

## SOS 2603. The Scandinavian welfare state model

### Course content

This course gives an introduction to the Scandinavian welfare state model focusing on work, family, immigration, labour relations, crime and gender equality. Theoretically, the course is informed by comparative welfare state research and contemporary debates on the sustainability of these welfare state models in the context of early 21st century challenges such as ageing, flows of immigrants and asylum seekers, and integration in the EU single market.

What are the historical roots of the Nordic states, and how did their political systems develop in the 20th century? What social conflict lines, alliances and compromises created the post-war context of highly organized civil societies (centralized labour unions and employers associations, strong organizations of farmers and fishermen), linked to the state in patterns of democratic corporatism.

How is work and family life reconciled in the setting of the Nordic welfare state? What policy reforms have been decided in order to respond to present challenges? Are the ambitions of gender equality and universalist welfare provisions sustainable in the future?

The course examines a wide range of policies (e.g. parental leave, daddy quotas, state-sponsored day care for children, working time regulations, integration measures, conditions applying to various types of immigrants, work life reforms, labour market regulations) and the outcomes of policies (e.g. fertility rates, fathers' participation in child care, the work/care balance of lone parents, crime rates, integration and multiculturalism, membership in unions and organizations).

The course literature highlights the similarities and differences between the Nordic countries through analyses of comparative statistical data and national case studies, and by contrasting the Scandinavian experience with that of other European countries.

### Knowledge

- historically and theoretically based knowledge about the basic features of the Scandinavian welfare state model
- gender, family, integration and labour market perspectives
- learn to assess the implications of this societal model for gender relations, economic development and social integration.

### Skills

- skills in using sociological concepts and theories to analyse cases within the Nordic welfare states
- the capacity to relate such cases to specific institutions and processes
- discuss and write such analyses, following the basic rules of social scientific inquiry.

### Competences

- awareness of the highly complex relationship between empirical research and moral reasoning in these lines of inquiry.