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The close relationship between politics and economics in real-life societies makes an important challenge for interdisciplinary studies. Dr Dohlman's book is one interesting example of this. The book is well-written and interesting, from a political science, as well as from an economic analysis point of view. Especially, the ambition to integrate politics and economics throughout the book is worth mentioning. To make such an integrated study is not an easy task. Dr Dohlman's practical experiences make her succeed in this difficult work and her book is definitely worth reading for students and researchers working in the field of international relations. The non-technical character of the book makes it good reading also for persons outside the academic world.

*Göte Hansson, Lund University*

David Arter: *Politics and Policy-Making in Finland*. Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987, 255 pp.

The Finnish political system, and Finnish politics in general, are relatively unknown around the world, apart from some general notions on foreign policy. This state of affairs has not been improved much by the Finns themselves who have been quite reluctant to write books on the subject in any other language than their own. Foreign scholars have been compelled to try to understand Finland through Jaakko Nousiainen's *The Finnish Political System* (1969), the latest book of its kind, written in English by a Finnish political scientist. Unfortunately, it does not offer much help in understanding contemporary Finnish society.

So we Finns should be grateful that there are foreigners who are sufficiently interested in our country to make it an object of study. One such creature is David Arter, a British political scientist, who has done his best in introducing Finland abroad. His book *Politics and Policy-Making in Finland* fills an important gap in many respects.

Of course, there are always problems in books of this type. A foreigner studying another country is liable to misunderstand many things due to a lack of background knowledge, an inability to understand the language completely, incomplete socialization into the country's culture, or theoretical/political preconceptions. On the other hand, comparative politics needs interpretations formed from different perspectives and a non-native may be able to see something that a native cannot.

However, at least Arter cannot be blamed for a lack of knowledge or hostile political views. If there is anything awry, it is that his analysis is based almost too extensively on interviews with Finnish 'informers', politicians' memoirs and current newspaper or magazine articles. There is more in the way of rumours and inside gossip in this book than one usually expects from a work in comparative politics. Sometimes the interpretations follow even too assiduously the logic of the Finnish

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bourgeois/centre/social democratic bureaucracy, while in other cases one may find the opinion of a moderate conservative or a critical social democrat linked to a more complex analysis offered by a Finnish mainstream political scientist.

In fact, one of the few things that give away the fact that Arter is not a Finn is that he deals more thoroughly with some special features of the Finnish political system than the Finns do themselves: the treatment given to the evening class of the Cabinet or the role of sponsoring officials are examples of this. Perhaps it is the very differences and peculiarities that catch the eye of a foreign comparativist.

In this light it is salutary that Arter points out problems that many Finnish political scientists have emphasized too, but to which the Finnish political system has been slow to respond. For example, as Arter argues, Finland has to be more sensitive to the needs of the New International Economic Order in the future, not only in words but also in deeds and, in addition, she clearly needs to strengthen the mechanisms of participatory democracy in her political system.

There are, however, some general problems in Arter's interpretations. The idea of writing the book seems to have arisen from discussions with some civil servants in the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is difficult to say if this has had a conscious or an unconscious impact on the style of the book, but the text does give a somewhat polished picture of Finnish history (not so much of contemporary politics). For example, the position of the Finnish President is not merely a Swedish/Russian legacy as Arter tells us, but is also due to the firm belief of the Finnish Right, after the Civil War in 1918, that one must have a counterforce to the popularly elected *Eduskunta* (Diet). Other features of Finnish history that are underplayed in the book are the harsh treatment received by the extreme left during the so-called First Republic (1918–44) and the fact that Finland was quite willingly allied with Nazi Germany in the Second World War.

These problems may also be due to the fact that Arter is not a historian but a political scientist – although the book uses mainly an historical and institutional method. Arter's introduction to the basics of Finnish politics is, however, fluent and follows the discussions within political science. The political system is introduced through three 'windows', namely Giovanni Sartori's consideration of Finland as a case of extreme multipartism (in part I where the Constitution, parties, elections and Parliament are introduced), Maurice Duverger's inclusion of Finland as a type of 'semi-presidential' system (in part II where the President and the Cabinet are presented) and Voitto Helander's analysis of structural corporatism in the contemporary Finnish political system (in part III where government/interest group relations and the nature of policy-making in the areas of foreign and economic policy are discussed).

A turning-point in Finnish politics came in 1966. In that year the Social Democrats and the Centre Party formed a new kind of strategic coalition and Arter shows effectively how Finland has developed rapidly during the last twenty years into a modern welfare state through uncommonly hard political bargaining within this 'partnership'. In this light it is possible for Arter to claim that, although formally speaking, Finland could be seen as an example of an extreme multiparty system, in reality this is not the case. In important respects the negative characteristics of polarized pluralism have not materialized, and especially since 1966, Finland has developed into a consensual society with increased volatility of voters. Although precise conclusions are sometimes hard to find in the book, Arter seems to argue also that to understand Finland as a 'semi-presidential' system is not as straightforward as it may seem. Nowadays, the President is primarily the leader of foreign policy, a role that may allow him to gain prestige within domestic politics too, as in the case

of the late President Urho Kekkonen. But although formally the Finnish President has considerable constitutional powers (for example, the nomination of governments and public officials), his real power is dependent on the strength of the Cabinet and the general political conjuncture. The role of the Presidency in Finnish politics cannot simply be evaluated only by referring to the written Constitution.

It is easy to agree with all this. More problematic is Arter's analysis of structural corporatism and consensual politics in Finland. According to Arter, there are signs of neo-corporatism, but these should not be exaggerated, because the situation seems to be changing all the time. The same applies to consensual politics, although Finland is clearly seen as a consensual society built on foreign policy and income policy. However, unlike many other countries, the consensus in Finland is seen to be due to prevailing external factors (the Soviet Union, international economic competition), and this also makes the future of consensus uncertain. The problem with Arter's method is most evident in this part of the book. Because there is no structural analysis of the Finnish society (for example, its class structure) and state (for example, its tasks), Arter can only list things which speak for or against corporatism and consensus. The result is a typical 'yes, but no' treatment. The result is also that consensus receives greater stress than it deserves. Although Arter notes that the extent to which consensualism exists in other policy sectors is less certain, he does not analyse these other sectors (e.g. mass media, education, community politics). There is no mention of the power mechanisms within Finnish society and the other side of foreign policy and incomes policy consensus: their oppressive control of citizens. Underlying this appearance of consensus are very deep political and economic cleavages and there exists a widespread dissatisfaction felt towards politicians as the low electoral turnout in the latest parliamentary and communal elections shows.

The problem with the book is also its consideration of the future of Finnish politics. The 21 years of Social Democratic/Centre Party coalition that turned Finland into a stable welfare state are at the moment over. There is a danger that in some respects Arter's book may be more historical than contemporary. It is perhaps unfortunate that it was printed just after the 1987 parliamentary elections (in March) but before the formation of a new Cabinet (at the end of April). Arter speculates about the possible governmental coalition of all the major parties, including Social Democrats, National Coalition (Conservatives) and the Centre, that was discussed at the time of the elections (again an example of how Arter is well acquainted with Finnish publicity). However, the result of governmental negotiations was a Blue-Red Cabinet of Social Democrats and National Coalition, and that perhaps has laid the foundation for a new phase in Finnish politics comparable to that of 1966.

In spite of these problems, this is the best book available in English about Finnish politics and it should be read by anyone interested in the subject. The Finnish political system has been admirably condensed into a readable package of 255 pages and considering it is not of Finnish origin there are surprisingly few errors. The only aesthetic 'error' is the colouring of the book's jacket: green and red. Although this may not be Arter's fault and although Finland has been ruled by a Green-Red coalition for years, the colours strike a Finn as impossible. So well have we been socialized into a patriotic state of mind that the only acceptable colours for this kind of book would have been blue and white, the colours of the Finnish flag.

*Erkki Berndtson, University of Helsinki*