

## Internationalization and Parliamentary Decision-making: The Case of Sweden 1970–1985

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In this essay we discuss effects of growing interdependence and internationalization upon national political institutions. More exactly we address the question of how these processes are reflected in matters handled by the Standing Committees of the Swedish Parliament. Generally speaking, the proportion of international issues has increased continuously during the 1970s and the early 1980s. The internationalization of parliamentary work has mainly taken place outside the area of 'traditional' foreign policy. Even though internationalization is a general phenomenon in the Swedish parliament, the enhancement of international issues is particularly evident in subject areas linked to economic life in general, but issues concerning environmental policy, communications and energy policy also bear the stamp of internationalization. In spite of this internationalization of domestic politics the pattern of relations with actors on the international scene seems to be rather stable. The picture is dominated by international organizations in the Scandinavian region and Western Europe. Traditionally, the principle of consensus has governed Swedish security and defence policy. Our data support this notion. However, international issues outside the area of 'traditional' foreign policy do not bear the hallmark of consensus. The level of conflict is considerably higher and has risen, especially during the 1980s. Generally speaking, patterns of conflict in international issues do not deviate from those in 'pure' domestic policy. Thus, internationalization has also involved domestication regarding the level of conflict.

There is a widespread notion that the nature of the international system has changed in several respects since World War II (Karvonen & Sundelius 1987, 1. ff; Holm 1987). The number of significant international actors has risen continuously during the postwar period as a result of decolonization and internationalization. An ongoing transformation and widening of the substance of international politics has taken place. Security and defence matters no longer totally overshadow other issues in interstate relations, especially when it comes to the foreign policies of advanced industrial nations. So called 'low politics' issues such as trade tariffs, monetary agreements, debt regulation and pollution are frequently given top priority on today's international agenda, thereby making it increasingly lengthy (Holsti 1978). Generally speaking, current international politics is a mixture of both traditional politico-military and strategic questions *and* economic

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issues in a broad sense of the term, including welfare problems, traditionally handled domestically (cf. Morse 1970; Hanrieder 1978).

The phenomenon is linked to the process of interpenetration (Katzenstein 1976). The number of problems that can be solved unilaterally by nation-states is shrinking, while transaction flows across borders are seen to increase. Practically every sector of domestic economic life is sensitive or even vulnerable (cf. Katzenstein 1976) to external fluctuations in the flow of factors (Lindbeck 1975; Hveem 1987), making international collaboration or so-called multinational regulation (Kaiser 1971b) a requirement for national economic growth and welfare (Dickerman 1976; cf. Karvonen & Sundelius, 1987, 6.ff). The costs of damaging this relationship are generally supposed to be high. However, the opposite is also claimed to be true. In order to reach acceptable solutions to collective problems, states must be willing to make far-reaching concessions or even subjugate the national interest, at least in a short-term perspective. This is valid for small states in particular (cf. Holsti 1978; Sundelius 1980; Hveem 1987).

The fact that economic and political processes are closely interwoven across as well as within national borders blurs and brings further into question the somewhat artificial distinction between international and domestic politics, as well as that between politics and economics. (The impact of the international economic system on security policy is analysed by Holm 1987.) In short, two interrelated processes are assumed to be at work: internationalization of national political life and domestication of international politics.

Contrary to the assumption that the bulk of international politics is largely taking place at the governmental level – a position favoured by the so-called ‘realist’ analysts – scholars have come to underline the importance of transnational and transgovernmental policy-making. They are thereby referring to actions mediated by non-governmental actors, e.g. international organizations and private entities, or actions channelled through semi-autonomous subunits within states, belonging to different echelons of government (Kaiser 1971b; Keohane & Nye 1974, 1977; Dickerman 1976; Karvonen & Sundelius 1987, 2, 18.f). As multi-lateralization of world politics is flourishing, international organizations have come to play an important role as *fora* for multinational regulation procedures (cf. Cox & Jacobson 1974; Dickerman 1976). This is paralleled by an ongoing bureaucratization of politically dominated decision-making processes (Karvonen & Sundelius 1987, 9.f; see also Jerneck 1987a) bringing about a state of bureaucratic interpenetration – a term referring to the intermingling of domestic and international civil servants in working groups and committees (cf. Scheinman 1971).

In liaison with politicians or business representatives they often constitute informal and quite often anonymous *networks* emerging as influential

movers and decision-making bodies in both national and international political settings (cf. Kaiser 1971b; Egeberg 1980; Jönsson 1987). In their capacity as vital coordinating agencies in iterated, multinational processes involving problem-solving and policy-making as well as implementation (cf. Jönsson 1987), they make a vigorous challenge to traditional means of statecraft. It is commonplace among scholars to ascribe such regional and global interlacings substantial power vis-à-vis national bodies (Jönsson 1986) because of their control of information and bargaining processes as well as their ability to build strong coalitions across national barriers, thereby transcending or even eroding traditional national loyalties (Keohane & Nye 1974; cf. Dickerman 1976).

In sum, the classical notion of world society as anarchical and fundamentally insecure, based on the principle of unconditional sovereignty, is therefore either substituted or supplemented by the idea of a system based on a multitude of multilateral, complex and interdependent relations between not only states but also non-state actors (Keohane & Nye 1977). Correspondingly, the view that military capability is a *sine qua non* for international power has been relaxed or even challenged. Economic strength, industrial capacity, technological know-how and negotiating skills are considered important or even decisive requisites for successful exertion of power on the international scene. Even if analysts assess interdependence and its consequence differently,<sup>1</sup> several agree on the notion that the freedom of action of political decision-makers at all levels and in a rising number of fields has consequently been circumscribed or severely limited.<sup>2</sup>

## Aim and Focus of the Study

The findings presented in this essay emanate from an ongoing research project on the Swedish Parliament.<sup>3</sup> In this project we examine formal and informal negotiations between the political parties, primarily in the parliamentary committees, with a focus on the changing character of committee work and changes in the pattern of consensus and conflict between the parties. This approach is of course intimately related to the question of whether political life in Sweden, traditionally labelled 'the politics of compromise', has undergone any changes during recent years (Rustow 1955; cf. Korpi 1983; Heckscher 1984; Sannerstedt 1987).

In this essay we specifically address the question of whether the processes of interdependence and internationalization are in any way reflected in the political agenda of the parliament and, secondly, if and how these forces affect the propensity to act in a conflictive manner in committee work. In our study of decision-making in the Swedish parliament it has not been possible to ascertain the actual degree of international interdependence in

various issues. However, by means of content analysis we have been able to estimate whether issues decided upon by the Swedish *Riksdag*, more exactly issues handled in the standing committees, have had any *international connection* or not. In this context an issue is considered to have international connection if, in some way or another, it touches upon Sweden's relations with foreign powers or international organizations. The degree of conflictive behaviour is measured by the reservations tabled to the committee reports.

A general impression among several members of the *Riksdag* is that the international concern of Swedish parliamentary committees has risen over the years, especially in areas traditionally regarded as domestic. One could expect that such a widening or transformation of the parliamentary subject matter calls for a redefinition of both committee responsibility and the range of strategies being utilized for the purpose of gaining or increasing parliamentary control over foreign policy, a continuous matter of dispute since the late 1920s (Brusewitz 1938; Lagerroth 1938; Olsson 1957; Lönnroth 1959).

Considering the need for so-called foreign policy management among government agencies, interpreted as the strengthening of the Foreign Ministry's coordination and control capacity vis-à-vis other bodies,<sup>4</sup> one cannot overlook the notion of intensified struggle between the legislative and executive arms of government, eventually leading to split loyalties within the governing party or parties. Internationalization may also result in inter-committee strife about responsibility and competence as regards foreign affairs. Tensions cutting across committee borders and established political layers inside and outside parliament may lead to difficulties in upholding the widely accepted Swedish principle of foreign policy consensus.

Generally speaking, empirical studies aiming to investigate the effects of international dependence upon national institutions or regulatory principles have, with a few exceptions (e.g. Rogowski 1987; Cassese 1982, vol. 3, where these problems are given some attention) concentrated their efforts on the executive, ministerial level of government, leaving aside parliamentary life, the nature of the party system and the performance of the parties in the electoral arena.<sup>5</sup> For that reason we find it natural to direct our attention to the legislative level.

## Outline of the Empirical Study

The empirical results reported in this essay are derived from a quantitative study of the committee reports during seven parliamentary years. We have chosen these years in order to enhance the possibility of comparison over

Table 1. Years Included in the Empirical Study. Division of Seats in Parliament and Composition of Government.

Year	Number of seats in the <i>Riksdag</i>					Total	Prime minister (Government parties)
	M	Fp	C	S	VPK		
1972	41	58	71	163	17	350	O. Palme (S)
1975	51	34	90	156	19	350	O. Palme (S)
1977/78	55	39	86	172	17	349	T. Fälldin (C, M, Fp)
1978/79	55	39	86	172	17	349	O. Ullsten (Fp)
1980/81	73	38	64	154	20	349	T. Fälldin (C, M, Fp)
1981/82	73	38	64	154	20	349	T. Fälldin (C, Fp)
1983/84	86	21	56	166	20	349	O. Palme (S)

M = The Moderate Party (Moderata Samlingspartiet)

Fp = The Liberal Party (Folkpartiet)

C = The Centre Party (Centerpartiet)

S = The Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna)

VPK = The Left Party Communists (Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna)

time. Since the unicameral reform in 1970 the mandate period of the *Riksdag* has been three years, and we have chosen the second year of each three-year period. We have added two more years, due to the changes of government. It should be noted that the parliamentary session used to follow the calendar year, but since 1975 the new parliamentary session starts in October and ends in June.<sup>6</sup> The years under study, together with a few basic facts, are given in Table 1.

For each of these seven years, comprising a spring session and a shorter autumn session, we collated a great deal of information on every committee report. The variables reported and discussed in this essay concern various types of international connection among issues handled by the committees and their relations to, *inter alia*, international organizations, subject area and conflictive party politics in the committees. Conflict is measured by the occurrence of reservations tabled to the committee reports. Since committee members act as official representatives of their parties, the occurrence of reservations reflects disparity of opinion between the government and the opposition. There are, however, some exceptions, for instance religious affairs and alcohol policy, where there is a free vote (Arter 1984, 284).

The quantitative study is thus based on 4307 reports, an average of 615 reports per year. It should, however, be noted that the number of reports delivered varies substantially from committee to committee. Some committees issue more than sixty reports per year, others less than thirty.

## The Committee System in the Swedish Parliament

The decisions of the Swedish *Riksdag* are based upon government proposals (about 200 per year) and private members' bills (nowadays over 3000 per year). (Further information on the decision-making process in the Swedish *Riksdag* is given in Arter 1984.) Formally, i.e. according to the *Constitution Act*, decisions are made by the assembly during plenary sessions. However, every parliamentary resolution is based upon a report from one of the 16 standing committees. This committee stage in the decision-making process is compulsory. In total, the committees deliver about 600 reports per year. About half of these reports are deliberations on governmental proposals, mostly together with several private members' bills.<sup>7</sup> Most of the remaining half are submissions on private members' bills only. Although the workload of the *Riksdag* and of the committees has increased during later years, the number of committee reports tends to decrease. This is due to conscious efforts to make committee work more effective, for instance by dealing with more bills together in one report.

The division of seats between the political parties on each committee reflects the parties' respective strength in the assembly. Thus, if the government is supported by a majority in the *Riksdag*, it is also supported by a majority on each committee. Since party discipline is strong in the Swedish parliament (Holmberg 1975, 214), the reports from the committees are, with few exceptions, accepted by the assembly.

The committee usually recommends that the assembly accept government proposals. It is, however, not unusual for a committee to recommend minor adjustments (Isberg 1984, 80–82). Normally the committee also recommends the rejection of private members' bills (Carlsson 1984). Many of these bills ought to be seen as the alternative of the opposition parties to government policy.

The committees are specialized: each committee is given responsibility for a specific policy area.<sup>8</sup> In the field of external relations, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Utrikesutskottet*, has primary and overall responsibility (KU 1976/77:36, 16). Bilateral or multilateral agreements with countries and international organizations presented by the government to the *Riksdag* for ratification are regularly presented by the Committee as long as they touch upon matters which in principle concern Swedish foreign policy. Matters of less political significance are mostly handled within the jurisdiction of other committees. Furthermore, the Committee scrutinizes the budget of the Foreign Ministry and deals with matters regarding Swedish missions abroad. In terms of issue areas, the Committee on Foreign Affairs handles foreign aid as well as all matters of 'high politics', i.e. national security and peace, arms transfers, disarmament, etc. It is also partially responsible for questions of foreign trade and international economic

cooperation, as long as more general principles of Swedish policy are at stake (*Riksdag Act*, Ch. 4 §6.6).

National security issues are also managed within a series of quasi-parliamentary bodies (Jerneck 1987b, 140 ff.; KU 1976/77:36, 16). The Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs, *Utrikesnämnden*, is the most prominent.<sup>9</sup> However, we contend that in terms of intra-parliamentary and inter-committee over, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is dominant with respect to the traditional core of Swedish foreign policy.

When the Committee on Foreign Affairs was first established in 1937 (Lönnroth 1959), its mandate was defined in the negative: only those issues falling outside the jurisdiction of other committees fell within its confines (Stjernquist 1966, 232 f. For an international comparison see Cassese 1982, vol. 1, see also Cassese 1980; Walker 1982; Morrison 1985). However, shortly after World War II the workload of the Committee increased as a result of extended Swedish participation in world affairs, and hence subsequently emerged as *the* central parliamentary body in the international field (Stjernquist 1966, 233). This evolution was judicially confirmed by the reorganization of the committee system<sup>10</sup> following the partial constitutional reform 1970–1971, which involved abolishment of the bicameral parliament (cf. KU 1976/77:36, 36). This reform also made Swedish foreign aid a concern of the Committee, thereby enhancing its factual and potential workload dramatically (Jerneck 1987b, 142 f.).

The committees in the Swedish *Riksdag* are rather small (15 members) and quite influential, at least when compared with, for instance, their British counterparts. An ordinary member of the *Riksdag* devotes approximately 6 hours per week to committee work (Christoffersson 1986, 19). The committees concentrate on their role in the decision-making process, and each report is the result of a thorough examination of proposals and bills. This examination might lead to requests for additional information from the government departments and the central boards, as well as ‘hearings’ with experts and representatives of interest organizations. Only one committee (the Constitutional Committee) devotes part of its time to critical review of the government. Committee membership is rather stable, and the members of a committee thus in due course become specialists in the subject area of their committee. The parliamentary debate on a committee report is also dominated by committee members. Their role as specialists is emphasized by the fact that they also serve on governmental commissions. If in an issue area an ‘iron triangle’ can be said to exist (cf. Jordan 1981), the parliamentary part of that triangle consists of committee members.

As a rule of thumb it can be said that the *parliamentary party groups* decide on highly politicized issues, while the actual decisions concerning matters of lower political significance are taken within the committee. Of course, the party parliamentary groups have little time to consider every



proposal or bill, and they also lack the necessary substantive competence to do so.

The overall importance of the parliamentary committees is of course highly dependent on the political situation. When the cabinet represents a parliamentary minority, the importance of the committees increases. In Sweden this situation was salient during the 'lottery Riksdag' 1974–1976 and the liberal minority government 1978–1979.

Although four or five parties are represented on each committee,<sup>11</sup> a majority of the committee reports are unanimous. A general norm is that matters ought to be considered in a spirit of *saklighet* (matter-of-factness) (cf. Anton 1969). The fact that a report contains both a recommendation and an elaborate motivation gives room for compromise in the committee. Of course much of the negotiating between the political parties has already taken place elsewhere. The agreement can then be said to be documented in the committee report. However, when a committee report deals with a highly politicized issue, and the parties' parliamentary groups have taken firm stands, the final committee report is normally accompanied by one or several written reservations.

## International Issues in the Swedish Parliament 1970–1985

Among those committee reports where issues with an international connection are to be found, two different types can be distinguished.

Parliamentary issues concerning international agreements, e.g. where the committees have to endorse decisions on bilateral agreements on double taxation or the ratification of an international convention, probably represent the most obvious form of international connection. However, the *Riksdag* also passes several other types of resolutions where the point at issue evidently affects Sweden's relations with foreign powers or international organizations; practically all matters regarding foreign aid and security policy, appropriations for international institutions, decisions in the field of tariffs, citizenship and international cultural cooperation – just to mention a few examples. We can call this *direct international connection*.

A different type of international connection can be found when committee reports concerning strictly domestic policy issues (i.e. without direct international connection) also contain a discussion in which these issues are related to corresponding states of affairs in other countries. A committee might for example discountenance a private member's bill on better exhaust purification devices in cars with reference to the fact that Swedish legislation must not be too different from American or German rules, or ban the use of certain means of control in agriculture with reference to the negative

experience of other countries. In these types of issue it is principally a question of international awareness among the decision-makers, an *indirect international connection*. In some cases this indirect international connection consists of a simple reference to the state of affairs in another country, in other cases it reflects a genuine awareness that decisions taken by the *Riksdag* concerning domestic questions may lead to external action. This is especially tangible in the field of economic policy. For instance, state subsidies to a branch of industry may be interpreted by other countries as an attempt at restriction of competition, and thus cause selective protectionist counter-measures directed against Sweden.<sup>12</sup>

Let us first examine how frequently international issues have been considered in the Swedish Parliament during the last fifteen years. A summary account of international issues in the standing committee reports is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Committee Reports with an International Connection.

	1972	1975	1978	1979	1981	1982	1984	Total
Direct connection (%)	11	14	15	16	18	16	20	16
Indirect connection (%)	5	5	5	5	4	7	4	5
All international issues (%)	16	19	19	20	22	23	24	20
Number of reports	631	636	613	625	608	656	538	4307

The table shows a continuous increase in the proportion of international issues considered in the Swedish *Riksdag*, from 16% in 1972 to 24% in 1984. The results also indicate that this is not only a question of enhanced international awareness among Swedish parliamentarians. There is no significant increase in the group of issues labelled indirect international connection during the period.<sup>13</sup> Consequently the increase seems to be a question of the rising proportion of issues handled by the committees that tangibly and directly affect Sweden's relations to the outside world. This category of committee report has nearly doubled during the period, from 11% to 20%. It can be added that the enhancement is not due to an increased number of international agreements. About 3% of committee reports deal with this type of issue, with only minimal annual variation.

The increased share of committee reports with an international connection may originate in two ways. First, it is possible that committee reports dealing with 'traditional' foreign policy have increased in number during the period, i.e. that foreign policy has become more important as an issue area (at least in a quantitative sense). Alternatively, issues with an international connection may have become more frequent in policy areas

which during earlier years were conspicuously 'domestic'. At this point we can make a preliminary decision by excluding the reports of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs from the investigated material – this is shown in Table 3. Almost any issue decided upon in this committee has some kind of international connection (see also Table 4 below).

Table 3. Committee Reports with an International Connection, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Excluded.

	1972	1975	1978	1979	1981	1982	1984	Total
International connection (%)	13	16	17	17	18	20	21	17
Number of reports	611	618	596	593	580	630	517	4145

Table 3 demonstrates on the whole the same results as the summary row in Table 2 – a continuous increase in the proportion of international issues. The conclusion must be that the percentage of issues with international connection has increased primarily outside the area of 'traditional' foreign policy. This is not to say that the increase in, not even the degree of, international connection is evenly distributed among all other issue areas.

## International Issues and Subject Areas

In Table 4 we show the percentage of reports with an international connection in different subject areas. The committee system of the Swedish *Riksdag* is, as earlier mentioned, highly specialized. For that reason the subject area categories in Table 4 tend to coincide with the committees as established.<sup>14</sup> The main exceptions are where we in some cases merged issues handled by two separate committees into one subject area (for instance social issues handled both in the Committee on Social Welfare and the Committee on Social Insurance), and where in other cases we made a subdivision (for instance environment policy issues handled in the Committee on Agriculture).<sup>15</sup>

In the first place it is worth mentioning that issues with an international connection are conspicuous by their almost total absence in some subject areas; the foremost are public administration and constitution and housing. Corresponding there are some subject areas in which international issues are remarkably frequent. This of course applies to security and foreign aid policy (97% of the issues) – the jurisdiction of the committee on Foreign Affairs – but also, albeit to a lesser extent, issues linked to economic life in general: economic and trade policy, labour market issues, agriculture

Table 4. Percentage of Committee Reports with an International Connection in Different Subject Areas.

	1972	1975	1978	1979	1981	1982	1984	Total
Foreign affairs and aid	100*	93*	93*	96	100	95	100*	97
Environmental issues	26	33*	—**	50*	25*	44*	50*	36
Economic affairs & Finance	21	27	23	26	29	40	33	28
Agriculture & Fishing	25	22	56	19	16*	19	16	25
Labour market	18	28	21	16	35	24	36	25
Communications	17	23	28	18	33	16	26	23
Energy policy	—**	—**	11*	12*	33*	8*	27*	22
Judicial policy	19	24	7	22	22	25	16	20
Defence	13	18	17	15	30	25*	15*	19
Culture and media	17	14	26	18	15	22	24	19
Education	14	12	10	15	9	20	24	15
Social policy	6	12	10	17	14	13	11	12
Fiscal policy	4	4	11	14	8	11	25	11
Housing	2	8	10	3	3	5	6	5
Public administration & Constitution	3	3	8	3	10	5	3	5
Number of reports	625	633	609	622	604	650	538	4281

Remarks. \*\* = Less than nine committee reports, percentage not specified.

\* = Less than 21 committee reports, uncertain percentage.

and fishing. Environment and energy policy also bear the stamp of internationalization. The same goes for issues regarding communications. In all these subject areas international issues account for more than 20% of the committee reports. The highest proportion can be found in the area of environment issues, 36%. However, that percentage figure is based on a rather small absolute number.

Even though the absolute number of committee reports forming the basis of the percentage calculations is in some cases rather small, it is clear that the enhancement of issues with an international connection is concentrated within certain subject areas. In some issue areas where international issues were common even at the beginning of the 1970s, the percentage has risen rapidly. This is particularly evident in the areas of economic affairs and finance and labour market issues. In the early 1980s more than every third issue in these areas had some kind of international linkage. The enhanced percentage figure in the economic field is not only an effect of an increased share of trade policy issues, but also an effect of the increase in the number of issues with an international connection in the subareas of finance and economic policy.

The enhanced figure in the subject area labour market is due mainly to

the fact that immigration issues have become more frequent (cf. Larsson 1986, 54.f). In the 1970s less than one out of ten issues in this subject area concerned immigration policy, in the 1980s this applies to approximately every fourth issue.

Environment policy has also undergone a process of internationalization during the 1970s. In the mid 1980s, 50% of the environmental issues have some kind of international connection. This accords with a widely held notion in the interdependence literature: ecological problems demand global solutions. Domestic solutions are not sufficient on 'spaceship earth'.

Two subject areas where international issues were rather uncommon in the early 1970s display a considerable increase, especially during the 1980s: education, where the proportion of international issues was 14% in 1972, and fiscal policy, where the equivalent figure only was 4%. Just over a decade later these figures had increased to about 25% in both issue areas.

No completely distinct pattern can be traced in the remaining subject areas. It is nevertheless a matter of an enhanced proportion of international issues, if anything. Only one clear-cut exception can be found; to be precise, the issue area of agriculture, where the tendency is the reverse. The decrease appears to be valid for the subject area as a whole, although issues concerning fishing and sea law (which have a high degree of international connection – the overall figure is 46%) have decreased in number compared with 'pure' agricultural and forestry issues.

## The International System

We shall now turn to another aspect of the internationalization of decision-making in the standing committees. Issues decided upon in the Swedish *Riksdag* may not only connect with state actors in the international system but also with international organizations.

The increased international *institutionalization* since World War II is relevant to this study. Considering the internationalization of Swedish society and politics it is reasonable to claim that international organizations along with networks in different issue areas play a dominant or at least decisive role in the overall picture of Swedish foreign policy. The fact that in 1983 Sweden was a member of 94 international organizations, compared to 54 in 1960, underscores the point (Jönsson 1987, 159). In accordance with this notion we have investigated to what extent international issues handled by the Swedish *Riksdag* can be related to international organizations.

In the literature on international administration it is customary to classify organizations, *inter alia*, according to membership. A first distinction can be drawn between organizations striving for global membership, such as

the United Nations, and organizations with regionally restricted membership, e.g. the Common Market and the Nordic Council. Another criterion refers to the character of the members, i.e. one can distinguish between organizations where the delegates represent their governments – inter-governmental organizations, IGOs – and international non-government organizations, INGOs, consisting of or including members who are not representatives of governments (Jönsson et al. 1986, 144 f.; see also Huntington 1973 who distinguishes between international, multinational and transnational organizations).

The growth of IGOs, which now run into the hundreds, is paralleled and exceeded by the growth of INGOs, in number nowadays amounting to approximately 4,000 (Jacobson 1984, 51). It should, however, be pointed out that far from all of these organizations are of any political significance (Jönsson et al. 1986, 143. f). Classification of organizations can also be made with reference to the functions they perform. One set of functions refers to the issue areas involved (economic, social and military), another to responsibilities and roles. Organizations can be rule creators or service producers. They may function as fora for debates or have a supervisory responsibility. Most of the international organizations are multifunctional in more than one of these respects. (For a more elaborate review and discussion of organizational functions, see Cox & Jacobson 1974, 5 ff.).

In sum, international issues handled by the Swedish *Riksdag* can be related to IGOs and INGOs. These organizations may be either global or regional in character and may have different responsibilities. Secondly, in order to spot the full picture of Swedish external relations, as reflected in Swedish parliamentary decision-making, we will consider traditional bilateral or multinational relations between governments as well as transnational and transgovernmental relations. The latter refers to relations with municipal and provincial governments or non-governmental organizations in other countries. Finally, there are some issues mainly concerning groups of citizens or private persons. Reception of refugees in Sweden, the position of foreigners and the rights of Swedes living abroad are some typical examples. The distribution of international issues among the defined types of actors is given in Table 5.<sup>16</sup>

Direct or indirect relations with international organizations account for nearly half, or 45%, of the aggregated number of cases where committee reports have an international connection. The figure for bilateral and multilateral relations between Sweden and other states amounts to a good third of the cases.

A closer look at the distribution among the international organizations reveals that Swedish parliamentary references to intergovernmental organizations are predominant. Non-governmental organizations appear in only 5% of the committee reports with international issues, compared with over

Table 5. Distribution of Different Types of Actors in Committee Reports with an International Connection.

	Percentage of reports	Number of reports
Global intergovernmental organizations	27	216
Global non-governmental organizations	4	30
Regional intergovernmental organizations	14	110
Regional non-governmental organizations	1	6
Governments – multilateral	22	183
Governments – bilateral	14	113
Subnational	3	23
Private citizens	16	133
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>814</b>

40% for IGOs. This result should, of course be judged with reference to the fact that the consequences of the activity of many of the non-governmental organizations are of no or very little significance from a political point of view (Reynolds & McKinlay 1979, 146.f, 154.f). We can also note that the international connection relates more often to global organizations than to regional organizations – the percentage is twice as high. (However, the difference between global and regional organizations is somewhat exaggerated by our coding technique, see note 16.) Among individual organizations occurring frequently we find, not surprisingly, the United Nations (excluding special branches) in 8% of the committee reports with an international connection, the Nordic Council (5%) and the Council of Europe (3%). These results form part of a general picture where references to multifunctional organizations – mostly organizations endowed with both economic and social responsibilities – and purely economic organizations are dominant.

Our empirical material is, unfortunately, not very well suited for corroboration or refutation of the hypothesis of the growing significance of international organizations. A time-series analysis yields far too small numbers for meaningful percentage calculation. Our data on this matter are therefore not presented here. Besides, a fifteen-year time-span may be too short a period in which to trace structural changes in the role of different actors in international politics. With these reservations in mind at least one observation can be made. The data do not indicate any tangible change between different kinds of actor in international issues during the period. It is therefore difficult to say that international relations in the 1980s compared with the 1970s are due to a greater extent to connections with, for instance, intergovernmental organizations. Internationalization seems to be a general phenomenon in this respect.

Finally, the international connection can be analysed in terms of *geography*, i.e. to which parts of the world the international issues refer. Do, for instance, relations with neighbouring countries predominate in the Committee reports of the Swedish *Riksdag*? If so, has the earlier noted internationalization of issues handled by the standing committees during later years also involved a broadening in the direction of other parts of the world? In Table 6 the committee reports with an international connection are classified according to geographical area.<sup>17</sup>

Table 6. Geographical Division of Committee Reports with an International Connection.

	Percentage of reports	Number of reports
Scandinavia	47	212
Rest of Western Europe	10	47
Eastern Europe	5	21
Europe in general	23	104
North America	4	17
South & Central America	2	9
Africa	3	14
Asia & Australia	6	28
Total	100	452

The data should be interpreted with great caution because of a great proportion of unclassifiable material, which is due to the fact that many issues concerning international organizations do not have any obvious geographical connection. The results indicate nevertheless that the international relations of the Swedish *Riksdag* are strongly focused on the West. Nearly half of the international issues concern Sweden's relations with the neighbouring Nordic countries. If we include Western Europe and North America we can account for up to two-thirds of the international issues (irrespective of the fact that most of the issues classified in the category Europe in general probably refer to Western Europe). Relations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union can be found in only 5% of the international issues. Issues concerning the relations between Sweden and countries in the Third World are also relatively unusual. In total, these amount to just over 10% of the international issues during the period 1970–1985. With regard to the small number of observations (due to the unclassifiable proportions), it is hazardous to express an opinion on changes over the course of time. However, the data do not indicate any substantial changes. It is not, for instance, the case that issues concerning the Third World have become more frequent.

This finding may contradict the popular and widely spread notion that the mainstream of Swedish foreign policy – except for some 'low politics'



areas – has lost its traditional orientation towards the European, and particularly the Scandinavian scene since the late 1960s. The volume of data does not allow for any far-reaching conclusion on this point. However, some tentative reflections may be called for.

One interpretation of the data suggests that the *Riksdag* as a *formal body* only infrequently gets involved in overseas matters, with the exception of foreign aid and arms transfers. The reason for this could be that the committees of the Swedish Parliament *reflect* upon governmental initiatives involving agreements with other states and/or international organizations rather than take initiatives on their own. Much of the Swedish foreign policy directed towards areas outside Europe does not necessarily involve formal agreements calling for parliamentary confirmation. Typical of this aspect of Swedish foreign policy – usually conducted in a purely verbal manner – is an explicit moral leaning (cf. Elgström 1982) frequently expressed in critical and often harsh language (cf. Jerneck 1983; Stenelo 1984), especially when it comes to violations of humanitarian principles or ground rules of international law. The deliberate moral appeal of such statements underlines their strong symbolic nature. Issues such as apartheid, human rights and disarmament, as well as remarks critical of the policies conducted by other countries dominate this area.

Even though this so-called *internationalistic* foreign policy (Goldmann et al. 1986, 27 ff.) has traditionally been the responsibility of the executive branch of government, members of the Swedish Parliament have involved themselves in these matters more frequently than before. This is partly due to party strategy, i.e. the prospect of winning marginal votes, but probably also due to a deeply felt sentiment with regard to the misfortunes of people living under dictatorship or warlike conditions. Much of this activity, however, is seen to take place outside the Parliament or in parallel with ordinary committee responsibilities. Hence, one can argue that the data recorded in the present study do not fully reveal all the actions taken by individual members of parliament as far as symbolic foreign policy is concerned, whether it be outside or inside the *Riksdag*.<sup>18</sup>

## Conflicts in International Issues

The pattern of conflict and consensus in international issues can, as earlier indicated, be inferred from the occurrence of reservations tabled to the committee reports. Since the Left Party Communists were not represented in the committees during the *Riksdag* sessions 1976–1982, the reservations of the Communist party have been left out of the analysis. Consequently the data reported here only reflect disagreement between the four major parties in the parliament.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it must be emphasized that the

reservations only give a measure of outwardly discernible conflict of party politics at the final stage of the parliamentary decision-making process. The cause of conflictive behaviour cannot be established. Differences of opinion are not the only possible cause of conflictive behaviour. In the same vein, consensual behaviour may occur in spite of conflict of interest between the parties (Axelrod 1970, 5. ff; see also Axelrod 1984, 5, 10. ff; Pruitt & Rubin 1986, 10–13; Levi 1986, 148).

Traditionally the basic principles of Swedish security and defence policy have been considered as an area where a political 'peace obligation' prevails. Open conflicts of party politics are considered as damaging to Sweden's national interest and should therefore be avoided (cf. Goldmann et al. 1986, 110; Jerneck 1987b). In a newspaper interview the Social Democratic member of the Standing Committee on Defence, Roland Brännström, expressed himself in the following manner: 'My experience from the committee is that we are in agreement 99 times out of a hundred. It is only concerning, for instance, the appraisal of superpowers that we sometimes disagree' (*Sydsvenska Dagbladet* 1985).

Table 7. Conflict of Party Politics on International Issues in Some Selected Issue Areas.

	Committee reports with reservations (%)	Total number of committee reports
Foreign & Security Policy	0	57
Foreign Aid	90	19
General Defence Policy	25	16

The data reported in Table 7 support the common view of a high degree of consensus in these subject areas.<sup>20</sup> Among issues concerning general foreign and security policy not even one single reservation could be found in the committee reports during the period 1970–1985.

In foreign aid issues, on the other hand, conflictive party politics is the rule. In fact, among the conflicts in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, foreign aid issues accounted for the lion's share. The non-consensual character of foreign aid can be explained in different ways. One line of argument stems from the notion that foreign aid issues, despite the fact that they are handled as international matters, substantially resemble domestic political issues. Decisions on foreign aid always involve considerable economic costs, hence causing budgetary strife. On several occasions during the 1980s foreign aid has been regarded as too costly vis-à-vis domestic needs – at least by some of the political parties. According to another line of reasoning, foreign aid issues are of a more concrete and everyday character than other matters within the jurisdiction of the Standing

Committee on Foreign Affairs. Since foreign aid issues are less remote and more intelligible, they are also more potent for party conflict. Thirdly, being less 'verbal' in nature, foreign aid does not demand the same amount of care as that required within the realm of traditional foreign policy. One could even contend that the members of the Committee, working within a rather strong consensual culture, deliberately utilize foreign aid issues as a politicizing instrument for the purpose of delineating their respective party positions from the others in a field where political opposition is usually not acceptable. The strong emotional and symbolic values attached to foreign aid may amplify this tendency.

When it comes to issues of defence policy the degree of consensus is lower than in matters concerning foreign affairs, but considerably above average for all committee reports (cf. Table 8 below). It should be pointed out that matters handled in the Standing Committee on Defence quite often have a domestic dimension. Issues concerning for instance the extent and location of military forces are, at least partly, regarded as matters of regional policy. In issues of that kind, conflictive party politics is common.

However, it is not absolutely certain that the above reasoning can be applied to international issues regarding other subject areas. Issues concerning Swedish relations with the outside world may, in principle, have two completely different effects on the level of political conflict in the standing committees. In one scenario the political parties strive for consensus with the object of presenting a unanimous national front, thereby vindicating the political strength and freedom of manoeuvre of Sweden, in the same way as in the field of 'traditional' foreign policy. There is, however, another possibility. If international issues necessitate negotiations, the Swedish government might be compelled to bind itself to a certain direction of action at an early stage in the decision-making process. This does not provide much scope for compromise between the political parties at the domestic level. Consequently, the less room left to negotiate, the greater the risk of conflicts in the committees. The two scenarios sketched here are, of course, greatly simplified.

Our findings do not corroborate the validity of either of the two suggested

Table 8. Conflicts of Party Politics in International and Domestic Issues.

	Committee reports with reservations (%)	Total number of reports
Direct international connection	35	669
Indirect international connection	52	209
Domestic issues	38	3429

scenarios. It is true that the level of conflict, as it appears in Table 8, is slightly lower when it concerns issues with a direct international connection than it is among purely domestic issues. However, this slight difference fades into insignificance when we consider the fact that the frequency of conflict is remarkably high when it comes to issues with an indirect international connection.

An increasing level of conflictive party politics in the Swedish Parliament has been the general trend in the early 1980s. The level of conflict in international issues follows this pattern closely (see Table 9). Neither is it

Table 9. Committee Reports with Reservations 1971–1985.

	1972	1975	1978	1979	1981	1982	1984
International issues (%)	39	36	26	38	36	45	50
Domestic issues (%)	39	30	26	40	34	43	57

possible to trace any differences between international and domestic issues with reference to structure of conflict or intensity of conflict (data not presented here). The reasonable conclusion must be that international issues in general do not display any intrinsic characteristics in this respect, but parallel the 'normal' pattern of conflict in Swedish politics. However, at this point it should be added that so-called internationalistic activities and policies, largely taking place outside the parliament, are assumed to have strong non-consensual features (cf. Goldmann et al. 1986). When picturing Swedish political life in terms of conflict in general, one ought to take that into consideration.

## Conclusions and Reflections

Sweden has successively become involved – to a considerable extent on a voluntary basis – in a complex web of mutual dependence. Without going into detail, we can contend that this web of dependence includes political, economical and environmental matters as well as legal regulations (cf. Ds Ju 1986:3; Ds K 1987:1; Jerneck 1987b; Flam 1987; for an account of Swedish external trade relations see Hamilton 1987). Since World War II the Swedish Parliament, the *Riksdag*, has ratified several international treaties with states and international organizations (cf. Stjernquist 1966, 234.f; Jönsson 1987). Meanwhile, the international character of Swedish business has become even more evident (cf. Hörnell & Wahlne 1986; Hveem 1987). In short, Sweden can hardly make decisions on pollution, monetary issues, employment programmes, taxation, industrial restruc-

turing programmes, etc., without considering, and in many cases adjusting to, the political processes and forces of the outside world. According to some observers, political and economic interdependence is even more explicit and all-encompassing in the 1980s than in the 1970s (Sjöstedt & Sundelius 1986, 14. ff; see also Sjöstedt 1987).

During the period 1970–1985 there has been a continuous increase in the percentage of issues with an international connection handled by the committees of the Swedish *Riksdag*. The share of issues with a direct international connection has doubled during the period. Nowadays every fourth issue handled by the *Riksdag* has some kind of international connection. Even though the increasing frequency of international issues is a general phenomenon, especially in the 1980s, the trend towards internationalization is particularly marked in the economic field, i.e. among issues concerning industrial life, fiscal policy and environment policy. In addition, we must emphasize the increasing importance of immigration issues over the course of time – here classified as a subcategory of labour market issues.

The internationalization of Swedish politics shows a general pattern in other respects, too. Broadly speaking, the international organizations and countries in the West which are predominant in issues handled by the standing committees are the same today as fifteen years ago. The only difference is that the references to international relations are more frequent throughout. Patterns of conflict in international issues do not deviate from 'pure' domestic policy with the exception of security and defence policy, areas where consensual party politics – at least as publicly expressed – have traditionally been stressed. Otherwise, the level of conflict in international issues has risen in a similar way to that in other political matters.

It is however important to underline that the principle of consensus, in spite of increased conflict in some areas, must still be regarded as a stable and enduring rule in Swedish political life when it comes to foreign relations, though a number of political affairs in the 1980s have put it under stress (Goldmann et al. 1986). Even if the principle of consensus applies mainly to security issues, several observers have argued that it has a restrictive effect on the public debate on other international issues as well. It should also be pointed out that even though the percentage of committee reports with an international connection has risen since the early 1970s, domestic matters still dominate committee work and the parliamentary debates. The recent intense debate on the EC issue may however indicate a new development in this respect.

As earlier mentioned, our material is not especially well suited for examining the degree of or change in the international interdependence of Sweden. However, the direct or indirect references to the international environment, which are to be found in the committee reports, indicate that

hypotheses about changes in the character of world politics presented in the literature on interdependence, are also reflected in the decision-making of the Swedish Parliament.

In the literature on international interdependence it is, *inter alia*, stressed that the number of economic transactions in the international system has undergone a rapid growth, that these transactions are to an increased extent channelled through international organizations, and that many of the most burning issues on the political agenda call for regional or global rather than national solutions – environmental policy being the most illustrative example. The international political economy has become more important, sometimes even at the expense of ‘traditional’ foreign policy, defence and security policy. Accordingly, internationalization is a process of injection of international issues into domestic policy – that is, the argument in outline (Reynolds & McKinlay 1979, 147–152).

Our analyses show that the percentage of issues handled by the committees in the Swedish *Riksdag* with an international connection has increased during the period 1970–1985, essentially in the area outside ‘traditional’ foreign policy. The frequency of and increase in the percentage of international issues is especially striking in the economic and ecological field. The relative increase in low-politics issues is not a result of a decrease in high politics. One could rather say that the total number of internationally connected issues has risen, making traditional foreign policy less dominant, yet not less important. We have also demonstrated that references to the international environment concern international organizations to a greater extent than individual states. An increase in the relative frequency of references to relations with international organizations over the course of time could, however, not be corroborated. Still, at this point one should bear in mind that the literature on interdependence depicts a general development in the postwar world, while we are studying only some separate years in a single country during the period 1970–1985 (cf. Jönsson et al. 1986, 135).

However, the references to international organizations observed at least *indicate* that Sweden finds regular contacts with these organizations valuable or even necessary. The current debate on Swedish relations with the EC illustrates this point quite clearly. Accordingly, this inference accords with the general argument that international bureaucracies and networks have become more important in international politics.

As far as influence over foreign policy is concerned, one could thus expect members of parliament to intervene in these networks or create counter-parliamentary networks in order to gain or regain lost control. When it comes to Swedish parliamentarians, it is obvious that this is the case (cf. Jerneck 1987b).<sup>21</sup>

However crucial the Committee on Foreign Affairs may be, it is clear

that a few other committees have emerged as important instances for decision-making on and management of internationally-related issues. Especially the committees on Industrial Affairs and Finance are mentioned in this respect (cf. Cassese 1982, vol. 3). Our data (not presented here) to some extent support the notion that several of the parliamentary committees have become more involved in international affairs. However, compared to the committees on Agriculture and Industrial Affairs in which international issues are frequent, matters handled by the Committee on Finance have very little connection with the international sphere. The same goes for the Committee on Defence, a somewhat unexpected result. Data do not allow for any far-reaching conclusions as regards the relative power of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The fact that internationally-linked issues in other committees have risen in number does not yield the conclusion that the Committee on Foreign Affairs has lost its position as the central parliamentary agency. High politics is still an important item in external affairs. Furthermore, membership of the Committee is as before regarded as most attractive – partly due to the relatively small workload, but also due to the prestige of the Committee (Jernek 1987b).

Investigating parliamentary decision-making in the era of internationalization touches upon the classical conflict between democracy and foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> The traditional standpoint, claiming these two phenomena to be incompatible,<sup>23</sup> has gained new support from authors like Kaiser who argue that interdependence is likely to narrow the scope of democracy rather than the opposite (Kaiser 1971a). Recent studies on Swedish material to some extent support this view; for instance in the field of foreign economic policy (Goldmann et al. 1986). Some scholars even argue that the Swedish parliament ‘. . . is only modestly involved in the choice processes relating to Swedish foreign policy decisions’ (Sjöstedt in Goldmann et al. 1986, 106).<sup>24</sup>

To several observers, democracy as a nationally-based system of decision-making, resting on principles such as political accountability, representation and information, will probably face new and severe problems or constraints as a result of subsequent transnationalization of international politics and internationalization of domestic politics (cf. Jerneck 1987a). Even if these problems of principle have for practical reasons not been given more elaborate attention in this study we are, however, hopeful that our results will shed some light on this complex subject matter and somehow contribute to the ongoing investigation of the field. It is to be hoped that our approach to the problem serves to illustrate that insights from both national and international fields of political analysis can be fruitful for such endeavour.

#### NOTES

1. For a discussion see Gourevitch (1978); Holsti (1978); Sjöstedt & Sundelius (1986, 14); Karvonen & Sundelius (1987, 1. ff.).

2. For a general review of the literature on interdependence, see Sundelius (1980). A critical evaluation of the interdependence paradigm is given in Barry & Willets (1984).
3. The project labelled 'Social development and consensual democracy' is carried out at the Department of Political Science in Lund with a grant from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.
4. Cf. Karvonen & Sundelius (1987); see also Dickerman (1976, 237) and his analysis of the concept 'dual coherence'.
5. Cf. Karvonen & Sundelius (1987), whose study on Scandinavian foreign policy management efforts is paralleled to a more general West European pattern. See also Dickerman (1976).
6. Thus '1975' indicates the (spring) session of 1975 together with the autumn session of 1975/76. The sessions 1977/78, 1978/79, etc., are given the shorter labels 1978, 1979, etc.
7. Some proposals, especially the budget, are split up into different sections and are thus treated in several reports.
8. The sixteen Standing Committees handle the Constitution, Finance, Taxation, Justice, Legal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Social Insurance, Social Affairs, Cultural Affairs, Education, Traffic, Agriculture, Industrial Affairs, Labour Market, and Housing (*Riksdag Act*, Ch. 4, § 2). It should be noted that a couple of minor changes regarding the distribution of issues between the committees were made during the period under study, i.e. 1970–1985. Also, the Committee on Housing was earlier labelled the Committee on Civil Works (*Civilutskottet*).
9. The Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs consists of leading politicians from all parties represented in the *Riksdag* except the Left Party Communists, and is regularly used by both the Government and the Opposition as a forum for exchange of opinions and top-secret information across political boundaries [*Constitution Act*, Ch. 10, §7; cf. Holmberg & Stjernquist (1980: 356. ff.), Goldmann et al. (1986: 110. f), Jerneck (1987b: 144. f).] For an historical account of the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs and its power, see Brusewitz (1938), Lagerroth (1938), Olsson (1957), Lönnroth (1959); in Jerneck (1987b) there is a most tentative short-hand analysis of parliamentary influence over Swedish foreign policy, see also Goldmann et al. (1986: 105. ff.).
10. In the old system the committees were organized according to principles of constitutional law. Nowadays a committee is responsible for all issues in a specific subject area (Holmberg & Stjernquist 1984:33).
11. Each of the four big parties, the Social Democratic Party, the Moderate Party, the Liberal Party, and the Centre Party, are represented in each committee. During 1971–76 and since 1982 the Left Party Communists have also been represented in most committees.
12. Cf. Goldmann et al. (1986: 26. f.) The authors prefer a somewhat more restrictive use of the term 'international' when classifying political issues. Only those matters dealt with in a deliberate and strategic interaction with the outside world are subsumed under that label.
13. Note that this is a 'residual category', in the sense that indirect connection has been coded only if there is no direct international connection.
14. The table is a summary table. In the actual coding procedure we used a multitude of subcategories.
15. The unclassifiable proportion, i.e. the proportion of committee reports not classified according to the subject area categories, is approximately 1%.
16. The percentage figures are based on the number of issues where an international connection exists. In a few cases it occurred that more than one type of actor-relation were observed in a report. In those cases we practised a 'hierarchical' coding procedure; if both a global and a regional organization were mentioned in the report, 'global' was coded, if both intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were to be found, 'intergovernmental' was coded, etc. The unclassifiable proportion, i.e. international issues where no specific actor could be identified is about 7%.
17. The unclassifiable proportion, i.e. international issues where no specific geographical connection could be found, is very large, 49%. See further comments in the text.



18. Much of this symbolic action within Parliament takes place in the form of debate on questions raised in Parliament. These are, of course, not recorded in the committee reports.
19. Thus, approximately 5% of the committee reports reported here as unanimous were in fact subject to reservations tabled by the Left Party Communists.
20. The issue area reported in the Table are selected subcategories of the larger subject areas Foreign Affairs and Aid and Defence reported in Table 4.
21. Network analysis has, however, not been undertaken in this study. The applied research design, utilizing mainly quantitative data, cannot adequately reveal the subtle data that would be required for such an investigation (cf. Jönsson 1987).
22. For a general overview of the European and U.S. scene in the 1970s, see Cassese (1980 and 1982).
23. For a thorough presentation of this argument, see Goldmann et al. (1986).
24. In our opinion this line of reasoning is based on a misinterpretation of data. Sjöstedt's conclusion is derived from the observation that, on the average, only twenty government proposals are introduced in the *Riksdag* each year. According to Sjöstedt, this is a low figure. However, when compared to the total number of government proposals (approximately 200 per year), the number of ministries (12) and Standing Committees (16), the figure is not outstandingly low. On the other hand, one cannot avoid the impression that parliamentary control over foreign policy is a matter of controversy. According to Stålvant, only a few of the agreements made between Sweden and the Common Market were presented to the *Riksdag* for ratification (Stålvant 1981:205).

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