

The Norwegian Welfare State

1. “Norwegian welfare state” – concepts and dimensions/issues

1. *Welfare* dimensions and issues. The **widening of the welfare-concept**
2. Relationships between Norwegian internal and external politics and welfare. Welfare *society* and welfare *state* in different countries
3. **Arguments** for and against the welfare *state*

2. Three important general historical developments

1. From family/church/charity responsibilities to welfare society and welfare state
2. From a more narrow definition of welfare rights (basic health, income, nutrition, housing) to a wider (education, culture, environment, happiness, “meaning” of life)
3. From general services and professions to specialization – followed by efforts to coordinate and integrate services

3. National welfare policies

1. Realized through programs/plans, organization, legislation and budgets
2. Responsibilities for municipalities, counties and state level
3. Welfare priorities among Norwegian political parties: consensus and conflicts
4. Economic policies and welfare – “**the Norwegian/Nordic model**”

4. Some important historical events and welfare reforms

1. Poor Commissions from ca. 1740 (poor tax) – The Poor Law of 1845
2. **Migration in the 19th and 20th century, ca. 1/3 of the population, mainly to North-America** – less economic, social and political tension in Norway
3. **Industrialization and urbanization from the 1850’ies:** Welfare consequences
4. The Health Law of 1860 – The Law on Labour Protection 1892 (restrictions on child labour) – Social Insurance system 1894 – Compulsory sick insurance for workers 1909 – The Children Laws 1915 – 8 hours normal working day from 1919
5. **Economic crisis/unemployment 1929-35 followed by “New Deal” in Norway**

6. Old Age Insurance 1936, Unemployment Insurance 1938
7. *1945: The joint program of all political parties, focusing on development of the welfare state and on cooperation between organizations and political parties*
8. Important reforms in the coming years: 1946: State Housing Bank and Family Allowance Act, 1953: Child Care Act, 1956: Sick Insurance Act (obligatory), 1957: Old Age Pension after 70 years, 1964: New Social Care Act
9. 1967 and 1971: National Insurance Act “**Folketrygden**”, integrating many earlier reforms into one comprehensive, and giving old pensions to people over 67 years, 1977: Workers Protection and Environmental Act, 1984: Local Health Service Act, (“Kommunehelseloven”)
10. Many of these laws have been reformed during the last 20 years
11. ***In education** (as part of the welfare state) important reforms. Now 10 years of obligatory education (6-16). Right to three or four years of upper secondary education for all young people. Most studies at colleges and universities are free.*
12. *2006-2019: Integrating social service, social security/pensions and labour recruitment through local offices and regional and national administration (NAV) – and later reforms to coordinate better primary health service with hospital treatment/specialized medicine (“**Samhandlingsreformen**”).*

5. Recent problems and challenges for the welfare state

1. **Expenditures** rising; more old people, fewer to finance; growing expectations and demands
2. Connections and **priorities** between prevention – healing – rehabilitation
3. Recruitment of **welfare-workers**: salaries and gender, dependence of migration workers etc
4. The **NAV-reforms** the last ten years – coordinating/integrating pensions, social services and employment assistance
5. **Privatization** and/or continuing welfare *state*?
6. Effects on welfare from globalization: economic ups and downs – benefits and challenges connected with **migration**
7. **Integration of different policy issue-areas** relevant for welfare – f ex housing challenges – especially rising prices, for young people in cities
8. **Review/redefinition of the welfare concept?** Challenges connected to “economic growth”, “environment”, “meaning” and “happiness”.