

## Political Science in Sweden in the Post-War Period

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### 1

Together with the Anglo-Saxon world Sweden has the oldest tradition of treating political science as an independent university discipline. It may even be said that the Swedish tradition is older to the extent that as early as 1622 a professorship in "Political Science and Rhetoric" was established at Uppsala University; not until the end of the 19th century however did the holder of that professorship undertake research which would be regarded as political science by contemporary standards. During the first three decades of the present century professorial chairs in the subject were established at the remaining universities then in existence.

Without oversimplifying the real situation all too greatly, two subjects could be said to have given Swedish political science its characteristic profile in the era up to the mid-1940's. One of these was the Constitution of 1809, still in effect, its background, structure, and application. The other was the parliamentary system, its evolution and form in various countries.

The study of the Constitution of 1809 possessed a very special sanctity and tradition within Swedish political research. For at least half a century our written basic law had occupied the center of interest for political scientists. The question that attracted a particularly high degree of interest concerned the background and the underlying causes which lead to that particular document. In the early 1940's two schools of thought existed on the subject. One of these was foremost represented by Axel Brusewitz, professor at Uppsala, who had concentrated his research on the intellectual spirit of the times in which the framers of the Constitution of 1809 lived and accordingly emphasized the influence of foreign doctrines, in particular those of Montesquieu. The other school found its chief exponent in Fredrik Lagerroth, holder of the professorship at Lund University. Lagerroth made a close examination of the basic form of the new constitution and its detailed provisions, comparing them with corresponding paragraphs in earlier Swedish fundamental laws. On the basis of his findings he adopted the older view that the present constitution is in the main anchored in a genuinely Swedish political tradition. These two points of view were presented and defended in a manner magnificent in its ire and haughtiness.

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A study of the emergence of parliamentarism had got its start in the period between the wars against the background of the pressures that had arisen before the principles of parliamentarism had won unconditional acceptance in Sweden and a number of other countries. Axel Brusewitz organized and inspired this study. The result was a remarkably large number of doctoral dissertations on conditions both in Sweden and abroad. These dissertations were structurally rather similar in organization and concept. The chief object of study was the rise and fall of various cabinets. The idea was that in these dramatic instances the relationship between the chief of state, the person forming the cabinet, and the parliament – a trilateral relationship of central importance to the development of parliamentarism – manifested itself with special clarity. The material was generally arranged in the form of minutes of proceedings, internal memoranda, notations in diaries, and letters. All this made it possible to give a very detailed account of all the twistings and turnings that can occur during cabinet crises as well to throw light upon the internal relationships and working methods of various particular cabinets.

Both of these kinds of study, once so characteristic of Swedish political science, attract only limited interest today.

On one occasion, however, a number of prominent Swedish political scientists felt called upon to turn once again to the question of the sources of the 1809 Constitution. On the 150th Anniversary of its ratification, *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift*, a publication for political science research in Sweden, published an impressively thick special issue with articles by a number of scholars. One of the contributors was Carl Arvid Hessler, who had succeeded Axel Brusewitz as professor in Uppsala. Hessler concluded his essay with wisdom and resignation: "These political scientists have all driven rather loose arguments proceeding from what seems to be a simple question: to what extent did the framers in 1809 allow themselves to be influenced in their decisions by ideas they had got from foreign authors and to what extent did they act with gaze firmly fixed upon the history of Sweden? In actual fact the question is so complicated that it can never be answered to complete satisfaction."

As for the study of the emergence of parliamentarism the last dissertation to be published in this genre appeared in 1961. It is regrettable that all this research on Swedish cabinets, which from abroad must appear unique, has never been systematized or summarized into a single account. During the last years of his life Brusewitz himself had planned to describe in broad terms the emergence of parliamentarism during at least the first two decades of the twentieth century, but these plans were never realized owing to his death in 1950. Gunnar Gerdner, one of Axel Brusewitz' many students and generally considered to be the most skillful of the cabinet researchers, was commissioned in the beginning of the 1960s by the Committee for the Celebration of the Swedish Bicameral Legislature's 100th Anniversary to write an account of the emergence of parliamentarism in Sweden for the whole 20th century based both on material previously published and on new research. Gerdner had himself published a study of one of the most important governments in Swedish parliamentary history, the coalition government between the Liberals and the Social Democrats from 1917 to 1920. But once again plans for putting together a unified account of the emergence of Swedish parliamentarism were broken off short of completion by Gerdner's untimely death in 1964.

Other areas of interest besides the study of the Constitution of 1809 and the emergence of parliamentarism have suffered the same fate and have also attracted very little attention in recent years. This is the case for instance with the broad subject of constitutional history which can be said to encompass the other two specialties. It might be added that these once so dominating questions also reflect two approaches to political science research that have diminished greatly in importance, even if they have not totally disappeared.

The first of these is the legalistic approach. As in other countries Swedish political science research at the beginning of the century was characterized by a tendency on the part of scholars to concentrate on the study of the written basic laws. Attempts were made to analyze and systematize these rules in relation to one another, to provide an interpretation of them

based on scientific precision and objectivity, to study their relationship to the political life of the nation they were intended to regulate, and so on. This approach was also characteristic of much of Frederik Lagerroth's work including his views on the background to the Constitution of 1809. The other approach was basically historically oriented, and as such is harder to characterize in a few words. The decision to adopt an historic approach can be seen as an attempt to place phenomena in a chronological perspective with respect to their origin, change and development. And it was largely this sort of view which was typical of the studies of parliamentarianism inspired by Axel Brusewitz and of much other work in political science as well.

## 2

Political science research in Sweden has undergone a successive change since the war with respect to new areas of interest that have arisen, and these can profitably be examined in terms of five dimensions they exhibit: *nature, level, region, point of time, and sector.*

*Nature:* When we speak of the nature of political activity we refer to the distinction between studies of normative prescriptions about how political life is supposed to be organized on the one hand and studies which go beyond prescription on the other. In the mid-1940s the analysis of political ideas and ideology attracted the attention of Swedish political science to a degree that was noteworthy compared to developments abroad. The pioneering figure in this category of political research was Herbert Tingsten, professor of political science at the University of Stockholm until his acceptance of the post as editor-in-chief of *Dagens Nyheter* in 1946. In a number of works Tingsten investigated the origins, development and mutual dependence of various political concepts and elements of ideology and attempted to identify the view of reality upon which they were based. Some of these studies have been translated into English, in particular his *magnum opus* on the development of Social Democratic thought in Sweden.

Interest in the analysis of political ideas and ideology has continued to make itself felt in Swedish political science. The principle – though not sole – heirs of this type of research are to be found at Uppsala University where the subject has been further developed since the war. In the early 1960s Carl Arvid Hessler published a rather comprehensive study of the debate on the state church in Sweden. Similarly two of his students presented dissertations in the same period based on the analysis of political ideas. One of these was Nils Elvander, at present associate professor of political science at Uppsala, who wrote a study of the thought of a well-known Swedish historian and politician, Harald Hjärne. The other was Leif Lewin, who did a study of the debate on a planned economy that had raged in Sweden for over four decades. An interesting point in Lewin's study is his following up of the hypothesis that politics is becoming less and less ideological – a theme that Herbert Tingsten had pursued, after having been one of the first political scientists in the world to suggest it, with varying intensity ever since the 1940s.

An idea-analysis that occupies a special position in Swedish political science research is Elias Berg's work, published in English, on the concepts of the majority and egalitarian principles in the writings of a number of modern theoreticians.

*Level:* Political activity can be thought of as taking place on three different levels, local, national, and international. The examples we have given of the interest in the 1809 Constitution and the emergence of parliamentarianism that dominated the scene in the mid-1940s show clearly that political scientists in Sweden were at that time primarily oriented to the national level. Even today it is the national level that occupies the foreground in the research picture but at the same time the two other levels of political activity have come to attract the attention of scholars to a much greater extent than ever before.

Interest in the study of local politics was very limited as recently as the middle of the 1960s. What little had been accomplished before that bore the stamp of the study of ad-

ministrative law. For the past three years, however, an ambitious project for the study of local politics has been under way. The project is a joint venture undertaken by the departments of political science at all five Swedish universities and is financed by the Anniversary Fund of the Bank of Sweden, a newly established fund intended to provide support for research in the social sciences. At present the local politics project has employed between twenty and twenty-five researchers and it is expected that over the entire time-span of the project some 50 dissertations – some of them Swedish doctoral dissertations – will be produced. Generally speaking, the project is concerned with discovering what effect various types of local government organization have on two fundamental questions: whether or not they favor local autonomy – which is seen as a form of providing the means for citizens to exert influence – and how the ability of local government to provide services is related to organizational types.

Interest among Swedish political scientists in the study of politics on the international level clearly predates the attention given to local government. It is sufficient to recall the work of Rudolf Kjellén and the renown his geopolitical writings brought him in the first decades of this century. But interest in international politics has yet to result in research of a depth and breadth comparable to the research in local government carried on in recent years.

The work in international politics by political scientists in Sweden can be divided into studies oriented towards specific actors and studies of a more general, systematic nature, the two major types of research common to this level. Actor-oriented research dominates, and the "actor" which has received the greatest attention has quite naturally been Sweden. Nils Andrén has written a survey of Swedish foreign policy since 1945 which has also appeared in English translation as *Power-Balance and Nonalignment: A Perspective on Swedish Foreign Policy*. Several articles, written by Kjell Goldmann and others, touching on various aspects of Swedish foreign policy are found in the Scandinavian journal *Cooperation and Conflict*. A series of studies have also been made on the structure and activities of various international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Labor Organization and the Nordic Council. On the other hand there are studies which employ a clearly system-oriented approach such as Hans F. Petersson's doctoral dissertation *Power and International Order*, which presents an analysis of different attitudes towards the problems of power, peace, and international order at the end of World War I. Central phenomena in international politics such as economic sanctions, armaments and norms have been investigated by young researchers such as Peter Wallensteen, Erik Moberg and Kjell Goldmann respectively.

*Region:* At present, just as two decades ago, the major portion of political science research in Sweden is devoted to Swedish conditions. But at the same time, now as earlier, a significant number of Swedish political scientists have sought objects for their research outside of the country's borders. Even in the 1940s Axel Bruswitz' example in seeking to explore the various aspects of the parliamentary system led to studies of the systems of Belgium, England, France, Norway, Switzerland, and others. The main difference between then and now is that the circle of countries under consideration has grown considerably. A couple of decades ago scholars were prone to limit themselves to Western Europe. Today, parallel with developments in many other countries' political science research, they are reaching out to encompass political systems in the developing regions of the globe. Göran G. Lindahl published a doctoral dissertation on Uruguay in 1962 (*Uruguay's New Path, A Study in Politics during the First Colegiado 1919-1933*). Lars Rudebeck, who had earlier dealt with Mexico, published five years later a study of Tunisia (*Party and People, A Study of Political Change in Tunisia*). Göran Hyden, finally, was awarded his doctorate in 1968 for a study of Tanzania (*Tanu Yajenga nchi. Political Development in Rural Tanzania*).

What is still to a great extent lacking in Swedish research is an attempt to compare political conditions in several countries with each other. Gunnar Heckscher, holder of the

chair of political science at the University of Stockholm from 1949 to 1965, published a book in English in 1957 which dealt with methodological problems involved in the study of comparative government (*The Study of Comparative Government and Politics*). The neglect of the subject of comparative government by Swedish political science is all the more surprising when one considers that the Nordic countries would seem to offer a ready-made field of study. Similarities in the social, economic and political structures of these countries would, one would think, be especially inviting for researchers wanting to make a comparison of structures and functions in the various systems. On the other hand it happens of course that Swedish political scientists do concentrate on the study of politics in other Nordic countries. Krister Wahlbäck, of the University of Stockholm, has developed an expertise on politics in Finland; a book by him on interpretations of the central events in Finnish politics is expected shortly in English.

*Time:* A couple of decades ago, the period of time within which Swedish political science found inspiration for research had essentially two boundaries. Towards the past, scholars avoided going further back in time than 100–150 years. And as for the present they were inclined to keep a certain – limited – distance from the object of their analysis.

If there has been any expansion of the remoter of these two temporal boundaries, it has not been apparent. On the contrary, along with diminishing interest in constitutional history since the war, there has occurred a marked restriction of the further limit. A significant exception to this tendency however is a study from 1955, published in German, by Pär-Erik Back, professor of political science at the University of Umeå, entitled *Herzog und Landschaft. Politische Ideen und Verfassungsprogramme in Schwedisch-Pommern um die Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Back's is a study of a constitutional debate which seeks to ascertain the connotations implied by the terms used and the specific aims of the participants. Much of the analytical method and perspective of Back's study could be applied with equal incisiveness to any contemporary debate – although Back was dealing with a struggle between the Estates and the Duke in 17th Century Pomerania! With regard to the nearer time limit for researchability in Swedish political science since the war, however, it is safe to say that it has been pushed forward. Thus it is nowadays very common, not to say the rule, that Swedish scholars, using new methods and techniques, analyze contemporary political events.

*Sector:* A division of political activity into various sectors could proceed along several different lines. I shall base the following discussion on the very simple idea that the decision-making process in a system such as ours naturally dissolves into a number of structures: voters, mass media, interest organizations, parties, central organs for conciliating opposing interests (such as parliaments and cabinets), and the governmental administration. Seen in these terms the expansion which has taken place in the scope of legitimate interest for research in political science becomes especially evident. The sector that occupied the center of interest two decades ago is the one I have called parliament/cabinet. I have already indicated as much when I referred to the attention that has been paid to the written constitution with its regulations controlling the central agencies and governing organs. This interest has decreased though by no means disappeared. In the mid-1950s, for instance, Hans Meijer published a dissertation on the committee system, an institution of considerable importance in Swedish politics. (An article on this institution is included in the present volume of SPS). In 1967 Hans Meijer was appointed to the chair of political science at the University of Stockholm that had previously been occupied by Herbert Tingsten and Gunnar Heckscher. In connection with the 100th anniversary of the Swedish bicameral legislature in 1966 Nils Stjernquist, professor of political science at Lund University and successor there to Fredrik Lagerroth, published a large study of the working procedures and organization of the Swedish *Riksdag* and I myself published recently a study of the arguments and party positions in the question of the composition of Swedish cabinets since the war.

The study of voters and voting behavior was still rather underdeveloped in Sweden as

late as the late 1940s. It is true that Herbert Tingsten had included data on Swedish voting behavior in his much-quoted volume, *Political Behaviour* from 1937 and similar material was found in several articles included in a book on the Gallup polls and the Swedish electorate, edited by Elis Håstad in 1950. Yet not until the beginning of the 1950s did a regular and systematic analysis of Swedish elections get its start. The initiative was taken by Jörgen Westerståhl and his students at the Department of Political Science in Gothenburg, and this particular branch of political science research has remained concentrated in Gothenburg. The leading force in this activity is at present Bo Särilvik, who also maintains close contact with researchers at the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. Much of the work done by Särilvik and his colleagues at Gothenburg has not yet been published and bits of their research are to be found in articles spread throughout various publications. Certain studies of voting behavior – especially for earlier periods – have of course been carried out or are in progress at other political science institutions. Here I principally have in mind a study by Gunnar Wallin of the University of Stockholm on election movements and statistics for the years 1866–1884.

The study of mass media has also gradually developed in Swedish political science since the war although the scale of research remains limited. At the Department of Political Science at Uppsala a rather comprehensive archives for press clippings was established in the late 1940s in hopes of stimulating research into the problems of the press as well as providing for the use of the press as a source of data. An attempt was made during the 1950s by Jörgen Westerståhl in collaboration with C. G. Janson – now professor of sociology at the University of Stockholm – to ascertain the political importance of various newspapers through a study of their areas of distribution. Jörgen Westerståhl has also led a number of studies of the content of news carried in mass media: the most recent of these was completed in 1968 and deals with the questions of impartiality and objectivity in the Swedish Broadcasting Company's coverage of the Vietnam conflict in comparison with similar coverage in a number of metropolitan newspapers.

The study of interest groups and interest organizations, on the other hand, has in recent decades been carried out on a large scale and has enjoyed a popularity among Swedish political scientists that almost reminds one of the earlier position of the emergence of parliamentarianism as the research favorite. The foundations for this interest were laid in the 1940s by Gunnar Heckscher in a book on the relations between the state and the interest organizations and by Jörgen Westerståhl in his doctoral dissertation on the Swedish trade union movement. Since that time practically all of the centralized interest organizations in the nation – as well as some branch organizations – have been the subject of monographs. Some of these have been published in book form, some exist only in manuscript, others are still in progress. Some examples of organizations which have been dealt with: the Metal Workers' Union and the Agricultural Workers' Union (Pär-Erik Back), the Municipal Workers' Union (Ingemar Lindblad), the Typographers' Union (Bertil Björklund), the agricultural cooperative movement (Gunnar Hellström), the consumers' cooperative movement (Olof Ruin), the Swedish Employers' Confederation (Lennart Lohse), and the diverse Automobile owners associations (Olle Söderberg).

Two major studies deal with the phenomenon of the interest organization as an institution in Swedish political life and its importance and function in the society. Pär-Erik Back has analyzed the earlier period of development and Nils Elvander has done a study of the contemporary scene.

The study of political parties in Sweden seems to have been given much less attention by political scientists during much of the postwar period than was allotted to the interest organizations. More systematic research into the political party system has now come into being. Nils Stjernquist published an essay on the opposition parties in Sweden in Robert Dahl's *Opposition in Western Democracies* and Björn Molin of the University of Gothenburg was awarded his doctorate a few years ago for a study of the issue of the supplementary pensions plan, an analysis that at the same time throws some light on the way in which the

parties take stands on important issues. Gunnar Sjöblom of Lund University has recently submitted a dissertation of a purely theoretical nature on the selection of strategies by political parties (*Party Strategies in a Multi-Party System*, in English). Furthermore, slightly more than a year ago a project was initiated with the goal of studying the structure and function of the Swedish party system which, similar to the previously-mentioned local politics project, will comprise all five of the political science departments in the country and be financed by the Anniversary Fund of the Bank of Sweden. Generally speaking, the project will investigate how the various parties, each with its specific operating methods, manage to adjust themselves and accomplish their goals in a quickly changing society.

Of the sectors mentioned here, public administration, finally, is the one that Swedish political scientists have neglected the longest. As early as 1950 Gunnar Heckscher published an article in *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* in which he drew attention to the desirability of research into the structure and working methods of Swedish public administration. He heeded his own call by publishing shortly thereafter a pioneering study of Swedish administration at work. Following this start studies concerned with administrative behavior and practices appeared only sporadically. Not until now, in the late 1960s, does it seem that at long last the will to devote energy to administrative studies – often espoused but seldom exercised – is to materialize in the form of concrete research projects. Thus a group has begun work in this area at the University of Stockholm under the direction of Hans Meijer, another at the University of Gothenburg under Björn Molin.

It ought to be added of course that after accounting for Swedish political science research sector by sector there still remain a number of studies that do not lend themselves to simple categorization within any of the sectors I have used. I have in mind in particular the type of research that aims to illuminate a specific political question. For example, Carl Arvid Hessler suggested in the early 1940s that a suitable research object for Swedish political science would be the mapping of the expansion of the activities of the state into various sectors of the economy and society. Such a perspective can be said to characterize a dissertation submitted in the late 1950s by one of Hessler's students, Olle Gellerman, on Swedish agricultural policy. Hans Thorelli's dissertation, written in English, *The Federal Antitrust Policy: Origination of American Tradition*, also describes in a manner of speaking the expansion of state activities. More recent examples of larger Swedish political science research studies concentrating on a specific question would be, in addition to the study by Björn Molin mentioned earlier, one by Tomas Hammar on Swedish immigration policy and one by Hans Wieslander on Swedish defense policy.

What is largely lacking in Swedish political science are studies that have the expressed purpose of studying the process of political decision-making from first proposals to the final execution of the decision. On the whole we have not yet progressed to the stage where we attempt to capture the entire breadth of political systems with all their functions. Criticism has been directed at this neglect, this fear of adopting the macro-perspective in research. An answer of sorts to this criticism is however research now under way within the framework of the local government project spoken of above. At least as far as local politics are concerned we can look forward to receiving, in time, the grand picture of the political process that has been lacking.

To recapitulate, the survey I have undertaken, dimension by dimension, of Swedish political science research in the period since the Second World War leaves us with the following picture: the analysis of political ideas and ideology attracts approximately as much attention as previously, otherwise most areas are characterized by broadening of interests. Where Swedish political science earlier concentrated its attention to political activity on the national level, it now concerns itself with the local and international levels as well, where it earlier limited itself to the study of conditions at home and in the West, it has now begun to show an interest in the developing regions as well, where it earlier maintained a certain distance to contemporary events, it has now begun to analyze present politics, and finally, where it earlier was primarily interested in the central organs in the political process, it has



more and more come to emphasize such sectors as the electorate, the mass media, the interest organizations and political parties and, most recently, the public administration.

One thing remains to be said about the changes that have taken place in the scope of political science research in Sweden. Another shift of emphasis besides those already mentioned has been observable in the development of political science research in other countries, and especially in America, namely a shift since the war from an earlier concern with *organizational* units of different types and towards units of analysis of another sort, such as the concepts of power, decision-making, strategy, systems, functions, communications, political culture, etc. Another characteristic, closely related to the former, has been a shift from the study of the institutional aspects of political life in favor of the study of political behavior in all its forms. It can be said that all these tendencies have made themselves felt in Swedish political science even if with less force than in the United States. But it is impossible to speak about changes and shifts of emphasis of this sort without touching upon the very *methods* of research in political science, for where basic concepts are concerned, the scope of interest for political science and the methods we use tend to coincide.

## 3

We have already suggested that developments in the methodology of political science research in the postwar period have more or less led us to reject what can be called legalistic and historical approaches to our subject. What has emerged in their place is, if I may continue to express myself in very general terms, a social-scientific approach. Far more than ever before political science research, in Sweden as abroad, takes place within a reciprocal relationship and in close interaction with research developments in such fields as sociology, economics, psychology, social anthropology and statistics.

To a far greater extent than was the case a decade or two ago, Swedish political scientists are concerning themselves with methodological problems. Jörgen Westerståhl was among those who, at a conference of political scientists in 1952, assailed what he saw as the methodological innocence of Swedish political science at the time: "Compared with several other branches of social science, the contrast is striking. Whereas statistics is moving in the direction of pure methodological science, economic theory possesses a much-used parade ground for the review of its methods and concepts, and sociology practically refuses to consider problems that are not susceptible to treatment by certain special techniques, political science on the whole continues to lead a quiet existence unperturbed by these concerns."

The new interest in questions of methodology which has indisputably developed during the late 1950s and especially during the 1960s can be illustrated by even a superficial comparison between what we find in Swedish political science studies published today with what they contained twenty years ago. At that time it was comparatively rare that empirically oriented studies began with a deliberate discussion of goals, hypotheses, concepts, etc. Active research scholars today are as a rule very explicit on this point. Topics of inquiry and approaches are discussed, hypotheses are advanced to be verified or falsified by scientific investigation, the connotations of concepts to be used are carefully defined, etc.

All this attention to explicitness and details of method bears witness to the fact that the aims of Swedish political scientists are other than what they were a couple of decades ago. We find scholars no longer hesitant to state, as they were earlier, that the goal of research in political science is to prepare the ground for meaningful generalizations on politics in all its forms and conditions. In order to be able to state propositions of a general nature, you must first be able to make comparisons between similar phenomena. And in turn, in order to make comparisons, you must approach your selected field of research with clearly stated aims and with a clearly defined methodology.

Within the framework of their efforts to make generalizations – and not simply be satisfied with describing specific events – Swedish political scientists have begun to apply new approaches and new techniques.

It is easiest to characterize the application of new techniques. One new development is

that use is being made of interviews and questionnaires as means of collecting information to a far greater extent than previously. Another is that data are increasingly being subjected to quantitative analysis. The use of interviews and questionnaires seems to be increasingly necessary as we attempt to study political activity which is actually in progress. And it seems natural to apply the techniques of quantitative analysis as we go in for the analysis of political phenomena that are basically repetitive. The Swedish political scientist who perhaps has done the most sophisticated work using both of these techniques is Bo Särilvik.

It is somewhat more difficult to characterize and give examples of new developments with respect to the *approaches* being used. It might be said that Swedish political scientists seem to be more prone to adopt "actor"-based than "system"-based schemes of analysis. In other words they tend to concentrate on describing and explaining the behavior of political actors rather than the functioning of the system the actors are a part of. Some examples: Bo Särilvik has set for himself the goal of attempting to describe the behavior of voters at least in part against the background of their attitudes in various questions and in terms of their environment. Björn Molin in his study of the pension issue and Gunnar Sjöblom in his study of party strategies, as well as myself in a part of my book on the problem of cabinet formation, seek to describe party behavior from the point of view of the goals the parties can be presumed to have and the means they can be presumed to choose in their efforts to maximize their goals. (The fact that the goals-means models we have chosen vary in their structure and complexity is another question.) One should mention, however, that Gunnar Sjöblom in his study does attempt to apply a systems approach as well to his analysis.

One approach which quite clearly is interested more in the actors than the system in which they operate is that employed by the extensive research which has been done on interest organizations in this country. Basic to all this activity is the concept, often expressed in American political science, that political decisions can be explained in terms of the groups and interests that partake in the formulation of them. The clearest expression of this idea in Swedish political research is to be found in Hans Wieslander's study of defense policy in the 1920s. Throughout his book, which studies the activities and relationship of various interest groups on various levels, attention is directed to the question of what the groups intimately concerned with defense policy wanted and what they were able to obtain.

The systems perspective has on the other hand been employed in what has to date been published by Lars Rudebeck. Rudebeck has been strongly influenced by the thinking of Gabriel Almond and his model for the comparative analysis of how basic functions are accomplished in different systems. In his doctoral dissertation mentioned above, Rudebeck shows how in Tunisia Neo-Destour – the dominant party – progressively increases its control over functions such as socialization, recruiting, articulation and aggregation at the same time as it develops into a mass political party.

An approach which forms a category of its own is that employed by Hans F. Petersson in his dissertation on political thought at the time of the First World War concerning the question of the coming international order. Petersson's material is thus of the type that has long fascinated Swedish scholars: a number of opinions about how something ought to be. What is original in his work is that he arranges his information into several dimensions; into "schools of thought" according to attitudes on problems such as power, peace and international order, according to aspects that Petersson himself – under the influence of Harold Lasswell – considers that the concept of power can be divided into and finally according to the several layers an opinion can be split into. The approach developed by Petersson with its ability to distinguish a number of "schools" in an analysis of a debate of this sort and the ability to systematize material into categories of high generality has already provided inspiration for other projects.

Everything I have said about new perspectives, approaches, and techniques in postwar Swedish political science can perhaps best be illustrated by a final comparison between two studies that deal with the same subject but are separated in time by a thirty-year interval.

The first was published by Gunnar Hesselén in 1927, the second by Hans Meijer in 1956. Both deal with the institution of government ad hoc commission in Sweden. Hesselén traces the development from the 17th century up to 1906. In his study it is said that in "a presentation of partially historical nature" there are "difficulties in bringing the account too close to one's own times." Meijer continues from 1905 forth to the mid-1950s stating expressly that his intention was to bring the account "as near to our time as possible". Hesselén, setting about to illustrate the changes in the composition and importance of government commissions through various periods of time, chose primarily to describe them, commission by commission, in chronological order. Meijer tries to free himself from this sort of reporting – although he does include a number of case studies – and instead describes structural changes in the commissions in quantitative terms. This is done in the express hope to "by means of this sort of description achieve a firmer basis for making generalization about commission politics during various governments and periods of time." What Meijer offers to this end – which Hesselén from his perspective and with his time frame has no counterpart to – is an analysis of how the system of ad hoc commissions fits into and functions as a stage in the decision-making process of each period. Meijer's analysis is based upon a large number of interviews with members of government commissions. In other words: Meijer's study contains, and Hesselén's lacks, the desire to make valid generalizations, an attempt to subject the data to quantitative analysis, an account of information via interviews, and finally an effort to view the material under investigation from a behavioral and not simply an institutional point of view.

## 4

The atmosphere in which Swedish political science finds itself working today can be perceived – and certainly *is* perceived by many – in quite different ways. One reaction is presumably that of weariness from all the talk about methods, perturbation in the face of what is often naive and unbalanced refutation of all the more descriptive research of an earlier age, paralysis in the face of all the demands that everything that is done must have universal relevance, disappointment that so little, despite all the high-flown declarations, has been accomplished. Another reaction – and I believe it is the dominating one – is a continued feeling of excitement and stimulation in the face of the new demands being placed upon political science. It is not only that a political scientist's technical knowledge must be more advanced and of another type than before. It is also – and more importantly – the requirement that the research scholar demonstrate a far greater measure of imagination and boldness now that research no longer is simply a matter of recapitulating in a thorough and persuasive manner specific political events but also requires the posing of hypotheses whose function it is to illuminate and define political relationships of a more general character.

If we look into the future we can foresee a further expansion along several different lines. One possibility is that in the future political research in Sweden may not limit itself to the study of contemporary or nearly contemporary political systems but begin to search for relevant political data, in an entirely new way, several centuries into the past. As a result of the increased use of computers in Swedish political science research the interpretation of data collected from various historical periods is facilitated. A further likelihood is that research will increasingly choose to emphasize processes and functions of various kinds rather than institutional structures in its selection of units of analysis. And finally we might express the hope that Swedish political science research will in the future to a far greater extent than heretofore venture into the realm of macro-analysis of political action.

*Olof Ruin*  
University of Stockholm

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