Två kön eller inget alls
Politiska intentioner och vardagslivets realiteter i den arbetslivsinriktade rehabiliteringen

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Abstract

This dissertation poses questions concerning the shaping of the welfare state and the implications of citizenship. Citizenship in democratic welfare states is based on the idea that everyone is of equal value. Who it is that constitutes the norm for "everyone" is examined in this analysis by applying feminist theory as a complement to more traditional political theories.

By following developments within an area of social insurance – vocational rehabilitation – from the 1940s until the year 2000, changes over the years in the norms and values of the welfare state become apparent, from a recognition of both gainful employment and household work to an almost total disavowal of unpaid work. This analysis shows that development of the welfare state can be very well explained by social liberal theory when citizenship based on a male norm constitutes the frame of reference. When feminist theory adds the private sphere, and the realities of everyday life are taken into consideration, citizenship is no longer equally accessible to both sexes.

In the Swedish welfare model, gainful employment is encouraged, and by using various incentives the state tries to induce women to take part in gainful employment to the same extent as men. This has not succeeded, which according to feminist theory is because the policy focuses only on citizens in the public sphere. According to liberal tradition, family life is a protected zone, implying that the division of work between spouses is something the state should not attempt to change. The realities of everyday life and political intentions end up in conflict, and as a consequence women cannot enjoy full citizenship to the same extent as men.

This dissertation demonstrates the importance of adding a gender perspective to critiques of the welfare state. Looking at the conditions of both men and women in both the private and public spheres poses new questions and also provides new answers to old questions.

Key words: vocational rehabilitation, social insurance, welfare state, citizenship, political theory, feminism