

Privatizing the Welfare State: Danish Libertarianism from the 1980s to the 2000s

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Abstract

This article explores the history of the Danish libertarian movement by analyzing its ideological universe and networks, with a focus on Libertas, from the 1980s to the 2000s. To a large extent, the movement created its ideological universe and networks with resources drawn from American libertarianism that were adapted to and implemented in a Danish context. Over the course of two decades, the Danish libertarians became prominent advocates of privatization with the aim of dismantling the welfare state and generated a wide reservoir of arguments for transforming the welfare state to a greater market-based organization through privatizing and marketizing its public sector. In four sections the article illuminates the rise of the Danish libertarian movement in the context of a youth revolt from the right launched from within the Conservative Youth Party in the early 1980s, describe how a group of theoretically inclined and internationally oriented young conservatives pursued libertarian visions by contributing to political debates about privatization of the public sector and environmentalism in the 1980s and 1990s and finally how the libertarian movement in the 2000s moved closer to the established institutions of political power, while at the same time mushrooming into a plurality of smaller forums.

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Introduction

The 1980s saw a radical ideological renewal in Denmark through the rise of a libertarian intellectual tradition. In 1986, a group of young intellectuals, academics, and politicians united in the intellectual society titled *Libertas* and issued a journal under the same name with the ambition of promoting knowledge of the free-market economy and personal freedom. The enemy of the Danish libertarian movement was the Danish Social Democratic Party and the left wing more broadly, whom the libertarians perceived as the guardians of a repressive welfare state consensus. From the 1980s, the Danish libertarians confronted their enemy, and marked out new battlegrounds of Danish political conflict, through organizing seminars, conferences, and workshops, participating in public debates, and publishing books and educational material among other things.

In its heyday from the 1980s to the early 2000s, the society positioned itself well beyond the mainstream of Danish academic and political debate. For example, *Libertas* was the only magazine in Denmark that systematically discussed the ideas of American libertarian thinkers such as Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard or David Friedman; debated whether air should be privatized and gun ownership legalized; or consistently criticized Danish governments, regardless of their leadership and party coalitions.

However, members of the Danish libertarian movement also sought to influence mainstream political debates. In doing so, they showed a willingness to sideline lofty theoretical debates on behalf of more concrete political ambitions aimed at reforming the welfare state through its established political institutions. For example, members of *Libertas* established strong relations to Anders Fogh Rasmussen who served as Minister of Taxation (1987–1992) and Minister of Economic Affairs (1990–1992) before

becoming Prime Minister for Venstre (the Liberal Party) from 2001 to 2009. Moreover, members of Libertas contributed to creating and running the free market think tank CEPOS (Center for Political Studies) that has been a prominent voice in Danish political debate since 2004.

The story of the Danish libertarian movement has so far only been told through insider recollections and short comments by co-founder of Libertas Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard.¹ This article explores the history of the Danish libertarian movement by analyzing its ideological universe and networks, with a focus on Libertas, from the 1980s to the 2000s.

The article shows how the Danish libertarian movement became the most prominent advocates of privatization with the aim of dismantling the welfare state. To a large extent, the movement created its ideological universe and networks with resources drawn from American libertarianism that were adapted to and implemented in a Danish context. However, the Danish libertarians largely avoided the factional battles and splits that characterized their American counterpart before and during the 1980s.² In contrast to the more heterogeneous American movement, the Danish libertarians remained devoted to one overarching aim: dismantling the welfare state. It should be emphasized that the welfare state constituted a very wide concept – or imaginary – for the Danish libertarians. More specifically, it served as an umbrella term for a wide range of (negatively loaded) ideas about the basic principles and dynamics that allegedly characterized the Danish welfare system in the 1980s. Encompassing at once political, economic and ethical dimensions, these ideas were connected to a large field of value-laden concepts – such as bureaucracy, efficiency and freedom – and constituted a broad platform for the libertarian attack on the established societal order and attempt to outline an alternative order. Over the course of two decades, so we argue, the Danish libertarians thus generated a wide

reservoir of arguments that all encouraged the transformation of the welfare state to a greater market-based organization through privatizing and marketizing its public sector.

The article proceeds in four sections. The first section illuminates the rise of the Danish libertarian movement in the context of a youth revolt from the right launched from within the Conservative Youth Party in the early 1980s. Here, young conservatives rebelled against what they perceived as an economically inefficient and politically repressive welfare state order that had been constructed and was governed by left-wing forces, spearheaded by the Social Democratic Party.

The following two sections describe how a group of theoretically inclined and internationally oriented young conservatives pursued libertarian visions by contributing to political debates about privatization of the public sector and environmentalism in the 1980s and 1990s. In these debates, so the article demonstrates, the Danish libertarians introduced new types of welfare state critique and novel ideas of how to transform it by means of privatizing and marketization. In this pursuit, the young men of the Danish libertarian movement (very few women were involved) eventually managed to position libertarian ideas centrally in Danish political debate. The final section describes how the libertarian movement in the 2000s moved closer to the established institutions of political power, while at the same time mushrooming into a plurality of smaller forums.

Youth Revolt from the Right

The rise of the Danish libertarian movement should be understood against the background of two important developments in the 1970s. First, the new types of welfare state criticism that began in the early 1970s, when the international oil crisis, rising taxes, and growing unemployment hit Denmark, gave birth to widespread discussion of the crisis of the

welfare state. Here, politicians and intellectuals from across the political spectrum challenged the fundamental values and the very legitimacy of the welfare state, focusing among other things on the tax burden, the bureaucracy, and the lack of regard for individual preferences. Most famously, Mogens Glistrup, who rose to fame as a lawyer, tax protester, and founder of the populist party *Fremskridtspartiet* (Progress Party), shocked the political establishments with an agenda that sought to address the crisis of the welfare state by reducing the size and scope of the public sector, lower the tax burden, protect individual freedom, and provide private businesses with better opportunities for hiring employees.³ The inability of shifting governments to solve the economic crisis during the 1970s spurred several critics to new attacks on the seemingly ever-expanding, overly expensive, and uncontrollable Social Democratic welfare state.⁴

The second important context for the rise of the Danish libertarian movement was the emergence of the new right in United States and United Kingdom, where Reagan's and Thatcher's new market-focused ideologies spelled the end of the American New Deal order and the British welfare state.⁵ Moreover, the emergence of Reagan and Thatcher re-fueled the 'Western' Cold War confrontation with the communist enemy in the East, which became a mobilizing factor and glue for the Danish libertarian movement.

In the contexts of these national and international developments, members of the Danish Conservative Party's youth section (KU) proclaimed a 'youth revolt from the right' (*borgerligt ungdomsoprør*) from which the core of the Danish libertarian movement would evolve. The roots of this youth revolt can be traced to the Copenhagen faction of KU in the late 1970s, where a group of high school students, who labeled themselves "anarchocapitalists", challenged the established position in KU by questioning whether governments and states ought to exist. Some of these "anarchocapitalists" – such as Otto

Brøns Petersen, who became a central figure in Libertas – were dedicated ideologists and deeply immersed in the theoretical writings of, for example, Murray Rothbard and David Friedman. Others, such as the later fiction author Benn Holm and the later businessman Lars Seier Christensen merged an ideological interest in libertarian thought with the cultivation of a countercultural habitus that included dressing up like punks and listening to punk music. The “anarchocapitalists” made a pitch for power in the 1981 KU elections, but their candidate, Villy Dall, lost out to the charismatic Lars Poulsen, who managed to gather support from both the radical and the more moderate camps in the youth party.⁶

With Lars Poulsen as new chair, KU adopted new principles to its program that focused on “individual liberty, private property, economic independence and a strong limitation of state capacity.”⁷ In addition, the party relaunched its monthly magazine under the new name *Vi Unge – Organ for borgerligt ungdomsoprør* (*We Young – Organ of the Right Wing Revolt*). In the new magazine’s first editorial, Lars Poulsen lamented the socialization of Danish society that had allegedly taken place under Social Democratic rule. He further described the Social Democrats as reactionary preservers of a growing but poorly maintained public sector, and the young conservatives as the new rebellious force, working to enhance freedom and democracy in Danish society.⁸ During Poulsen’s and his successor Robert Spliid’s time as chairpersons from 1981 to 1984, the youth organization promoted its agenda in new ways and gained a significant amount of media airtime.⁹ Moreover, KU increased its amount of members from 4000 to about 12000.¹⁰

Coinciding with KU’s success, the crisis-ridden Social Democratic government resigned in 1982 and was succeeded by a coalition government headed by Poul Schlüter from the Conservative Party. To restore the Danish economy, Schlüter announced that he would pursue a “new liberal philosophy” inspired by Thatcher and Reagan.¹¹

The young conservatives in KU shared the government's fascination with political developments in the United States and the United Kingdom but developed their own political agenda and culture. Most importantly, they depicted their agenda as a new type of youth rebellion, which, in contrast to '68', embraced a yuppie-identity, market-oriented values, and ideals of individual freedom. From this basis, they waged a war against the Social Democratic welfare state, which, they stated, stifled economic growth and democracy at home and supported the growth of communism in Eastern Europe.

In terms of ideology, the young conservatives promoted distinct liberal ideas about individual liberty and the free market. In so doing, they criticized and outlined alternatives to initiatives taken by leftist youth movements such as the squatter's movement, the communist-driven peace movement, and the National Union for Danish Upper Secondary School Students. For example, in 1982, KU established the peace organization Demokratisk Fredsaktion (Democratic Peace Action) to support NATO and fight against Soviet influence on the Danish peace movement and for freedom of speech in Eastern Europe.¹² Moreover, in 1986, young conservatives visited Nicaragua to protest the volunteer solidarity program Operation Dagsværk (Operation Day's Work) that was organized by high school students and allegedly supported the socialist Sandinistas.¹³

Founding the journal *Libertas* in 1982 was one of many projects that members of KU initiated in the early 1980s. Some of its founders had participated in meetings organized by the Mont Pèlerin Society, the transnational network of neoliberal thinkers and organizations, and were deeply ideologically committed to free market thought.¹⁴ They had been invited to the Mont Pèlerin Society by Christian Gandil, who had been a lonely second hand dealer in neoliberal ideas since the 1940s.¹⁵ The young conservatives were grateful to Gandil and held him in great esteem.¹⁶ But they did not share his deeply

pessimistic outlook on life, his self-marginalisation and stubborn out-of-touchness, or his lack of a concrete political vision. Instead, they formed part of a self-confident movement that was articulating a concrete political program of reforming the Danish welfare state in tune with the changing political winds across the Western world. Similar to Lars Poulsen, they were eager to capitalize on the advance of the new right in the United States and Great Britain. In the article opening *Libertas*, one of the journal's founders, Villy Dall, wrote that Denmark was probably the country in which the "new right" was least established. In this context, this group of young conservatives aimed to create a forum that communicated knowledge of "neoliberalism" to readers outside of KU and Konservative Gymnaster (Conservative High School Students) and salvage ideological debate from being suffocated by the (in their eyes) widespread welfare state consensus.¹⁷

The first spell of *Libertas* produced only one issue of the journal. However, in 1986, a larger group of founders and newcomers re-created *Libertas* as a society that from 1987 centered on a published journal. The editorial board consisted mainly of members of the KU-fraction in Copenhagen that united under a minimalistic ideological declaration focusing on individual freedom, the right to property, the free market, and the right to assembly.¹⁸ Theoretical discussions overshadowed visions of everyday politics. In retrospect, founder Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard explained that he and his fellow libertarians were fed up with the pragmatism of party politics, hierarchical organizations, and the Danish rightwing parties.¹⁹ The conservative-liberal government had, they believed, abandoned its market liberal visions, when Prime Minister Poul Schlüter in 1984 famously declared ideology "to be useless".²⁰ In contrast to the professional politicians, *Libertas* focused mainly on ideological debates.

During its first years, *Libertas* appeared three-to-four times a year, and specialized in

introducing a comprehensive selection of liberal, libertarian, and anarchocapitalist thinkers such as Adam Smith, Robert Nozick, Milton Friedman, David Friedman, James M. Buchanan, Friedrich Hayek, Murray Rothbard and Ayn Rand as well as less known Danish and foreign writers. The group was in contact with many libertarian milieus abroad, in particular in the United Kingdom and the United States. During its first years, the advisory board included Hayek, who became honorary president, and other notable libertarian intellectuals from European and American think tanks. These included President of the Adam Smith Institute Dr. Madsen Pirie, Leonard P. Liggio from the Institute of Human Studies, and anarcho-capitalist Murray Rothbard. As such, *Libertas* connected to, and used the resources of, the international networks of free market organizations to build a platform for their activities.

Most contributions to *Libertas* aimed at generating internal ideological debate and at drafting more people for the libertarian milieu. However, members of *Libertas* also disseminated libertarian ideas to the broader Danish public through books and newspaper articles. In 1988, they established the annual Adam Smith Award to a person who had done a significant effort to promote the libertarian agenda embraced by *Libertas*.

Central to all libertarian activities was a dichotomist notion of historical development as an existential struggle between the opposing forces of socialism and free-market liberalism, which lead either to decay, destitution, and totalitarianism, or to a flourishing world of freedom and wealth. In this struggle, the Danish libertarian milieu was unified in a battle against the supposedly totalitarian ideas and institutions of the Danish welfare state. At the same time, within this overall framework, the libertarian movement housed various strands of thought and its reactions could take many forms: they could be framed as defensive responses or as positive alternatives to the welfare state project, and they

could change through time.

From the 1980s until the 2000s, the Danish libertarians concentrated in particular on criticizing and outlining market-oriented alternatives to the welfare state in political debates about privatization and environmentalism. In the following, we illuminate the ideology and networks of the Danish libertarian movement by analysing its contributions to these two debates. As we shall see, the Danish libertarians formed shifting alliances and made use of various ideological notions drawn from American libertarianism in particular, as they sought to influence a constantly changing political landscape.

Privatization

The primary libertarian visions for societal change dealt with the many aspects of privatization of the public sector. As one of their most profiled political agendas in the 1980s, the Danish libertarians associated privatization with both institutional efficiency, and individual liberty. Privatizing public goods, they argued, was thus a necessary tool to overcome the country's economic burdens and served as a vital ethical alternative to Social Democratic society that should foster virtues of entrepreneurship and free choice in the Danish population. By placing privatization on top of the political agenda, the Danish libertarians regarded themselves in opposition to their own government and build their opposition with ideological inspiration drawn from abroad.

In the early 1980s, inspired by developments in the UK and the United States, privatization became the subject of heated political debates in Denmark, as liberal and conservative politicians began to consider selling public institutions and outsourcing public service provision as a solution to the crises of the welfare state.²¹ The Danish libertarians contributed extensively to this privatization debate by promoting arguments

mimicking American and British influences. As the new conservative-led government took over in 1982, KU members issued a flood of publications on privatization to position the topic on the political agenda and influence the public debate. In the early phase of the privatization debate, the young conservatives consistently promoted two issues. First, they argued that a privatization of hospitals, health insurances, home care and employment service could serve as an alternative to cuts in the public sector.²² Privatization thus provided a way to improve the Danish economy. Secondly, and more importantly for the libertarians, was the liberatory potentials inherent in the privatization of the public sector. The aim was to create and ensure personal liberty and the freedom to choose. In *Vi unge*, Palle Steen Jensen thus declared that the most important function of privatization was to convince the Danes of the virtue of being masters of their own lives and destinies.²³ Overall, Danish libertarians presented privatization as a fundamental break with the traditional Social Democratic understanding of welfare services, and as such it provided a route to an alternative societal model that would turn the users of public welfare goods into empowered consumers with real societal agency and influence on their own lives.

In Danish political debate, privatization contained several meanings ranging from the public sale of assets, public outsourcing, user fees for public goods, voucher schemes, deregulation, to full public withdrawal from obligations. The libertarians mainly pushed for the latter. In 1983, the Danish government established a committee to present proposals for privatizations of public services, and the Conservative Party's parliamentary group set up the so-called privatization board. In *Vi unge*, several prominent members of KU contributed to the initiative by offering ideological reasons, theoretical views, and concrete proposals for privatization.²⁴ Their ideological

inspirations were drawn from various libertarian thinkers such as Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Murray Rothbard and Madsen Pirie.

In 1983, the Copenhagen faction of KU presented a 30-page memo to the Conservative Party's privatization board that proposed to leave as many public tasks as possible to the private sector.²⁵ The memo sought to solve the apparent systemic problems of the welfare state and contended that private companies were more responsive than the state to citizen's needs and demands. As Otto Brøns-Petersen explained in an article in *Vi unge*, the private sector had a much stronger incentive to perform in accordance with the customers' needs than the public sector. Moreover, companies would be able to improve the welfare service level and make sure that the people only used the amount of public goods that they needed. Finally, privatization could solve the apparent problem of information between citizen and the state. As the people only had a chance to participate at the election every fourth year, politicians had only a slim chance of knowing the actual desires of the people. By privatizing the public sector, the market would automatically fulfill these desires. Considering the many benefits of privatization, Brøns-Petersen argued, it was no longer up to advocates of privatization to justify which areas of the welfare state that private actors could improve. Instead, it was up to the proponents of the welfare state to clarify why a particular service still should be controlled by the public sector.²⁶

Despite originally prioritizing the issue, the Danish government soon withdrew its interest in privatization, as it had become identified with an extreme welfare critique, which was not popular with the voters or with other political parties.²⁷ Instead, 'modernization' of the public sector became a key concept in its proposals for welfare state reform, and the government eventually excluded the issue of privatization from the

first of a series of so-called modernization programs that it issued in 1983.²⁸ The tendency to downplay privatization and reframe it as modernization, was evinced by the conservative Minister of Finance, Palle Simonsen, who in 1985 described privatization as a minor part of the government's modernization program.²⁹

In reaction to the conservative government's efforts to distance itself from the privatization agenda, the Danish libertarians continued their efforts to influence the political discourse in favor of privatization in several newspaper articles published during the 1980s.³⁰ Thus, their arguments for privatization were turned against the government and focused on the original aim of dismantling the welfare state. In 1988, prominent founding members of *Libertas* co-authored a volume on privatization in which they sought to reboot the privatization debate by presenting theoretical arguments for the need of privatization and by providing examples of public goods and services that the government could sell, outsource, or subject to user payment.³¹ With reference to Dr. Madsen Pirie, the president of The Adam Smith Institute, the authors declared that there were very few limits to the amount of tasks that could be moved from the public to the private sector: "Everything it takes is ingenuity and determination."³²

The volume criticized the government's modernization policies for not solving the problems of the growing public sector and for abandoning the overall ideological project of societal reform. In his introduction to the book, former chairman of KU, Jens Heimburger, expressed his irritation with the government, which had promised reforms to cut welfare state expenses but taken no action.³³ Furthermore, one of the founders of *Libertas*, Finn Ziegler, argued that, by replacing 'privatization' with 'modernization', the government had failed to solve the problems in the public sector: "The problem with the public sector is that it is public. Just like new makeup does not change a person's nature,

modernization does not change the nature of the public sector.”³⁴ Like Brøns-Petersen, Ziegler contended that private companies would always be motivated by profit to deliver cheaper and better service than the state. But more importantly, Jens Heimburger added: “Privatization is not just a question of economic efficiency but to a greater extent a question about morals – everyone’s rights, possibilities, and impact on one’s everyday life. Basically, about whether the citizen or the state rules.”³⁵

The volume’s title *Farvel til socialstaten* (Farewell to the social state) indicated the authors’ aim to initiate societal change in the Danish society. However, the libertarians also found inspiration abroad in their desire to promote privatization. The feeling of partaking in a reformist movement that would change the course of history echoed through the chapters of *Farvel til socialstaten* and through the edited volume *Privatiseringer – den danske model* (Privatization – the Danish Model) from 1990.³⁶ According to the authors, Denmark lagged behind other countries that had started to sell public institutions or outsource public tasks. For example, Otto Brøns-Petersen declared: “As nationalization and state-controlled economy was a recurrent theme in the 1960s, in many countries privatization have become the refrain of the 1980s.”³⁷ To show that Denmark missed out on the opportunity to take part in a global wave of privatization, Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard described how western countries had implemented cuts in and privatized parts of their public sectors.³⁸ Furthermore, the Danish libertarians highlighted the fact that privatization not only trended in USA and Western Europe but also in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Hence, the internationally oriented libertarians were convinced that Denmark could learn from the east.³⁹ By presenting privatization as a global trend, they infused their political ideas with a new temporality that displayed a vision of a future society after the end of the Cold War.

Farvel til socialstaten and *Privatiseringer* appeared parallel to the government's decision to sell various public buildings and shares in private companies.⁴⁰ These included the sale of state-owned land and property as well as partial privatizations of state-controlled companies, such as the State Institute of Life Insurance (Statsanstalten for livsforsikring) and the Copenhagen Bus Company (HT). Convinced that the wave of privatization was just beginning, *Privatiseringer* listed 81 further public areas that could be privatized, including state-sponsored cultural institutions such as museums and theaters, the employment service, and the entire development aid.⁴¹

The renewed public interest in privatization was also shared by the Danish Social Democratic Party, which, following in the footsteps of liberal and conservative politicians and libertarians associated with Libertas, began to discuss the possibility of privatizing parts of the public sector in the late 1980s. Once in power, in the 1990s, the Social Democratic government outsourced and sold a lot more of the public sector than the right-wing government had done in the 1980s. This included privatization of state-owned companies, such as the national airport and the national tele-communications company.⁴²

The fact that a more positive attitude towards privatization gained ground in Danish politics strengthened the libertarians' belief that they were on the right side of history. At the same time, the most prominent affiliate with Libertas, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, began embracing libertarian views in public. After having experienced a market liberal "awakening" during a trip to the United States in the early 1980s, Fogh Rasmussen began to investigate how market liberal economic theory could be used to reform the Danish welfare state. This interest led him in the late 1980s to Libertas. Most famously, in 1993, after the Social Democratic government headed by Poul Nyrup Rasmussen had taken power, Fogh Rasmussen published the book *Fra socialstat til minimalstat* (From Social

State to Minimal State) that outlined visions of a libertarian society and heavily criticized the welfare state.⁴³ An important link between Fogh Rasmussen and Libertas was the economist Otto Brøns-Petersen, who is currently head of research at CEPOS, and who at the time had a reputation for being chief ideologue at Libertas.⁴⁴ Brøns-Petersen was employed in the Skattepolitisk Sekretariat (Tax Policy Secretariat) that Fogh Rasmussen established in 1988, and the fact that Fogh Rasmussen thanked him in the foreword to *Fra socialstat til minimalstat* witness the close intellectual ties between the two.⁴⁵

Fogh Rasmussen was never a member of Libertas or proclaimed a political affinity with the group. However, Libertas regarded him as a potential ally in the ideological battle against the Social Democratic welfare state. And although few in Fogh Rasmussen's party championed hardcore libertarian worldviews, Venstre and Libertas grew closer in the 1990s both in terms of ideology and networks. This rapprochement happened as prominent members of Libertas, including Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard, joined Venstre in the late 1980s, due to conflicts with more moderate forces in the Conservative mother party, who wanted to subdue the libertarian forces in KU.

During the following years, as Libertas and Fogh joined forces in a common ideological battle, prominent members of Libertas such as Christopher Arzrouni and Jens Løgstrup Madsen approached the circles of power in Venstre under Fogh Rasmussen's leadership, for example by advising and assisting him on contentious proposals from Venstre regarding privatizing hospitals, introducing free-choice systems in the public sector and fostering of a culture of entrepreneurship in the population.⁴⁶ With these proposals Venstre spearheaded the attacks on the Danish welfare state and gave the libertarians hope that their ideas could become reality if the power shifted. In addition to ideas of renewing the public sector, Fogh Rasmussen and other libertarians singled out

environmentalism as another key arena in which the welfare battle against the welfare ought to be waged through arguments for privatization and marketization.⁴⁷

Environmentalism

In a Danish context, environmentalism became a heated political issue during the mid-1980s, spurred not only by local debates on topics such as wastewater discharge, but also by discussions of global problems such as transboundary acid rain, pollution of the oceans and the atmosphere, depletion of the ozone layer around the globe, global warming due to CO₂ emissions, poverty alleviation in the third world etc. These debates called environmental experts, grassroots organizations, and politicians into action. Moreover, in 1986, environmentalism became the topic that Danes found most important.⁴⁸

Seeing environmentalism as a new arena in which the battle against the welfare state should be fought, the Danish libertarians contributed to debates on the topic from the mid-1980s onwards. Compared to their optimistic agenda of privatizing the public sector, their writings on environmentalism were initially framed as defensive responses to current developments. However, in time they became more self-assertive when addressing the topic, and their approach to it underwent significant changes. As to be elaborated on below, from the 1980s to the 2000s, drawing to a great extent on American free market thinkers and activists, the Danish libertarians created discourses of first denial, then doubt, and finally a ‘green market economy’ in the political debate. All three discourses were formulated in opposition to and sought to transform environmental policies in the Danish welfare state, but also internationally.

The discourse of denial was framed by older associates of *Libertas*, who thought of themselves as outsiders to Danish society, and who strongly denied the existence of

environmental problems and rejected all calls for political interference in this era. Steen Steensen, a frequent contributor to *Libertas* in the journal's first decade, was the most prominent proponent of this discourse. Steensen was an atypical member of *Libertas*, having grown up on a farm in Jutland and worked as an agricultural assistant, before becoming a primary school teacher and then a high school teacher in history and philosophy. In 1986, he published the book *Den økologiske krigsførelse (The Ecological Warfare)*, which, from a hardline pro-market and anti-statist position, waged a frontal attack on the environmental concerns that had manifested themselves in Denmark.⁴⁹

According to *Den økologiske krigsførelse*, the claims about the poor state of the environment, which had been raised since '68', were a complete "bluff". In fact, thanks to the advance of free market forces in the nineteenth century, the environment had never been better. In Steensen's view, environmentalism was merely a cover for a battle, waged by self-interested bureaucrats, trade union leaders, propaganda experts and sociologists, to seize societal power. Allied with politicians – and with the powerful and growing state in hand – they wanted to suppress business, including industry, fisheries, and agriculture. Steensen explained at the back of his book: "Property law and civil law are the major opposites of today's social conflict. It is the liberal and the social state that are entangled in a deadly embrace. In that fight, environmental protection is used as a lethal weapon."⁵⁰

While *Den økologiske krigsførelse* was far-off mainstream environmental debate in Denmark, the book gained a lot of attention and made Steensen a sought-after speaker, not least in agricultural circles. It also received positive reviews from right-wing debaters, who saw a potential in its harsh critique of the Social Democratic welfare state. One the positive reviews came from the conservative politician and later Minister of Defense, Bernt Johan Collet, who played a central role in establishing CEPOS in 2004.⁵¹

In the 1980s, Steensen writings on environmentalism ignited the libertarian battle against the welfare state. Tellingly, the very first 1987 issue of *Libertas* opened with the article “Ejendomsretten contra embedsretten” (Property Law versus Civil Law) in which Steensen reiterated his arguments from *Den økologiske krigsførelse*: environmentalism was a tool used by the left-wing to consolidate its control of the state apparatus, thereby suppressing the market forces, which were better suited to deal with environmental issues, as private ownership for profit generates a strong incentive to conserve and cultivate resources to increase their value. For “neo-liberals,” Steensen concluded, “the environmental issue is and will be the most important engine of the social state, and there is one thing to do; wage an unconditional fight against the environmental movement.”⁵²

Since the 1980s, many libertarians have heeded Steensen’s call to fight the welfare state through fighting environmentalism. However, they have added new features to this fight, beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where scientific and political discussions had moved from discussions of local issues, such as pollution, to questions of global climate change. This development been spurred among other things by the 1987 report “Our Common Future”. Commissioned by the UN Commission, the report painted a bleak picture of global nature destruction and appealed to the world community to act by promoting so-called ‘sustainable development’.

In this context, the libertarian discourse of doubt was coined by a younger and more academic generation than Steensen. Like Steensen, they associated environmental, or rather climate concerns, with left-wing totalitarianism, but addressed the topic in a more optimistic tone, and doubted rather than rejected the existence of climate challenges. They did so by referring to new expertise, associated with American free market organizations that doubted the established science and aimed to undermine political action in the area,

nationally as well as internationally. Hence, they formed their critique of international environmentalism as a critique of political systems and institutions that did not heed the virtues of the free market. This critique applied in particular to the Danish welfare state.

This libertarian approach to environmentalism originated in articles that the current editor of *Libertas* Niels E. Borges published in *Libertas* in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Illustrative is the text “Eksperter er uenige om drivhuseffekt” (Experts disagree on greenhouse effect) from 1993. “The argument for weakening Denmark’s competitive ability and create more unemployment”, so Borges began the article, “is that Denmark must contribute to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the air as it increases the temperature and thus creates the Greenhouse effect.” According to Borges, such a perspective could only be defended from a political viewpoint and not from a scientific one, as experts disagreed on the effect of carbon dioxide on the rise in temperature.

To make his case, Borges referred to Patrick Michaels, a professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, who doubted that the use of fossil fuels had caused the greenhouse effect and global warming.⁵³ Michaels was also senior fellow at the Cato Institute and funded by the fossil fuel industry, who at this time had begun to invest large sums of money to disseminate discourses of doubt via experts such as Michaels.⁵⁴ In the article, Borges also outlined theories about volcanic activity and sunspots as possible explanations for climate change. His main message was thus that political action to combat global warming would be a useless waste of resources.

Borges’ article “Ozon-laget: Den gode fjende” (The Ozone Layer: The Good Enemy), which was printed in *Libertas* in 1993, presented similar views.⁵⁵ The Danish media coverage on holes in the ozone layer, Borges wrote, were part of a “massive big-brother campaign” which “constitutes a suitable management tool for many people who, for

various reasons, wanted to restrict the freedom of their fellow human beings.” Referring to the work of the world’s perhaps most famous climate skeptic Fred Singer – who was also employed by the University of Virginia and paid by the fossil fuel industry – Borges argued that the widespread scientific disagreements on whether holes in the ozone layer were caused by human activity should deter governments from intervening in the economy to counteract ozone gaps. Moreover, comparing the use of energy in the United States and the Soviet Union, Borges contended that “when it comes to the effective use of resources, the market economy far superior to the central economy.” In his perspective, environmentalism functioned merely as a new way to breathe life into totalitarianism after the demise of communism, and it should therefore be treated with suspicion.

However, the libertarian discourse of doubt also offered proposals for concrete action to solve possible climate problems. This is seen among other places in an article entitled “Forurening og frie samfund” (Pollution and Free Societies) published in *Libertas* already in 1989.⁵⁶ In the article, Borges complained about how the environmental movement had allegedly won the public debate and compelled politicians of all background to enforce state regulation, although it “violated the ideals of freedom” and “totally overlooked the vital role played by the free market economy in questions about environmentalism and resources.” Inspired by American libertarians such as Murray Rothbard and David Friedman, Borges recommended a market economy approach based on free property to ensure efficient use of resources and a corresponding reduction of pollution. The idea here is that we humans only take care of things if we own them and are responsible for them. If part of a common property, we do not take care of our resources. Consequently, Borges argued for a total privatization of society, including water and air.

While discourses of doubt were not uncommon in current Danish debates on climate

change, ideas of a total privatization of society and all natural resources as a solution to climate challenges were exceptional. Still, in a less radical form, the idea of privatization, was key to the discourse of ‘green market economy’ that became central to the libertarian movement during the 1990s. Later Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen was crucial in formulating and disseminating this discourse which saw the light of the day within the Skattepolitisk Sekretariat that he established in 1988 as Minister of Taxation and in which Otto Brøns-Petersen was employed.

Skattepolitisk Sekretariat gradually developed into a powerful agency and generated various ideologically driven tax policy proposals, and it was in the secretariat’s publication *Skattepolitisk redegørelse* (Taxpolitical Report) from 1992, which Brøns-Petersen presumably authored, that the libertarian discourse on free market solutions to environmentalism saw the light of the day. “It is absolutely crucial that economic mechanisms are included in the environmental policy efforts,” the report proclaimed.⁵⁷ These economic mechanisms, it further explained, could be introduced in two variants, both of which differed from traditional direct regulation of the environmental area in the form of centrally designed planning laws, prohibitions, and control mechanisms, which were only to a certain degree compatible with market forces. The first mechanism was indirect regulation in the form of environmental taxes and tradable pollution permits where the state abandoned its traditional role as a direct regulator of pollution in favor of a new role as the creator of a market for pollution on which companies can trade.

The second economic mechanism to be introduced in environmental policy was privatization, as clearly demarcated and enforceable private property rights would allegedly eliminate so-called “externality problems” (in economics, an externality is a cost, or a benefit of an economic activity experienced by an unrelated third party).

According to *Skattepolitisk Redegørelse*, instead of paying tax on market activity that creates negative externality, created private citizens or firms are able to negotiate a mutually beneficial, socially desirable solution as long as there are no costs associated with the negotiation process. This way of creating new property rights through pricing externalities in the market was allegedly far more economically efficient than government regulation.

This technical argument was made with reference to the Chicago School free market economist, Ronald Coase, who was awarded the Swedish Riksbank's Prize in Economics in 1991, and whom Fogh Rasmussen honored in a 1993 article in *Libertas* entitled "Den liberale økonomi" (The Liberal Economy).⁵⁸ In "Den liberale økonomi", Coase's significance for environmental policy is said to arise from his argument that all necessary regulation of pollution by the public sector must be "done in accordance with – not contrary to the market." Such a market-oriented environmental policy could, for example, entail that the public sector sells pollution permits instead of setting quotas, so that the more efficient companies can buy permits from the less efficient ones:

"This ensures that when there is pollution, citizens get the most for their money. And when companies must pay to pollute, they have a strong financial incentive to invent new, less polluting production methods. A market-oriented environmental policy could therefore lead to less pollution than a very interventionist policy."⁵⁹

Altogether, the 'green market' discourse, as championed by Fogh Rasmussen, also held privatization as the ultimate solution to the environmentalist challenge. But, compared to the ideas of denial and doubt, it represented a more pragmatic libertarian approach to

environmental policy, which was characterized by the ambition to build a bridge between environment, market, and state through a scientific and economic approach that aimed to transform Danish society towards a greater market-based organization.

This pragmatist approach to environmentalist policy also informed the chapter on the topic in Fogh Rasmussen's *Fra socialstat til minimalstat*. In the chapter "Green market economy", he opposed this approach to environmentalism to "ecototalitarianism" – i.e. policies involving direct regulation. "Ecototalitarianism," Fogh Rasmussen wrote as an echo of Steen Steensen's struggle against the environmental movement, is pursued by people who are seriously talking about restricting human freedom so much that growth in the Western world must stop."⁶⁰ Moreover, in line with Niels Erik Borges and other market liberals, in newspaper articles in the 1990s, Fogh Rasmussen cast doubt on whether climate change was taking place, whether it was man-made, and whether it was appropriate to do something about it.⁶¹

In line with this, Danish libertarians were undoubtedly thrilled, when after becoming prime minister in 2001, Fogh Rasmussen appointed political scientist and author of *Verdens sande tilstand* (The True State of the World) Bjørn Lomborg as head of the government's so-called Department of Environmental Assessment.⁶² Lomborg had become one of Denmark's most debated figures, as he changed the boundaries for environmental discussion by claiming that ecological problems are relative to the planet's many other problems, such as poverty and hunger, and instead advocated a cost-benefit approach to environmental and climate problems. Fogh Rasmussen's embrace of Lomborg was part of the cultural war against government experts and 'judges of taste' (smagsdommere) that he waged as Prime Minister and which led to massive cuts in the public sector.⁶³ This was not least the case in the Ministry of Environment, which had

become internationally trendsetting under the leadership of the prolific Social Democrat Svend Auken in the 1990s.

Lomborg's skeptic cost-benefit approach to environmentalism was also embraced by *Libertas*. Already in 1998, in a theme issue on *Miljø og marked* (Environmentalism and the Market), *Libertas* reprinted a selection Lomborg's texts, followed by three libertarian comments on the Lomborg debate.⁶⁴ Moreover, also in 1998, economist Martin Ågerup – who in 2004 became the first president of CEPOS – authored the book *Dommedag er aflyst – velstand og fremgang i det 21. århundrede* (Doomsday Cancelled – Wealth and Progress in the twenty-first century) that paralleled *Verdens sande tilstand* and had been written, as Ågerup wrote in his foreword, in a fruitful dialog with Lomborg and the latter's main source of inspiration, the American economist Julian Simon.⁶⁵

Since the 2000s, the milieu around *Libertas* and CEPOS has continued to contribute to political debates on environmentalism, drawing on the three libertarian discourses that had been formulated since the 1980s.⁶⁶ As such, environmentalism remains a key battleground for the libertarian battle against the welfare state in a Danish context.

Epilogue: Mainstreaming and Pluralization of Danish Libertarianism

In the 1980s, inspired by international developments and milieus, a group of young men established a libertarian movement in Denmark. Anchored in *Libertas*, the movement aimed to dismantle the Danish welfare state through privatizing and marketizing its public sector. During the 1990s, members of *Libertas* gained significant positions in politics and academia. Moreover, the Danish libertarians eventually contributed to moving from the margins to the center of political debate, beginning with their alliance with Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Venstre, even if they continued to understand themselves as being in

opposition to the established political system.⁶⁷

Members of Libertas made another decisive move towards mainstream politics by contributing vitally in establishing and running the think tank CEPOS in 2004 that became a vital force in the Danish political landscape. Aiming to influence politics by generating research about societal issues and providing concrete policy proposals, CEPOS has since played a key role in disseminating ideas of free markets and individual freedom and criticism of big government in Denmark. CEPOS's President Martin Ågerup and Chief Economist Mads Lundsby Hansen have long been virtually omnipresent in Danish media (Hansen was three years in a row crowned the most cited Danish economist and in 2021 singled out as the most cited expert in Danish media altogether); its board, council and advisory board houses numerous influential people from Danish business, academia and intellectual life; and it is well-connected to Danish right wing political parties. Moreover, it has trained an army of 'second hand dealers in ideas' which contributes to spreading the CEPOS' free market message across the media, also via internet forums and blogs.

CEPOS has since its inception maintained a focus on privatization and environmental issues as pursued by libertarian forces since the 1980s. However, the think tank has also sought to influence Danish politics by generating research and providing concrete policy proposals on reforms of the tax system and retirement reforms.⁶⁸ As such, the libertarians from Libertas has helped create what is in essence a neoliberal institution that is focused on improving the welfare state rather than on dismantling it. In so doing, they have sidelined or downplayed the more theoretical and uncompromising aspects of their thoughts and become a fullyfledged part of the established political system.

The 2000s saw not only a mainstreaming, but also a pluralization of the Danish political scene with the rise of a number new libertarian hubs in the public debate,

including internet forums such as Liberator (2001), punditokraterne.dk (2005), and 180 grader (2007). As part of this mainstreaming and pluralization of Danish libertarianism, many associates of Libertas entered the established Danish political scene with the foundation of the party Liberal Alliance in 2008.⁶⁹ In public and parliamentary debate, Liberal Alliance criticized and outlined an alternative to the Social Democratic welfare state – *and* to the agendas of Venstre and Det Konservative Folkeparti, which in the perspective of Liberal Alliance had to eagerly embraced the welfare state during Anders Fogh Rasmussen’s spell as prime minister. Quickly developing into a key component of the center-right block in Danish politics, Liberal Alliance embraced a free market agenda, promoting tax cuts, reduction of welfare programs and a critical stance towards European integration. However, Liberal Alliance has never been a strong advocate of ofr instance privatization in the same way that Danish libertarians promoted the issue in the 1980s.

Most recently, in 2015, another party with (paleo)libertarian leanings, namely Nye Borgerlige (Nye Borgerlige) emerged. The party combines libertarian economic policies calling for tax cuts and the abolishment of all corporate taxes with extremely strict immigration policies and conservative cultural values. Among other things, Nye Borgerlige wants Denmark to step out of the UN refugee convention and to deport all immigrants who live on temporary residence or are not able to support themselves.⁷⁰ A range of other Danish libertarian forums, including Libertas, has similarly began to discuss whether immigration should be regarded as serious threat to the free society and ought to be further restricted.⁷¹ This merging of economic libertarianism with a call for restrictions on immigration and conservative cultural values is also known from the American libertarian scene.⁷² However, in contrast to American developments, even if

actors on the Danish libertarian scene disagree on various issues, it has not yet amounted to any fundamental institutional split on this or any other issue.

In line with this, the ideological unity, and the fact that the Danish libertarian movement to a great extent coalesced in one institution and not in competing milieus, is arguably what made the Danish libertarian movement grow strong and expand its institutional presence and influence in Danish politics.

¹ See first of all P. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 'En tilfældig liberalist hændelige erindringer', *Libertas*, 22b (1996).

² See the introduction to this theme issue.

³ N. Olsen, 'Welfare state criticism as elite criticism in 1970s Denmark', in J. Östling, N. Olsen and D. Larsson Heidenblad (eds.) *Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia – Actors, Arenas and Aspirations*. Routledge (Routledge: London and New York, 2020), pp. 111-126.

⁴ J. Jensen and N. Olsen, 'Jørn Henrik Petersen and the Origins of the Third Way: The Market Turn in the Danish Welfare State since the 1970s', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 47:2 (2022), pp. 203-224.

⁵ D. T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Harvard University Press, 2011); B. Jackson & R. Saunders (eds.) *Making Thatcher's Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁶ L. Christensen, *Ungdomsoprør: Konservativ Ungdom gennem 70 år* (Frederiksberg: Konservativ Ungdom, 1994), pp. 88-93; B. Q. Holm, 'Staten er et svin', in M. Kongstad & H. Vesterberg (eds.) *Dengang i 1980erne* (København: Gyldendal, 2003), pp.146-149; M. Sabroe, 'På vej mod ulvens tid', *Information* (May 14, 1982). The ideological universe of these "anarchocapitalists" is first of all documented in the journal *Profil* that was issued by the Copenhagen faction of KU in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

⁷ 'Politisk landsråd i KU', *Vi unge - Organ for borgerligt ungdomsoprør* 8 (1981), pp. 6.

⁸ L. Poulsen, 'Leder – Et konstruktivt ungdomsoprør', *Vi unge - Organ for borgerligt ungdomsoprør*, 6 (1981), pp. 2.

⁹ J. Janting, 'Her er de nye oprørere', *Jyllands-Posten* (March 21, 1982); J. Mikkelsen, 'Han leder en rastløs utålmodig skare', *Berlingske Tidende* (May 30, 1982).

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- ¹⁰ L. Christensen, *Ungdomsoprør: Konservativ ungdom gennem 90 år* (Frederiksberg: Konservativ Ungdom, 1994), pp. 92.
- ¹¹ S. Hein Rasmussen and Poul Villaume, *Et land i forvandling: Danmarks Historie, 1970–2005* (København: Gyldendal, 2007), pp. 276–277.
- ¹² V. Fischer, ‘Det politiske mål for DEFF’, *Vi unge - Organ for borgerligt ungdomsoprør* 4 (1982), pp. 18-19.
- ¹³ J. Heimburger et.al., *Revolutionens Nicaragua og Operation Dagsværk* (Frederiksberg: Forlaget Kontrast, 1986).
- ¹⁴ P. Kurrild Klitgaard, ‘Classical Liberalism and modern political economy in Denmark’, *Econ Journal Watch* 12, 3 (2015), pp. 407; P. Mirowski & D. Plehwe (eds.) *The Road from Mont Pelerin: The Making of a Neoliberal Thought Collective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
- ¹⁵ N. Olsen, ‘A Second-Hand Dealer in Ideas: Christian Gandil and Scandinavian Configurations of European Neoliberalism, 1945-1970’, in H. Schulz-Forberg & N. Olsen (eds.) *Re-Inventing Western Civilisation: Transnational Reconstructions of Liberalism in Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), pp. 137-167.
- ¹⁶ Gandil was in 1989 given Libertas’ Adam Smith award, and, after his death, he was honored by former KU member and founding member of Libertas Palle Steen Jensen. See P. Steen Jensen, ‘Christian Gandil, 1907-99, in memoriam’, *Libertas*, 29-30 (1999), pp. 25.
- ¹⁷ V. Dall, ‘Derfor Libertas Danmark’, *Libertas*, 1 (1982), pp. 2.
- ¹⁸ Libertas, ‘Libertas principdeklaration’, *Libertas*, 5 (1988), pp. 2.
- ¹⁹ Kurrild-Klitgaard, ‘En tilfældig liberalist’, op. cit.
- ²⁰ B. Rasmussen, ‘Ideologi er noget bras’, *Berlingske Tidende* (December 30, 1984).
- ²¹ P. Brixtofte (ed.), *Den truede velstand. En debatbog om hvordan vi får styr på den offentlige sektor* (Holte: Forlaget Liberal, 1980); Det Konservative Folkeparti, *En fremtid i frihed*, 1981, pp. 10.
- ²² V. Dall, ‘Privatisering af den offentlige sektor’, *Vor tid* 20 (1982), pp. 15. Villy Dall, ‘Nedskæringspolitikken må erstattes af en reel privatisering’, *Weekendavisen* (August 6, 1982); Villy Dall, ‘Lad private overtage offentlige virksomheder’, *Jyllands-Posten* (November 4, 1982).
- ²³ P. Steen Jensen, ‘Privatiseringer – 80’ernes opgave’, *Vi unge* 6 (1983), pp. 7-8.

²⁴ P. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 'Private sygehuse - ja eller nej', *Vi unge* 6 (1983), pp. 5-7; Jensen, 'Privatiseringer, op. cit.; R. Spliid, '3 forskellige former for privatisering', *Vi unge* 6 (1983), pp. 9-10; O. Brøns-Petersen, 'Privatisering = mere frihed', *Vi unge* 7 (1983), pp. 9-10; R. Spliid, 'Privatisering større valgfrihed – lavere skat', *Vi unge* 7 (1983), pp. 12.

²⁵ Brøns-Petersen, 'Privatisering = mere frihed', op.cit, pp. 9-10.

²⁶ Ibid. 10.

²⁷ Finansministeriet, *Rapport afgivet af privatiseringsudvalget* (Administrationsdepartementet, 1983). For an insightful comment on the Conservative Party's report, see H. Dyremose, 'Privatisering – Historien om en borgerlig holdningsændring', in T. Rechendorff & Lars Kjølbye (eds.) *P.S. Festskrift til Poul Schlüter på 70 års dagen 3. april 1999* (København: Aschehoug, 1999), pp. 130-139.

²⁸ J. Henrik Petersen, K. Petersen & N. Finn Christiansen, *Dansk Velfærdshistorie*, vol. V (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2013), pp. 115-116.

²⁹ *Berlingske Tidende* (June 30, 1985).

³⁰ See for example H. Carmel, 'Fortsæt diskussionen om dansk privatisering', *Børsen* (August 11, 1986); O. Brøns-Petersen & P. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 'Myter om privatisering', *Jyllands-Posten* (April 15, 1987).

³¹ P. Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.) *Farvel til socialstaten – En bog om privatisering* (Værløse: Forlaget Kontrast, 1988).

³² M. Holm, H. Carmel & P. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 'Politisk efterskrift: privatiseringspolitikens muligheder', in P. Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.), *Farvel til socialstaten – En bog om privatisering* (Værløse: Forlaget Kontrast, 1988), pp. 133-134.

³³ J. Heimburger, 'Om igen!', in Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.), *Farvel til socialstaten – En bog om privatisering* (Værløse: Forlaget Kontrast, 1988), pp. 11.

³⁴ F. Ziegler, 'Ikke én, men mange modeller', in Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.), *Farvel til socialstaten – En bog om privatisering* (Værløse: Forlaget Kontrast, 1988), pp. 64.

³⁵ Heimburger. 'Om igen! ', op.cit. pp. 11.

³⁶ K. Behnke, P. Ørum-Hansen & N. Erik Borges, *Privatiseringer – den danske model* (København: Forlaget Liberty, 1990).

³⁷ O. Brøns-Petersen, 'En bedre strategi', in P. Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.) *Farvel til socialstaten – En bog om privatisering* (Værløse: Forlaget Kontrast, 1988), pp. 22.

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- ³⁸ P. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 'En politisk-økonomisk mega-trend', in P. Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.) *Farvel til socialstaten – En bog om privatisering* (Værløse: Forlaget Kontrast, 1988), pp. 70-122.
- ³⁹ Ibid; L. Christensen, 'Privatiseringer i Tjekkiet', *Libertas* 21 (1995), pp. 6.
- ⁴⁰ K. Viborg Andersen, C. Greve & J. Torfing, 'Reorganizing the Danish Welfare State: 1982–93: A Decade of Conservative Rule', *Scandinavian Studies* 68: 2 (1996), pp. 174-175.
- ⁴¹ Behnke, Ørum-Hansen, Borges, *Privatiseringer*, op.cit. pp. 44-62.
- ⁴² F. Aaen, 'Privatisering og udlicitering i Danmark gennem 25 år', in Anders Lundkvist (ed.), *Dansk Nyliberalisme* (Copenhagen: Frydenlund, 2009), pp. 304.
- ⁴³ A. Fogh Rasmussen, *Fra socialstat til minimalstat* (København: Samleren, 1993).
- ⁴⁴ P. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 'To be conceived in liberty', in W. Block (ed.), *I chose liberty: Libertarian autobiographies*, Ludwig von Mises Institute: Auburn, 2010), pp. 178.
- ⁴⁵ See A. Sofie Kragh, Fogh, *Historien om en statsminister* (København: Peoples's Press, 2004), pp. 122-246.
- ⁴⁶ Venstre, *Mennesket frem for systemet: Principprogram for Venstre* (1995).
- ⁴⁷ This is not to say that the libertarians were satisfied with the progress of privatization in a Danish context. See for example K. Behnke, 'Fremtiden for privatiseringer', *Libertas* 39 (2002), pp. 12-17.
- ⁴⁸ Rasmussen and Villaume. *Et land i forvandling*, op.cit.
- ⁴⁹ S. Steensen, *Den økologiske krigsførelse* (Ranum: Abildgaard & Brødsgaard, 1986).
- ⁵⁰ Ibid. back cover.
- ⁵¹ B. Johan Collet, 'Kampskrift om miljøhysteriet', *Vor Tid*, nr. 8 (20 October 1986), pp. 14.
- ⁵² S. Steensen, 'Ejendomsretten contra embedsretten', *Libertas* nr. 1-2 (1987), pp. 5.
- ⁵³ N. E. Borges, 'Eksperterne er uenige om drivhuseffekt', *Libertas* nr. 15 (1993), pp. 13.
- ⁵⁴ N. Oreskes & E. Conway: *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010).
- ⁵⁵ N. E. Borges, 'Ozonlaget: den gode fjende', *Libertas* 16 (1993), pp. 11-12.
- ⁵⁶ N. E. Borges, 'Forurening og frie samfund', *Libertas* 6 (1989), pp. 30.
- ⁵⁷ Skatteministeriet, *Skattepolitisk redegørelse* (1992), pp. 88.
- ⁵⁸ A. Fogh Rasmussen, 'Den liberale økonomi', *Libertas* 16 (1993).

⁵⁹ Ibid.10. However, Coase did not (in contrast to what Fogh Rasmussens texts from the early 1990's suggest) develop ideas of the possibility of trading pollution on a market established by the state. This idea has roots in the work of other economic theoreticians. See N. Berta, 'Efficiency without Optimality: Environmental Policies and Pollution Pricing in the Late 1960s', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 42:4 (2020), pp. 539-562.

⁶⁰ A. Fogh Rasmussen, *Fra socialstat til minimalstat: En liberal strategi* (København: Samleren, 1993), pp. 187.

⁶¹ See for example A. Fogh Rasmussen, 'Dommedagsteorier skifter med vejret', *Information* (1998).

⁶² B. Lomborg, *Verdens sande tilstand* (Viby J: Centrum, 1993).

⁶³ A. Fogh Rasmussen, 'Nytårstale 2002', <https://www.regeringen.dk/aktuelt/statsministerens-nytaarstale/anders-fogh-rasmussens-nytaarstale-1-januar-2002/>.

⁶⁴ P. Kurrild-Klitgaard (ed.) *Libertas* 27-28 (1998).

⁶⁵ M. Ågerup, *Dommedag er aflyst. Velstand og fremgang i det 21. århundrede* (København: Gyldendal, 1998).

⁶⁶ N. Olsen, 'Klimapolitikens idéhistorie i Danmark 1980-2022', *Historisk Tidsskrift* 122:1 (2022), pp. 182-202.

⁶⁷ Se J. Løgstrup Madsen (red.). *Den moderne liberalisme – rødder og perspektiver* (København: Forlaget Breidablik, 1997).

⁶⁸ See the organization's webpage at <https://cepos.dk>

⁶⁹ Most significantly Ole Birk Olesen, who contributed to *Libertas* in the 1990s and was the founder of 180 grader, became a prominent politician for Liberal Alliance when he entered parliament in 2011. See O. Birk Olesen, 'Om repræsentanter', *Libertas* 31 (1999), pp. 25; O. Birk Olesen, 'Frem med privatlivet', *Libertas* 25 (1998): 19; O. Birk Olesen, 'Falske tungetalere', *Libertas* 23 (1997), pp. 21. Moreover, financial support from the investment bank Saxo Bank was crucial for Liberal Alliance in the early days from 2008 to 2010 (on account of which critics labeled the party "Team Saxo Bank" and the "Saxo Bank Party"), and Saxo Bank President Lars Seier Christensen contributed to constructing its political profile. See Schjørring & Jannerup, *Værdikæmperne: Slaget om danskernes sjæl* (København: Gyldendal, 2018), pp. 280-289.

⁷⁰ See Nye Borgerlige, *Danmark har brug for Nye Borgerlige*, Principprogram, 2015.

⁷¹ Three issues of *Libertas* in 2008, 2011 and 2019 primarily dealt with values, culture, and immigration. See R. Toftegaard Selsing, *Libertas*, 47 (2008); R. Fonnesbæk Andersen et al. *Libertas* 50 (2011); Torben Mark Pedersen et al. *Libertas*, 69 (2019).

⁷² See M. Cooper, 'The Alt-Right: Neoliberalism, Libertarianism and the Fascist Temptation', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 38:6 (2021), pp. 29–50.