

Political Science in the Nordic Countries 1960-1975: Introductory Note

This volume of *Scandinavian Political Studies* marks the end of an era in the history of Nordic co-operation in the academic study of politics and government; it is the last in the series of *yearbooks* published since 1966. It also marks the beginning of a new era; the establishment of an active Nordic Association and the transition to a new format for its publication. *SPS* will appear as a *quarterly* from 1978 onwards.

To prepare this transition the Editorial Board decided at a meeting in 1974 to seek funds for a volume of *stocktaking reports*. We had produced a number of reports on the state of the discipline country by country for the first volume of *SPS* and we felt it would be time by 1976 to produce another set of reports on developments in our different countries. What changes had occurred in the *academic status and organization* of the discipline? What had been happening to the *graduates* produced by the different departments and what signs were there of a growing *professionalization* of the discipline? And what had happened on the *research front*: new studies, programmes, approaches, modes of conceptualization?

To find the resources required for this effort at stocktaking the Editorial Board put in a request to the Nordic Cultural Secretariat in Copenhagen. Funds for a series of meetings as well as for the preparation of a cumulative bibliography of the research literature were allocated early in 1975 and the overall plan for the undertaking was established at a meeting in Bergen in May that year. Further details were settled at the Constituent Meeting of the Nordic Association in Aarhus in August, 1975. Each National Association designated its Country Rapporteurs for the volume and these met on three occasions during 1976 and 1977 to coordinate their efforts.

This volume is structured in three parts. In the first part we offer for each of the four countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – accounts of the *Growth of the Profession* since the early sixties. We review the increases in teaching staffs, the statistics of student loads and the production of graduates, and we offer information, if available, about the occupational careers of those who completed advanced degrees in our discipline. Here we also include an overview of the vigorous development in Iceland in recent years.

In the second part of the volume we present a parallel series of reports on *Trends in Political Research* since 1960. We offer information about changes in the organization and the infrastructure of research undertakings, and point to new departures and new approaches as well as to new field of concentration.

Political Science in the Nordic Countries 1960-1975: Introductory Note

This volume of *Scandinavian Political Studies* marks the end of an era in the history of Nordic co-operation in the academic study of politics and government; it is the last in the series of *yearbooks* published since 1966. It also marks the beginning of a new era; the establishment of an active Nordic Association and the transition to a new format for its publication. *SPS* will appear as a *quarterly* from 1978 onwards.

To prepare this transition the Editorial Board decided at a meeting in 1974 to seek funds for a volume of *stocktaking reports*. We had produced a number of reports on the state of the discipline country by country for the first volume of *SPS* and we felt it would be time by 1976 to produce another set of reports on developments in our different countries. What changes had occurred in the *academic status and organization* of the discipline? What had been happening to the *graduates* produced by the different departments and what signs were there of a growing *professionalization* of the discipline? And what had happened on the *research front*: new studies, programmes, approaches, modes of coceptualization?

To find the resources required for this effort at stocktaking the Editorial Board put in a request to the Nordic Cultural Secretariat in Copenhagen. Funds for a series of meetings as well as for the preparation of a cumulative bibliography of the research literature were allocated early in 1975 and the overall plan for the undertaking was established at a meeting in Bergen in May that year. Further details were settled at the Constituent Meeting of the Nordic Association in Aarhus in August, 1975. Each National Association designated its Country Rapporteurs for the volume and these met on three occasions during 1976 and 1977 to coordinate their efforts.

This volume is structured in three parts. In the first part we offer for each of the four countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – accounts of the *Growth of the Profession* since the early sixties. We review the increases in teaching staffs, the statistics of student loads and the production of graduates, and we offer information, if available, about the occupational careers of those who completed advanced degrees in our discipline. Here we also include an overview of the vigorous development in Iceland in recent years.

In the second part of the volume we present a parallel series of reports on *Trends in Political Research* since 1960. We offer information about changes in the organization and the infrastructure of research undertakings, and point to new departures and new approaches as well as to new field of concentration.

The third part of the volume provides an essential complement to this second part: a *Cumulative Bibliography of the Research Literature 1960-75*. This Cumulative Bibliography represents a strict selection of items from the listings offered in volumes 1 through 9 and again in Vol. 11 of *SPS*. You will see that we had to cut out all references to typical 'public affairs' writings, to commentaries by politicians and civil servants, to reviews of current events by journalists, to official documents, etc. We concentrated on the *research literature* produced by political scientists themselves and brought in references to writings in such neighbouring fields as law, history, sociology and anthropology only when we judged them of direct importance for further research within our own discipline.

We have not tried to impose any form of standardization on the country reports; they differ in scope, in structure and in content not because of individual whims but because of historically given differences in the contexts of discipline-building. The Nordic countries share many elements of a common culture but they have been free to establish their separate institutional solutions; this applies to the structuring of academic organizations no less than to the over-all systems of policy-making and administration. There were marked differences in the institutional settings for the establishment of a discipline of political science after World War II. These differences are still present after thirty years of expansion and differentiation in each country and are fully reflected in the reports presented in this volume.

We have not tried to establish, on the basis of these varied reports, any comparative *tableau* of similarities and differences; we leave this to another round of stocktaking. Our primary concern has been to bring together *information* of use to all those who want to know about the institutional structure and the production of new political knowledge in each country and in each department. We have tried to produce a useful work of reference and we hope it will be extensively used by all those who take an interest in exploring possibilities of comparative research across the Nordic countries.

This volume represents only one in a long series of steps taken since the early sixties to strengthen the links of communication and co-operation among political scientists in the Nordic countries. It all began in 1961 with an informal meeting of the Nordic participants in the World Congress of Political Science convened that year in Paris. It took some time before these initial discussions could bear fruit. Things began to happen in earnest in 1964. A constituent meeting of the Board of *Scandinavian Political Studies* took place during the World Congress in Geneva in 1964 and Pertti Pesonen was appointed the first Editor of this Yearbook series. The first volume was published two years later. The Editorial Board of *SPS* also took charge of the organization of a series of *Nordic Conferences of Political Scientists*. The first of these took place in Oslo in 1966 and was followed by similar meetings in Helsinki, Gothenburg and Aarhus. In organizing these activities we tried at all junctures to stick to the basic principle of 'Nordic rotation' by moving officer-ships and editorial responsibilities at regular intervals from country to country to ensure maximal commitment to the common cause. We have not always been able to adhere to this principle in strictest terms but we have throughout these years of

frequent meetings and massive correspondence done our best to make the Yearbook and the conferences genuinely *shared* enterprises. We hope that this joint volume of stocktaking will help us further in this work. We have established an active Nordic Association* and we have good reasons to believe that the research groups set up under its auspices will trigger off a new wave of co-operative and comparative studies across the Nordic countries. We are also convinced that this movement will be given further impetus through the pages of the new *SPS quarterly* scheduled for publication from March, 1978 onwards. We hope to make this a lively forum for the discussion of research across the Nordic countries.

Our five countries offer extraordinary opportunities for the comparative testing of hypotheses about political processes and structures. They share a number of important characteristics, particularly in their basic political culture, yet they offer a variety of contrasts not only pair by pair but also within each unit. Only a small handful of social scientists have taken up the challenges of these 'most-similar-system' comparisons – to use the Przeworski-Teune terminology. We have recorded a few such attempts in our chapters on Trends in Political Research, but there is still an abundance of tasks for comparative systematization to be tackled by the next generation of enterprising youngsters.

To take a few obvious examples of questions which might trigger off significant efforts of comparative analysis:

- What differences in administrative structure, in the partitions of functions among ministries, agencies, directorates can be traced back to the contrast between the heritage of absolutism in Denmark–Norway vs. the long tradition of representative control in Sweden–Finland?
- What were the consequences for administrative style and the attitudes of the citizenry to the territorial bureaucracy of the early establishment of the *ombudsman* institution in Sweden and the greater emphasis on confidentiality in Denmark and Norway?
- What interlinkages can be traced between the early histories of absolutism vs. representative rule and the later differences in the speed of suffrage extensions and in the timing of the introduction of parliamentary responsibility?
- What were the consequences of the inherited differences in agrarian structure for the rates of mobilization of different groups of the peasantry and for the recruitment of political leadership from these rural strata?
- What were the consequences of the differences in the timing and character of urban growth and the degree of monocephality-polycephality?
- How can we explain most parsimoniously the differences among the four or five countries in the duration of the 'Liberal gap' between the dominance of the old Establishment and the entry into power of the Social Democrats?
- Why do we find such differences in the strength of popular movements, such as the Free Churches and the Teetotalers, and what consequences can we trace from such differences?

- What differences can we establish among the countries in the strength of intellectual groups such as academics, journalists and publicists in different parties and what consequences have these had for differences in party ideology? What about the press: what differences in political alignments can be traced to contrasts in ownership structure and levels of concentration?
- What differences can be observed in the rhythms of change in the channels of recruitment to public office and to positions in the civil service and how can such differences be explained? Have there been any differences between the countries in the political role of the universities, in the style of student politics, in the strength of parties at the university level? Why were the students in Copenhagen more thoroughly radicalized than in the other Nordic universities and how did such differences at the level of academic youth affect the over-all flows of activists to the parties in the sixties and seventies?
- What are the political consequences of the persistent differences observed across the countries in women's participation in the labour force?
- Why did the 'green wave' of anti-urban, anti-bureaucratic populism find so much stronger resonance in Norway than in Sweden?
- How persistent and how pervasive are the differences in levels of inequality as measured by income, property, salary scales and other indicators and what political consequences can be traced to such differences? Why were the reactions against features of the Welfare State so much stronger in Denmark than in the other countries: why did a Glistrup-type movement succeed there but not elsewhere?

Such questions could be multiplied page after page and hardly scratch the surface of the problems awaiting systematic comparative analysis. Many of the questions listed have been touched upon in one way or another in studies described in this volume but no one has tackled them systematically.** We hope that the reports in this volume will alert a number of young people to opportunities for research and help them find the materials they need to get going.

But the Nordic Political Science Association clearly will not restrict its mission to the promotion of comparative research across the five countries only; it will also give high priority to wider comparisons within Europe, within the industrialized West and with the Second and the Third Worlds. In fact, it is only fair to say that the Nordic political science movement was triggered off within the wider network established by IPSA: the World Congress organized by that Association brought the Nordic political scientists together much as the UN forced the Nordic governments to establish a regular caucus to defend their common interests. This international pressure increased enormously with the establishment of the European Consortium for Political Research. The Nordics took an active part in this development and were able to meet much more frequently as a result, not only at the senior level but, what was even more important, at the graduate student level (in the Summer Schools) and at the level of the recruits to research (in the Workshops).

The development of these strong networks of international co-operation has had a variety of consequences for Nordic political science, but the most important one over the long run is probably the opening up of new perspectives on the sources of distinctiveness and divergence across countries as against the conditions making for similarity and convergence. The acceleration of professional contacts across the boundaries of Europe has made Nordic political scientists more aware of commonalities but has at the same time whetted their appetites for a broadening of the range of comparative inquiries. There has been a definite increase in the interest shown in the smaller nation-states further South, in the Netherlands, in Switzerland, in Ireland, and there are many signs of greater awareness of the importance of comparisons with the larger industrial nations, with Germany, France, the U.K. and Italy. There can be no doubt that the Nordic Political Science Association will do its best to counteract any tendencies towards isolation. It will work closely with IPSA and with ECPR and will make its own distinctive contribution to the common cause, the internationalization of the academic study of politics and government.

Bergen, May 1977

Stein Rokkan

* For details see the note by Kjell A. Eliassen in *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 11, 1976: 167.

** A useful collection of analyses of immediate relevance in this context was completed just before this volume of *SPS* was sent to the press: Karl H. Cerny (ed.), *Scandinavia at the Polls. Recent political trends in Denmark, Norway and Sweden* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977), 304 pp. This includes contributions by Erik Allardt, Ole Borre, Bo Särilvik, Sten Sauerberg and Niels Thomsen, Daniel Tarschys, Henry Valen and Willy Marthinussen.