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Demolishing welfare

The view from Denmark



Welfare state rationale

A postwar "contract" between citizens and state that

a) all citizens work full time and pay high taxes

b) the state looks after the young, the sick and the old

In reality a "contract" with middleclass women

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In reality a "contract" with middleclass women

The "contract" is threatened by

- demographics (few hands, many needs)
- expectations (everybody is middle class)
- gradual budget cuts

New data

Survey 2015 and 2023 among adult children of professional care recipients

How many provide help? 2015: **83%** - 2023: **94%**

Does it affect daily life? 2015: **59%** - 2023: **78%**

Does it affect mental health? 2015: **43%** - 2023: **62%**

Does it affect physical health? 2015: **23%** - 2023: **36%**

Does it affect paid employment? 2015: **36%** - 2023: **57%**

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Qualitative study 2024 finds a new category of family carer efforts: **compensatory** tasks




New national policies

Setting elder care free

- Local care teams who can make on-the-spot decisions
- Reduced documentation of care, goals and decisions
- Shared decision-making "in close consultation with families", but scope is very unclear

Getting disability budgets under control

- Cost to be allowed as a deciding factor
 - New powers to staff to use force, e.g. locking in <10 hrs
 - Not a word about family carers
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A vertical bar on the left side of the slide, featuring a yellow-to-red gradient. Below the bar is a small, empty rectangular box.

How to respond?

Are these the first steps towards demolishing welfare?

Lower taxes, private health insurance, acceptable inequality...



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Carers right to be informed and consulted

Carers right to support for their own well-being

Carers right to flexible paid employment

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Lower taxes, private health insurance, acceptable inequality...

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But the demographic threat remains – so what to do?

- Fight it because carers are at breaking point
- Accept it and advocate for better support