Challenges to Health Promotion in Modern Society

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Today’s Presentation

• Health promotion faces various challenges
• These challenges are wrought by globalization and weakening of concepts of universalism and solidarity
• Effects of these changes are mediated by the form of the welfare state
• Social democratic welfare states can best resist these challenges
• There are means of moving the health promotion agenda forward
Key Health Promotion Principles

• Provide prerequisites of health
• Build healthy public policy
• Create supportive environments
• Strengthen community actions
• Develop personal skills
• Reorient health systems

Affinities between the Prerequisites and Social Determinants of Health

- **Ottawa Charter**: peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity.

- **SDOH: The Canadian Facts**: income and income distribution, education, unemployment and job security, employment and working conditions, early childhood development, food insecurity, housing, social exclusion, social safety network, health services, Aboriginal status, gender, race, and disability.
The Nordic Concept of Level of Living I

• “The command over resources in terms of money, possessions, knowledge, psychological and physical energy, social relations, security, and so on by means of which the individual can control and consciously direct her conditions of life.”

The Nordic Concept of Level of Living II

Johansson’s nine components of well-being:

- Health
- Employment
- Economic resources
- Knowledge and education
- Social integration
- Housing and neighbourhood
- Security of life and property
- Recreation and culture
- Political resources
HP in Wealthy Developed Nations

• Finland, Norway, and Sweden have emerged as leaders in health promotion
• Australia, Canada, and UK continue to provide conceptual contributions to HP with rather less to show for it in terms of health-promoting public policy
• The Continental nations do a rather good job of supporting health independent of explicit commitments to health promotion
The Nordic HP Situation

• Finland
  – *Socially Sustainable Finland 2020: Strategy For Social And Health Policy* (2011)

• Norway

• Sweden
  – *Closing the Gap* (2010)
The Liberal HP Situation

- **Australia**

- **UK**
  - *Fair to All, Personal to Each* (2004)  

- **Canada**
  - *Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2008: Addressing Health Inequalities*
  - *A Healthy, Productive Canada: A Determinant of Health Approach*
The Continental Situation

• France
  – Health promotion remains ‘hindered by a system still very centred on curative care and a lack of political consideration for health determinants’

• Germany
  – The German approach to explicit health promotion appears to be embedded within a behavioural approach.

• Belgium
  – Belgium does not have a ‘global comprehensive policy framework’ to address the social determinants of health.

The Modern Welfare State I

• Welfare state is a nation in which organized power is used to modify the play of market forces in by narrowing the extent of insecurity by enabling individuals and families to meet certain social contingencies; third, by ensuring that all citizens, regardless of status or class, are offered the best standards available in relation to a certain agreed range of social services.

The Modern Welfare State II

• “The welfare state can also be seen as a capitalist society in which the state has intervened in the form of social policies, programs, standards, and regulations in order to mitigate class conflicts and to provide for, answer, or accommodate certain social needs for which the capitalist mode of production in itself has no solution or makes no provision.”

The Welfare State is a Choice, not an Economic Imperative

The euro crisis is supposed to be the death knell of cradle-to-the-grave government. But the reality is the only thing the euro crisis might be the death knell of is the euro. None of Europe’s biggest welfare states are in trouble.

Let’s look at some data. The chart below compares average social spending with adjusted per capita GDP growth since 2000. (Note: The y-axis shows social spending as a percentage of GDP; the x-axis shows percentage growth. Data is from the OECD and IMF). See if you can make out any kind of discernible relationship here.

I know this picture is worth 1,000 words, but here are four more. There is no pattern.

Distinctiveness of the Scandinavian Welfare State

- Ideological inspiration: Equality
- Dominant institution: The State
- Emphasis on full and paid employment
- Universalism of supports and programs
- Support for gender equity
- Greater extent of decommodification
- Strong labour activation policies
Figure 5. Poverty Rates in Families with Children, Selected OECD Nations by Welfare State Type, Mid 2000s

Figure 4. Gini Coefficients of Income Inequality, Selected OECD Countries, by Welfare State Type, Mid-2000s

Figure 3. Total Public Expenditures as Percentage of GDP, Selected OECD Nations, 2007

Figure 7. Public Expenditure on Childcare and Early Education Services as Percentage of GDP, Selected OECD Nations, by Welfare State, 2005

Decommodification

• “Essentially, it is the extent to which individuals and families can maintain a normal and socially acceptable standard of living regardless of their market performance” (p.4).

Decommodified Security Ratio

• Provision of three types of income:
  – (i) replacement income for the risks of old age, unemployment, sickness and disability plus survivors’ pensions;
  – (ii) reimbursements and benefits in kind: costs of health care, family allowances, housing benefits; and
  – (iii) allowances and benefits in kind paid as part of measures to combat social exclusion (income support, etc.).

Figure 9. Infant Mortality Rates, Selected OECD Nations by Welfare State Type, 2007

Figure 8. Life Expectancy at Birth, among Selected OECD Nations, 2007

Changing Welfare States: Retrenchment?

• Most obvious in liberal political economies
  – England
  – Canada
  – USA
• Also apparent in Nordic nations
  – Norway
  – Sweden
  – Finland
Increasing Inequality and Poverty?

Figure 1. Income inequality increased in most, but not all OECD countries

Gini coefficients of income inequality, mid-1980s and late 2000s

Note: For data years see Table 1. “Little change” in inequality refers to changes of less than 2 percentage points.

1. Information on data for Israel: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602.

Source: OECD Database on Household Income Distribution and Poverty.

EQ2.1. Poverty has been rising

Panel A. Percentage of persons living with less than 50% of median equivalised household income, late-2000s

Panel B. Annual average change in poverty rate between mid-1980s and late-2000s, percentages

Declining Adequacy of Social Assistance Benefits

Figure 4.2: Adequacy of social assistance and minimum income benefits (type-case data and averages of a single person, a lone parent and a two-parent family), 1990-2008

Note: Adequacy is defined as the level of the equivalised benefit as percentage of the level of equivalised median income in total population.
Source: SaMip

Source: Kuivalainen, S. and Nelson, K. (2012). Eroding minimum income protection...
Growing Income Inequality

Figure 8.2: Income inequality (Gini coefficient) around 1985, 1995 and 2005, and cross-national variation of these inequality estimates

Source: Fritzell, J. et al. (2012). Income inequality and poverty...
Growing Relative Poverty

Figure 8.3: Relative poverty rates (%) (60% of median equivalent disposable income) and cross-national variation in these rates, by coefficient of variation around 1985, 1995 and 2005

Source: Fritzell, J. et al. (2012). Income inequality and poverty...
Challenges Related to Immigration

• Presents employment and integration challenges
• Can leads to split in left party solidarity
• Manifests in different nations in different ways (see next slide)
• Requires education efforts but more important is successful integration and employment strategies

Growing Strength of Centre-Right and Nationalist Political Parties?

Swedish Anti-Immigration Party Claims Seats

By STEPHEN CASTLE
Published: September 19, 2010

STOCKHOLM – Sweden became the latest European nation to see a breakthrough for populist right-wingers Sunday, when the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats won their first parliamentary seats in elections that failed to produce a clear outcome.

The True Finns followed a well-known recipe for success

Mainstream European parties need to offer positive solutions, not adopt the rhetoric of the nationalist populists

Jon Worth
guardian.co.uk, Thursday 21 April 2011 14.08 BST

Norway's anti-immigration party suffers election setback

Posted: 13 September 2011 21.24 hrs

OSLO - Norway's populist anti-immigration party was the big loser in Norway's local elections that were in the end influenced very little by the July 22 twin attacks, observers said on Tuesday.
Immigration Presents a Threat to Left Solidarity in Nordic Nations

Percentage of Voters Jointly Supporting Redistribution and Restrictive Immigration Policy, 2008

- Denmark: 16%
- Finland: 41%
- Norway: 22%
- Sweden: 7%

Defining Support for the Welfare State

Figure 3.1: Conditional response probabilities for different welfare state support types, 2006

- Reduce income differences
- Provide jobs for everyone
- Standard of living for unemployed people
- Healthcare for the sick
- Standard of living for elderly people

Source: Jaegar, M. (2012). Do we all (dis)like the same welfare state?
Identifying Support for the Welfare State

Figure 3.2: Marginal distribution of welfare state support types across countries, 2006

Source: Jaeger, M. (2012). Do we all (dis)like the same welfare state?
Many of these challenges are related to economic changes wrought by economic globalization and increasing corporate influence upon public policymaking.
Globalization and its Discontents?

The effects of these changes are mediated by the form of welfare state regime
Figure 2 The Characteristics of Welfare Regimes

Social democratic regimes are best situated to resist these challenges; Liberal regimes the least able.
Figure 1. Schematic overview of the process of globalisation

Drivers
- Trade liberalisation (WTO, FTAs, etc.)
- EU enlargements and integration
- Cost and technique of transportation
- Liberalisation of capital movements and financial markets
- ICT, Internet, communication
- Migration policy and frontier control
- Multinationals and international governance
- Innovation, R&D, education, transfer of technology

Aspects of globalisation
- Positive feedbacks
  - Changing size and structure of trade flows
  - Outsourcing and insourcing of production
  - Relocation of people
  - Changing structure of trade in services
  - Changes in patterns of capital movements
  - Changes in tax base (relocation of capital)

Social consequences
- Industrial and regional structural changes
- Income inequalities and poverty
- Changes in employment patterns and levels
- Social inclusion or exclusion

Social policy recommendations
- Strengthen education and training notably for low-skilled
- Foster integration of migrants both in the labour market and society
- Increase labour market adaptability and flexibility
- Reshape social protection and enhance empowerment and endowment of individuals
- Find new ways of managing social and individual risks

Figure 9.4 Factors Contributing to the Extent of Health Inequalities and Willingness to Tackle Them

Power Relations
- Electoral Behaviour
- Trade Union Strength
  - Union Density
  - Collective Agreement Coverage
- Civil Society Coalitions

The State
- Liberal vs. Social Democratic Welfare Regime
- Proportional Representation
- Central vs. Federal System

Extent of Decommodification

Extent of Social Inequalities
- Poverty Rates
- Income Inequality
- Developmental Inequalities
- Workplace Inequalities

Health Inequalities
- Extent of Health Inequalities
- Tackling of Health Inequalities

SDOH-Related Public Policy
- Disability Policy
- Family Policy
- Health Policy
- Income and Taxation Policy
- Labour Policy
- Pension Policy

Figure 11.3: Odds in 14 Nations of Escaping Child Poverty, by Left Cabinet Share

Growing Strength of Centre-Right and Nationalist Political Parties?

- Finland: Centre-Left Coalition
- Norway: Red-Green Coalition
- Denmark: Centre-Left Coalition
- Sweden: Centre-Right Coalition

- Numerous authors, however, complain of weakening of social democratic resolve and this is especially the case in liberal nations
Collective Agreement Coverage

Figure 1. Collective Agreements Coverage among Selected OECD Nations, 2008


Civil Society Coalitions I

Percentage of Non-profit Work that is Unpaid Voluntary Activity, mid 1990s

Civil Society Coalitions II

Voice versus Service Focus in Non-profit Sector Work, mid 1990s

Social Democratic Welfare States: Finland

- Finland has been a success story of how an agrarian society was transformed in the course of half a century into a well-developed welfare state with an educated population and high-tech industries.

- Future challenges of the Finnish welfare state are similar to those of other European nations, an aging population, economic instability, increased inequality, globalization, and migration.

- Sustaining the Finnish welfare state is chiefly a matter of commitment and determination.

Social Democratic Welfare States: Norway

- Norwegian public health policy approach is radical in its emphasis on upstream measures and intersectoral collaboration.
- These principles represent a revitalization of universal and structural measures in line with the social democratic welfare state model.
- Universal welfare measures are seen as more important than contributions from the health sector in reducing social inequalities in health.
- It is born from a conviction that the social democratic welfare state project should be sustained.

Social Democratic Welfare States: Sweden

- Changes observed in public policy approaches have been inspired by neo-liberal ideas on the role of government, acceptance of growing income inequalities, retrenchment of the welfare state, and an emphasis on the importance of individual choice.
- Health equity should be a goal across the left-right spectrum in a country with a strong egalitarian legacy.
- Since the political majority will not change soon, public health advocates need new strategies to bring politicians on board.

Liberal Welfare States: Australia

• Economic inequities in Australia have increased with worrying signs of a growing divide between haves and have-nots in Australian society.

• Concerted policy action is required to use progressive taxation and other revenue-raising methods to ensure funding for redistributive policies.

• Leadership is required to create the political will to institute a systematic approach to reducing inequities.

Liberal Welfare States: UK

• Despite a raft of policy measures designed to reduce health inequalities, health inequalities remain high on policy agendas throughout the UK.
• By the time Labour left office in 2010, health inequalities continued to widen triggering some despair within the health inequalities community.
• Scholars have called for stronger links between academics and policy-makers to co-produce research; engage in public health advocacy and work with communities; and promote awareness of the actors and forces influencing policies.
Liberal Welfare States: Canada

• Health inequalities are being driven by the country’s expending fewer resources toward citizen support than most other OECD nations.

• Continuing evidence of a decline in relative population health and stagnating or increasing health inequalities can be expected.

• Canada’s unwillingness to promote citizen economic and social security are troubling with little sign this situation will improve in the near future.

Resiliency Factors

- SD Welfare state: Path dependency
- Central governance
- Proportional representation
- Union strength
- Strength of civil society
- Nordic values of equality
- Buy-in of the middle class
Nordic Nations: Immediate Challenges

• Integrating immigrants
• Counterbalancing corporate influence
• Resisting lure of right-wing parties
• Responding to welfare state fatigue?
• ???
What about the Conservative and Latin welfare regimes?
Implications for Health Promotion

• Need for continued education and public awareness as to the importance of health promoting public policy *(hear Toba Bryant on Thursday)*

• Need for a political economy lens that considers how issues of power, influence, and economics shape the making of health promoting public policy

• Identifying of barriers to the making of health promoting public policy provide means means of overcoming these barriers *(hear me tomorrow)*
Implications for Health Promotion Research

• Need to systematically research the political economy of health promotion
• Study citizen attitudes and values towards redistribution, health, and health promotion
• Examine the forces that oppose health promotion and the public policies that support it
• Evaluate the impacts of governments’ policies on the health and well-being of citizens and the extent of health inequalities
• Put special focus on the situation of immigrants
Conclusions and Take Away Messages

• Nordic welfare state appears to be the best means of promoting health and quality of life.

• Challenges to promoting the health and well-being of citizens can be addressed but only if they are accurately identified.

• “Don't it always seem to go
  That you don't know what you've got
  'Til it's gone
  They paved paradise
  And put up a parking lot
--- Joni Mitchell, Big Yellow Taxi, 1970
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This presentation and other presentations and related papers are available at:  

http://www.atkinson.yorku.ca/draphael  

[go to the library there]