Why, Who, and How?
Normative Problems of Co-Determination in the Public Sector, Illustrated by University Reforms in Denmark and Sweden*

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1. Introduction

During the 1960's and 1970's representative democracy and its ideals have been put on trial in the Western world. Experiments have been conducted, demands raised. Incumbent politicians have had to meet new challenges. Although the rhetorics of this period is still lingering on, it is at the beginning of the 1980's evident that the wave of "democratization", "near democracy" etc. has lost some of its momentum. The economic crisis in general, the often disappointing experiences with new democratic forms, and the flexible resistance put up by those challenged, are among the factors that account for the apparent slow-down in the process of "democratization". From the perspective of political science research this slow-down is no disaster, since it provides a pause that can profitably be used for theoretical and empirical research. Much of what has transpired during the last decade, has not been dealt with satisfactorily by democratic theory, neither in its normative, nor in its empirical variant.[1]

This paper will deal with a limited problem within this large area. I will discuss some of the normative claims for representation and participation that have been made in the context of public institutions, and I will further discuss, how the institutions of liberal democracy, government and parliament in particular, may handle these new demands for powersharing.

To do so in general terms would be an impracticable task. Therefore I have chosen to proceed by way of illustration. It is suggested that a lot can be learned about the theoretical problems of "democratization" by studying the process in a special institutional context, namely that of the university, and in a somewhat narrow geographical context, that of two Scandinavian countries, Denmark and Sweden.

The brief justification for choosing this illustration and these peculiar cases runs as follows:

a) *Why study the "democratization" of the universities?* Apart from the intrinsic interest of this topic, it can be argued that the universities, at least in Western Europe, more than other public institutions have been affected by the new demands for "democracy". The claims were presented in dramatic ways in the university, and the democratic dilemmas were lived out more fully there than in most other public contexts. "Democratization" has hitherto been put in inverted commas. The reason for this usage is, of course, primarily that the term has been used and misused so much that it is no longer of any value as an analytical concept. Another reason is, however, that what is characterized by means of the term "democratization" is in fact a very complex process that takes on different shapes, dependent upon the institution that is being "democratized".

In the context of the universities I suggest that "democratization" should be used as a convenient summarizing concept, which covers at least the following five emergent features:

– *a growing understanding among the public of the role of university in society,* including the ideas that what goes on in the university is influenced by societal values, and that the teaching and research in itself have profound effects upon society. – These are not at all new ideas, but they have now finally become understood in wider circles; in the process they may also have become some-

what vulgarized. This new understanding in turn easily becomes an argument for increased public control over the university.

– *an increased integration of the universities into the public sector.* The universities have become costly to run for the state, and partly for that reason they have become objects for planning and policy-decisions. – The consequence of this development is that universities are increasingly treated as public institutions among other public institutions.

– *an increased awareness among politicians with regard to the politics of higher education.* Universities are now being seen as vehicles for educational reforms, egalization reforms in society etc. – In the wake of this development often follows the appearance of inter-party conflicts and disagreements over the content of policies of higher education.

– *a tendency for the university itself to become an arena for social and political conflicts.* For external as well as internal reasons the life in, and the governance of, the university have become marked by political conflicts, some of which have been cast in forms of inter-party conflicts.

– *a demand for, and subsequent introduction of, new governmental structures within the university,* by means of which new groups have been given the right to participate in the decision-makig bodies of the institution, – so-called *co-determination.*

These five processes have tended to take on different shapes across Western Europe. In some countries violence and turmoil were prominent conflict features. In some countries the fifth process did not go very far, while in others it transformed the university government fundamentally. Irrespective of variations a major 'effect of the processes of "democratization" has been de-mystification of the university as an institution, and a tendency among politicians and citizens to look upon the university as a public institution that ought to be under public control.

This changing interpretation of the role of the university in Western Europe is fairly well documented in the specialist literature.[2] The five processes are thus also visible in the Nordic countries (e.g. Pedersen, 1981). Two countries stand out as especially interesting cases in this respect, namely Denmark and Sweden.

b) *Why study "democratization" processes in Denmark and Sweden?* Because in these two countries which are usually considered to be very much

alike in their social and political characteristics, two very different elaborations of "democratization" can be found, both of them being radical in comparison with those found in other countries and each of them is furthermore based upon a fairly clear set of normative principles. Thus it can be argued that closer scrutiny of these two processes of "democratization" may provide basis for more general speculations and empirical research.

Sweden has often enough been characterized as being in the forefront with regard to social and political experimentation. Referring to ongoing attempts to create co-determination within the Swedish industries Robert L. Heilbroner recently went as far as speaking about "a social experiment of truly historical significance". (Heilbroner, 1980). In the field of education Sweden has been heralded as a pioneering country; a few years ago an OECD examination report of Swedish education almost used the same words as Heilbroner, when it said that change and development in the educational field "should arrest the attention of the whole international community with a concern for education" and when it characterized Sweden as being "in the forefront of radical social reform". (OECD, 1979, 1).

In a similar way it was once said about less studied *Denmark* that "some of the most profound changes in the world take place in a quiet country like Denmark, where hardly anyone raises his voice and the rhetoric of revolution finds few admirers" (Dahl, 1970, 4). In this connection it is not irrelevant to continue by saying *that* the Danish university reform of 1970–73 was in many respects the most radical in the entire world in terms of granting co-determination rights to students and non-professorial staff, *but also that* the introduction and implementation of this reform made the last sentence of Dahl's sound slightly out of tune.

Enough has been said in order to justify the choice of topic for this paper. It is time to outline the thesis that will be pursued on the following pages.

The theme of the paper is the "democratization" of the two university systems in the wake of the student revolt of the late 1960'es. Emphasis will be given to the last of the five processes outlined above, and the thesis which will be argued is that the present configuration of structures of co-determination in each of the countries can be understood mainly as a result of the extremely different ways in which the political authorities –

government and parliament – defined the decision-problem, and how they responded to the political pressures and demands from students and other groups in university and in society.

The presentation will follow a straightforward path. In *section 2* a general discussion of the normative aspects of co-determination in public institutions will lead to the construction of a conceptual framework for the comparative analysis. Then the two profiles of emergent co-determination are presented by means of a diachronic as well as a synchronic comparison, *section 3*. The following *section 4* provides an analysis of the ways in which the politicians in Sweden and in Denmark coped with demands for co-determination, and in the final part, a brief conclusion is provided.

2. Normative Aspects of Co-determination

Let us consider the problem of co-determination, as it arises in a public agency or institution like e.g. a school, a hospital, a museum, a military unit, a ministry, or a university. We will in turn discuss the problem as it looks from the perspective of those claiming influence, and of those, who are entitled to grant such influence.

2.1 The Claims and the Claimants

In the typical case the governmental structure of the agency has hitherto been based upon some kind of hierarchical command. The leadership may be located in one person, who acts as the responsible manager of the agency, or it may be located in a collegiate body, a board which is entitled to issue orders etc., and which acts on behalf of the institution. The latter structural form is characteristic of most of those public institutions that have been endowed with a certain degree of formal autonomy vis à vis other organs of government.

Against this form of leadership criticism is raised, and demands are made for more democratic structures, typically involving the participation of a larger number of individuals in the decision-making units of the institution, serving as representatives for various interests.

The initial problem for politicians, who have to listen to these demands and to react to them consists in *decoding the claims* and *interpreting* them in terms of *relevant goals*, and next to *decide* what to do about the claims, i.e. decide if some of them are strong or convincing enough to warrant or necessitate action. Consequently a major problem for those who are demanding rights of co-deter-

mination consist in deciding how to present the demands; what kinds rhetoric to use; how to choose the most convincing arguments and reasons.·

This situation of presenting, interpreting and responding to demands thus boils down to the following questions: On what grounds may an individual, a collective group, or an organization demand influence over the government of a public agency? Which are the most effective arguments, i.e. which are the arguments that will be considered relevant and eventually compelling by those who are entitled to make constitutional decisions about the allocation of influence and legal authority?

Any person can of course walk up and demand access to a governing body of a public institution. But if the demand is to be considered a serious and legitimate claim, it has to be based in some minimal requirements about the relationship between the claimant and the institution.

As far as I can see there exist three categories of such minimal requirements. First, one may claim access by referring to one's *membership* of the institution, – one's status as an employee. Second, one may claim access by referring to the fact that one is *affected* by the decisions of the institution, e.g. in one's role as a client. Third, the claimant may refer to the fact that he is already in a *superior or supervisory position* vis à vis the institution in question. Since supervision is often coupled with a broader, more general managerial responsibility, this demand can also be grounded in a reference to the need for coordination, inclusion of societal or at least more general considerations, when decisions are being made.

The relationships referred to here are often couched in the slippery, but hard-to-avoid vocabulary of *interests*. Claimants are invoking certain interests, the term "interest" thus referring primarily to manifest and identifiable arguments. This terminology will also be used here as a convenient summary expression of a complex relationship.

In these terms it is thus possible to identify three categories of interests, upon which a claim for participation in decision-making bodies can be based:

– "membership/citizen" interests;
– "affected" interests; and
– "public/societal/general" interests.

These interests or arguments have only been sketched here.[3] Each of them has a long history as central concepts in democratic theory. In each case it is possible to differentiate within the category: thus there are e.g. many different types of "affected interests" that can be invoked, like consumers' interests, taxpayers' interests, etc. Some people are more affected by the decisions in question than others, and people are differently affected; — consequently the claims that can be put forward under the label of "affected interests" will differ with regard to power of persuasion. Similar reasoning can be made with regard to "membership interests": the quality of the membership may vary, — some members may be more qualified or bona fide "members" than others etc.

When claims are made for participatory rights these arguments are spelled out in more details, and much of the political debate at such occasions will focus on the validity or legitimacy of the arguments in the particular context. The relative persuasive power of the arguments will also differ from one context to another, and it is definitely not possible to answer a priori the question, which argument is the strongest.

It is also important to note that in a given situation the same type of argument can be used by different types of claimants, and that a given claimant may base his demands on more than one type of arguments. References to "membership interest" do of course require that the claimant is a "member" or "citizen", but in many cases the borderline between "members" and "non-members" will be vague, thus allowing many claimants to utilize this argument. In the same way, but even more pronounced, the "affected interest" is an extremely vague standard, since it can be argued that many people may be affected by a given decision, but at the same time not affected equally (cf. Dahl, 1970, 65).

Just like the various interests of claimants can be divided into three categories, it is possible to identify three groups of claimants. The first category consists of those who are *employees* or in other ways making a living from serving the institution. The second category consists of individual groups, or organizations that are related to the institution in the legal sense of being *hierarchically superior*. The final category is *residual*, consisting of all such individuals, groups etc. who are neither belonging to one or another of the two just mentioned categories. One may choose to speak about intrainstitutional, suprainstitutional, and extrainstitutional actors.

By making this distinction between, on one hand, the arguments for influence, representation, participatory rights etc., and, on the other hand, the claimants, the seekers of influence and representation, an important point can be made: *in principle any seeker of influence in a public institution may back his claims by any type of argument*. If I am an employee within the institution I may ground my claim on my status as a "citizen" or "member"; or I may refer to my status as directly affected by the decisions of the institution; or I may claim a role as representative of the "general interest". Standing outside the institution it may be natural and most convincing to argue for participatory rights by means of reference to a role as client or as a taxpayer, but I may also choose to stress my role as citizen, voter etc.; the hierarchically superior may on his side claim to act on behalf of society, the "general interest" etc., but he may as well claim to take care of the interests of specific groups of clients. What makes the rhetoric so bewildering in many debates on "participatory democracy" in the public sector is the distribution of roles among the discussants: most of us can claim influence by being taxpayers, by being citizens, by being voters, and many of us will be affected to some degree by the decisions made within the institution.

This means that if we create a classificatory scheme by combining the two dimensions, see *fig. 1*, none of the cells can be pronounced irrelevant or empty *a priori*. In any given situation it is a task for an empirical investigation to study the arguments used, the distribution of actors claiming influence, and the patterns of actor-argument relationships.

Fig. 1 A conceptual grid of demand-actor relationships

Argument \ Actor	Suprainstitutional (gov.)	Intrainstitutional (employees)	Extrainstitutional (clients)
	$\mathcal{N}$	*i*	*$\mathcal{L}$*
"general"/ "superior" interests *g*			
"membership" interests *m*		.	
"affected" interests *a*			

2.2 The political response

When politicians are called upon to decide in cases where individuals or organizations are demanding participation rights and influence within a public institution, they are confronted with three related decision-problems, *the Why? the Who?, and the How?* The first problem in this logical sequence consists in deciding, why there should be made any change in the first place? What is the character of the situation and the demands raised? Are present practices and structures unsatisfactory, and is the situation bad enough to warrant, or even demand, political action? What is involved here is, in other words, a *diagnosis* of the problem in the light of existing practices, structures, and goals.

The second problem is different. Its essence is the *choice of a formula* for representation and participation. Who — eventually among contending claimants — should be given the right to participate in governance? Which claims should be considered legitimate? What weight should be given to various claims? As in the case of diagnosis a formulation of and comparison with goals is paramount.

Third, with the diagnosis made and the proper formula chosen, time has come for the *implementation of details*, the formulation of the specific rules of participation and representation.[4]

In terms of the conceptual grid of *fig. 1* the problem for the politicians consists in

— discovering that influence over and within the institution is contended; that various claims are being made by various actors; and that, accordingly, a decision has to be made which constitutes a solution to a problem;

— considering the various claims put forward, and comparing them with the goals that have hitherto been ascribed to the institution; on the basis of this comparison a decision has to be made about the future goals of the institution, a decision which, eventually, calls for restructuring of the institution;

— on the basis of an evaluation of claims as well as actors a principal decision with regard to *which* actors should be entitled to participate, on *what grounds*, and with *what weight;*

— a final set of decisions by means of which the proper details of representation and participation are arranged, negotiated, and made operational.

What has been sketched here is a logical sequence of decisions. Its affinity with the ideal type of rational decisions is evident. Evidently actual de-

cision-making processes do not necessarily follow the same sequence. Several partial decisions may collapse into one. It may also be the case that the temporal sequence is totally or partially the reverse of the logical sequence outlined.[5]

The most important aspect of the decision-making process is, however, — at least for our purposes —, that the universe of options is bounded as depicted in *fig. 1*, and that actual decisions about the proper formula, — in whatever sequence they are made, — involve a choice among several possible configurations of arguments and actors.

Some of these formula-configurations can be outlined in schematic form, cf. *fig. 2*.

Fig. 2 Two hypothetical demand-actor configurations

(a)

(b)
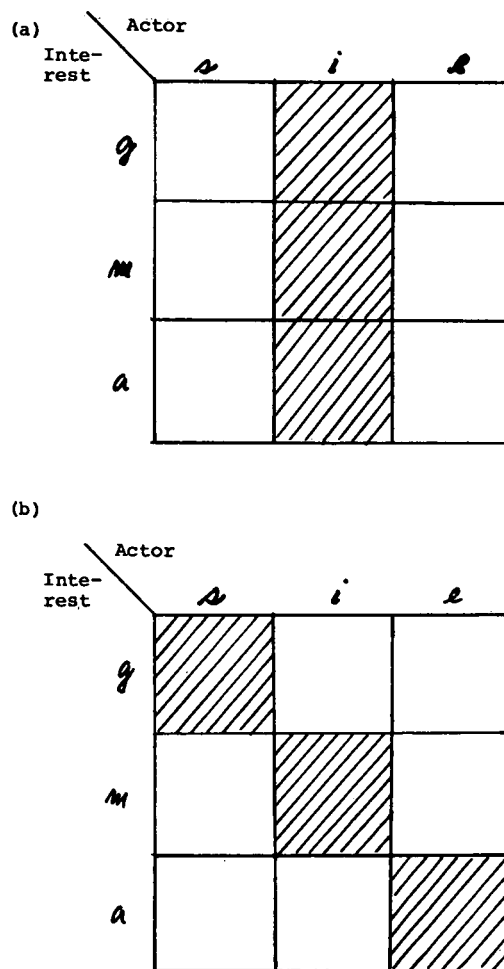
The first configuration (a) illustrates the way various interests were "represented" in the traditional university of Continental Europe before the years of student revolt etc. Only individuals belonging to the university itself – *in casu* the chaired professors – were entitled to participate in governing the university, and these professors who constituted a fraction of all "academic citizens", acted not only in their own interests as employees, but as representatives of the interests of the state, and as guardians of the interests of those affected by the activities of the university. It was in accordance with this view that the chaired professors were appointed as high civil servants, and mostly bestowed with the same kinds of insignia as were the highest officials within the Civil Service.

The second configuration (b) illustrates a system of representation and participation which is highly structured and differentiated. Each category of interests is represented by its "own" actor-category, and, most important, the employees of the institution are only represented in their capacities of employees.

These two patterns are, however, only the simplest and most straightforward among those possible. When politicians have to make decisions in controversial situations involving many and highly abstract goals, which may not be explicitly stated, and when many different groups are making different claims, it is no wonder, if the resulting patterns become much too complex to lend themselves to depiction within the confines of a 3×3 matrix. This point will be made clear when actual Swedish and Danish decision-making situations have been described by means of the conceptual tools presented here.

3. Denmark and Sweden: Contrasting Emergent Patterns of Representation and Participation

Similarities and differences come out clearly, when we ask the question which has been prominent in most debates and decisions on universities in recent years: Who shall have the right to participate in the management of the university? We will see immediately that whereas the answer would be very much alike in earlier times it differs considerably across the two countries since the mid-1970's.

Until the 1960'es universities in Denmark and Sweden were still stable institutions which, modelled along the lines of the traditional European "Ordinarieuniversität", functioned in coexistence with other public institutions; were financed by the state; served the needs of the state for an educated elite; and at the same time pursued teaching and research without much interference from the outside world.[6] The central figure in university life was the individual professor. The professorial "chair" was endowed with the legal and financial powers to control the development of "its" branch of learning. Succession to chairs being of the greatest importance, every precaution was taken to safeguard and control promotions. Formally the professor was appointed by the King, but in reality he was coopted by his future colleages. The professors jointly ruled the daily business of the university as members of the various collegiate boards. The organisational structures might differ from university to university and from country to country, but the basic pattern of management was the same.

During the last decade this pattern of management has been changed fundamentally, as new structures of participation and representation have been created or imposed. In both countries the new pattern is based upon the idea that the chaired professor should no longer be the sole ruler, neither as an individual, nor as a member of a collegiate group.

In *Denmark* the break with the past has been most radical in terms of rights of participation. Already in 1970 a first University Act was passed by the *Folketing*. It was revised somewhat in 1973 and extended to all institutions of higher learning. This means that the Danish institutions during most of the 1970'es have been working under rules that date back directly to the turbulent years of 1968–69.

The main features of the participatory aspects of the Danish structure can be summarized in three points:

– the ex-officio memberships of professors in the governing bodies of the university were abolished. All teachers, tenured as well as un-tenured, have been put on equal terms with regard to suffrage and eligibility. It has also been established that all teachers, irrespective of rank and/or qualifications, should be able to perform all types of tasks within the spheres of research, teaching, and administration;

– the students have been given considerable influence over and responsibility for their own education by the establishment of a hierarchical structure of study boards based upon the principle of numerical parity between teachers and students;

– the students and all auxiliary staff (academic secretaries, typists, janitors, etc.) have been given the right each of them to control 25 % of the seats in all other governing bodies, from the highest to the lowest level in the three-level organizational hierarchy within the university (senate-faculty-institute), the remaining 50 % of the seats being reserved for the academic staff proper.[7]

Important to note is, first, that only individuals employed by the university are given suffrage and eligibility; second that no distinctions are being made by means of qualitative criteria within each of the three "estates": firstterm students are on equal terms with students, who have been studying for six or more years; newly appointed assistants are on equal terms with full professors; unskilled technical staff are counted with the same weight as highly trained engineers etc.

If all details are considered, the Danish organizational set-up is, of course, highly complex. We may, however, make it simple by stressing only the main principles. The government of the university is split in two branches, one taking care of research and general business, and another con-

centrating on educational aspects.[8] As we have just seen these two sectors are organized according to different principles. If we let the Senate *(Konsistorium)* represent the first, and the Study Boards *(Studienœvn)* the second sector, the basics can be presented as in *table 1*.

In *Sweden* the re-organization of the universities took place during the first years of the 1970'es, and the new organizational structure was made operational as of 1977. The "gestation period" thus was much longer in Sweden than in Denmark, a fact that will be commented upon at a later stage.

It is not at all possible to summarize the participatory aspects of the new Swedish university reform in the same neat way, as was possible in the Danish case. The reason is fourfold: first, the reform was a comprehensive reform that encompassed all institutions of higher learning and post-secondary education; second, the reform, in contrast to the Danish, was not only an organizational reform, but a comprehensive reform in which a large number of political goals were pursued; third, the goal of "democratizing the organization

Table 1 The Composition of the Principal Collegiate Bodies. Denmark

(a) The Senate:

Category of Representatives	How Many?	Who are Eligible?	Who Nominate?	Who Elect?
Representative of teachers and research fellows	50 %	All tenured and untenured teachers *	Same as eligible; informal caucuses.	Same as eligible
Representatives of technical and administrative staff [TAP]	25 %	All employees in technical and adm. staff [TAP]	Same as eligible; informal caucuses. Sometimes slight union involvement	Same as eligible
Representatives of students	25 %	All registered students	Same as eligible; informal caucuses. Sometimes partisan divisions	Same as eligible

* Rector and Pro-rector are *ex officio* members of the Senate. They are, however, included in the 50 % quota. These two officials are themselves elected by an electoral college, in which the three "stände" are represented; only tenured academic staff (professors and lecturers) are eligible for these positions.

(b) The Study Boards:

Category of Representatives	How Many?	Who are Eligible?	Who Nominate?	Who Elect/ Appoint?
Representatives of academic teachers involved in the study program	50 %	Teachers, tenured and untenured, incl. part-time teachers	Same as eligible; informal caucus.	Same as eligible
Representatives of students in the program	50 %	All students in the program	Same as eligible; informal caucus.	Same as eligible

of education" (Prop. 1975:9, p. 406) was pursued by means of an extremely complicated set of means, involving a great many categories of representatives etc.; and, fourth, the organizational structure created by the Swedish authorities included more levels and more vertical as well as horizontal linkages than even the Danish.[9]

It is, however, possible to highlight the essential participatory features by presenting the composi-tion of the Senate *(Högskolestyrelsen)* and the Study Programme Committees *(Linjenämnd)*. *Table 2* contains the basic information.

Even from this, much simplified, picture of the Swedish structure some important observations can be made.

First, and maybe least important, we note that the legal powers of the professors have been transferred to a wider group within as well as outside

Table 2 The Composition of the Principal Collegiate Bodies. Sweden

(a) The Senate:

Category of Representatives	How many?	Who are Eligible?	Who Nominate?	Who Elect/ Appoint?
Representatives of "public interests"	33 %	No stipulations in legal texts	Political groups in Municipal and County Councils	The Municipal Council and the County Council
Representatives of "activities carried on within the unit"*	33 %	All university employees (in principle)	Informal caucuses among teachers. No stipulations made in legal texts	Tenured teachers
Representatives of the employees	17 %	All university employees	The organizations of the employees, i.o. SACO/SR; TCO-S; SF	The Regional Board of Higher Education
Representatives of the students	17 %	All students	Informal caucuses among students	Electoral College of students

* Rector and the Permanent Head of the University Administration are included in this group (11 %). The Rector is appointed by the Swedish government upon recommendation of the Senate or a special electoral college. The government appoints the Head of Administration.

(b) The Study Programme Committees:

Category of Representatives	How Many?	Who are Eligible?	Who Nominate?	Who Elect/ Appoints?
Representatives of "activities carried out within the area of activities of the study programme committee"**	33 %	Teachers, various categories	Informal caucuses	Teachers, various categories
Representatives of "trades and professions" 33 %	No stipulations made	Various organizations of trades, industries, professions, employees, etc.	The Senate	
Representatives of students	33 %	Students		Electoral college of students

** A representative of technical and administrative staff may also be appointed if the organizations of these employees so demand. This as well as other stipulations on the composition are approximate and may vary according to local decisions.

the university proper. While in Denmark the powers of the chair were only spread among teachers, technical and administrative staff, and students, in Sweden the diffusion of power involves local politicians, trade union officials, officials and elected representatives of a wide range of interest organizations, in addition to the various groups of employees and students. Second, this diffusion of powers does create a number of personal and organizational linkages between the university and its environment, in marked contrast to the "closed" Danish governmental structure. Third, it is suggested even by this sketchy description that the principles of representation and participation must be quite complex, at least when compared with the straightforward representational scheme that was introduced in Denmark.[10].

What has been developed in this section is a puzzle: Why is it that two political systems so much alike, when exposed to the same stimuli, respond in very different ways, creating in the Danish case a structure of university government based upon some principles of co-determination for employees and students, and in the Swedish case creating a highly elaborate governmental structure, unmistakably based upon a number of corporatist ideological notions?

This is the *explanandum* that will be dealt with in the following.

4. Actors, Claims, Responses, and Formulas

An understanding of these differences can be attempted at various levels of comprehensiveness and generality. A genetic/historical perspective would soon lead to the conclusion that the political processes that produced the two different outcomes vary considerably, but that they have also something in common: the process was highly complex, extended over time, involving many and shifting actors within as well as outside the legislative arena, and the outcome cannot be interpreted as a response to a search for rational order. The political processes are much more like the "garbage can"-processes described in modern political decision-making theory.[11]

In a comparative analysis of recent university legislation in Western Europe Hans Daalder has suggested that a major explanatory factor of cross-national variation is *the timing* of events and legislative responses. Thus one generally finds a close relation between early passage of statutes and radical contents. The experiences of countries like France, The Netherlands, Denmark, Austria,

Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, and Finland all support this generalization. Sweden with its late legislation and the radical contents of that legislation apparently represents a deviant case, according to Daalder (1982:499–500).

Upon closer scrutiny this deviation does, however, tend to break down. The radicalism of the Swedish arrangements is — it can be argued — not a radicalism in terms of democratic principles, but rather a radical new way of linking university and society.

Timing undoubtedly is an important factor in explaining the content of participatory reforms, — but *how* does timing contribute? In order to come to grips with that question, we will have to examine more closely the two legislative case-stories. The examination will utilize the concepts that were introduced in *section 2*.

4.1 Claims and Initial Response

The first serious claims for participation in university government came from students during the spring events of 1968. This is a myth that has been created — and sustained — in quite a few countries. As for Denmark and Sweden the statement is only partially true. In these countries the swift transformation of the universities from exclusive elite institutions to institutions of mass education had put considerable stress on the relations between various groups within the university, and in both countries attempts had been started well before 1968 to remedy some of the structural imbalances. But the timing of events differed considerably.

In *Sweden* a major reform of universities as part of the general reform of the educational system was under discussion, and the central government committee (the so-called U68) was set to work during spring 1968. The office of the University Chancellor was also to some extent prepared, when the students made their first diffuse demands for influence; at least the Chancellor's Office immediately took a political initiative by asking the government for a permission to conduct experiments with various forms of participation at the universities. This permission was granted at once, and over the next years a considerable amount of experimentation took place. The potential political conflict thus was kept under control, without any intervention from parliament.

In *Denmark* events developed in a different way. A government committee, in which professors, students, and civil servants had been repre-

sented, published a report in early 1968. This report contained some very modest proposals for increased participation by younger university teachers in the governance of the university, but no one, not even the student representative, had asked for participatory rights for students. The student uprising in Copenhagen in the spring of 1968 was intense and dramatic, compared to the minor incidents that took place in Stockholm, and it frightened the newly appointed tri-partite bourgeois government. The Minister of Education gave some implicit support to the new demands for participatory rights, but he studiously insisted that government and parliament should not discuss, and much less act, as long time as the universities themselves tried to find solutions that would satisfy the various groups of teachers and the students.

Thus we see two different responses to stimuli that only differed in intensity. The Swedish response consisted, first in combining the issue of participatory rights with a large number of other policy issues, thus making the former less conspicuous, and, second, referring these issues to a government committee, composed of four high-ranking civil servants, who were given wide discretionary powers with regard to the handling of the work in the committee (U68) and its various affiliated/subcommittees. The Danish response was diametrically opposite: first, the Minister of Education did himself acquiesce with the issue of student-teacher participation, such as this issue was defined by the actors within the university; second, he made no attempts to study university problems in a broader perspective, and, third, he decided to let students and teachers at the universities, — first and foremost at the University of Copenhagen, — try to find mutually agreable solutions. In Denmark the initiative thus was handed over to political forces within the university, whereas in Sweden it was transferred to a bureaucratic setting equally far removed from university and parliament.

4.2 Making the Diagnosis and Defining the Problem

In comparative terms the principal Danish actors in the university debate were amateurs. A newly appointed tripartite bourgeois government and an inexperienced Minister of Education had to handle a dramatic and turbulent political situation, and the task was not made easier by the fact that the major opposition party, the Social Democrats,

systematically tried to gain advantages by its handling of the issue. It was also important that the Ministry of Education was a rather weak administrative organization, and, in particular, that neither of the relevant actors had much experience in handling policy in this field.[12]

By handing the initiative over to the universities, the teachers and the students, the Danish politicians *de facto* abdicated influence. The very definition of the issue was made within the university, and it was neither altered nor elaborated upon by the politicians. Without exaggeration it can be said that it was a simple question of "democratizing" an authoritarian institution by taking away from the full professors their traditional powers and giving them to other teachers and, especially, to the students. A corollary to this view was an acceptance and a stressing of the traditional *autonomous* status of the university vis à vis other state authorities.

It is important to note that this diagnosis of the decision-problem was accepted by almost all politicians during the ensuing debates in parliament.

Why is it that a government and a parliament, irrespective of party, accept a problem and a set of goals that have been defined by a rather small group of citizens? It has been argued that such adaptive behaviour should be interpreted as an attempt by politicians in general to court the large cohorts of young voters (Daalder, 1982; Pesonen, 1982). It can, however, be argued that the reaction of the Danish politicians also had another, theoretically more interesting, background.

When a new and difficult problem has to be dealt with in politics, it is tempting for the political actors to take refuge in the conceptual world of analogy and metaphor. By comparing the new situation to something already known, it becomes easier to grasp and control the new problem. In politics the use of analogy does, however, also serve other than analytical purposes. First and foremost it serves the purpose of creating positive or negative emotions, to impart upon the phenomenon a particular value, and thus engage and activate the audience. As in other fields of intellectual activity the use of metaphors may, however, have not only beneficial effects. If a metaphor is taken literally, it is allowed "to become an identity, an assertation of fact that may be, and usually is, entirely erroneous. To take a metaphor literally is to create a myth and the more conventional myths become, the more difficult they are to dislodge." (Landau, 1972, 83).

A perfect illustration of this mechanism can be found in the Danish debate and especially in the debate in the *Folketing* in early 1970, when the parties made their standpoints clear during the first reading of the University bill. In the very first speech by the spokesman of the Social Democratic Party the situation in the university was compared to that of the Danish society 120-50 years before; the proposal to give the students 33 % of the seats in Faculty Boards and in the Senate was characterized as a step forward, but "it is a step forward from the age of absolutism to the era of the estates of the Realm; There is still another step to be taken in order to arrive at constitutional democracy" (Ft. F. 1969/70, col. 3294). The implication of this analogy, when it hardens through debate and is taken literally, is that the university is a kind of *microcosmos,* comparable to the surrounding society, and its *citizens* should be given *democratic political rights* in the same way as the citizens of the nation-state were given democratic rights during the 19th and early 20th century. The final implication of this powerful analogy is, of course, a demand for the 'one-man, one-vote"-principle. This implication was also drawn by several debating politicians, most notably those belonging to socialist parties.

The important thing to note is that the analogy between the university and the nation-state was not contested by any Danish politician. Other analogies were also referred to and used, such as the analogy with the industrial plant, the management of which ought also be shared by the various categories of employees, according to a number of politicians who favoured such "democratization", but these analogies were supplementary or secondary.

By defining the problem of representation in these terms it is not very surprising, if the analogy controls the decision by controlling the premises that are brought to bear. The definition sets the agenda, also in the sense that it makes some aspects irrelevant for the decision. Thus it is evident that very few Danish politicians were prepared to discuss the relationship between university and state at the time, nor were they much inclined to discuss the goals and purposes of the university in society, the proper role of the university as an institution which was 100 % financed by the state. To the extent that these aspects were touched upon at all, it was done by bourgeois politicians, but the discussion was not taken beyond the most banal clichés, such as the argument that the uni-

versity belongs to society, and therefore its governmental structure ought to be laid down in an act of parliament. The Radical Liberal minister of education thus summed up the decision problem in 1970 as one of weighing against each other the views, interests and influence of the three groups, the chaired professors, other teachers, and students, and to these interests should be added "the societal view and the societal interest, the relevance of which is stressed by the fact that the bill is debated and will be decided upon by the *Folketing*" (Ft.F. 1969/70, col. 3322). The 'societal interest' in the university thus was defined in terms of procedural forms, not at all in terms of substantial content, expectations, demands etc.

In Sweden the "symmetrical reasoning" (Ruin, 1979:151—52) from societal macrocosmos to the microcosmos of the university was also applied by students and various other groups, but it never caught on and controlled the public debate. The reason for this difference is complex, but it is partly due to the fact that the issue was handled on a more sophisticated level from the very beginning of the debate. There is no doubt that the Swedish authorities were considerably better prepared to handle the political problem than the Danish. A strong and experienced Social Democratic government; an ambitious Minister of Education — Olof Palme —; and an efficient administrative agency, the Office of the University Chancellor, were at the receiving end. The U68-Committee, with flexible and self-controlled relations to the other actors, was ensued with the task of preparing a comprehensive university reform, and it was allowed to work at relative ease until it delivered its main report in 1973 (Högskolan, SOU 1973:2). A long tradition for centralized government control with the universities was important in this connection, as was the far-reaching consensus among Swedish parties, and the relative moderation of Swedish students and their organizations. In all these aspects the Swedish situation is different from the Danish.

By conducting controlled experiments with various models of student-participation and at the same time having the U68 at work, the authorities could easily avoid to make hasty decisions. Soon the work of U68 overshadowed the experiments, and in 1972 the parliament decided that decisions with regard to participation rights would have to wait until U68 had finished its work. At this occasion a consensus was also registered in parliament with regard to the very definition of the decisional

problem, and this consensus happened to correspond to prevalent views within the U68 Committee (Lindensjö, 1981:142). For the central actors the problem was the following:

"The question concerning university governance has to be seen in a wider perspective (than influence for students, add. MNP). Higher education is a general concern for society, a public matter of great importance. Universities and other institutions of higher learning are also important for the towns and the regions in which they are located. For these and other reasons strong arguments speak for the inclusion of representatives for society, and here primarily at the level of municipalities and counties, in the local governmental structure of the universitites. By these means it will be possible to obtain an increased influence of the citizens over the universities." (Mot. 1972:1151, p. 7, cf. also UbU 1972:4, p. 9).

No one said things like that in Denmark. Or for that sake in other European countries.

4.3 Finding the Formula

The quotation from the debate in the Swedish *Riksdag* suggests that the Swedes were searching for a formula for representation of various groups, but that they had already agreed on certain principles, including the principle that laymen ought to be represented on the governing boards of the university. This, in fact, was also the case.

Representation of laymen on boards of public agencies had become increasingly common in Sweden during the 1960'es, and at some point in time this idea was also applied to the universities. It is difficult to trace the idea to a single source. It was mentioned by some of the universities themselves as part of the responding activities within the official experimental program (Ruin, 1979:174–75). It was certainly also part of the thinking among the high civil servants, who drafted the U68-report, and as we have just seen, the view was endorsed by the *Riksdag* at an early stage. What remained to be done was to make a decision about the proper formula of representative.

This turned out to be the difficult part, partly because the weighing of various interests was a complex and delicate task, partly because of the fact, that the Socialist majority was lost in the election of 1973 and replaced by a fragile equilibrium of Socialist and Bourgeois parties. We will not follow this long-winded process in details from 1972 to 1977. The result of it has al-

ready been summarized in *table 2* with regard to two levels within the governing structure, and good detailed descriptions of the very complex decision-making process and its outcome are readily available, cf. note 9. Suffice it to say that the resulting pattern of representation bears some likenesses with the hypothetical pattern depicted in *fig. 2 (b)*. A number of "legitimate interests" were acknowledged: the interests of *employees*, of *students*, of *the institution*, of *trades and professions* linked with the university, and, first and foremost, the *"public interests"*, *(allmänna intressen)*, a genuine Swedish invention with regard to the principle as well as with regard to the way it was made operational, cf. *table 2*. These interests were supposed to balance and complement each other in varying mixes, such that the *external interests* were made dominant in those boards that made plans for and allocated ressources to various educational sectors, while *internal interests* were allowed a majority with regard to the day-to-day running of the university.

It is much easier to describe, how Danish politicians found the proper formula of representation.[13] They did not find it themselves, – it was found for them by a small group of students, one may say with only slight exaggeration. A few days after the outbreak of the student revolt at the University of Copenhagen the principle of parity of representation in study boards was coined, and in the decentralized negotiations that were conducted over the next months it was built into most agreements made. So was the application of a 2–1 distribution of seats among teachers and students in Senate, Faculty Boards and the Boards of Institutes. These arrangements were provisionally endorsed by the Minister of Education, and they were of course for that reason almost impossible to change, when the Ministry prepared the bill that was passed as the first University Act in 1970.

We have seen already that the political actors defined the problem as one of giving participatory, rights to new groups within the university, and primarily the students. No one mentioned the other categories of employees such as clerks, technical assistants, janitors etc. until the very end of the debate in the *Folketing*, when these groups were promised some kind of equivalent rights in connection with a future revision of the University Act. It was quite obvious that this was a minor issue compared to the granting of rights to younger academic staff and students.

A second important point is the rationale given for the relative weighing of the various groups. For the students, who claimed parity in the spring of 1968, the claim was a war-cry, more than a well-reasoned principle. Later in the process some principal underpinnings were given. In the bill that the Minister of Education put forward in 1970, the government granted the students 50 % of the seats in the study boards that were in charge of the educational programmes, but the government warned against a universal application of the principle of parity, because

"... boards composed according to the principle of parity presupposes consensus among the parts, and in such boards there exists a risk that such consensus cannot be reached, and that important decisions which have to be made consequently will not be made" (Folketingstidende, Till. A, 1969/70, col. 2101).

The incongruence in this kind of reasoning is blatant, and other attempts to argue for the principle of parity sound even more artificial, as when e.g. a high civil servant in the Ministry of Education defended the principle by arguing that

"the philosophy behind the fifty-fifty share of the seats between the teacher and the student representatives was that the teachers and the students were two homogeneous groups with opposite interests. Results satisfying to both parties would not be obtained until general agreement was reached through a "palaver-democracy", i.e. through intensive discussions and compromises." (Goldschmidt, 1975).

The latter quotation is revealing, because it indirectly states that policy-matters concerning higher education were to be decided without external interference, thus in sharp contrast to the principles laid down in Sweden. This point of view was also made an explicit policy during the *Folketing* debate. In the legal commentaries that followed the bill it was thus said that "the granting of seats to employers'/customers' interests should be met with hesitation, because it would result in interference in the traditional autonomy of the university." (Folketingstidende, Till. A., 1969/70, col. 2110–11). Instead it was decided to codify in the University Act that representatives from the university and representatives from public as well as private institutions, in which the graduates from the university were employed, should meet once a year for consultations. This modest clause was

more than many politicians and most students could stomach, and it remained a dead letter in the University Act until the revision in 1973, when it was removed from the legal text. This may be the most revealing indicator of the fundamental differences between the Danish and the Swedish approach.

5. Concluding Discussion

So far it has been argued that the timing of the legislative processes and the initial political diagnosis of the problem are the important explanatory factors, when we want to understand cross-national variation in university "democratization". If space had permitted, it could have been demonstrated, that the implementation of details is dependent upon the timing as well.

This question will not be pursued here. Instead we will take a final look upon the two formulas and some of their inherent problems and dilemmas.

A superficial observer would probably sum up the differences between the Danish and the Swedish formula by referring to the two stylized patterns depicted in *fig. 2*. No one can deny, that in Denmark only intra-institutional actors are represented on the various boards, nor that the Swedish system of participation and representation is characterized by its element of external representation which is evidently dual in character, comprising (supra-institutional) representatives for "the public interests" as well as (extra-institutional) representatives for various clientelistic interests.

It is also evident that the Swedes tried to create a system of government that would provide a maximum linkage between the university and the surrounding society, and that they did so by setting up a corporatist structure, in which various interests were brought together in varying proportions, and in which the policies of higher education research etc. at the university level were expected to emerge from the interplay of these interests.

It is more problematic to conclude about the general goals of the Danish university reform. All politicians from one end of the political spectrum to the other talked about the situation as one of creating participatory rights for members of the university community, but no one really tried to cope with the question, how clientelistic interests, not to speak about the equivalent of the Swedish "public interests", could be brought to bear upon the decisions and policies of the university. There are indications that the students supported their claims for participation by referring to themselves

as representatives for broader societal interests. Their role, apart from pursuing specific goals qua students, was to correct the course of the traditional university and in the process make it more useful for the population in general, — and the working class in particular. Representatives for the technical and administrative staff may in turn have thought of themselves as a check and corrective on the students. But these arguments were at best only supporting arguments, — the quest for "near democracy" was paramount.

Neither of the two structures of participation and representation are without problems and weaknesses. Space does not permit any thorough examination,[14] but four problems ought to be mentioned in this conclusion, since they are closely linked to the formulas, and since they all tend to modify the simplistic picture of similarities and differences.

First, in both countries it has been suggested out that the new structural forms are producing *dysfunctional immobilist tendencies*. That immobilism can easily result from "palaver-democracy", as it is practiced in Danish study boards, is evident: if compromises cannot be reached, *status quo* will prevail. Curricular reforms may require year-long negotiations, and quite often the effort is not found worth while. In Sweden the immobilism partly seems to be a result of trade unionism. The far-reaching co-determination reform (the socalled *MBL-reform*) interferes with the university reform in a way that makes it difficult to pinpoint the heart of the problem, but structural change that involve change in the work conditions of employees apparently has become difficult to decide about and implement.[15]

Second, in both countries there can be heard many complaints about *bureaucratic tendencies*, i.e. in the sense that time is increasingly being spent in committees etc. A Swedish evaluation report makes another important point that probably can be generalized:

"The democratic system with its various categories of representatives gives to the central bureaucracies wider room for maneuvering. The interplay between the various corporative groups which have been introduced in the name of democracy, often results in a blocking of the decision-making process, and hence the central administration becomes a determining and redeeming power." (UHÄ-rapport 1981:13, p. 59).

While the first two problems mentioned have been common problems for the Swedish and the Danish

university systems — and probably shared by many other university systems — the next two are linked to the special formulas that have been developed in the two countries.

A major dilemma in the *Danish* context seems to be the total neglect of creating structural linkages between university and society within the framework of the University Act. This neglect is to some extent a reflection of ideological conflicts, that were characteristic of the early student revolt, but they are of course primarily a result of the choice of the formula of representation. After a few years' experience with the University Act some politicians started to complain about the ungovernability and unresponsiveness of the universities. Right-wing politicians from 1973 and onwards have emphasized that the university belongs to the society, and its goals accordingly could not be determined solely by its employees and students (see e.g. Ft.F. 1972/73, col. 4026). The most colourful formulation of this emergent point of view once was made by the new Progress Party in a bill put forward in the *Folketing*, when the party stressed that

"... With this proposal the Progressive Party goes to the root of the evil, and settles the touchy problem of the outdated self-willedness of the institutions of higher education. The party wants to maintain that our universities and other institutions of higher learning are the property of the Danish society and not autonomous enclaves." (Ft.F. 1975/76 Till. A, cols 1459 ff., see also Pedersen (1982), p. 265).

This kind of thinking, even if it is mostly more moderate in its tone, has characterized Danish politicians since the mid-1970'es, and the temporary results have been a considerable reduction of the traditional autonomy.[16]

For all the attempts to create effective linkages between the university and society in *Sweden*, the reality may be different from the blueprint.[17] External representatives have apparently often found it difficult to see the meaningfulness and relevance of their job. Some groups of organizations are much more active and conscious about political influence than others. The very constructions which implies that individuals are able to act as representatives of distinct interests, is based upon a sociological role concept which may serve analytic purposes —, that has at least been the argument in this paper, — but may not always fit the real world. To mention just one example: On a given board there may be representatives for the

workers — and LO members — employed by the university. On the same board a LO representative may be present, charged with the task of representing the "public interests". Since it is mostly the parties/organizations, trade unions etc. that nominate both types of representatives, it is evident that the neat distinctions will often break down, and equally evident that conflicts of interests are latent.

That these and other problems should turn up, when new and supposedly more democratic structures of government were introduced in the universities, can only surprise those who are not familiar with *Contrat Social.*

Notes

* This is a slightly revised version of a paper presented at the XIIth IPSA Congress, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, August 1982.
1 It is symptomatic that the books by Pateman (1970) and Dahl (1970) are still indispensable, and that the most recent compendium of democratic political theory (Pennock, 1979) devotes only few pages to problems of "democratization" in the modern sense of the word.
2 The discussion in this paper relies upon Daalder & Shils (1982) which provides up-to-date analyses of the emergent relationships between state and university in most West European countries. For this discussion the chapters by Ruin, Pedersen, and Daalder are especially relevant.
3 The argument presented here and the terminology is inspired by the reasoning in Westerståhl & Persson (1975).
4 The terminology has been borrowed from Zartman & Berman (1982), who, however, uses the concepts of *formula* and *details* within the specific context of negotiation theory.
5 For discussions of the fit between theoretical models of decision-making and actual decision-making the reader is referred to e.g. Dror (1968) and March & Olsen (1976).
6 For descriptions of the ways in which Swedish and Danish universities were governed before the late 1960'es the reader may wish to consult Goldschmidt (1978); Wahlbäck (1975), and Pedersen (1982).
7 The legal text, *Lov nr. 362 af 13. juni 1973 om styrelse af højere uddannelsesinstitutioner* has been published with commentaries in *Uddannelse 7a/1973.* An official English translation can be found in *Minerva,* XV, no 3–4, (1977), pp. 377–86.
8 For a description and an analysis of this distinction, see Pedersen (1982).
9 The literature on the Swedish university reform is extensive. A monograph by Lindensjö (1981) provides a very detailed account. Shorter treatments

have been given by Ruin (1979; 1982), Premfors (1979); Pedersen & Hunter (1980). The legal texts have been published by Sandquist-Örnberg (1977). An English summary of the U68 proposal can be found in *U68 Higher Education* (Stockholm: 1973).
10 In this presentation the author has decided to omit a treatment of the regional boards of higher education, a new type of planning and coordinating organization, in which a majority of members are representing the "public interests", i.e. are local politicians. Sweden is divided in six such regions, each of them under the leadership of a board which has been entrusted with the responsibility for coordinating and planning all higher education within the region.
11 It may be indicative that the so-called "garbage-can"-theory of decision-making was developed in connection with studies of decision-making within universities, cf. March & Olsen (1976) and Enderud (1977).
12 As a relic of royal absolutism the Danish universities were considered outside the legislative domain, and consequently they were only in an indirect way supervised by the *Folketing.* When new universities were founded during the 1960'es, and when the costs of higher education skyrocketed, the *Folketing* became increasingly conscious; it was only in 1970 with the passing of the first University Act, that this unique situation changed. See further Pedersen (1982) pp. 235–6.
13 There are not many analytical treatments of the Danish development, apart from Pedersen (1982). An interesting autobiographical narrative by the former Rector of the University of Copenhagen deserves to be mentioned, even if it is a partial statement, Fog, 1977. No politician has as yet tried to describe or evaluate the events. For details about the events in Denmark during 1968 and 1969, see Pedersen, 1982, pp. 245–47.
14 Very little evaluation research has been done in Denmark on the topic. An attempt to conduct an evaluation project at the Roskilde University Center failed dismally, and political authorities, including the Ministry of Education apparently feel no need for public discussion and research. In contrast the Swedish government has initiated a large-scale research program, the aim of which is to monitor and evaluate the reform, see *UHÄ-rapport 1981:34* for a list of projects and publications.
15 On the *MBL-reform,* see e.g. Arbetslivscentrum (1980).
16 For a brief description, see Pedersen (1982), pp. 268–70. A book-length treatment has just been published, Christensen (1982). According to Roger L. Geiger (1978) the loss of autonomy by the *Gruppenuniversität* is a universal phenomenon. He puts the problem succinctly as follows: "The power struggle in higher education between university-based groups and the state over the mantle of authority once borne by the professors seems at the moment to have been

decided in favor of the government. The scope of decision making for elected university councils is narrowing to less important internal matters, while crucial decisioins on policy and planning are increasingly being imposed from either the Ministry of Education or the legislature." (p. 206).

[17] I have drawn on conclusions in UHÄ-rapport 1981:13, as well as in Pedersen & Hunter (1980). The reader may find food for thought by comparing this discussion with the discussion of the role of laymen in British universities in Moodie & Eustace (1974), espec. pp. 114–23.

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