

ANALYSIS OF PARTY BEHAVIOR*

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The literature on political parties is extremely extensive, but attempts at formulating more generally held theories of the reasons for their behavior have hitherto been very few in number¹), while the methods for establishing theories have varied greatly.

The two books which so far have perhaps been the most discussed in this field, Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957) and Maurice Duverger's *Les Parties Politiques* (1951), illustrate two diametrically opposed points of departure.² Downs' method of procedure is deductive; he puts forward certain axioms and from these he develops a gradually more detailed model for the behavior of political parties. The model is logically cohesive and is complete in itself, but at the same time has a surprisingly high degree of realism considering the procedure.³ Duverger, on the other hand, uses an inductive method of procedure. On the basis of very extensive data on parties and the party system in various countries, he tries to reach empirical generalizations on the connection between party behavior, party system, electoral systems etc.⁴

This latter method — of gradually constructing a more and more generally applicable theory for the political field or part of it by building up empirical generalizations — make certain demands on the special investigations. The results together are to form the material for the generalizations.⁵ The least ambitious form of research in political science from the point of view of method is seldom suitable as a basis — the form that limits itself to a historical description of the course of events based on findings of various sorts in records and where the course of events is interpreted (if at all) by means of a collection, not indicated in detail, of wholly or half anecdotal explanations, usually in the form of references to personal motives and such of the actors.

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A condition for the possibility of special investigations being able to form the foundation of further generalizations is that they can be compared to a reasonable degree. The condition making this possible is, first, that the questions are clearly stated and are placed in relation to other questions of interest to political science (e.g. such as those on a higher level of abstraction), and second, that the language of analysis in the various investigations is comparable to a reasonable degree, which is facilitated if the researchers know and clearly state about what they are inquiring. In the latter conditions is also included the fact that the researcher tries to state what *type of explanations* can be regarded as relevant from the point of view of political science. Perhaps an attitude more or less of the type here mentioned does not give any guarantee that the method of gradually connecting generalizations leads by degrees to the formulation of general theories of political science. On the other hand, the "impressionist" attitude insures that such theories will never be reached.

Questions of this type are actualized by the "form of explanation" of the behavior of political parties which forms the main section of Björn Molin's *The Supplementary Pensions Question: A Study in Swedish Party Politics* (1965).⁶ This book deals with an extremely important question in Swedish politics which has a large number of aspects; it gives a good idea of the interplay between political parties and interest organizations; it is the first Swedish doctor's thesis on political science in which content analysis is systematically used to any extent. It is also interesting from the point of view of method, representing as it does an attempt to present the general factors that can be thought to determine the choice of decisions of a political party. These factors are then used as grounds of explanation in the analysis of the various decisions of the Swedish political parties in the Supplementary Pensions question. In his form of explanation the author goes considerably further than anyone previously in Swedish political science to formulate and specify explicitly a method of analysis for an important field of politics. Molin's main source of inspiration seems to be Downs' book mentioned above, but Molin's form of explanation also constitutes an independent contribution. Downs' theory has been developed and changed in important respects. However, the reader has reason to desire a more detailed explanation of the differences between the two methods of procedure.⁷

The following paper forms an attempt to discuss the content and range of Molin's form of explanation. Special weight has been given to the question of what grade of general suitability the form of explanation can have for the analysis of the behavior of political parties.

The "Form of explanation"

Molin assumes that the choice of standpoint of the parties on the politicized plane is determined by their "value system" which coincides with what he calls "interest", and of their "prediction system" or "strategy" (143)⁸.

A question is on the politicized plane (a question has been politicized), when it is an element in party propaganda and is assumed by the parties to have an effect on the opinion of the electorate. A politicized question is normally controversial from a party political aspect (141).

The value system (interest) is concerned with the evaluation by the parties of various political decisions.

The prediction system (strategy) is concerned with the ideas of parties how different political decisions and other measures influence their possibilities of gaining or keeping control of the governing apparatus (143).

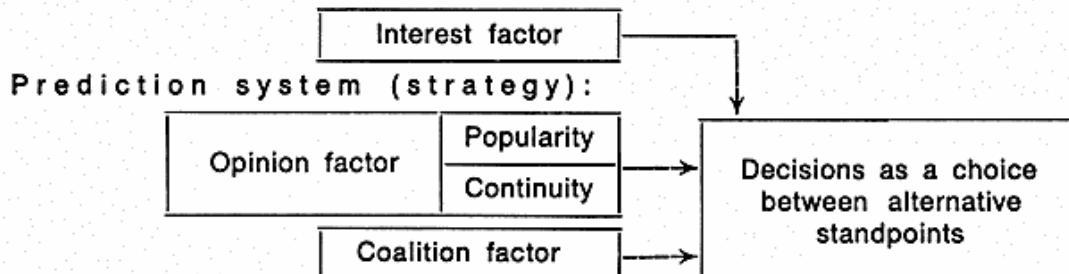
The form of explanation can therefore be thus expressed in its simplest form:

A party's choice of attitude on the politicized plane is determined by its wish to bring about political decisions in accordance with the party's value system and its desire to gain or keep control of the apparatus of government.

The value system has only one factor, the interest factor, while the prediction system has two, the opinion factor and the coalition factor. The opinion factor consists in turn of two parts: popularity and continuity.

Molin illustrates the connection between these factors schematically in a diagram (143 and SPS I, 50). This diagram has a somewhat misleading form, but can easily be made more explicit in the following way:

Value system (interest):



From this diagram it can be gathered that party's decisions on the politicized plane are the result of weighing each other the interest factor, the opinion factor and the coalition factor (cf. 147).

A reasonable interpretation of Molin's diagram might further be that he regards these factors as necessary but not sufficient explanatory factors of party decisions. This problem is, of course, connected with the intentions as regards the level of generality of the analysis.

In considering the diagram by which Molin illustrates his form of explanation, the reader gets the impression that its only purpose is to explain party decisions as a choice between different standpoints. However, the form of explanation actually serves a threefold purpose namely to explain:

1. the decision as a choice between different standpoints,
2. the decision on politicizing,
3. action after making the decision and deciding upon politicizing.

The second purpose is directly expressed by the author: "The decision to politicize a question can also be explained by the factors" (147). The third purpose, which I shall call "tactical action", is not explicitly formulated, but finds expression in the author's analysis of the behavior of the parties in the supplementary pensions question.

The use of the form of explanation for the decision on politicizing should not cause any great complications. The difficulties would be greater if one attempted by this means to explain a party's tactical action. The latter is connected with the relation in which different decisions can stand to each other as ends and means. This question is reverted to in what follows.

The Interest Factor

In Molin's form of explanation the interest factor is the only factor in the value system. He defines it by means of the idea of the "major group" and "interest" (143, 144). Every political party is considered to have a hard core of homogeneous supporters forming a majority of the party voters and activists. Because of the socioeconomic character of the Swedish party system, the major groups are defined in socioeconomic terms (the occupational groups of entrepreneurs, whitecollar workers, farmers and manual workers). "The interest factor is now defined as the explanatory factor which motivates the parties' choice of a standpoint that should mean the realization of the interest of this major group. The determination of the interest of the major group can be suitably based on the standpoint taken up by the interest organization of the respective group. If the organization in question has not decided on its standpoint, an estimate must be made" (144).

Table 1. Major groups in percent of the parties' voters in 1956 and 1960.

Major groups	Party affiliation		
	Conservative	Centre	Liberal
Entrepreneurs & white collar 1956	65		57
Entrepreneurs & white collar 1960	75		70
Farmers & small entrepreneurs 1956		82	
Farmers & small entrepreneurs 1960		68	
Manual workers 1956			
Manual workers 1960			74
			74

Source: Molin (144).

When Molin shows, with the help of survey data, the major groups in percent of the parties' voters (Table 1), his assumption in this respect seems his most debatable point. The following criticisms may be directed against his argument:

1. The division made by the author in occupational groups is a very rough one which can scarcely have any considerable value for explaining the

- parties' standpoints, even if the criteria in general were adequate. If the division into occupational groups is to be used at all, it must be more differentiated.
2. If, on account of the special question he has chosen to deal with, the author wishes to define the major groups in socioeconomic terms, the division into occupational groups is also insufficient. Other socioeconomic dimensions are also necessary in order to be able to include groups which, especially in the supplementary pensions question, played an important part for the party strategists: old age pensioners who have the basic national pension, those who already had voluntary supplementary pensions financed by insurance fees, civil servants and private employees etc.
 3. For two of the parties – the Conservatives and the Liberals – the major groups thus defined offer no direction as to the choice of standpoints (143, 159, 165). Nor is the difference between the figures for the respective parties sufficient to make it possible to divide them with regard to the interest factor (165). The author is also forced to have recourse to further material to bring out this difference, namely the income distribution between the respective voters of both parties (165). This has, however, very largely the character of a supplementary hypothesis, and in any case it is in opposition to the author's general basic principles to work with uniform explanatory grounds. If income distribution is to be introduced as a further criterion, this must be done for all parties.
 4. The choice of the groups in a party that together are said to constitute the party's major group is completely arbitrary as regards the Liberal Party, and probably also for the Conservative Party. The 1960 Election Survey, the data of which Molin uses *inter alia* as a basis, classifies the voters in seven occupational classes (Table 2). When Molin determined the major group

Table 2. Occupational groups by party in 1960.

Occupational groups	Party affiliation			
	(%) Conservative	Centre	Liberal	Social Democratic
1. Large entrepreneurs, managers etc.	5	1	3	0
2. Higher ranks of white collar workers	20	1	5	1
3. Farmers	15	57	4	2
4. Small entrepreneurs (excluding farmers)	20	11	19	3
5. Lower ranks of white collar workers, shop assistants etc.	30	9	43	20
6. Manual workers in agriculture and subsidiary occupations	1	8	3	5
7. Other manual workers	9	13	23	69
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Swedish Official Statistics: Parliamentary Elections, 1959–1960, II, p. 56.

of the Conservative Party, he added together groups 1, 2, 4 and 5, but left out group 3, farmers, who, however, constitute 15 % of the party supporters. The same groups were made to constitute the major group of the

Liberal Party; for this party one could, on equally bad or good grounds, add up groups 5, 6 and 7 -- the lower ranks of white collar workers and shop assistants, farm workers with subsidiary occupations, and other manual workers -- and obtain the figure 69 % (while Molin's major group gives 70 %). Such a grouping would obviously result in a quite different interest factor for the Liberal Party.

In the discussion on the supplementary pensions question another distribution played an important part, i.e. that between entrepreneurs and wage-earners. The percentage of entrepreneurs is 40 in the Conservative Party, 69 in Centre Party, 26 in Liberal Party, and 5 in the Social Democratic Party.

5. Molin assumes that the major group forms a majority in the *party voters and party activists* (143), i.e. that these two groups should have the same relative composition; the latter group would, so to speak, be a miniature of the former (as regards the occupational group division). To put it mildly, in this important question such a matter cannot be stipulated by definition without reservations.
6. The definition of the interest factor is based on the assertion that the Swedish party system is "of a socioeconomic character" (143). Even if this assertion were correct, it would not follow, as previously stated, that the division into occupational groups would be the only relevant criterion (see point 2 above). Further, the assertion implies a far too rough description in a case such as this -- obviously there are other cleavages in the Swedish electorate which cannot be ignored. In addition, the general tendency in the electorate would seem to point towards an ever greater heterogeneity among the voters in all parties.⁹

Usually it is impossible to describe the party system in a well established democracy in a one-dimensional way, as Molin does. The cleavages between the different parties may be many, and thus the grounds for recruitment are also various; different voters attach importance to different cleavages. Different cleavages may be of importance on different occasions as new issues come to the fore.¹⁰ If this were not the case, the party strategists would not find themselves faced with such complicated information problems concerning the voters as is now the case.

Molin's one-dimensional definition of the interest factor emphasizes the basic question of what grade of generality his form of explanation can be considered to have. If it is only intended to be valid for "important socio-economic questions" (142), the unreasonable character of his definition of "major group" would not seem to be so striking as if the form of explanation were regarded as having a wider application. But in any case a number of difficulties remain.

The criticism in points 1-6 above has concerned the definition of the idea of the "major group". My last objections concern the use of the term "interest", a classical problem concept in political science.

It should be noted that the interest factor is the only factor within the

value system in the form of explanation. This means, according to the definitions, that a party's evaluation of different political decisions should be completely determined by the standpoints taken up by the interest organization(s) of the major group(s).

I can see why Molin refrained from introducing "ideology" as a factor — the use of this term usually gives rise to more problems than it solves.¹¹ With reference to Molin's narrow definition of the interest factor, however, his use of language in certain parts of the thesis is surprising. In some cases he speaks of the parties' "general political basic attitudes" (146, twice); in another place it is stated that the "debate does not take place in general political (ideological) terms" (i.e. on the non-politicized plane) (141); on one occasion reference is made to "the respective parties' general value system", where it is mentioned as an example that a party characterizes a proposal as "opposed to freedom" (151). In the last chapter of the book "the parties' different basic perspectives toward social welfare policy" are mentioned (187).

7. In recent literature dealing with the functions of the political parties in a political democracy, it is usually stated that the parties perform *inter alia* a representative function and an integrative (sometimes, aggregative) function.¹² The representative function consists in the fact that the parties are representatives of ideas and interests in the electorate and that they try to get these ideas and interests to characterize the authoritative state decisions. But the ideas and interests of the voters may be unlimited in number and must be reduced to a manageable number of alternatives; through effecting this the parties fulfill an integrative function.

Molin's argumentation seems to presuppose that the parties only function representatively as the delegates of opinion. But they must bring about a balance of opinion, some form of compromise between the ideas and interests in the groups to which the party appeals; the party must also try to form a complete and more or less consistent program. It is almost impossible to imagine this happening without the application of general values or attitudes, however vague in content these may be. We cannot *empty* the idea of the value system of its content by referring to decisions in the interest organizations of the major groups.

8. Molin's definition of the interest factor seems to arise from the idea that the various interest organizations only ascertain and promote their members' "real interests", and that therefore these "real interests" should be formulated in a pure form in the decisions of the interest organizations. In reality, however, the interest organizations also — not only the parties — probably make strategical estimates of the actual effect of their decisions. The more strongly an organization aims at achieving concrete results, the greater the need of such strategical considerations on the part of the leaders of the organization in choosing their standpoints.

This circumstance makes it more difficult to maintain a strict demarca-

tion between the value system and the prediction system. The parties are faced with an information problem: to what extent are the decisions of the organization "adjusted" for strategical reasons?

The Continuity Factor

The continuity factor has got a wide and disparate definition in Molin's form of explanation. It contains at least three different components:

1. "...the need to appear to the electorate as reliable and responsible prevents the parties from completely disregarding their previous policy", (which warrants) "a standpoint that lies both nearer the attitude of the parties in similar questions and in line with their general political outlook" (146). In the following I call this "value and standpoint continuity".
2. "...this is the same factor that causes parties which have control of the government apparatus to act in such a way that program gives a consistent general impression" (146). In the following I call this "program consistency", and I presume that this is also more or less true for the opposition parties.
3. "The necessity for the party to appear reliable makes it also necessary for the party to give an impression of unity" (146). In the following I call this "party cohesion".

The connection between these three different components lies only in the fact that they must be taken into consideration in order that the party may appear in the eyes of the voters to be "reliable and responsible".¹³

As an *explanatory factor* the continuity factor suffers, however, from the weakness that its different components may very well "give directives" in contrary directions, e.g. as follows:

- (a) The policy of a party may only make a consistent impression if certain changes in standpoint are made.
- (b) A party may perhaps only appear reliable if certain changes in standpoint are made, e.g. on account of new relevant facts which have emerged in the political debate.
- (c) Party cohesion can perhaps only be maintained if certain changes in standpoint are made.
- (d) *One* change in standpoint may perhaps require a number of *consistent changes* if the party is to appear "reliable" and its policy is to make "a consistent total impression".

These examples should suffice to show that Molin makes a debatable assertion when he states: "As an isolated variable, the continuity factor is always a motive against changes in position" (146). This would be correct only if the continuity factor were limited to apply to "value and standpoint continuity".

The continuity factor also brings to the fore the question whether the classification in the form of explanation is quite convenient, i.e. the division into value system and prediction system (strategy). It appears doubtful whether, as now occurs, the components "value and standpoint continuity" and "program consistency" can be wholly integrated in the term "strategy". Naturally they also belong there; they can, among other things, be manipulated in a party's propaganda to the electorate. But in certain respects they rather belong to the value system (cf. what was said above about the part played by general values and attitudes in the integration process). There is in general a certain degree of inertia in every party's evaluations and opinions in issues of fact, an inertia that cannot only be explained by the need to appear before the electors as "reliable and responsible". Nor does the latter aspect give a complete explanation of the fact that a party program must have a certain degree of consistency.

The Popularity Factor

In the foregoing the continuity factor has been treated without taking into consideration the popularity factor; in Molin's form of explanation they form together the opinion factor.

The opinion factor as a whole is defined as follows: "If the parties try to carry into effect their endeavors to form a government by gains in an election and if the standpoints in question may be expected to cause such a change in the opinion of the electorate that the majority position in parliament is changed, the opinion factor motivates the standpoint that is supposed to maximize the net vote increase of the party" (145).

A criticism of a minor point: this definition appears to be too narrow. Obviously a party may often be content with a net increase in votes (with a resultant gain in seats) without the party gaining control of the governmental apparatus or the majority position in parliament being changed. A large amount of the political strife in a multiparty system of the Swedish type is aimed at achieving for one's own party as great parliamentary "importance" or "weight" as possible, in order that the party, even if it does not gain control of the apparatus of government will be able indirectly to influence the content of the authoritative decisions. This is, of course, particularly striking in cases of minority government.

On the relation between the two parts of the opinion factor, Molin writes as follows: "The continuity factor, when isolated, is thus always a motive against changes in standpoint only when the gain in votes caused by the popularity factor and resulting from a change in standpoint is greater than the continuity vote losses, is the change motivated" (146). I interpret this as meaning that the continuity factor aims at avoiding losses in votes, while the popularity factor endeavors to win new votes. In each decision where the opinion factor in general is involved, these two subordinate factors must be weighed together.

The term "popularity" must clearly be differentiated for various groups of voters. There are probably very few political standpoints of interest which are popular among all voters, and in any case it would be difficult to bring about political strife on such questions, i.e. to politicize them. Scarcely any party appeals to *all* groups of voters. There is a certain limit to how large an actual or anticipated party majority can be for it to be possible to use the majority in a significant way.¹⁴

The elementary fact that a certain party cannot hope to be the most attractive to *all* groups is of central importance for the understanding of its various forms of action. It should be emphasized that the idea of a "major group" cannot be sufficient for supplying information on what electoral groups' votes a party is trying to gain for the simple reason that the majority of parties are competing for the support of groups which do not traditionally or uniformly vote for a particular party.

Molin has naturally observed and made use of this differentiation of the popularity idea in his analysis of the party behavior (e.g. 164, 175), but he has not developed it in detail in the form of explanation. But pointing out the obvious is not superfluous in all cases, a rule I myself have followed in this paper.

Molin makes three modifications in his general definition of the popularity factor. The first is formulated in connection with the presentation of the form of explanation, while the two others may be gathered from his analysis of the behavior of the parties.

The first modification touches on the coalition factor, but the argument is, in the first place, relevant to the opinion factor, as it concerns the consequences for the distribution of votes of the assumption of a standpoint (or the decision on politicizing). "An issue of fact can be politicized or a standpoint be taken by a party without the party calculating on an immediate gain in votes for its own part; it may be sufficient to count on a loss in votes for the chief opponent, with the dissolution of an opposition coalition, on an increase in votes for its own coalition as a whole or an increase in votes for closely related parties, which could facilitate the formation of a new coalition. In another parliamentary situation a party can, on the other hand, try to strengthen its own position in the coalition by minimizing the net increase in votes of the partners" (145).

This ingenious planning of various strategical possibilities greatly increases the realism of Molin's form of explanation. It does not, therefore, imply any criticism to state that the modifications considerably complicate the use of the popularity factor in an analysis of a choice of concrete standpoints and decisions on politicizing.

Another modification, which does not emerge in the form of explanation but in the author's later analysis, is concerned with the time perspective. It deals with the distinction between short term and long term popularity (e.g. 173). Certain standpoints may possibly be popular on a short view and result in a net

increase in votes for the party or parties which have adopted them, but on a longer view are shown to be "baseless" or occasioning unpopular effects and also having a boomerang effect. Other standpoints possibly give no increase in votes at short term, but at long term may have favorable consequences on opinion for a party that can utilize them. In both cases it is naturally a party's assumptions in the present situation on the long-term effects which are of interest in understanding the choice of standpoint.

Still another modification in the popularity factor can be seen in Molin's analysis (but is not to be found in the definitions of the form of explanation), i.e. what can be called the propaganda capability of the parties (163, 167, 182). What resources has a party for making its standpoints known and understood by the electorate? How easy or difficult to explain are various standpoints? What resources have the other parties? What support can the party get — and what opposition can it encounter — from formers of opinion outside the party ranks if it takes up a certain standpoint?

Obviously such considerations may be of significance for a party's choice of standpoint, decisions on politicizing or tactics. The decisive factor is, of course, the relative propaganda capability of a party, thus its capability in relation to what the other parties are thought to have.

In addition to these modifications in the definition of the popularity factor which are explicit or implicit in Molin's thesis, I shall take up one more which, so far as I can see, he has not dealt with. This tries to answer the question: how can one explain why a party sometimes consciously takes up unpopular standpoints?

One answer to the question has been given in the foregoing — a party may presume that a standpoint which is unpopular in the present situation may become popular in the long run. But there is a further possibility.

Every party, of course, makes a desirability grading of different issues. If a standpoint is important for the party leaders, in spite of the fact that it is presumed to be unpopular among the actual or presumptive party voters, the leaders may nevertheless adopt it, if it is assumed that the electorate regards it as of lesser importance, on condition that the leaders believe that they represent popular standpoints in questions of greater importance to the distribution of votes. A party controlling the government may, for example, consider that economic policy is so popular and decisive for the distribution of votes that it feels it can afford to take up presumably unpopular standpoints in, say, a constitutional issue, in other words, situations may arise where we have reason to differentiate between "party popularity" and "standpoint popularity". (The realism of this assumption is confirmed by the important effect of more or less vague party images on the behavior of voters according to a number of electoral surveys.)

This modification of the popularity factor is also important because it limits the application of the factor as an explanation of certain individual party decisions.

The Coalition Factor

According to Molin, the parties have two general aims: first, to put into operation certain actual decisions (in accordance with their value system) and, second, to control the government apparatus. In calculating the likelihood of winning or losing governmental power, the parties have to take into account two strategic factors:

1. Can control of the government be won or lost because of a coalition being formed or split?
2. Can control of the government be won or lost because of a change in opinion making itself felt in parliamentary elections and changing the majority position in parliament? (144 f.)

Molin calls the former factor the coalition factor, while the latter is the opinion factor already dealt with. Two more comments may be made on these.

It is not certain that "the will to effect certain actual decisions" and "the will to control the governmental apparatus", respectively, are in all situations two aims with the same degree of generality in a multiparty system. We can always assume that a party will put into effect certain actual decisions. On the other hand, it is not certain that a party will always wish to be in power. The latter becomes obvious if we reintroduce the realistic, but for the analysis complicating modification, "ambition on a short or long view". On a short view, a party may very well wish to avoid forming a government in a multiparty system (cf. 146).

In indicating the two ways in which control of the government may be won or lost – by the formation or breaking up of a government coalition and the change in the majority position in parliament through a general election – Molin's definition is again too narrow. During the period in Swedish politics when changes in government occurred at frequent intervals – 1920–36 – *none* of the changes in government from the first Branting government to the formation of the Bramstorp government occurred because of either of the reasons mentioned above. This is because these reasons are so constructed that they exclude the situation with minority government without government coalitions.

This is a detail but it motivates a reformulation of the parties' strategic aims as follows: the parties strive to get the maximum parliamentary influence. (The problem of possible conflicts between short term and long term ambitions remains, of course, with this formulation).

Further Aspects

Before summing up the analysis so far of the form of explanation and its factors, *three further problems* which are relevant to all factors are:

1. The parties' information problem.
2. The time aspect: the short term and long term ambitions of the parties.
3. The relation of different standpoints to one-another.

Problems 2 and 3 have been touched upon to a certain extent in the foregoing account. Molin himself deals with problems 1 and 2, but not in connection with all factors.

The information problem. Molin deals with this in connection with the popularity factor (145). This is natural as the problem is most acute in this connection. But the information problem also exists as regards the other factors as is shown by the following examples:

- (a) The interest factor. Is the élite of the party representative of the party voters? What groups form the party's steady voters? Are the standpoints of the interest organizations representative of the members? How decisive are the standpoints of the interest organization for the voting behavior of its members?
- (b) The continuity factor. What importance do the electors (the party's traditional supporters and the new voters the party wants to win) assign to the party's standpoint and value continuity, program consistency and party cohesion? For how long must a party observe standpoint and value consistency in its policy?
- (c) The coalition factor. What are the aims of the other parties regarding the type of government?

The time aspect. The question of short and long term perspectives is dealt with by Molin in connection with the popularity factor (commented on earlier) and the coalition factor — the parties' endeavor to win or retain control of the governmental apparatus can be either a short term or long term prospect, according to Molin (146). He emphasizes that because of the uncertainty of the long term perspective the parties always attach greater value to the short term alternative.

This problem may be considered to be of importance also in connection with both the other factors, particularly in cases where the two prospects seem to conflict. Do we want to carry into effect the interest of the major group at short or long term? Does the program consistency require it to be perceptible in every situation or is it sufficient if it exists in large outlines?

As previously stated, the introduction of this problem involves a considerable complication in the analysis of party behavior while every exposition in which the problem is overlooked tends to be unrealistic.

The problem of short or long term can be regarded as an important part of a larger problem, i.e. the question of the *relation of different standpoints to each other*. This may be decisive for the degree of generality in a form of explanation of the Molin type.

There would be no difficulty if each standpoint could be placed in isolation, so to speak, but this is practically never the case; often a standpoint can only be explained as a means of putting into effect another on which the party lays greater stress. The argumentation here is partly the same as the foregoing explanation why a party in certain situations can adopt a consciously unpopular policy.

These are commonplace observations; nevertheless, they motivate the introduction of still another "factor" in Molin's form of explanation. Thus, in order to understand a party's choice of standpoint in a certain question, we must know among other things what importance the party attaches to the question in comparison with other questions and in what means-end relation the question stands to other questions. Is the realization of a certain decision a primary aim of a party or only a means in the endeavors to carry into effect primary aims?

Every party works with such a more or less clearly formulated level grouping. We may call this aspect the position of the issue in the party's scale of priorities where "priorities" refer to political (value + strategic) priorities, not priorities in time.

The Term "Explanation"

Earlier in this paper *Molin's form of explanation* has been expressed as follows: a party's choice of standpoint on the politicized plane is the result of weighing the interest factor, the opinion factor and the coalition factor. The opinion factor is the result of a weighing between the continuity factor and the popularity factor.

In his analysis of the parties' different choice of position in the supplementary pensions question, Molin first gives an account of the situation and the contents of the decisions and then "explains" the decisions by referring to one or several factors. The decision is thus "explained" by referring to the general endeavors (or aims) connected with the functions the parties exercise in a democracy.

This involves a (certainly brief) "explanation" *on condition that* the endeavor (or aim) expressed by the factor is relatively unambiguous. In other words, if a factor is to function as a basis of explanation, it should not itself be more or less the result of a number of weighings in the balance of competing goals. (Molin is clearly on the same line of thought when he uses continuity and popularity as independent grounds of explanation; the opinion factor unspecified is seldom satisfactory as a ground of explanation).

My preceding analysis should, however, have shown that Molin's four factors should rather be regarded as collective designations of different types of relevant aspects of the study of party behavior. If such is the case — and naturally on condition that the basic classification of the form of explanation is adequate — it seems more natural to speak of interest factors, continuity factors, popularity factors and coalition factors. As Molin's actual method of procedure in the analysis showed, the conceptual scheme must be detailed and the number of aspects increased for it to be possible to speak with any reasonable degree of precision of an "explanation" of a special decision on a special question.

As a consequence of this the term "form of explanation" should therefore be abandoned and as a suggestion replaced by "scheme of analysis" (or "paradigm").¹⁵ A scheme of analysis implies a codification and classification of questions, terms used and choice of aspects – such aspects as in the connection studied may be assumed to have an explanatory function. The scheme of analysis lays down more or less the points of suspension for an analysis, but does not constitute as such an explanation of the phenomena it is intended to study. It lays down the factors the analyst regards as necessary for an explanation but says nothing about the relations between these factors in the concrete case. It must, of course, leave the question open if the factors are sufficient.

Scheme of Analysis

My examination above of the factors in Molin's form of explanation has taken up three types of difficulties.

1. the cases where relevant aspects have not been codified in the form of explanation, although they were used in the analysis of the concrete party decisions.
2. the cases where, for a more general analysis, important aspects would seem to have been omitted.
3. the cases where the difficulties lie in the construction of the form of explanation itself (inter alia difficulties of classificatory type and even the precision of the concepts).

In the following an attempt is made to solve the difficulties mentioned in (1) and (2) above and a certain extent in (3); in the last case, however, various problems remain. The "form of explanation" is turned into a "scheme of analysis". Partial changes are made in the formulation of the parties' aims. The concept of "factor" with its usual sense of "explanatory variable" is dropped in the headings of the respective sections. In the explanation of the scheme of analysis "aspects" are mainly mentioned, all individually associated with a certain type of data relevant to the explanation of party behavior.

The term "behavior" in the heading of the scheme of analysis refers to choice of standpoint, decisions on politicizing and tactics. It is, however, uncertain how the scheme can be applied to the last mentioned.

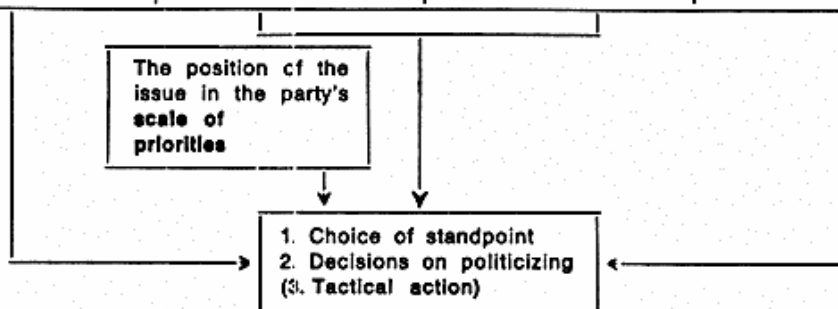
The scheme should not – any more than Molin's form of explanation – be applicable to parties active on the fringe of the parliamentary system without hopes of ever being able to gain control of the apparatus of government within the framework of the existing political system.

The general aim (that the party itself should make the authoritative decisions in accordance with its value system) should not require any considerable comment. A special case can be imagined in a political system where the

SCHEME OF ANALYSIS ON PARTY BEHAVIOR IN A MULTIPARTY SYSTEM

GENERAL AIM: that the party itself shall make the authoritative decisions in accordance with its value system

<p>VALUE SYSTEM AIM: that the authoritative decisions shall reflect the party's value system</p>	<p>STRATEGICAL SYSTEM AIM: to achieve the maximum parliamentary influence</p>		
<p>With regard to the program AIM: see above</p>	<p>With regard to the opinion of the electorate AIM: maximum votes</p>		<p>With regard to the parliamentary situation AIM: gaining control of the governing apparatus</p>
<p>A program consists of an integration of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General value system of the party leaders 2. Standpoints of the major group organizations 3. The party leaders' assumption of the "real interests" at long term of the groups the party appeals to. <p>Time aspect</p> <p>(a) Is the program of a long or short term character?</p> <p>(b) Is there a conflict between long term and short term "interests"?</p> <p>Information problem</p> <p>(a) Which are the "major groups"? Are the party leaders representative of "major groups"?</p> <p>(b) Are the leaders of the organisations in question representative of their members?</p> <p>(c) Are the standpoints of the organizations strategically conditioned?</p>	<p>Continuity AIM: to avoid losses in votes</p> <p>What importance do the party leaders place on the three following "reliability aspects" when facing the electorate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standpoint and value continuity 2. Program consistency 3. Party unity <p>How does the party solve possible conflicts between (1), (2) and (3) above?</p> <p>Time aspect</p> <p>(a) How long does aspect 1 above work according to the party?</p> <p>(b) Does the party observe program consistency at short or long term?</p> <p>Information problem</p> <p>The electors' estimation and possible giving of priority to aspects 1-3 above.</p>	<p>Popularity AIM: to gain new votes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What groups does the party appeal to? 2. Party popularity in relation to standpoint popularity 3. Party popularity in relation to coalition popularity 4. The party's propaganda capability. <p>Time aspect</p> <p>Possible conflict between short and long term popularity</p> <p>Information problem</p> <p>(a) What degree of popularity exists in cases 1-3 above?</p> <p>(b) What propaganda capability have other parties?</p>	<p>What type of governmental control is the party aiming at?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Its own majority government 2. Majority government through a coalition 3. Its own minority government 4. Minority government in a coalition 5. All-party government <p>Time aspect</p> <p>Possible different ambitions at short and long term and possible conflict between these ambitions</p> <p>Information problem</p> <p>The parliamentary ambitions of other parties.</p>



holding of power is so highly valued that a party is ready to put its value system completely aside if this is necessary to have control of the government. In such a case the "general aim" and the "value system" of the scheme of analysis tend to be eliminated.

The aim of the arrangement of the main headings and the formulation of the various aims illustrate the levels at which conflicts between different aims may arise and where the parties are forced to weigh or balance various aims.

The aim of the value system (that the authoritative decisions shall reflect the party's value system) and the aim of the strategic system (that the party shall attain the maximum parliamentary influence) may come into conflict, and very often do so, usually with modifications in the former as a result. The aims of the value system may also come into conflict on the next level with both sub-divisions of the strategic system: it may prove impossible to combine the "carrying through of the program" with "getting the maximum number of votes" and "gaining control of the apparatus of government". Further, two of these three aims may conflict with each other (program/getting the maximum number of votes, program/gaining control of the apparatus of government, getting the maximum number of votes/gaining control of the apparatus of government). Finally, any one of the aims may be in opposition to the two others.

Both subsections of the maximum votes principle ("continuity" and "popularity") are, as in Molin, so defined that they must always be balanced against each other.

Under each main heading, corresponding to the "factors" in Molin, a number of question throwing light on various aspects have been tabulated (a number of aspects are not directly expressed in the form of questions but can easily be reformulated to that effect). The questions are all connected with the general endeavors of the political parties; thus they are relevant to achieving the aims formulated. Further, in each section the time aspect is considered (does the party plan a long term or short term perspective, or both?) Are the perspectives reconcilable with each other? and also the problem of information (as the party leaders require external information for their action).

The content of most aspects can be gathered from the earlier exposition. However, the various aspects under the "Value System" require further comment.

By "major groups" are meant the groups forming the respective parties' traditional supporters at the polls (according to information from the party leadership), and from which the greater part of the party leaders are presumably recruited. The principles of classification of these groups are not and cannot be uniform. It may be a question of occupational groups (as in Molin), or other economic interest groups (type: old age pensioners), again voluntary associations (type: members of temperance societies), geographical groupings (type: rural voters), etc. As the bases of division for sub-division into groups vary, these groups must, of course, in part overlap. The problem of overlapping membership is consequently a complication which faces the party leaders mainly because of the fact that the "interest", which is decisive for different

electors' voting, is so hard to determine. This, together with the fact that the original demands of certain major groups may be wholly or partly irreconcilable, forms the most important explanation why a party program (on different levels) must be the result of a far-reaching integration process, affected by the party's policy-making organ. The distance between the original demands of various kinds and the final result in the form of the party policy is sometimes considerable. If the differences appear too great for certain traditional groups of voters in a party, these may naturally reconsider their attitude to the party.

The term "program" here refers not only to the codified party program, but every decision involving a formulation of general valuation principles for a party. In addition to its written program, a party generally has a certain value tradition which may form an important part of the party's general value system.

It is obvious that there are a number of borderline difficulties in this connection. The existence of such difficulties is in itself an important reason why the aim of a value system is often extremely flexible when it comes into conflict with other aims.

It has been stated earlier that the third type of difficulties in Molin's form of explanation — connected with the construction of the system of explanation — partly remains in the revision of the form of explanation which the scheme of analysis constitutes. Some of the difficulties are in classification and concern cases where an aspect cannot be clearly classified under a certain heading. The following difficulties would seem to be the most obvious:

1. In certain respects the program aspect and the continuity aspect flow into each other. Such subordinate aspects as "the general value system of the party leaders", "standpoint and value continuity" and "program consistency" obviously have points of contact.
2. The continuity aspect is too disparate and furthermore is not wholly on the same level as other main aspects.
3. The significance of party unity may be discussed under all four main aspects.
4. Propaganda capability is naturally as relevant to "continuity" as to "popularity", inter alia because the electors' idea of the three "reliability aspects" can be manipulated by means of propaganda. The relative propaganda capability can also be of significance for the value system, e.g. for answering the question how far can the integration process be driven in regard to the "representative demands" Finally, it may be of importance for a party's parliamentary ambitions.

It must here be left unanswered whether the difficulties in the scheme of analysis referred to above can be eliminated by the scheme being made more specific or whether they require a revision of the four main categories based on Molin's four factors.

A fifth main category has, however, been regarded as necessary, the

previously mentioned "position of issue in the party's scale of priorities". As stated, here a political (i.e. both a value and a strategic) priority is concerned, not a time priority. This category therefore lies on the boundary between the value system and the strategic system.



This paper might possibly give the impression that I take up a negative attitude towards the main section of Molin's thesis, but this is not the case.

Molin's book is from the point of view of method a pioneer work in Swedish research in political science for mainly two reasons:

1. The author tries explicitly to lay down and systematize the grounds of explanation he uses in his analysis. He refrains from offering "ad-hoc explanations".
2. These grounds of explanation have their basis in the functions of the parties in a democratic system and in the general aims of the parties corresponding to these functions.

NOTES

¹ Re the literature on political parties, see the references in Joseph La Palombara—Myron Weiner, eds., *Political Parties and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) p. 439.

² A comparison between the methods of Downs and Duverger is made in Frank A. Pinner: Notes on method in social and political research (in Polsby-Dentler-Smith, eds., *Politics and Social Life*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963, p. 145 ff).

³ Re Downs' model, see James Buchanan—Gordon Tullock: *The Calculus of Consent*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962, p. 334 ff, and Donald E. Stokes: Spatial Models of Party Competition (*American Political Science Review*, vol. 57: 1963, p. 368 ff).

⁴ Duverger's book is discussed, for example, in George Lavau: *Partis politiques et réalités sociales*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1953, and in Aaron B. Wildavsky: A methodological critique of Duverger's Political parties (in Eckstein—Apter, eds., *Comparative Politics*, New York: Free Press, 1963, p. 368 ff).

⁵ Of the problem in general, see, for example, David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*, New York: John Wileys Sons, 1965, p. 3—66.

⁶ The "form of explanation" is presented in the Swedish book on pages 141—147 and is used thereafter in the analysis of the parties' assumption of standpoints in the supplementary pensions question.

⁷ Molin states his association with the ideas of Downs on page 142 f., note 1, where it is stated amongst other things that the control of the government apparatus in Downs' model is "the starting point of an analysis of party behavior; the maximization-of-votes principle is therefore in Downs the only principle that determines the action of the parties. In this exposition the control of the government apparatus and not the maximum-votes is the aim; a number of votes giving 55 percent of the seats can be quite as good an aim as a further maximization of votes. This assertion is different from Downs' in as much as Downs explains the parties' basic attachment by their estimation of the division of ideological opinion (any type of more basic interest is not then needed!), and also in that Downs' model for the basic logic for individual voting here lacks relevance. See also criticism of Downs in Buchanan and Tullock, *The calculus of consent*, p. 63 ff and 334 ff., and in Riker, *The Theory of Political Colitions*, p. 32 f."

It should be added that Buchanan and Tullock in their book handle in detail "the logic of individual voting"; their criticism, if any, of Downs would thus be

irrelevant to Molin's statement. Further, there is scarcely any criticism of Downs in the parts Molin refers, In one case (334 ff.) it concerns a reference.

Molin's characterization of Downs' model concerns the latter's disquisition on a two-party system. Downs has, however, indicated, even if very briefly, the modifications that must be made in the model so that it can be applied to multi-party systems (chapter 9, p. 142 ff). He also states clearly the problems the maximum-votes principle may cause for parties which together form a coalition government (p. 159).

⁸The figures in parantheses are page references to the Swedish edition of Molin's book.

⁹See Swedish official statistics, Parliamentary Elections, 1961-1964, II, p. 97.

¹⁰With reference to the argument about the dividing lines between the parties, cf. Duverger, *op. cit.*, p. 262 (fig. 28: Superposition des dualismes en France), and Bo Särilvik: Skiljelinjer i valmanskåren (*Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* 1965: 2-3, inter alia pp. 141-142). Cf. the discussion on the significance of "cross-pressure" and "over-lapping membership" in David B. Truman; *The Governmental Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), p. 156 ff. Cf. also the ideas of "cumulative", and "pluralistic" patterns of conflict in Robert A. Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall 1963), p. 78 f.

¹¹On the complications in the term "ideology", see Arne Naess: *Democracy, Ideology and Objectivity*, Oslo University Press, 1956, (part B, chapters 1 and 2, p. 141-233).

¹²See, for instance, Gabriel A. Almond: Comparative political systems (in Eulau-Eldersveld-Janowitz, eds., *Political Behavior*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1956, p. 34 ff.), Almond: A Developmental Approach to Political Systems (*World Politics*, vol. 17: 1965, . 183 ff.), Gabriel Almond-James S. Coleman: *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 3-64, Henry Valen-Daniel Katz: *Political Parties in Norway*, Oslo: Universitets forlaget, 1964), p. 42 f.

¹³Cf. Downs, *op. cit.*, p. 103 ff.

¹⁴Cf. Riker, *op. cit.*, 1962, p. 47 ff.

¹⁵Re the concept of "paradigm", see Robert K. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1957), p. 14 ff. cf. A. Brecht, *Political Theory*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 28 f.