

## STRUCTURAL REFORM AS NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT POLICY

### Three dilemmas in Danish substance misuse treatment

#### ABSTRACT

*In 2007 the Danish welfare system was reorganized in a structural reform. Taking its empirical point of departure in substance misuse treatment, this article argues that the reform can be seen as a way of rethinking treatment. The reform follows the line of existing tendencies to modernize the public sector according to the private sector, termed as New Public Management. The article points to three dilemmas concerning the changing aims of substance misuse treatment: Firstly, a dilemma concerning standardization and decentralization. Requirements of documentation, compatibility and efficiency are enhanced to audit social work to create more competitive services. This contradicts attempts to decentralize the sector, since compatibility requires national standardizations. Secondly, a dilemma concerning the role of the social workers from expert to entrepreneur. Treatment has become a 'commodity' which is sold; and treatment organizations have become entrepreneurial since they have to be more offensive and compete to get 'customers' to buy services. Thirdly, the dilemma 'for the sake of the user?', which concerns visions of changing the role of the clients to become self-managing users. The reform accentuates trends to empower citizens. However, the reform does not discuss that e.g. users are often not able or even interested in being self-managing accordingly. The chapter discusses discrepancies between policy intentions and users' wishes and possibilities.*

**KEYWORDS:** Substance misuse treatment, structural reform, New Public Management, Denmark