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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 23
Issue 1 *March*

Article 16

March 1996

Review of *Divided Against Itself. A Study of Integration in A Welfare Bureaucracy.* Bjorn Hvinden. Reviewed by Sven E. Olsson Hort, Stockholm University, Sweden.

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Recommended Citation

Olsson Hort, Sven E. (1996) "Review of *Divided Against Itself. A Study of Integration in A Welfare Bureaucracy.* Bjorn Hvinden. Reviewed by Sven E. Olsson Hort, Stockholm University, Sweden.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 23 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol23/iss1/16>

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and find suitable examples where human service professionals indeed were highly effective in influencing local politics. An incorporation of human services material in these five chapters and a less condescending approach would have made this book an important addition into macro practice literature. Still, the ones who can benefit from this book are community-practice students in introductory courses.

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Björn Hvinden, *Divided Against Itself: A Study of Integration in A Welfare Bureaucracy*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1994 # 45 hardcover (Distributed in the United States by Oxford University Press, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016).

In European social research, the "Matthew effect" is a notion associated with the Flemish researcher Herman Deleeck, a continental equivalent of Richard Titmuss and T. H. Marshall. Whether the young Norwegian sociologist Björn Hvinden will invent a "Mark effect" remains to be seen, but he is absolutely on his way towards recognition and academic respect. Like Deleeck, Hvinden has modelled the title of his book on a quotation from the New Testament: "And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (St Mark III:25). However, Deleeck is focussing on distribution, Hvinden on organization and implementation.

Divided Against Itself is a pioneering study of frontline social administrators inspired by Michael Lipsky's streetlevel bureaucrat approach. In focus are two of the most important social policy agencies in Norway: local offices of the National Social Insurance Administration, and local government social service departments; and ambitions to coordinate their efforts to serve the local community and develop human resources.

Hvinden undertakes an in-depth study through "indirect participatory observation" of eight paired offices of the two branches of government. He looks into what the employees and local managers actually are doing behind their desks and computers, and traces their way of problem-solving and problem-avoidance. The

practical starting-point is the national social policy goal of integrated services and cash benefits: help to self-help (a key concept that Hvinden's proof-reader quite a few times has turned into "self to self-help"). The analytical point of departure is a penetrating discussion of the concept of integration, which ends up with a plea for a focus on horizontal integration. The overall finding of the Norwegian case study is a lack of integration between the two types of welfare authorities; in other words, failure to achieve the policy goal.

A little more than a third of the book is devoted to this thorough, theoretically informed descriptive analysis of the workload and work culture at two different welfare agencies in five geographical areas. Here, participant observation is carried out with great skill and Hvinden's strength as a sensitive listener and knowledgeable social researcher stands out.

Added to this demanding task—not least in hours spent at the agencies—Hvinden makes a significant addition through an, admittedly downsized, comparative study of Scottish civil servants involved in providing similar social benefits in cash and in-kind at two different public agencies. The Scottish results are contrasted with the Norwegian, and end with a very stimulating discussion of inter-agency similarities and differences in Norway and Scotland in terms of reciprocal vs unilateral dependence. My concern, however, is the relationship of the latter concept to that of horizontal vs vertical integration, and my fundamental disagreement with Hvinden is that Scotland is not an example of horizontal but of vertical integration. Unilateral dependence seems too close to vertical integration to go unremarked.

At the very end, Hvinden summarizes the theoretical approach as well as the methodological design of the study in an analytical chapter and continues with a discussion of the implications of the results of his study in terms of theory, management and effects on society and individuals. Like all thought-provoking research, this study leaves more questions unanswered than "solved" or transcended. Social insurance is Hvinden's point of departure, and he makes a thorough presentation of the modern Scandinavian approach to welfare policy, including an extended discussion of the current symbolic role in this type of policy of the totality as against societal parts. Why he chose to compare the

administration of social insurance with municipal social work, and not employment agencies, which are also considered by Hvinden, never become entirely clear to me.

Furthermore, in his discussion of municipal social services, Hvinden never mentions their roots in the Norwegian poor law tradition. There is an ahistorical stroke through Hvinden's work despite lip service to institutional inertia as theorized by Theda Skocpol and Arthur Stinchcombe. He shows no interest in the findings from research on the roots of the Norwegian welfare state, perhaps most eminently carried out by the Oslo historian Anne-Lise Seip.

My main doubts concern the overall findings that there is weak horizontal integration or an absence of inter-organizational cooperation (collaboration) in the Norwegian welfare system, in particular on the street level between central state insurance offices and local government social service offices. The Scottish case may not lend itself to such a comparative conclusion. Perhaps a comparative study of a Danish or Swedish counterpart would have substantiated Hvinden's claims. Whatever St Mark had in his mind, compared to many other buildings, the Norwegian house seems rather firmly erected. By striving for integrated cash and in-kind social benefits help to self-help—the Norwegian welfare state is actually searching for the almost impossible task of excellence in management.

Overall, to a Scandinavian reader like this writer, it is a little sad that the book does not contain any recent research on similar topics in Denmark, Finland or Sweden. Anglo-American research, and in particular sociologists such as Peter Blau and Robert Merton, have definitely provided important impetus to Hvinden's work. Still, Hvinden's discussion of welfare bureaucracy is to my mind too influenced by an American interpretation of Max Weber's analysis of bureaucracy. Although there are some parallels in terms of rule-abiding and formal procedures, I am not sure that the kind of lay, amateurish and almost anti-professional type of bureaucracy that characterize Scandinavian social insurance in particular, is particularly close to the Weberian model of bureaucracy. Here, I think Hvinden would have benefited from the results and theoretical implications of some other Scandinavian studies of welfare bureaucracies. For instance,

in works inspired by the street-level approach, Rothstein in his seminal work on employment services has managed to capture their lay character through the concept of "cadre" organizations, while Roine Johansson focussed on the client-relation in a study of agencies very similar to Hvinden's research objects.

Whatever criticisms and questions that this book might provoke, there is no doubt that it is an innovative and at times brilliant study of the administration of social welfare.

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Richard Neely, *Tragedies of Our Own Making: How Private Choices Have Created Public Bankruptcy*. Urbana, IL. University of Illinois Press, 1994. \$19.95 hardcover.

By Richard Neely's statement the purpose of his book is to pull together the various strands of our perception of public bankruptcy in US social programs; (1) the belief in the declining efficacy of social welfare programs despite the infusion of more dollars, (2) the collapse of public education, (3) the failure of industry and governments to deal with declining productivity of the American labor force, and (4) rising crime along with rising expenditure on crime control. We are also promised to be provided with a blueprint to cheap and efficient ways to reverse the deterioration in public programs and the loss of faith in government. This is an ambitious task.

Neely, from his experience as judge and later Justice of the West Virginia Supreme Court structures his argument around the obvious truth that bad private choices lead to unintended public problems. He is most specific with regard to decisions about the creation and dissolution of the family unit. He argues that citizens need to be better informed about the real costs and the real benefits of the private choices that they make. He argues that it is in the interest of society to subsidize good choices and penalize poor ones through programs of social intervention.

The concept of social intervention implies a "rebuttable presumption" that the most desirable mode of choice is a network