

## *SPECIAL SECTION*

# THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

On 4 October 1999 the Skytte Foundation at Uppsala University celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science with a panel discussion on 'The Future of Democracy'. Participants were the five prize winners so far: Robert Dahl (1995), Juan Linz (1996), Arend Lijphart (1997), Alexander George (1998) and Elinor Ostrom (1999). *Scandinavian Political Studies* has been given the opportunity to publish slightly edited versions of the introductory speeches.

## Introduction

Leif Lewin\*

The Skytte Prize is awarded every year to the scholar who in the view of the Skytte Foundation has made the most valuable contribution to political science. All areas of the discipline are considered: political theory, comparative politics, public administration, and international politics. At 400,000 Swedish crowns, the prize is one of the biggest in the social sciences. Members of the profession all over the world are invited to nominate candidates, and a prize committee then makes a recommendation to the Foundation. I am happy to say that the prize has had a good reception in the academic world, as well as among the media and the interested public, and has achieved an international reputation.

It was not difficult to formulate the topic for the panel discussion. Democracy is the main concern of political scientists theoretically as well as empirically – as regards its fulfilment in the nation states as well as its relevance to international politics. The triumph of democracy is by no means certain. The papers that follow reflect varying degrees of optimism about whether democracy can meet its challenges and continue to survive and develop.

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