

## **SOME BASIC WELFARE MEASURES FOR COMBATING POVERTY: LESSONS FROM A FORMERLY POOR COUNTRY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Poverty alleviation is mainly about redistribution of economic, social and political resources, and all forms of redistribution carry a built-in conflict potential. However, there are political and social means available to contain such conflicts. Some of these means are discussed through a presentation of the historical development of Norway from a poverty ridden country to a wealthy country where redistributive measures dominate the economic and social life of a modern welfare state.

### **THE BUILT-IN CONFLICTS OF DISTRIBUTION AND REDISTRIBUTION**

There are two theses in social policy theory which seem to be indisputable: i) No social problem can be alleviated (and certainly not solved) without some kind of distribution or redistribution of economic, political or social resources. ii) All kinds of distribution and redistribution have a built-in conflict potential, no matter how trivial the distribution/redistribution seems to be.

These are the harsh realities which policy-makers and voluntary organisations engaging in the field have to relate to. There is no way of avoiding them, but under certain circumstances the conflicts can be contained and minimised.

One way of looking at poverty is to see it as part of a social, economic and symbolic hierarchy, with the poor placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. The longer a state of poverty has lasted, the more established the hierarchy will become. Transfer of resources to the poor upsets such an established hierarchy, both in actual and symbolic terms. Arguments like 'the poor are moving out of their place', 'they are becoming like us', 'they are getting something for free', are signals that an accepted balance and important symbols are threatened.

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It is not only those who foot the bill, the wealthy or the tax payers, who are challenged by such imbalance. Studies show that 'the almost poor' ie, those groups who are just above the poor in the hierarchy, express the most negative attitudes towards resource transfers to the poor. They lose 'their' underclass, and relatively speaking they move closer to the bottom of the hierarchy.

The more comprehensive the amount of transfers to the poor, and the more the transfer contains of political, economic and social resources, the larger the conflict potential involved. Massive transfers will interfere even more with the established balance. The injection of resources upgrades the social position of the poor (which is really what welfare measures should be about), thereby threatening still larger parts of society.

Internal transfer of resources, ie, transfers from non-poor groups to the poor within the same culture/country, is likely to carry the largest conflict potential. The non-poor experience a direct loss of accumulated resources. This is particularly so where the percentage of poor people is high. External transfers, ie, transfers from other countries or from international agencies, carry a large conflict potential, for reasons mentioned above.

So far economic growth or an otherwise accumulated surplus have been seen as a necessary prerequisite to avoid conflicts stemming from redistribution. However, studies do not present a unanimous picture on this point. Welfare measures have been developed both during economic growth and during periods of economic hardship. Much is still to be done analytically to resolve this argument, including the fact that one result of economic growth is the increased differentiation in the income distribution, thereby increasing also poverty, both in absolute and in relative terms. Also, the effects of economic growth have differential effects, as seen for example in the different impacts on rural and urban poverty.

Where poverty problems are closely linked to other conflicts such as ethnic and political problems, pressure on land use and water resources, the built-in conflict in the transfers is likely to increase further.

### **THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF POVERTY**

On the one hand, it can be argued that poverty needs to be alleviated, both for humanitarian reasons and for the loss of human capital being wasted when people have to use all their energies to survive. It can also be argued that poverty is costly to society because it increases the risk to society at large of epidemics, crime exposure, pollution and waste.

On the other hand, and much less acknowledged, it can be argued that poverty is actually an asset to certain parts of society. Poor people constitute cheap, flexible and unorganised labour whose mere existence puts a lid on wage demands. A certain amount of poor people is functional for the economy because the poor buy and consume second and third grade products which would other-

wise be wasted. Also, poor people form part of 'the silent majority' on whose behalf politicians and bureaucrats can act without being accountable. There are countries where the votes of the poor can be bought for very little money, and there are countries where the poor function as 'clients' for a 'patron' who is given a blank signature to act in all political matters, no matter their contents. It can be doubted whether such decision-making actually attends to the interests of the poor. Without poor people such political systems would break down. Add to this that there are non-poor people who benefit financially when they transfer the risk of their illegal behaviour to the poor through modest payments, for example, the use of couriers in drug trafficking or prostitutes. The poor are also symbolically useful, as examples of illiterate, lazy, dirty and inferior human beings who serve as a bogey to demonstrate the superior status of the moral standards of the non-poor.

Little is known about how much the non-poor actually have vested in sustaining a certain amount of poverty. Even less is known about how much poverty is functional for a certain society, and at what stage a certain amount of poverty turns into being dysfunctional for the same society.

It is interesting to note that the built-in conflict potential in distributive measures stems from two sources. The non-poor society may experience loss both through their direct contribution to redistributive measures, and through a loss of reduced utilities of a shrinking poor population.

In the following is presented a case exposing some distributive measures of poverty alleviation which over time led to the eradication of poverty, while at the same time keeping the distributional conflicts at a low level.

## **THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE**

Today Norway is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Few would have predicted this half a century ago when the country was marred by five years of foreign occupation. However, it was in this situation, right after the war, that the political parties in a joint declaration pronounced their willingness to fund and organise those basic national institutions which are now at the core of the welfare state.

But the story goes further back, to a time when Norway was one of the poorest countries in Europe. Although it is difficult to date the exact beginning of the welfare state, there seems to be an agreement that the humanitarian organisations blossoming during the 19th century were the driving forces behind a push for a more general social commitment to deal with extensive poverty and misery. Those informal organisations helped create the awareness of the problems and to set the ethical standards necessary for welfare measures to be implemented. They catered for traditional problems created through illness, widowhood and orphanage, along with the new problems due to accidents at the factories, child labour and

health risks brought about through early industrialisation. Once the labour unions became established they became important actors in the fight for industrial protection and measures of social protection. After the turn of the century the health care professionals became another set of important actors in the push for a public health care system, along with popular movements promoting hygiene, prenatal care and proper nutrition. School lunches, for example, became one of the symbols for a new and more healthy society. All along, the political parties monitored their special interests towards shaping the welfare state, and ferocious debates were exchanged on principles of financing, benefits, obligations and the responsibility of the individual. (Interestingly enough, the arguments from those debates some 60 and 70 years ago are still the same, both in Norway and in other countries).

After a halting start in the beginning of the century the public sector took over some of the welfare measures, and local welfare programmes grew like mushrooms, slowly converging into national social policy programmes. In 1995 the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Social Affairs celebrated the centennial of the first social security programme. The real boom came in the 1960s which saw a series of national social security programmes based on cash transfers to the elderly, the disabled, single providers, orphans, families with children, unemployed, and those temporarily out of work because of illness or pregnancy. The public health care system was already well established, and became further cemented in the public sphere through its close financial ties to the national social security system. The 1970s saw the institutional fortification of the welfare state, both in the bureaucracy and in the caring for the elderly and disabled. During the following decade when the welfare state was under attack from the conservatives, the bureaucrats and the professionals came out as its staunchest supporters, cheered along by a majority opinion in the population.

Much of the welfare state building happened before the oil revenues were even known. But the further expansion of the welfare state has built heavily on the income from the North Sea oil fields, and is likely to continue doing so.

In this very short exposé it is only possible to stress a few of the factors which led to the development of a comprehensive welfare state. Besides, historians and social scientists between them still have not resolved which were the dominant factors behind this development.

Basically, we can distinguish three kinds of factors influencing the process of poverty alleviation: those characteristics of the country already in existence which were of relevance for poverty alleviation; those political decisions which indirectly helped poverty alleviation, but were actually aimed at improving the opportunities and quality of life for all the citizens; those policies which were directly aimed at alleviating poverty.

In the first category can be emphasised the small size of the country, the homogeneity of the population created through a long history built on joint tra-

ditions, and the early development of democratic institutions. Noted should likewise be the opportunity created for mass emigration to the American continent when the pressure on scarce land resources in the 19th century created widespread famine, and later, the massive need for labour in the period of reconstruction after the Second World War. Both of these phenomena had more impact on poverty alleviation than any welfare measure could possibly have.

In the second category can be counted political decisions such as progressive tax laws and targeted tax deductions, concessions to the rural sector, public ownership of some vital industries and infrastructure, control of imports and foreign investments, protection of internal trade and local use of resources, just to mention a few examples of the state interventions.

In the third category fall the packages of public health and social policy programmes which helped wipe out mass poverty and to sustain a fairly decent level of living for the majority of the population, including those outside the workforce.

The homogeneity of the population was expressed through a core of common values of what was right and proper behaviour. Taking into account the smallness of the population and the relative visibility of its members (partly due to the local political institutions and the involvement of popular movements), these factors gave way to an empathy with the less fortunate and a call for justice and equality. Some historians may add that the occupation of Norway by foreign powers (Denmark and Sweden) for close to 500 years and the consequent lack of a national elite, created a foundation for solidarity among the ordinary people which has been instrumental in later calls for equality and disdain for those who consider themselves superior to others. (Norway actually has a set of informal rules called the 'Law of Jante' which in ten paragraphs outlines why no individual should behave in such a way that they portray themselves to be more valuable human beings than other people!).

A strong state and the existence of democratic institutions were key factors in containing the conflict potential of the many and comprehensive transfers embedded in the proposed welfare measures. As part of the political process, the proposals went through elaborate and organised processing in committees and interest groups, being changed and adapted before final approval.

Although it could hardly be known at the time, the choice of principles for the welfare state turned out to be more sustainable than other choices put forward.

#### **FOUR PILLARS OF THE WELFARE STATE**

The actual outcome of this historical development is still not easy to grasp. Therefore, a warning should be issued at this stage: the Norwegian welfare state has now become such a complex organisation that no analytical scheme lends itself easily to an evaluation of the many health and social programmes making up the welfare state. The four basic principles outlined below have become altered

and diluted within many of the social programmes, but they still represent a baseline for the ideology of the welfare state.

### **Universalism vs Targeting**

Two of the major conflicts in Norway centred (as elsewhere) around the issue of who was to benefit from new welfare measures, and who was to foot the bill. The tradition has been to create welfare measures which target the needy and deserving part of the population. The benefits have usually been low, and payments have in varying degree come from the church, philanthropists, voluntary organisations, the local community, taxpayers, employers, the state, and international organisations.

Much can be said in favour of targeting. If the target group is well defined and the welfare measure precisely tailored to the needs of the target group, the efficiency of the resources directed towards the group is likely to be very high. As long as the benefits are kept low and the benefit receivers are considered deserving by the non-poor, targeting as a welfare measure carries a fairly low conflict potential. It is at the same time a measure with a pending conflict potential because criteria for transfers and level of benefits are left open to still new negotiations.

Much can also be said against targeting. One of the problems is, of course, the difficulties with a precise definition of the needy. Another problem is the administrative costs involved in sorting the needy from the not-so needy. A third problem is the handling of the borderline cases and the perceptions of justice involved. A fourth problem is the low level of benefits which really does not 'solve' poverty. The levels are usually kept low, both out of consideration to moral issues and to the availability of labour. Still another problem, which is of a psychological character, is the unease, or even stigma, which inescapably follows targeted transfers. Needy people become equipped with an extra load on their shoulders when targeted, which by the way is functional since it works as a rationing mechanism towards further claims.

Universalism is a type of distribution which embraces all citizens, and in the ideal form gives them the same benefits and the same obligations. It can be summed up as a costly measure with low target efficiency, and it is no wonder that most economists are against it.

However, universalistic welfare measures have other qualities, which in the language of the economists may be counted out as externalities. First of all, universalistic measures have a low conflict potential because all citizens benefit. That may be particularly pertinent in a country characterised by homogeneity and strong norms of equality. Secondly, universalistic measures reinforce democratic institutions and the unique value of the individual, no matter how marginal or poor a person is. Thirdly, universalistic measures tie the individuals closer to the society in financial terms, and the majority of the beneficiaries will have a vested

interest in defending their benefits. It may be hypothesised that such measures also have a psychological value and increase the citizens' feeling of belonging to the society. Administratively universal arrangements are cheap to run, and stigmatisation is avoided.

Both the principle of targeting and that of universalism have ruled the ground in the Norwegian welfare state, the former steadily losing out as still more comprehensive universal welfare measures have taken over. However, lately the renewed interest for market liberalism has brought back the discussion about increased targeting.

Universalistic principles in obligations have hardly been an issue. All Norwegian citizens earning an income have to pay into the public social security system (including the health care system), as do employers on behalf of their employees. The size of the compulsory payments is part of the public debate, but few will dispense with the condition of about half a century, where all citizens have benefits as well as obligations in the welfare state.

### **Social Rights as Citizen Rights**

Much has been written on what kind of rights should be extended from the community/the state to a citizen, in particular in the British literature. Into the discussion are woven issues of the responsibility of the state versus the responsibility of the individual, liberalism versus socialism, privatisation versus public engagement, moral punishment versus investment in human capital, and how private and public resources shall be distributed.

The pros and cons for a fixed poverty line reflect part of this discussion. One of the largest social science studies ever undertaken was a series of projects on the consequences of introducing a nation-wide poverty line through a negative income tax in the United States. The major aim of the study was to evaluate the expected loss in available labour power if such social rights were introduced. The final estimates of the loss ran between five and ten percent. However, other results were more surprising. Through controlled experiments, those deprived families who had a guaranteed income, even low as it was, the mothers gave birth to babies with a higher average birth weight than comparable families without a predictable income. The children from the families with a right to an income also stayed longer in secondary school than did children from families with an unpredictable income. If the results from these studies are of a more general nature, they are of significance for poverty alleviation. Increased birth weight is acknowledged as a vital instrument in the battle against malnutrition and prevention of health problems. Prolonged school attendance is a vital instrument for breaking out of a poverty situation. If predictability in income through allocation of social rights is as powerful as indicated here, the discussion on the consequences of allocating social rights needs to be rethought and brought into the policy-making arena where poverty alleviation is at stake.

This outlook coincides with the more general issue located in the philosophy of human rights, that granted rights protection first and foremost to the most vulnerable groups. This is partly because the social structure provides the best opportunities for those who are already well integrated in the society and partly because marginal groups lack the power and institutional energy to fight for themselves and their needs repeatedly.

Universalistic measures and the concept of social rights are of course closely tied together, as the former includes the latter, while the latter does not necessarily include the former.

In Norway today the tendency has been for extending the social rights of the citizens still further and into still newer areas. At the same time private insurance arrangements have increased. For the uninitiated it should be added that Norway is not a socialistic country. The Norwegian economy consists of a public/private mix, and politically Norway has moved further to the right during the last decade, in spite of a social-democratic government.

### **Equality and Justice**

If one were to do a content analysis of the tons of paper and documentation which at one time or another have been fed into the preparations and evaluations of the many programmes under the Norwegian welfare state, the words *equality* and *justice* would turn up frequently. As mentioned earlier, they are linked to basic values in the Norwegian society, although equality is considered a less attractive value now than just a few years ago. Also the verbal use of the two concepts forms part of the conflict reduction of a new distribution.

At this stage it is necessary to distinguish between equality in input and equality in outcome. Expectations of equality in input, such as equal access to the health care system, and equal rights to benefits, are strong, while expectations of an equal outcome for the individual going through the educational system, the health care system or the social security system, are a non-issue. In principle, everybody should be given the same opportunity, but how these opportunities are utilised only becomes an issue if somebody falls below certain acceptable standards.

The distributional outcomes of equal inputs are not easy to predict, of course. An often cited illustration of the unknown consequences of extending retirement benefits to the elderly, is how the balance of power between the generations in the rural areas can become upset. When the elderly suddenly control the only stable cash income in a household based on foodstuffs and cash in kind, they regain a control they had left behind when the farm was turned over to the next generation. The history of social policy is full of such examples.

Emphasis on justice and equality at the same time does not necessarily lead to the same kind of distribution. While it may be considered 'just' that all citizens should be treated equally and receive the same retirement benefits, it is not con-



sidered just that those citizens who have paid more into the social security system than others (because they have worked longer and earned more) should receive the same level of benefits as those citizens who never worked outside the home. These two kinds of seemingly opposed perceptions of justice are nicely taken care of in the Norwegian retirement scheme. Every citizen receives a basic retirement pension, irrespective of how much he or she has paid into the system. Women in particular benefit from this scheme. Those citizens who have paid more into the system receive an additional benefit, reflecting the size of their input. But here the principle of equality reigns again. An upper limit is set to the amount of additional benefit paid out, irrespective of the amount a wealthy citizen has had to pay into the system. Once more, a distributional system has been created which has a low conflict potential.

### **The Strong State**

Distribution/redistribution of economic as well as of social and political resources calls for strong actors on behalf of those who are at the lower end of the distribution. During the development of the Norwegian welfare measures, many such actors have been involved, as mentioned above. The strongest, and maybe most impartial, actor has been the state, through the democratic institutions and the bureaucracy. Neither universalistic measures, nor the establishment of social rights and approximating equal measures incorporating the least resourceful part of the population, would have been possible without the existence of a state with legitimacy, integrity and the authority to prioritise communal resources.

Since distributions/redistributions are never won once and for all, welfare measures need to be built into sustainable institutions, be granted legitimacy through legitimate bodies, and have strong and independent surveyors following the agreed upon rules of distribution. The surveyors can be much the same actors as mentioned before, including the media and the general informed public.

### **THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

Distributions and welfare measures touch upon so many different kinds of interests that it is not surprising to observe the manifold actors entering the field, trying to influence the outcome one way or the other. In addition to this is the fact that delivery of semi-private welfare services has become part of a very attractive market, particularly in developing countries. International organisations, for example, feed sizeable economic resources into this market, based on the belief that voluntary organisations are a less expensive and more easily controlled medium for organising services than welfare measures organised through the state.

The voluntary organisations are a heterogeneous group, both with respect to activities, ideology, flexibility, size, involvement of members and potential for a

long-lived existence. All these factors have to be taken into account when analysing the role of those organisations.

The arena for the voluntary organisations is determined by the role of the state and its responsibilities in the welfare sector, to such a degree that it can be termed a symbiotic relationship. Within a weak state with limited powers and low legitimacy, ample room is provided for voluntary organisations to define their activities and priorities, without interference and control. Within a strong state already engaged in the distribution of welfare measures, the voluntary organisations have to play second fiddle and engage in those activities which are 'left over' from the welfare measures in the public sphere. Not surprisingly, there is ambivalence and a certain conflict potential built into the relationship between the strong state and the voluntary organisations. The ambivalence stems from the acceptance that the state can never fulfil all the welfare obligations towards its citizens, so the contributions of the voluntary organisations are needed to complement the public engagements. The conflict stems from the unclear division of labour between the state initiated welfare measures and those measures set by voluntary organisations, characterised by different goals and ambitions.

The discussion of the role of the voluntary organisations becomes muddled when infiltrated by the discussion of private versus public responsibility for distributing welfare measures. In functional terms there are really two separate issues, one belonging to the political sphere where privatisation/public engagement is an overriding issue, and the other belonging to a discussion on how to distribute welfare measures in the most efficient way. Another ideological trend which has gained prominence lately is the push for more decentralisation of public activities, including welfare measures. This is also a discussion which muddles the picture. Decentralisation has been interpreted in several ways: one is to empower local democracy, another is to cut down on the powers of the state, just to mention a couple of interpretations. For the welfare state, decentralisation (according to how it is implemented) is likely to make the pillars of equality, social rights and universalism more fragile. For the voluntary organisations, decentralisation will expand their arena and give more scope for initiatives tailored to the organisations' specific interests.

During the development of the Norwegian welfare state the role of the voluntary organisations has changed over time. Roughly speaking, these organisations have gone through three stages: that of being innovators and driving forces behind humanitarian welfare measures; a period of hesitance when defining the space for new initiatives as the welfare state took over; and a development into interest groups for and by specific groups of disabled people, following with vigilance the public welfare measures and pressing for still larger benefits in cash and kind for their own group. Many of the voluntary groups in the welfare sphere are subsidised by public grants, and most of the groups would fold if these grants were withdrawn. The groups are in principle under a certain control of the pub-

lic authorities, their economy in particular. The welfare professions play a double role here, as they are both integrated in such groups, and at the same time argue that interference by non-professionals can be harmful to 'disabled' people.

The integration of the public sphere and the voluntary organisations raises a whole set of questions. To which extent should the voluntary organisations be obliged to follow the same ideology for their activities as the one laid down for public welfare measures? Should their loyalty be with the public welfare measures, or should they take on the critical role of external surveyor mentioned above? How much loyalty should they invest in the ideology provided by the organisations which finance them? How large can the voluntary sector grow before it becomes a threat to the public welfare measures? What is the optimal division of labour between the public and the voluntary sphere? When does the voluntary sector perform better than the public sector? How can the voluntary sector enforce the growth of democratic institutions? How can greedy profit-oriented voluntary organisations be sorted out from that part of the voluntary sector which is needed to improve the quality of life for marginalised citizens? Do the voluntary organisations need to be early innovators of welfare measures now that lessons can be learned from other cultures? Or should they rather turn to the educational process of communicating to the non-poor what a life in poverty is like, and why it is also in the interest of the non-poor that poverty be alleviated? As it now stands, few poverty alleviating measures can be implemented without the moral and political support of the non-poor. Long-term investments in welfare measures directed only at the poor tend to fail if the non-poor are not co-opted and integrated in the process.

### **THE ROLE OF THE WORLD BANK**

One other actor should be mentioned in particular, because it is one of the most forceful in the welfare sector of developing countries.

The World Bank has for a long time called for economic growth as a means to overcome poverty on the national level and to create resources to alleviate poverty on the individual level. The ideology is based on a strengthening of the market forces and a liberalisation of economic regulations. More specifically the Bank prescribes a medicine of less state intervention, a smaller public sector, increased privatisation in all social sectors, a rudimentary public 'core of health care' only for the most deprived, a limited targeting of marginalised groups, only 'basic education' provided by the public sector, and a 'fee for services' otherwise.

Let it be said immediately: *If the World Bank had been in existence and set these demands to the poor Norwegian society when it tried to struggle out of poverty and provide a better quality of life for its citizens, Norway would never have succeeded.*

The Norwegian welfare state would never have come into existence, and the foundation for the present riches of the Norwegian society would not have

emerged, oil or no oil. One basis for the Norwegian road to success was the broad public education provided for all citizens. The strong state which controlled its own economy was a prerequisite for rebuilding the society after the Second World War. For example, in order to save an out-flow of foreign capital, no Norwegian citizen was allowed to buy a foreign car until the early 1960s. Oranges were considered a luxury good in the cold Northern climate and could only be imported at Christmas! Internal capital flows were likewise regulated. Building materials, for example, were a scarce commodity and priority was given to the construction of industrial buildings. Licences were needed for building private houses, and their size was limited.

Public subsidies were provided for industries at jeopardy to secure jobs and incomes for ordinary people. The agricultural sector was subsidised, and services considered important for the country, such as the telephone, electricity, water-works, postal services, ferries and railroads, were public property.

All these policies, which together laid the foundation for the economic success of the country and the welfare state, would have been impossible today if the World Bank had had the authority to intervene in the Norwegian society.

The four pillars of the welfare state described above, would likewise have been unacceptable under the ideology of the World Bank. Targeted welfare measures would have had to replace universalistic measures, social rights would have been limited to a core of very poor people for as long as they stayed very poor, the ideology of equality would have had to yield to larger differentiation in the population, and the power of the strong state would have been winged.

It is certainly a paradox that developing countries now are forced to accept a set of instruments to induce an economic growth which is supposed to lead to improved quality of life for the citizens, while at the same time they are prevented from making use of such instruments which have proved efficient in improving quality of life for citizens in other countries.

The Norwegian government is also faced with a difficult paradox vis-à-vis the World Bank. Percentage-wise the Norwegian state is one of the large donors to the World Bank, thereby giving legitimacy to an ideology which is contradictory to the ideology of the Norwegian welfare state. So far, this is an issue which has not yet received full attention in the political sphere.

## **THE RELEVANCE OF THE DISCUSSION FOR BOTSWANA**

It is difficult to judge how much of the Norwegian history is of relevance for a country of a very different composition and history. From a distance it looks as if the instruments used for creating a better quality of life for the citizens in one of the small and poor countries a long time ago, may be of some use in this Botswana Society Symposium. While all kinds of warnings should be issued against drawing parallels, some of the elements presented here are of a sufficiently general

value to be taken into consideration wherever new welfare measures are considered. But now policy-makers and scholars going into the discussions have the advantage of knowing more precisely what the problems of marginalisation and poverty are, and which welfare measures have been through the process of trial and error in other countries. Such a knowledge was not available in the early days of the Norwegian society, and that may be another reason why it took more than a hundred years to eradicate poverty.

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## DISCUSSION OF ØYEN PAPER

### **Discussant: Taolo Lucas, University of Botswana**

The discussant, Taolo Lucas, noted that the Øyen paper gave a clear account of the history of the welfare state in Norway, and said that this has some relevance for the situation in Botswana. He singled out four factors favouring the creation of the welfare state in Norway:

1. Humanitarian and voluntary organisations that helped to create an awareness of the existing problems.
2. Political forces that seemed to agree on the basic principles of the needs of a welfare state.
3. A collective sense of empathy for the underclass (the small size of the country and relative homogeneity favoured this).
4. A 'rights' culture and a commitment to the virtues of equality and justice.

He then asked how these factors might apply to Botswana. Briefly he felt that humanitarian and voluntary organisations have not been very influential; the political party in power has only recently become more committed to welfare ideals; and the sense of empathy for the weak has not been adequately cultivated. Too much stress has been placed on the capacity of the extended family to care for the disadvantaged. He concludes by stating that in his opinion "in poor, developing countries, there is definitely a role for the state in the creation and distribution of resources and wealth".