

Foreword

Volume IV of *Scandinavian Political Studies* begins with an article by Erik Allardt about the lines of demarcation between sociology and political science. The article is based on a paper presented at the Second Nordic Conference of Political Science in Helsinki in August 1968. To attempt to draw boundaries between various social sciences can, of course, often appear as an artificial and even repressive enterprise. But at the same time, however, such efforts can deepen insight into all the different aspects which can be applied to social process and all the different factors which can be utilized as explanation of this process. Erik Allardt writes in his capacity as a sociologist whose research has always reflected an interest in political phenomena. The main point he wants to convey in his article is that politics is an activity *sui generis* which cannot be reduced to sociology or psychology. That which we call political science, therefore, still has a major task when those within the discipline continue in their pursuit of analyzing the consequences of political actions and political institutions.

In Scandinavian social research, Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan are frequently associated with each other. Quite naturally, then, Allardt's article in this volume of *SPS* is followed by an article by Rokkan. Here Rokkan advocates a new organizational form of comparative research: data confrontation seminars. Participants in this type of seminar would not present papers in advance but machine-readable data files. In this fashion, according to Rokkan, it ought to be possible to increase the options for reanalysis and to intensify the interaction over the interpretation of divergencies through regular interaction with a computer holding the original data.

One area discussed in several articles of this volume is executive institutions in the different Scandinavian countries.

Denmark and Finland, to some degree, form one group with regard to composition and formation of cabinets in Scandinavia, Sweden and Norway another. The pattern of coalition formation in Denmark is treated by Erik Damgaard, and in Finland by Klaus Törnudd. Damgaard encompasses the entire twentieth century, Törnudd the 50 years during which Finland has been independent. In both countries there have been at least six parties represented in parliament for many years. None of these parties has, as a rule, commanded a parliamentary majority of its own. As a result of this party structure, it has often been difficult to form majority governments in these two countries. The duration of cabinets has, however, been much shorter in Finland than in Denmark; in Finland, during the country's first 50 years as an independent

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state, there have existed no less than 50 different ministries, while the corresponding figure for Denmark during all this century is barely half. Parties located in the center of the political spectrum, as brought out by Damgaard's and Törnudd's articles, have continuously been especially well represented in the cabinets. Besides describing the composition of governments in Denmark, Damgaard's article offers an attempt to apply Riker's size principle to coalition formation in a series of concrete cases.

It ought to be added that the particularly great difficulties which Finland has experienced regarding the formation and duration of ministries have had large significance for the position of the chief of state. The president of Finland has a position which closely resembles that of the president in the Fifth French Republic. In a review article, Paavo Kastari, professor of law at the University of Helsinki, provides an account of the provisions of the constitution which regulate the activity of the Finnish president, as well as the way in which the seven presidents have *de facto* applied and evolved these provisions.

Sweden and Norway, as mentioned, form a group with regard to composition of cabinets. The duration of governments in these two countries has been considerably longer than in Denmark and Finland. The number of majority governments has been greater. Although Norway and Sweden also have multiparty systems, the number of parties has been somewhat less than in the other Scandinavian countries and, most important, one of these parties – the Social Democrats – has received a share of the vote approaching or exceeding 50 per cent for several decades. At present Sweden has a Social Democratic government based on a clear parliamentary majority; since 1965 Norway has had a non-Socialist coalition government also based on a parliamentary majority. The composition of the Swedish government during the postwar period and the discussion conducted about various alternative governments are dealt with in an article I have written. An attempt is made to explain the parties' attitude toward various alternative governments on the basis of different goals which are assumed to determine the parties' behavior. In a review article Arve Solstad provides an account of how the Norwegian non-Socialist coalition government *de facto* works. Solstad is a journalist for the Oslo newspaper *Dagbladet* at the same time as he teaches at the University of Oslo.

Another area which is discussed from various viewpoints in several essays of this volume is policy-making.

Thomas Anton, University of Michigan, who spent a year at the University of Stockholm, enumerates a series of features which he finds characteristic of the style of Swedish policy-making. Simultaneously, his essay constitutes a critique of all the attempts to describe a country's style of decision-making via concrete case-studies. In this type of investigation, too much attention is said to have been devoted to an analysis of various actors, the choices they are confronted with, the goals for their activity, etc. Instead Anton maintains that decision-making ought to be viewed as "a dynamic process of interaction between a system and its environment, in which the norms and limits governing that interaction are maintained by individuals playing relatively stable roles".

Many of the features which Anton finds characteristic of Swedish policy-making

are related to, among other things, a rather typical Swedish political institution – the royal commissions. In an article in this volume, Hans Meijer deals with these commissions, their composition and importance. Royal commissions fill numerous functions. They gather and present comprehensive reports of conditions and collections of facts. They make recommendations for government measures. They may be used as a means for putting off inconvenient decisions until a future day. They can form the basis for creating consensus and compromises between different actors in the Swedish political system, etc. Within the framework of commission activities, as Meijer points out, much essential research in the social sciences has been carried out. This is discussed, discipline by discipline, in a special review article. The article has been written by Lars Foyer, who is the secretary of one of the parliamentary standing committees and is also attached to the University of Umeå.

In both Anton's and Meijer's articles the role of experts in the formulation of policy is touched upon. An article by Torodd Strand focuses exclusively on the position of experts in a decision-making process. Strand's basic assumption is that individuals who in decisional situations possess knowledge also have influence. Experts possess knowledge, and a study of experts within the framework of political science ought to concentrate primarily on describing their ideologies, values and factual belief-systems. Strand illustrates this approach with facts taken from the planning of the transportation-system in the Oslo area.

The last article in this volume of SPS is a study by Jan Stehouwer and Ole Borre of election results and trends in election behavior in Denmark during the 1960's. The last article is related to the first by Allardt, inasmuch as it provides renewed proof of the mounting research activity, also in Scandinavia, lying in the border regions between sociology and political science.

Now as in earlier volumes of SPS a bibliography of new publications in Scandinavian political science is included. The bibliography covers the years 1967 and 1968. As previously Helen Aareskjöld, Bergen, has applied her usual vigor in compiling the bibliography in collaboration with Hans Clausen and Peter Hansen, Aarhus, Raumo Lehtinen and Pentti Pärssinen, Helsinki, and Anders Mellbourn, Stockholm. Two bibliographical surveys are also included in this section. One deals with institutional and structural aspects of the mass media in Norway and has been authored by the former editor of SPS, Per Torsvik. The other survey, which I have written, deals with trends in Swedish political science during the postwar period.

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Olof Ruin