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# Översikter och meddelanden

## The Ideology of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party: An Interpretation of the Political Science Debate of the Early 1990s

### Introduction

In the beginning of the 1990s no less than three doctoral theses were presented concerning the ideology and the ideological development of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party. Torbjörn Aronson's "Konservatism och demokrati. En rekonstruktion av fem svenska högerledares styrelsedoktriner" (1990) was the first. The second was "Fosterlandet främst" (1991) by Jan Hylén, and the third "Folkhemskapitalismen" (1992) by Stig-Björn Ljunggren. The conclusions drawn by these three authors differ to a very large extent. The conclusions drawn by Torbjörn Aronson and Stig-Björn Ljunggren are essentially that there has been no ideological transformation of the ideology in a liberal direction. Conservatism is still the prevailing ideology of the Moderate Party, according to these two authors. However, the conclusions of Jan Hylén are that the ideology of the party has been almost completely transformed. According to Hylén, the ideology was formerly characterised by a conservative collectivism with a pessimistic view of man's capabilities that traced its foundations back to traditional Christian religion. During the twentieth century the ideology was gradually transformed into an ideology permeated by liberal individualism and an optimistic view of man's capabilities, according to Hylén.

The aim of this study is to use the concepts ideology and conservatism/liberalism to discuss the differing conclusions drawn by the three authors mentioned above. The basic idea of this

study is that the main reason for the diverging results might be fundamental differences in the theoretical frameworks and methodological instruments for the analysis of the ideological properties and development of the party.

### The Study of political ideologies

Political ideologies can be studied in several ways. Evert Vedung has distinguished between content-oriented as opposed to functional analyses of political ideologies. The basis of the content-oriented analysis of political messages are criteria concerning whether the contents are supported by reasons in the message, and whether they are clear, relevant, consistent and true. The functional analysis of political messages stresses the particular setting within which the political statements are made, not the contents per se (Vedung 1982, pp.31ff., pp.39ff.). In this study, the focus will be on content-oriented analyses of the three authors mentioned above, i.e. how they interpret the contents of the ideological statements made by the Conservative (Moderate) Party and its representatives, but also to some degree what empirical material these authors have chosen to study.

The content-orientation is motivated by the fact that the theses and analyses of the three authors are content-oriented. This study can be regarded as a meta-analysis of three previous studies/theses that have presented very dissimilar results and conclusions regarding the ideological development of the same political phenomenon, i.e. the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party.

### What is an ideology?

The ideology concept has been constructed in many ways. Hamilton concluded in a review that

no less than 27 basic characteristics had been combined in the literature to achieve a large number of definitions (Hamilton 1987, p. 18). According to Schull, ideologies can either be considered as belief systems or as discourses within which people can communicate with each other in the same language (Schull 1992, p. 728). Boudon has also analysed ideologies in different dimensions (Boudon 1989, pp. 17ff.) and ideologies have been analysed in many ways. However, it is not self-evident that modern ideologies have always existed. Ideology seems to have existed as a concept for only approximately two hundred years.

The ideology concept was used for the first time by Destutt de Tracy at the end of the eighteenth century. de Tracy was inspired by the philosophers of the enlightenment and wanted to create a new scientific study object. According to de Tracy, the aim should be to study the origin of ideas to be able to create a better and more equal society. The name of this branch of science should be "ideology" (McClellan 1986, pp. 5f.). In reality, the concept of ideology very soon acquired a more pejorative meaning, denoting the arguments of self-interest of particular socio-economic or other interest groups (McClellan 1986, p. 6; Boudon 1989, p. 25).

The ideology concept thus traces its origin from a very particular historical situation. During this particular period the old worldly and spiritual authorities were confronted with the French revolution and with the beliefs in human reason and the ability of man himself to control his life produced by the enlightenment philosophers. This period also saw the emergence of the modern ideologies. Conservatism appeared as a reaction against the ideas of the French revolution, even if the word conservatism was used for the first time in France just after the end of the Napoleonic wars, and in England in the 1830s and onwards (Kirk 1982, p. XIII; Nisbet 1986, pp. 1ff.).

Modern ideologies differ from former traditional thoughts that were characterised by religiously and metaphysically anchored belief systems in the following ways:

1. Modern ideologies try in their language to adhere to the modern scientific and rational tradition of Western society.
2. Modern ideologies are totally worldly. They only deal with material realities as opposed to the spiritual and metaphysical dogmas of the traditional religions. Traditional religious thinking dealt with the hierarchical relation between God and man. This metaphysical, spiritual dimension disappears in modern ideologies.
3. Modern ideologies are action-oriented. Their aim is to use science and modern political thought in order to change the material realities of society. They include an ideal of perpetual change, a dynamism, in contrast to the rather static religious dogmas of traditional society (Boudon 1989, pp. 20ff.; diPalma 1991, pp. 55ff.; Habermas 1970, p. 99; McClellan 1986, pp. 2ff.).

This distinction between modern ideologies and traditional religious belief systems has particular relevance for the study of conservatism, which will be illustrated in the next section.

### Conservatism

Liberalism and socialism seem to have retained much of their ideological contents and visions since they emerged as modern ideologies in the first half of the nineteenth century. Francis Fukuyama states that the liberal emphasis on individual freedom, market economy and democracy is the only tenable alternative after the fall of the left wing totalitarian and right wing authoritarian regimes (Fukuyama 1992, pp. 42ff.). Alexis Callinicos states that socialism and even marxism will succeed even after the downfall of the Communist regimes in eastern Europe (Callinicos 1991, p. 133).

It is more difficult to imagine what contemporary conservatives have in common with conservatives of the early nineteenth century. Conservatism also appears to have become a more unclear concept than previously. This should be no surprise since even political scientists have used the concept to denote e.g. old Communist élites of eastern Europe (Bova 1991, p. 125).

Russel Kirk has tried to define the concept of conservatism in a more distinct way:

First, conservatives generally believe that there exists a transcendent moral order, to which we ought to try to conform the ways of society. ...

Second, conservatives uphold the principle of social continuity. ...

Third, conservatives believe in what may be called the principle of prescription. "The wisdom of our ancestors" is one of the more important phrases of Burke; presumably Burke derived it from Richard Hooker. ...

Fourth, conservatives are guided by their principle of prudence. Burke agrees that in the statesman, prudence is chief among virtues. Any public measure ought to be judged by its probable long-run consequences, not merely by advantage or popularity.

Fifth, conservatives pay attention to the principle of variety. They feel affection for the proliferating intricacy of long-established social institutions and modes of life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity and deadening egalitarianism of radical systems. ...

Sixth, conservatives are chastened by their principle of imperfectibility. Human nature suffers irremediably from certain faults, the conservatives know. Man being imperfect, no perfect social order ever can be created. (Kirk 1982, pp. XV-XVIII).

A comparison between the way in which modern ideologies differ from traditional belief systems, and Kirk's definition of conservatism clearly illustrates that conservatism as a political ideology constitutes a particular problem. Conservatism seems to be a political ideology that partly remains anchored in the traditional metaphysical belief systems. However, as the processes of modernisation and secularisation gradually proceed, conservatism may be expected to be gradually transformed into a variant of the liberal ideology or at least an ideology much closer to the liberal ideology than before. This problematisation of conservatism within the traditional religion versus modern ideology setting constitutes one analytical framework for the understanding of conservatism. This is of course not the only framework. The reason why it is

used here is only that it may give an answer to the question why the conclusions of Aronson, Ljunggren and Hylén differ so much concerning their view of the ideology and the ideological development of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party.

The particular dualism of conservatism can be illustrated by a comparison of two of its founders.

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) has often rightfully been named "the father of conservatism". "Reflections on the Revolution in France" (1790) had a thorough impact on the most important contemporary conservative authors in France, Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre (Beneton 1988, p.11). However, Burke also influenced many prominent personalities with liberal and radical political ideas (Nordin 1990, p.53). Even in our own days Burke is mentioned by clearly liberal authors as a source of inspiration:

By liberalism I shall understand the conception of a desirable political order which in the first place was developed in the later part of the seventeenth century to that of Gladstone at the end of the nineteenth. David Hume, Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, T. B. Macaulay and Lord Acton may be regarded as its typical representatives in England (Hayek 1975, p.55).

C. B. Macpherson also mentions Burke as an important liberal (Macpherson 1977, p.20).

The only metaphysical trait in Burke's writings is the transcendent principle of a natural law concerning the importance of the inheritance from the ancestors (Macpherson 1980, pp.39f.). According to Macpherson this natural law meant that poor social and economic conditions for the working class were necessary to ensure the development towards a liberal free market and capitalism (Ibid, pp.58ff.). Burke's defence of the free market was founded on empirical observations and based on the thinking of Adam Smith. The defence of property was motivated by the fact that every individual had the right to the fruits of his labour (Macpherson 1980, p.44). Burke's view of man is consequently both pessimistic and optimistic. The pessimistic trait stems from the notion that no single individual or even no single generation, could disregard the

wisdom embedded in society and inherited through generations. The optimistic trait is inherent in the belief in the free market and the modernisation of the English society that were already on their way in England in Burke's own days (Landes 1969, p.11).

The most prominent representative of the conservative reaction in France apart from de Bonald was Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). According to de Maistre the French revolution was God's penalty for the contempt against God shown by the French enlightenment philosophy, and for the decadence of the old ancien régime. The ancien régime had become weakened by the philosophy of the enlightenment and had lost its belief in its own authority and legitimacy (Jamieson 1988, p.107).

There is a satanic quality of the French revolution that distinguishes it from everything we have ever seen or anything we are ever likely to see in the future. Recall the great assemblies, Robespierre's speech against the priesthood, the solemn apostasy of the clergy, the desecration of objects of worship, the installation of the goddess of reason, and that multitude of extraordinary actions by which the provinces sought to outdo Paris. All this goes beyond the ordinary circle of crime and seems to belong to another world (de Maistre 1994, p. 41).

For de Maistre, as opposed to Burke, the guarantee for the ethical and moral standards of society was God, and not the unbroken traditions of the ancestors. According to de Maistre, God is the legitimate source of all power. Only the power executed in the name of God is legitimate. Time and tradition serve as the deputies of God in the world (Tingsten 1966, p.29). Society has always existed and the precondition for society is religion:

Wherever an altar is found, there civilisation exists (Jamieson 1988, p.109).

de Maistre's faith in a higher metaphysical truth is close to platonic idealism. The world is split into two spheres of reality, the immanent and the transcendent, which are both true. However, the transcendent world represents higher forms of reality (Jamieson 1988, p.109).

This pronounced metaphysical variant of conservatism also leads to an even more pessimistic opinion concerning man's possibility to change the material/ immanent world. The king and the aristocracy are the upholders of the power derived from God. According to de Maistre, there can be no written constitution. A written constitution is a sign of weakness. This is because the human *ratio* is very weak and undermines the natural authorities of society. Instead, a written constitution is a sign that human egoism has to be regulated in more detail. The political and religious power, the devoted worship of God, must instead be intimately united (de Maistre 1994, pp. 49ff.).

Burke and de Maistre defended the social and economic systems of two different societies. In England the industrial revolution was already in progress at the eve of the French revolution (Landes 1969, p.11). But even in the case of England, there was a metaphysical conservatism before the industrial revolution represented first and foremost by the Stuarts that were overthrown by the Glorious revolution in 1688-1689. As late as in 1745-1746, an attempt was made to reinstate this legitimist régime on the throne of Great Britain (Prebble, 1990). In France, the landed aristocracy and the Catholic church were still the dominating segments of society.

Today, there are no truly metaphysical movements or political parties in Europe or the USA. Metaphysical conservatism is mainly represented by intellectuals like Alexander Solsjenitsyn and Eric Voegelin (Jamieson 1988, p.109; Crowther 1988, pp. 261ff.). Modern conservative parties oriented towards liberalism in the tradition of Burke are in contrast very common (Girvin 1988, p.9).

The fundamental differences between Burke and de Maistre illustrate the dualism of conservatism within the range between extreme metaphysical traditionalism and modern ideologies:

1. Conservatism may sooner or later in its language try to adhere to the modern scientific and rational tradition of Western society.
2. Conservatism may be more or less worldly in its orientation. De Maistre represents a more metaphysical orientation. On the other hand,

Burke's conservatism seems to represent more of a modern ideology among other modern ideologies with worldly materialist orientations.

3. Burke's conservatism is obviously also more action-oriented than the conservatism of de Maistre. The thinking of Burke includes a basis for perpetual change and reform within the material world.

The inherent dualism of conservatism in points 2 and 3 above will be used to analyse the different conclusions of Aronson, Hylén and Ljunggren concerning the ideology of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party during the twentieth century. The points 2 and 3 are used to investigate the theoretical models used in these theses. How do these theoretical models relate to the Burke versus de Maistre spectrum outlined above? What time periods were studied by the authors? The empirical material used for the analyses are also briefly investigated. Can the material used by the authors answer questions about the ideological party position on the Burke versus de Maistre spectrum of conservative ideology?

### Torbjörn Aronson (1990)

The aim of Torbjörn Aronson's study is rather limited. It concerns the government doctrines of five leaders of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party during the twentieth century: Ernst Trygger, Arvid Lindman, Gösta Bagge, Gunnar Heckscher and Gösta Bohman. The five party leaders were chosen because they were the only conservative party leaders that had stated such doctrines. The objective is also to relate these government doctrines to the conservative ideological tradition. Thus, the empirical material on which the study is based consists of speeches and statements made by these five party leaders, including statements made in the Riksdag concerning specific political matters.

The analytical scheme of Aronson's thesis consists of two different levels of ideology: one basal level that consists of the fundamental perceptions, and one operational level that consists

of standpoints taken in practical political matters. Aronson refers to the work of Hans F. Petersson in the distinction between these two analytical levels. Petersson's concept *stereotype* is equivalent to the basal level, according to Aronson (Aronson 1990, p.31):

These statements have the nature of axiomatic propositions; rational proofs is not offered, but reference to "the nature of things" or to the historical frequency of the particular phenomena cited are sometimes advanced in support. . . but another element is closely related to the descriptive. Being an instinctive reaction to politics, the stereotype also contains a series of primitive evaluation components. The basic level thus comprises both the premises of thought, from which action-oriented conclusions can be drawn, and prejudices, which anticipate or compel the choice of certain attitudes. (Petersson 1964, p.30)

The basal level contains both thoughts concerning the political reality and basic values and prejudices of a prescriptive nature (Aronson 1990, p.31). The basal level of ideology constitutes the fundamental notions of an evaluative and cognitive nature upon which the constructions of the operative level are based (Aronson 1990, p.33; Lundquist 1982, p.51). The components of the basal level are termed ideological postulates by Aronson.

The basal level, consisting of *ideological postulates* and *basic values*, is characterised by Aronson as different aspects of the basic perceptions within the conservative ideology: the cosmology, the fundamental construction of society and the view of the nature of man. The moral nature of man is considered in connection with the cosmology of conservatism, since these are interconnected, according to Aronson. The rationality of man is dealt with in connection with the view of human nature. The basic conservative values connected with the basic perceptions of conservatism are described by Aronson as methods of social change, natural collectives and institutions, hierarchies, inequality and equality, property and legal system (Aronson 1990, pp.37ff.).

The *fundamental postulates* of the conservative ideology are not thoroughly discussed in

Aronson's thesis. However, they are discussed in detail in another book by Aronson published a few years later, "Gösta Bagges politiska tänkande. En studie i svensk konservatism" (1993). Since the statements in the two books do not differ otherwise in their contents and conclusions, the statements in the latter book will be used in our discussion. According to Aronson, the conservative ideology did not arise as a reaction against such social phenomena as secularisation and modernisation by themselves, but rather as a reaction against the tendency to use political means to speed up these social processes. There was also a secularised wing within the conservative political camp in Great Britain even before the French revolution. Furthermore, the origins of conservatism have nothing to do with hostility to the technical development, the arrival of the market economy or social reforms, according to Aronson. Aronson also stresses that Edmund Burke was a friend of the two latter phenomena. The *cosmologic* basis of conservatism as an ideology is the Jewish Christian religious tradition. God has created everything and the reason for the imperfect state of society is the Fall of man. Man is imperfect and both good and evil in his character. However, there is an objective, absolute moral order that is derived from God. This absolute moral order provides the support for man through tradition, family, church and authorities *to do good*. There is also a secularised variant of conservatism, according to Aronson. However, this variant has also accepted the political implications of the Jewish Christian tradition. The intermediate social structures between the State and the individual, e.g. the family and the church, constitute *the fundamental construction of society* in the conservative ideology. This idea widely differs from the individualistic ideas of liberalism that state that man is born good, and that the goodness of man only can be expressed when both the State and the intermediate social structures are weak. The conservative idea of society also differs from the socialist idea of a very strong State that exclusively controls the social order of society. The conservative *view of the nature of man* rejects "abstract speculations" and dogmatic theories in politics. It also stresses the importance of

the concrete circumstances in political decision making. There must be a balance between political reason and theoretical thinking in concrete historical situations. Conservatism is critical against too much rational thinking in political matters and defends traditions, customs and religion (Aronson 1993, pp.18ff.).

The *basic values* of the conservative ideology include *methods of social change*. According to conservative ideology, societal changes should be slow and as small as possible. Sudden and profound changes in society often have devastating results. It is impossible to carry out utopian dreams in reality. Reforms must be judged by their practical consequences and not by abstract principles. *Natural collectives and institutions*, i.e. the nation, the family, the church, professional corporations, are superior to the individual. The individuals are organic parts of the collective. The individuals only have rights as members of a society. The role of the State is to uphold and strengthen these collectives. The conservative view of *hierarchies, inequality and equality* is that all are equal before God and before the law. However, no further equality is possible or desirable, according to the conservatives. Society is a complex organism that contains many classes and interest groups. Differentiation, hierarchies and leadership is the characteristic of every organised society. Different social classes fulfill different functions in society, and there are no natural sources of conflict between those classes. National solidarity is one source of social harmony. *Private property* is the fundamental prerequisite for freedom, independence and stability for both individuals and society. Property is one condition for the independence to express opinions. Property is handed over from generation to generation, resulting in a sense of responsibility for family and relatives. Lack of private property means social rootlessness. The legal system must be historically inherited, and is necessary in order to preserve society. The rule of law establishes the rights and the responsibilities of the citizens. It protects society against the impulses of human nature. It also constitutes a moral support for the individual (Aronson 1990, pp.37ff.).

The operational level is a consequence of the basal ideological level. The properties of the standpoints taken by the conservative party leaders at the operational level could be summarised by three questions, according to Aronson. What prerequisites should be present for the constitution to work satisfactorily? What should be the aim of the constitution? What should the content of the decisions made according to the constitution be? Integrating both the basal and the operational level, Aronson's most important research question is: How can the operational level of the government doctrine be understood with regard to the basal level of the ideology of the leaders of the Conservative (Moderate) Party? (Aronson 1990, p.40ff.). The questions at the operational level are the main focus of Aronson's interest. However, the basal level of ideology, the fundamental properties of the ideological ideas of the conservative leaders, is the basis for Aronson's analysis. The basal ideological level is thus the level of analysis that is discussed in our analysis of the three theses. At the basal ideological level, the ideological postulates will be commented more than the basic values, since the latter appear to be derived from the former, in the same way that the methods used are derived from the theory in any analysis.

Aronson's theoretical and methodological framework is rather complex but very logical and consistent. However, there seems to be some lack of sense for the historical process of secularisation, and the meaning and implications of that process for conservatism as a political ideology. Aronson stresses the great importance of the Jewish Christian religious tradition for conservatism as a political ideology. On the other hand, Aronson simultaneously mentions that there is a secularised form of conservatism that is not religious but accepts the Jewish Christian tradition. This is done without any reference to the historical process of secularisation that has characterised the Western world during the past 200 years. It is also done without any reference to the fact that England in the days of the relatively secularised conservatism of Edmund Burke already had overthrown a legitimist king one hundred years before the French revolution. Edmund Burke was also during most of his life

a whig and not a tory. For instance, in the case of Gösta Bagge, Aronson seems to neglect this historical secularisation process and its ideological implications by stating:

Bagge combined his conservative defense of the market economy with a Christian cultural criticism and a strong connection with Christian beliefs, ethics and tradition. In this sense he strongly differs from his successors. The Swedish political right has been secularised rather than liberalised during the post-war era (Aronson 1993, p.9).

The importance of Christian tradition in shaping the conservative ideological postulates in the form of a metaphysically derived *cosmology*, an idea about *the fundamental construction of society* and a *view of the human nature* is not questioned but even stressed by Aronson. However, the antagonism and interaction between the metaphysical traits of conservative ideology as opposed to the irreligious or even anti-religious traits of liberal ideology seems to have been overlooked by Aronson. Conservative ideologies often defend the intermediate social structures of society. They do this as a protection against the possible evil actions of man. On the other hand, the irreligious or even anti-religious liberal ideology defends the individual and trust in the good actions by the individual. This way of separating the secularisation process from the liberalisation process does not seem to be the proper way to handle these two ideological phenomena and their implications for the ideological development of conservatism. The gradual change of Western conservatism caused by liberalisation and secularisation, and the implications of these two mutually connected processes for conservatism as a political ideology has for instance been observed by Charles Covell:

This book has suggested that the conservative theorists with whom it deals failed to reconstitute the connections between law, morality and the state. It has suggested further that they failed because of an adherence to the underlying ethical and metaphysical principles of the liberal tradition they sought to challenge; or because of a sense, which Cowling's work endorses, that the liberalising drift towards secu-

larisation was not to be reversed (Covell 1986, p. 240).

The analysis of the statements of some selected (not all) conservative party leaders seems to be too limited to determine whether the party as a whole has remained predominantly conservative or not.

The time period studied by Aronson starts with Ernst Trygger (1857-1943, party leader in the upper chamber of the Riksdag 1912-1935) and Arvid Lindman (1862-1936, party leader in the second chamber of the Riksdag and leader of the electoral party organisation 1912-1935), and thus extends over most of the twentieth century. This time period seems long enough, a fact that on the other hand generates even more reason to question the lack of inclusion of the historical process of secularisation and liberalisation in the analysis.

### Jan Hylén (1991)

The aim of Hylén's thesis is to distinguish between traits of liberal as opposed to conservative ideology in the development of the Conservative (Moderate) Party during its entire existence as an electoral party from 1904 until 1985. Hylén's methodological instrument is called parametre. A parametre is a rough axis or broad area within the limits of which it is possible to establish the position of specific factors or elements of a theory in order to be able to decide to what extent it is close to one or the other of the two extremes of that axis (Hylén 1991, p.8). There are several advantages with such a model, according to Hylén. One advantage is that few theories of society can be positioned according to some either/or-dichotomy. Instead, they can more easily be positioned in terms of a more/less-scale. Second, theories of society can seldom be placed within one single scale of two clearly defined extreme values. The reason for this is that there are many different variants of the main types of theories, e.g. liberal versus conservative ideology. Third, the sociological parametre notion gives us the opportunity to show that theories that are different in some respects also may be similar to an important extent. It is thus better to perceive a

theory of society or an ideology as composed of several specific components, rather than to give a theory or an ideology as a whole a label without any nuances (Hylén 1991, p.8; Campbell 1986).

Hylén constructs the following parametres in order to separate liberal from conservative ideas: 1. the parametre optimistic versus pessimistic view of the nature of man, 2. the parametre individualistic versus collectivist theory of society, 3. the parametre economic individualism versus economic collectivism, 4. the parametre individual versus collectivist ethics. The points 1 and 2 above concerns statements concerning how reality is constituted. They represent perceptions of *reality*. The points 3 and 4 above represent statements concerning how reality should be constituted (Hylén 1991, p.9f.).

The parametres do not give a complete picture of the ideological situation in all respects. However, they give information about trends and tendencies concerning specific and central aspects of the ideological development.

According to a pessimistic view of the nature of man, human reason is very weak and fragile. Man is principally irrational and guided in his actions by instincts, impulses and emotions. The nature of man is complex, but more prone to egoism than goodness and altruism. In contrast, the optimistic view of the nature of man is characterised by a high regard of human reason. Man is rational and the conditions for planning and realizing huge reform projects in society are good. The attitude to traditional authoritarian authorities in religion and politics is negative. Human reason ought to be guiding human actions and activities.

According to a collectivist theory of society, social reality is an internal part of human nature. The individual human being is perceived as an accumulation of disordered, uncontrolled and unspecific desires that she herself is unable to control or delimit. She must trust the informal connections and the formal institutions of society to provide the resources for a structured human existence. A human being becomes a person first within the framework defined by a given society. Society is thus a real entity just as the individual herself. In contrast, the individualist, liberal theory of society regards society as



an association of autonomous individuals that has been constructed by the individuals to attain personal goals. Society is like a contract or treaty between individuals. The goal of society is to protect the individual and to maintain the treaty.

The economic (liberal) individualism versus economic (in this case conservative) collectivism parametre concerns the question whether the individuals should decide by preferences and choices in economic matters through the mechanisms of a free market economy, or whether the collective in the shape of the State or other political institutions should decide. Economic collectivism stresses that the economy is not an end in itself, but rather a mean for the collective good.

An individual (liberal) ethic means that moral values could only be tied to individuals. Only individuals have moral rights. On the other hand, a collectivist (conservative) ethic is derived from a collectivist theory of society. According to such a theory, the individuals are seen as only a part of the society in which they live. Moral values could thus also be tied to the collective as such according to such a theory (Hylén 1991, pp.10ff.).

The four parametres are used by Hylén to analyse the extent of liberal versus conservative ideological contents in the ideology of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party.

The empirical material used by Hylén is not limited to what leading conservative politicians have written about themselves and their party, but also extends to arguments that have been used in debates in the Riksdag and in internal debates within the party concerning concrete political matters (Hylén 1991, pp.18f.).

The four collectivist (conservative) versus individualist (liberal) parametres used by Hylén seems to be good analytical tools for the characterisation of the secular ideological development and the ideological characteristics of the party. A model that a priori acknowledges the possibility of both liberal (individualistic) and conservative (collectivist) ideological traits is the only possible way to answer the research question whether there has been a gradual shift in the ideology of the party on the liberal versus conservative continuum. The four parametres used by Hylén enables him to illustrate the secu-

lar drift of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party away from a collectivist/conservative standpoint to an increasingly individualistic and liberal standpoint in many political matters. For instance, Hylén demonstrates how the Conservative Party has taken three different standpoints concerning abortions during the twentieth century. The party was clearly opposed to abortions during the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s. The basis for this attitude was traditional Christian religion and the morals and ethics derived from it. The party standpoint was also collectivist because it was concerned to protect the Swedish State and the interests of the collective against the possible immoral actions of the individuals (Hylén 1991, p.77ff.). This standpoint subsequently changed during the 1950s in a liberal, individualistic direction. It now became the foetus as an individual that was to be protected by the party against the pure arbitrariness of other individuals and the state (Hylén 1991, pp. 147ff.). Finally, the third and completely liberal standpoint became the mainstream standpoint of the party from the 1980s and onwards. The right of the individual to conduct an abortion is now regarded as something completely legitimate, according to the party, because the State should not interfere with the decisions of the free, independent and always rational individuals (Hylén 1991, pp.211ff.).

Hylén's empirical material also seems to be broad and to cover even arguments and decisions from debates regarding specific political issues, which appears to be an advantage compared to the rather limited scope acquired by only analysing what leading politicians and the party stated about themselves.

Finally, the long time period (1904-1985) analysed also appears advantageous compared to shorter periods of analysis. The longer the time period analysed, the more likely it is that secular trends in the development of the ideology of a party will be detected and recognised.

### **Stig-Björn Ljunggren (1992)**

Ljunggren repudiates the usual liberal versus conservative dichotomy when it comes to char-

acterising the ideological development of the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party. In contrast, he introduces a trichotomy of liberal conservative, social conservative and cultural conservative standpoints and traditions. These three aspects of a basically unchanged conservative ideology have dominated the ideology of the party during different post-war time periods, according to Ljunggren (Ljunggren 1992, pp. 30ff.).

The liberal conservative standpoint has been a characteristic of the Swedish Conservative Party since its foundation, according to Ljunggren (Ljunggren 1992, p.34). The party has adopted a feature of individualism and scepticism against traditional society from liberal ideology. This liberal conservative standpoint was a dominating trait of the party ideology during the 1950s (Ljunggren 1992, p. 37).

The social conservative standpoint defends state intervention and tax-based social reforms to some extent. The motives for this are twofold. First, state intervention and tax-based social reforms have been regarded by social conservatives as preventive measures against socialism. Second, there has often been sincere Christian and humanitarian beliefs behind the interventionist standpoints taken by social conservatives. Some early social conservatives were even anti-industrialist and anti-capitalist, and defended traditional agriculture and traditional craft (Ljunggren 1992, pp.30ff.). The social conservative standpoint within the party was strongest in the 1960s, according to Ljunggren (Ljunggren 1992, p.37).

The cultural conservative standpoint is the most anti-individualist trait of the three aspects of modern conservatism, according to Ljunggren. It concerns the preservation of certain over-individual characteristics of a society. It stresses the invisible connection between past, present and coming generations in an unbroken chain of continuity and tradition (Ljunggren 1992, p. 32f.). The cultural conservative standpoint was strong within the party both in the 1950s and the 1990s, according to Ljunggren (Ljunggren 1992, p.37).

The time period studied by Ljunggren is rather limited:

The objective of this study is to investigate how the Swedish Conservative Party has viewed the Swedish state during the period from 1940 to 1991 (Ljunggren 1992, p.29).

Ljunggren's empirical study material consists of party programs, journals, newspapers, brochures, and books written by leading actors within the Conservative (moderate) Party itself (Ljunggren, 1992, p.28). This empirical material thus gives very little information about the real party standpoints taken in debates and decisions/votations in the parliament/Riksdag.

There are several difficult problems in Ljunggren's study:

Ljunggren's trichotomy does not only a priori make the plausible conclusion of a transformation towards a more or less liberal standpoint within the Conservative (Moderate) Party impossible. It also a priori excludes the possible presence of a completely metaphysical and traditionalist party standpoint in certain matters during certain time periods. The kind of metaphysically based traditionalist conservatism that is deeply rooted in Christian traditionalism, the Church and the Bible is instead a priori disregarded in the trichotomous model by Ljunggren as "archaic", "apolitical" and of no interest in the study (Ljunggren 1992, p.19ff.). This means that the two extremes of the Burke versus de Maistre model presented above – the liberal and the traditionalist conservative – are excluded already from the outset of the analysis. These exclusions seem particularly problematic considering the fact that there was a break out from the Conservative Party in Western Sweden already in 1930, the People's Church Party, caused by the issue of certain religious features in the primary school teaching program where the general standpoint of the Conservative Party already had changed in a liberal and individualist direction during the late 1920s (Thermaenius 1933, p.113f.). At the other extreme, the contemporary Moderate Party politician Sigvard Hämring was worried in the mid-1990s about the disappearing ties between the Swedish State Church and the Swedish State. The problem was that the disconnection might lead to less influence for the politicians and more influence for

the Church itself and the active members of the Church, according to Hämring (Hämring 1995, p.4). The conviction that secularised modern politicians should decide in church and religious matters is of course very close to the struggle during the French revolution between the Catholic Church and the atheist revolutionary Paris government (Moore Junior 1996, pp92ff.). In the journal of the Moderate Youth organisation, "Moderat Debatt", Lindvall and Schlingmann have praised the new IT-technology as a freedom solution for post-modern liberal mankind. In the same article, they expressed their contempt for the traditional Christian Lutheran sense of duty (Lindvall and Schlingmann 1995, pp. 12ff.). The theoretical framework of Ljunggren's study thus seems to predestinate the work to the conclusion that the party has been and still remains predominantly conservative.

In some instances the same key notion in Ljunggren's study is used to denote two different phenomena. The aim of the cultural conservatives within the Conservative Party in the 1950s was to reinstall traditional Christian religion within both the Conservative Party and in Swedish society as a whole. Christianity was not to be viewed as just a trait of a diffuse "cultural inheritance", but rather as the fundament of all political activities of the Conservative Party and, ultimately, Swedish society (Ljunggren 1992, pp. 204ff.). When, according to Ljunggren, the cultural conservatives within the party once again gain importance in the 1990s, there is nothing left of the central norm giving role of the Bible and traditional Christian religion. The new cultural conservatives, denoted by Ljunggren in the same way as those of the 1950s, do not derive their arguments or statements from the Bible any more (Ljunggren 1992, pp. 368ff.). In contrast, their defence of e.g. traditional family life is based on scientific sociological observations (the leader of the social policy group within the Moderate Party, professor Hans L. Zetterberg, is himself a sociologist). According to these observations, they design and suggest technical solutions to the social phenomena and social problems observed. The focus of their analysis also mainly concerns the good for the individual (Ljunggren 1992, pp. 380ff.). This of course

highly contrasts the strong metaphysical, traditionalist trait of the cultural conservatives of the 1950s. There is even no basis at all for using the same concept to denote these two different phenomena.

The time period 1940-1991 seems rather limited considering the fact that the Conservative (Moderate) Party existed several decades prior to the lower boundary year 1940. In the long term Burke versus de Maistre spectrum perspective this fact seems to be even more critical, since the transformation of the conservative ideology seems to have been a secular, long term process.

The empirical material consisting of texts written by leading actors themselves concerning the ideology of the party seems somewhat too weak when it comes to answering the question concerning continuity of the conservative ideology versus transformation into a clearly liberal ideology.

### Conclusions and implications for further research

The diverging conclusions drawn by Aronson (1990), Hylén (1991) and Ljunggren (1992) concerning the ideology and the process of ideological development within the Swedish Conservative (Moderate) Party during the twentieth century are interesting and somewhat amazing. Two of the authors have concluded that the party always has been a predominantly conservative party. The third author, Jan Hylén, has come to the completely opposite conclusion. According to Hylén, the party has developed in a direction from a collectivist, pessimistic conservative ideology to predominantly a liberal, individualist and optimistic ideology. This process of ideological transformation has been secular over the whole century, according to Hylén. Starting with a discussion that concerns the particular metaphysical traits of conservatism as opposed to the modern concept of more or less secularised ideologies, the results of this study support the idea that the answer to the question why the conclusions of these authors diverge so much lies in the different theoretical frameworks and

the different instruments used by the authors for the analysis.

The most fundamental condition for an analysis concerning conservative as opposed to liberal traits in the ideology of a political party must be a theoretical framework and an analytical instrument that include both these concepts as clearly defined and mutually separate and exclusive entities. Aronson acknowledges the particular metaphysical traits of the cosmology of the conservative ideology. However, already in the theoretical framework he adds that there also has been a secularised variant of conservatism ever since the French revolution. This addition partly obscures the theoretical framework. It gives a picture of conservatism as an unchanged ideology with different secularised and metaphysical variants over the past 200 years. Hylén's theoretical and analytical framework is very elaborate and completely fulfills the condition stating that the concepts of liberalism and conservatism should be defined as mutually separate and exclusive entities. Hylén has elaborated an analytical instrument consisting of four parameters, four scales with a purely liberal, individualist and optimistic (when it comes to the way to view the nature of man) extreme as opposed to a conservative, collectivist and pessimistic extreme at the other end of the scale on each of the four parameters/scales. The theoretical framework elaborated and used by Ljunggren does not seem to live up to this condition at all. Already from the outset, Ljunggren defines three different variants of conservatism that form the basis of his analytical instrument. The pure concept of liberalism, as defined by Hylén and also as outlined above in this study, is completely neglected by Ljunggren. One of the three concepts used by Ljunggren, the liberal conservative variant, also represents an unfortunate mix of the two pure and mutually exclusive liberal and conservative concepts. This of course does not mean that there never have been different mixtures of liberal and conservative ideologies in the ideas of right-wing parties throughout the Western world. The idea of a secular liberalisation and secularisation process implies such mixtures. However, the analysis of this process and its implications for the analysis of the liberal versus

conservative contents of right-wing parties requires that the concepts and the contents of the liberal as opposed to conservative ideologies are clearly separated from each other.

The obvious connection between the liberal ideology and the secular secularisation process throughout the Western world deserves particular attention. Political liberalism with its individualism, its high esteem and optimistic view of the nature of man, its action-oriented view of a world controlled by man instead of being ruled by God, its high beliefs in continuous technical, economical and political progress, is a modern ideology that is completely separated from the old pre-ideology metaphysical and religious belief systems. On the other hand, the collectivism, the pessimistic view of the nature of man, the doubts concerning the benefits of technical and other aspects of progress are traits of the conservative ideology that to a greater or lesser extent are still rooted in the metaphysical and religious pre-ideology beliefs. Aronson disregards this distinction by saying that some variants of conservatism are secularised. These variants, like the conservatism of Edmund Burke, still contain some beliefs in a higher metaphysically derived order, in the intermediate structures of society etc., otherwise they would be entirely liberal. Ljunggren also disregards this distinction by saying that the oldest, "arcaic" form of conservatism is "apolitical" (see above) and has nothing to do with the analysis of modern ideologies. The only one of the three authors that clearly takes this distinction into account is Jan Hylén.

The historical perspective, the transformation of ideologies as a secular process over centuries, is also an important aspect of political ideologies. The ideologies partly form the social reality of society, but they are also formed and affected themselves by other ongoing processes in society. Ideologies should thus not be studied as static entities that are unaffected by 200 years of political and cultural change. The longer time perspectives and time periods studied in the studies of Hylén and Aronson are therefore advantageous compared to the much shorter (post-war) perspective of Ljunggren.

We must also specify what we mean when we say *the ideology of a political party*. Do we mean

the ideological principal statements made by the party leader(s)? Do we mean the ideology that can be observed by studying the work of its politicians in the practical political work within the national (Riksdag), regional or local parliaments? Do we mean the political attitudes of its party members, supporters and voters? Aronson's study includes only the statements by the party leaders. Ljunggren's study concerns both the party leaders and statements by the rest of the party organisation. Hylén's study concerns both party leaders, party organisation and the practical political work in the Riksdag, the national parliament. Aronson even a priori excludes the possibility of a transformation within the Conservative (Moderate) Party during the twentieth century by saying that the ideology can not have been transformed since the electorate of the party is the same (Aronson 1990, pp.12f.). But is this really true? There has been a profound process of secularisation in Swedish society during the twentieth century. This in a deeper sense cultural transformation has of course also affected the minds of the population. The conservative electorate has even been transformed in a secularised direction to a higher extent than the average Swedish population. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the electorate of the party still went to morning service in the church to a much higher extent than the rest of the population (Gustafsson 1965, p.335). In the 1980s and the 1990s there were no such differences anymore between the conservative electorate and the rest of the population (Holmberg 1985, p. 206; SCB 1994, p. 164). The geographical pattern of the electoral support for the party has also undergone a complete transformation in a direction away from the religious, traditionalist parts of southern Sweden north of Scania and the northernmost parts of Sweden in the direction towards the traditionally more secularised geographical areas and the big cities and their surroundings (Lindström 1999, manuscript).

Ljunggren's critique against Hylén that the long study period 1904-1985 constitutes a bias towards conclusions inferring ideological change seems rather irrelevant and even misleading in this perspective. Ljunggren's statement that the party had no clear party doctrine in

1904 and thus could not be studied from this year on also seems unwarranted (Ljunggren 1992 (Svensk Tidskrift nr. 1, p.62; Ljunggren 1992 (Svensk Tidskrift nr 2-3), p.169).

There has been an interesting debate in the Anglosaxon countries concerning the nature of conservatism. Is conservatism really an ideology like any other ideology or ideological system? Or, is conservatism more of a natural disposition which embodies the historical tradition, customs and prejudices of a society that could not, in consequence, be articulated as a body of ideas and values? A recent author, Andrew Vincent, argues that conservatism should be regarded as just one political ideology among other ideologies (Vincent 1994, pp.204ff.). However, the conclusions of this study clearly imply a rejection of Vincent's assertions. It seems that conservatism, unlike other ideologies, with its metaphysically anchored collectivist, pessimistic, traditionalist traits and views, is at least partly anchored in the pre-ideology tradition of the old traditionalist and religious belief systems.

Jan Hylén's conclusion that the ideology of the Conservative (Moderate) Party generally has moved from a predominantly conservative, collectivist ideological standpoint in the direction towards a predominantly individualist, liberal standpoint seems on theoretical and methodological grounds to be the most well-founded conclusion in the debate of the early 1990s. Hylén is not the only scholar who has drawn such conclusions. Already in 1972, Erik Anners stressed the ideological implications of the change of party name in 1969 from the Conservative Party to the Moderate Coalition Party as a shift in ideology in a liberal direction (Anners 1972, pp. 268ff.). Boedeker has come to a similar conclusion concerning the ideology and ideological development of the Conservative (Moderate) Youth organisation during the period from the early 1970s to the early 1990s (Boedeker 1994, pp. 83f.). A watershed in the ideological development of the Conservative (Moderate) Party seems to have been the early 1980s, when the electoral support for the cultural conservative Christian Democrats slowly and gradually started to rise in Sweden at the same

time as the electoral stagnation of the Moderate Party started. It might be that the optimal ideological drift towards liberalism was reached already fifteen or twenty years ago, when it comes to the electoral support for the Moderate Party in Sweden.

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## Yttrandefrihetens grundvalar och gränser samt dess betydelse för demokratin

### Två problem med yttrandefriheten

Fri åsiktsbildning är en oundgänglig förutsättning för demokrati. (SOU 2000:1 s 78)

I Demokratiutredningen *En uthållig demokrati!* (SOU 2000:1) uttrycks det att yttrandefriheten är en "förutsättning" för demokrati och man skriver vidare att

Yttrandefrihet, tanke- och trosfrihet uppfattas i dagens Sverige som självklara demokratiska rättigheter. /.../ Det finns (därmed) också en risk för att man förlorar förståelsen för att även yttranden som upplevs som obekväma, stötande och obehagliga måste få framföras. (SOU 2000:1 s 78)

I SOU-rapporten nämns alltså, som jag ser det, två problem med yttrandefriheten. Det första problemet är mer implicit – att den kan ses som "självklar" (ibid.) – vilket handlar om själva grunden för yttrandefriheten, eller m.a.o. att man kan ha glömt bort *varför* den friheten är önskvärd. Det andra problemet rör hur man ska *bedöma* vilka yttranden som är "obekväma"

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(ibid.) eller icke-obekväma, d.v.s. var gränserna ska dras.

Syftet med denna artikel<sup>1</sup> är att peka på ett antal problem som den svenska statsvetenskapen inte har uppmärksammat i tillräckligt hög grad – och det är de problemen med yttrandefriheten som skisserats upp med utgångspunkt från *En uthållig demokrati!*. Min uppgift är emellertid inte att endast peka på problemen utan även att försöka ange en riktning mot en lösning – även om lösningen naturligtvis kan diskuteras och kritiserats.

Då en demokrati i sig själv är en paradoxal företeelse – vilket tydligt märks när yttrandefriheten förs på tal – eftersom den å ena sidan ska tillåta individer att föra fram sina åsikter, medan den å andra sidan inte kan tillåta sådana åsikter som kan hota demokratin själv, krävs det att en demokrati har ett villkorligt perspektiv (se not 3) på tolerans och yttrandefrihet. Detta dilemma är det första problemet och rör *gränsdragningsproblematiken*.<sup>2</sup> En del teoretiker har försökt att lösa detta och min uppgift här är att utifrån tre teorier om yttrandefrihet försöka strukturera deras argument och ge ett sammanhållet svar, vilket kommer att utmytna i två principer som kan vara vägledande vid bedömningen av yttrandefrihetsdilemman.

Ett annat problem har varit att yttrandefriheten, av jurister och statsvetare, i allmänhet har betraktats som relativt oproblematiskt. Forsk-