Abstract

The dissertation departs from the growing tendency of men and women to engage in care taking of their children while simultaneously being successfully employed. The main empirical question penetrated is if this growing tendency results in an increased care-orientation in societal norms in the society as a whole. This question is framed as a question of how the character of the state changes with changed power conditions between societal groups, in this case between men and women.

Departing from previous feminist research, such as Carol Gilligan, a theoretical model is developed to account for how experiences of physical care-for dependants among women and men results in changes in personal moral convictions. It is presented as a possible way to deal with questions of care-norms without connecting them more to women than to men. On the societal level it is assumed that a normative change in this direction can be manifested as an increased care-orientation of how public sector employees in general are supposed to encounter with the public. The thesis is investigated through a case-oriented analysis focusing on central steering documents for Kindergarten and the Police.

The findings show that there is reason to talk about a change of state-character regarding Kindergarten and the emergence of an empathetic state. Concerning the Police there has been an increased care-orientation in policy intentions, but not all questions lifted forward in the analysis could be answered positively. This leads to the conclusion that the development cannot be connected to changes in living patterns between men and women, such as in the Kindergarten case.

Key Words: state theory, feminist theory, policy, kindergarten, police, police education, living patterns, process analysis, mechanism, ethics of care, women, parents, civil servants, welfare states