature of the Norwegian welfare state is that cash support from the National security system (folktrygden) is based on one's income, that is, in relation to one's salary in the labour market. Furthermore, the public sector is responsible for the social welfare goods or services. These services are being delivered by the communes and state or private organisations that receive public aids under strict public control. There is always a political struggle to stop the development in the commercialisation of these public goods that the public delivers.[5]

Sweden and Norway had two motives first to create a contemporary identity which are echoed from the past and the rationalist instrumental to bound the democratic movement and namely given in shape of training of " mature human being" to increase the participation in the country's public affair. In both the countries during the time of introduction of welfare state term the rural farmer were the dominating factor and tax payers. With a view to the ill-defined conditions with the party co-operation with the farmers and in light of the fact it was through the support of the farmers parties that the social democratic party in both Sweden and Norway[6]social democratic parties on the region were Sweden was considered as the exception were as Norway was very much close to the development in Europe even though

most of the democrats on the region stayed outside. It was somehow hard to explain the Norwegian radicalism. Conversely it is possible to view the situation in Sweden as opposite of bull's perception namely that the working class was more oriented or action oriented in Sweden than in Norway[7].

Sweden and Norway turned themselves from a small, revolutionary, class struggle parties to the big, national, unifying parties and worked for modernization program in their respective countries. The social democrats in Sweden and Norway turned to reformism and won the strong positions. In 1919 Norden organization in which Norway, Denmark and Sweden work together for the mutual enlightenment and cultural co-operation among Scandinavian countries. They both share the Scandinavian identity and they have an extensive network of labor movement and academic world there is a strong inclination to copy each other.

Old age care and public pensions, which tend to benefit females more than males since the longevity for females is significantly longer than for males[8]. 1914 Sweden introduced public pension scheme. The pension include old age pension and disability pension which were compulsory the pension were given after the age of 67 or earlier if person is unable to do work. The Norwegian public pension is formed on the same theme as the Swedish insurance scheme. The reform in Norway is inspired by the Swedish pension reform, in part by changing over to a lifetime-based pension earning and by introducing a flexible pension which is neutral in design.[9]The reform look identical at a first glance but from closer context the difference shows. Norwegian pension system is traditional social insurance while Swedish traditional one “ pay as you” system in which financial risk are transferred

from state to individual. difference in outcome of the two countries' reform processes is probably best explained by different perceptions on future "crisis" in the old age pension system, and of course, the different national economic position of the two countries. By transforming the petrol fortune into a pension fund, Norway has secured a financial buffer for future pension payments that is already six times as high per capita than the Swedish financial buffer.[10]

Conclusion: Specific historical social and economic structural configurations in Scandinavia may have been conducive to the development of a participatory political culture, consensus building (compare with the political compromises of the 1930s), a strong role of local and central government, and the overall support for the principle of universalism (education, health and social security). But the uniqueness of the Scandinavian historical experience does not rule out an assessment of the implications of developing governmental capacity and institutions for promoting welfare, and for the possible positive implications of the principle of universal policies for the general level of welfare.[11] Trust is a fundamental prerequisite for the welfare state. If we didn't trust one another, the whole model that the Scandinavian societies are built around would collapse even before it was implemented.[12]