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RECALIBRATING ESTONIAN SOCIAL POLICY – SHOOTING THE MOVING TARGET

Ferrera, Hemerijck and Rhodes (2000) have introduced the notion of welfare recalibration to capture positively the adaptive capacity of welfare states in the context of evolutionary economic and social developments. Recalibration is conditioned by a set of constraints, stems from an interaction between external and internal pressures and entails both subtractions and upgradings in the social policy menu in an attempt to find a new balance in policy objectives and instruments. But what are the possibilities for a sensible social policy, if the economy is suffering from a bipolar syndrome when high positive growth rates are followed with high negative growth rates. Does recalibration entail that social policy shall expand and contract accordingly? If retrenchment is a necessity due to the low economic harvest, where do you cut the lean welfare state? The presentation will revisit the concept of recalibration in the light of Estonian experience in coping with the economic crises and investigates which social policy programs have been cut, which have been maintained and which expanded in times of crises.