

## Editorial Note

In the spring of 1991 the editors of *Scandinavian Political Studies* took an initiative to arrange a conference with the title “**Political Science in Scandinavia – Trends and Challenges**”. The intent of this conference was, as we wrote to colleagues in the Nordic political science community:

to provide an opportunity for some focused reflection about the status of political science in Scandinavia. In a very general sense we have imagined that the conference would provide some perspectives on where we have come from and where are we going, what some of the major lines of development are today and what Nordic political science has to offer the discipline at large. We are not seeking a detailed “stock taking”, but more a view of where the main challenges lie for the Nordic milieu.

The idea was presented to the board of the Nordic Political Science Association, which agreed to give us their support. We also received financial support from *Nordisk Kulturråd*, *Norges allmennvitenskapelige forskningsråd*, *Letterstedtska Föreningen* and *Clara Lachmanns Fond*. With this support, the conference was held in Oslo in May of 1992. Seven papers were prepared in advance and circulated to all participants as a basis for the discussions which took place.

Following the conference, authors of the papers were invited to revise their papers with the prospect of publishing a special issue of *Scandinavian Political Studies* devoted to the same general theme. Three authors were in a position to accept our invitation, and their contributions constitute the first three articles in this issue.

All three articles, each in their own way, probe the character and identity of political science as it has developed in Scandinavia in recent years. Dag Anckar, through a review of the contents of five central journals published by the Scandinavian political science community, offers a broad assessment of the empirical orientation of political research carried out by scholars in the Nordic area. Peter Nannestad, by comparison, takes as his point of departure a more general theoretical perspective – “rational choice theory” – which has come to occupy a prevalent position in the international political science community, and provides an assessment of the position this perspective has within Scandinavia. Finally, Christer Jönsson presents a commentary on the stature of international politics in Scandinavian political science, especially as this might be compared with the same subfield in the United States.

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There are, of course, many facets and perspectives relating to political

science in Scandinavia not touched upon by these articles. The article by Miller and Listhaug, which is also published in this issue, for example, draws upon a strong tradition of electoral research in the Nordic area which is not directly addressed by the three initial articles. Neither we as editors nor the authors of the three overview articles have been under the illusion that we could be exhaustively comprehensive in our efforts. Rather, our hope is that the publication of these articles may contribute to two objectives: first, to provide a glimpse of Scandinavian political science at a time when our empirical world of reference is in a state of noteworthy flux; and, second, to stimulate further discussion and debate over the nature of political science in Scandinavia – both with respect to its past, but perhaps even more important, with respect to its future. This latter purpose is particularly important in view of the upcoming 10th Nordic Political Science Congress which is to be held in Oslo in August of 1993.

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