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Social Capital in the Social Democratic Welfare State

BO ROTHSTEIN

The strength of the Swedish Social Democracy implies that Sweden is a critical case for theory about social capital. First, what is the relation between the encompassing welfare programs and social capital? Second, what is the effect on civil society of the neo-corporatist relations between the government and major interest organizations? Using both archival and survey data, the result is that the sharp decline in social capital since the 1950s in the United States has no equivalence in Sweden. This has to do with the specific way in which social programs have been institutionalized. Social capital may be caused by how government institutions operate and not by voluntary associations.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

In no other Western country has Social Democracy had such a political influence as in Sweden. Having been in government for forty-five of the past sixty-six years, the party is not only the most successful among Social Democratic parties but one of the most successful democratic political parties ever. As a consequence of this unique power of the political left, Sweden stands out as extreme on many standard measures used in comparative politics, such as public spending, degree of unionization, and voting turnout.¹ Apart from such purely quantitative measures, it also has been argued that the political and economic system in Sweden has been characterized by a more qualitative difference from comparable coun-

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tries. From the 1950s until the late 1980s, the Swedish society in general and its system of industrial relations in particular was, by many observers, branded with a special name: the Swedish Model.² One of the more important features of this model was an unusually close collaboration between the state and major interest organizations in the preparation as well as in the implementation of public policies. There are thus several reasons why Sweden should be seen as a critical case for the current discussions about the importance of social capital, civil society, and trust.³ One reason is the relationship between, on one hand, the high level of public spending and ambitious welfare state programs and, on the other, the health of the civil society. Have, as many have argued, the numerous and encompassing welfare programs made not only voluntary organizations but also other forms of informal social relations and networks between individuals unnecessary and thereby fostered social isolation and anomie? Is there something like a “carving out” effect so that more social programs mean less civil society and thereby less social capital?⁴

Second, what has been the effect on the vitality of civil society of the close collaboration between the government and the major national interest organizations? During the 1970s, political scientists labeled this “neo-corporatism” and it was argued that it would take voluntarism out of the voluntary sector because the organizations were getting most of their money and their tasks from the government, thus making them more like government agencies than parts of civil society. A standard assumption in the research on neo-corporatism has been that the government’s support for and collaboration with the interest organizations would make the organizations’ elite become more professional and less responsible toward their members and that the members’ activity would then drop.⁵ On the other hand, it also has been shown that support from the government can strengthen the ability of interest organizations to organize potential members.⁶ The Swedish case would provide us with an answer to the question of whether neo-corporatism creates or destroys social capital.

Third, what has been the long-term trend in social capital in this Social Democratic polity? In several articles and in a recent book, Robert Putnam has reported a surprisingly sharp decline in almost all major forms of social capital in the United States during the past two decades.⁷ The differences in not only size and demography but also in many political and economic aspects make a comparison

results of my work here. Ylva Norén has been a very helpful and skilled research assistant in this project. My collaborators in this project—Peter Hall, Claus Offe, Victor Perez-Dias, Robert Putnam, Theda Skocpol, and Jean-Pierre Worms—have given very helpful comments on earlier versions. My colleagues in the Department of Political Science at Göteborg University, especially Mikael Gilljam, Sören Holmberg, and Maria Oskarson, provided me with more good comments than I could handle. Many thanks to Thorleif Pettersson, who generously gave me access to the Swedish section of the World Value Study data, and also to Torsten Österman, who provided me with data from the *Forskningsgruppen för samhälls-och informationsstudier (FSI)* surveys. Nils Elvander, Lauri Karvonen, Michele Micheletti, Jonas Pontusson, Dietlind Stolle, and Filip Wijkström provided constructive comments on an earlier version of this report.

between Sweden and the United States what in comparative methodology is called a “most different design” approach. Especially in political matters, it is difficult to find two Western countries that are more different than Sweden and the United States.⁸ This means that if the trends in social capital in the United States and Sweden were the same, then we could assume that politics at the national level would be of no importance in explaining this phenomenon. Instead, we should examine hypotheses, for example, that changes in international ideological trends such as “postmaterialism” would be the important variables. However, if we were to find great differences in the forms and trends of social capital in these two countries, then it may very well be the case that politics explains social capital as much as social capital explains politics.

Fourth, one of the most important arguments in the discussion of social capital is the existence of a positive relationship between social capital and a well-functioning and stable democracy. If, as I will argue below, there is a decline in the way the Swedish democracy performs, then we should expect that the social capital, however measured, also would be declining.

FROM A MODEL DEMOCRACY TO A PROBLEM DEMOCRACY

The hegemonic position of the Social Democratic party in Sweden was perhaps strongest during the late 1960s. Not only did the party reach one of its all-time high electoral successes in 1968, scoring just above 50 percent, but it was during this period that the term “Swedish Model” became internationally recognized. For many observers, the Swedish Social Democracy seemed to have found a number of working solutions to some of the most difficult problems facing modern capitalism.⁹ The combination of democratic stability and popular legitimacy, considerable economic growth, a collaborative system of industrial relations, and a uniquely universal and generous welfare state were the central parts of this model.

The Swedish Model is a concept that covers a broader terrain than the political system in Sweden, but it is safe to say that the Swedish type of democracy represents the specific political configuration of this model during the postwar period. According to many outside observers, as well as in the Swedish self-image, this was a society marked by high levels of trust, both vertically between citizens and the elite and horizontally between individuals. Concepts such as consensus, collaboration, and cooperation were important ideological markers of the Swedish society during this period. Thus, the image of this “model democracy” of the 1960s and 1970s was that the citizens were, on a large scale, cooperating with one another in different nationwide “popular movements.” The parties in the labor market collaborated in organizing peaceful industrial relations, and the ruling Social Democratic party tried to form public policies in consensus with the parties in opposition and with major interest groups.¹⁰

Today, the general picture of Swedish democracy is very different. Most of the elements of the Swedish Model have been abandoned or are in a state of crisis.¹¹ Most notably, the trustful collaboration between the major interest organizations in the labor market and the state disappeared during the late 1980s.¹² The participation of interest organizations in the creation of public policy by governmental commissions has become much less significant, and working compromises are seldom reached even when they do participate.

What evidence is there for arguing that the quality of Swedish democracy has deteriorated? An attempt to audit the Swedish democracy was carried out by a group of political scientists (including this author) in 1995. Measuring thirteen indicators, the report concluded that, on balance, there has been a qualitative deterioration in the way the Swedish democracy has worked during the past two decades, especially with regard to democratic control over the political agenda and control over economic resources.¹³ I will, however, confine myself here to three types of data indicating a change for the worse in the quality of Swedish democracy.

CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

A working democratic system must be built on a certain degree of legitimacy for elected representatives. Several studies based on surveys have shown that the number of persons who agree with the statements "parties are only interested in people's votes, not in what they think" and "those who sit in Parliament making decisions don't pay much attention to the thoughts and views of ordinary citizens" has increased considerably since 1968. It could be argued that this only reflects the critical attitude directed against all kinds of authority in the zeitgeist of the late 1960s and beyond, especially against the way in which the media cover politics. Except for the EC Parliament election, participation in recent general elections to the Riksdag has remained comparatively high (86 percent to 91 percent). It also could be argued that the increased mistrust is based on the changed behavior of leading politicians.¹⁴ Such an interpretation is substantiated by data from another survey study showing that trust in Parliament and the government has gone down considerably since 1986 (see Figure 1).

This dramatic fall in confidence in the central political institutions stands in sharp contrast to what was argued in a recent major international research project on beliefs in government in the Western European countries, namely, that their data from 1981 to 1990 "do not demonstrate that there has been a widespread decline of the public's confidence."¹⁵

Local government is of particular importance in Sweden for two reasons. One is the long tradition of self-governance for the local authorities, and the other is the provision of most of the social services by the municipalities. There is, unfortunately, no time series for trust in local government equivalent to the ones shown above. However, in the 1996 Society Opinion Media (SOM) survey,¹⁶ a question

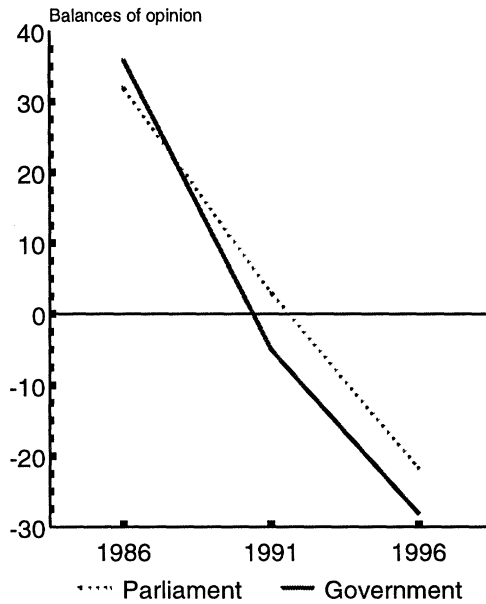


Figure 1. Trust in political institutions, 1986, 1991, and 1996.

Source: Sören Holmberg and Lennart Weibull, *Trends in Swedish Opinion* (Göteborg: Göteborg University, the SOM Institute, 1997).

Note: Trusting answers minus distrusting answers.

about trust in the municipal councils was posed for the first time, and the result was the lowest figures seen among any of the fifteen institutions covered in the SOM surveys during the ten years, scoring -30 in balance of opinions.¹⁷

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A vital aspect of a working democracy is the willingness of people to spend time in established forms of political activity. Whereas for older generations, such participation may be a question of habit and social pressure, for young people, participation can be considered a more deliberate act. Here, we find two opposing trends. On one hand, several surveys show an increasing interest in politics. On the other hand, people are turning away from traditional channels for political participation, such as political parties and interest organizations, and are turning toward temporary and "one issue" organizations.¹⁸ Consequently, membership in the youth organizations of the political parties has declined sharply, from more than 220,000 in 1972 to 50,000 in 1995.¹⁹ There also has been some decline in membership in the political parties. In 1984, 13 percent of those twenty-five to forty-four years old were members of a political party, whereas ten years later, this

dropped to 6 percent.²⁰ In a recent study, it is argued that the parties have changed character from popular movements and member parties to *voter* parties. The work of volunteers has, to a large extent, been taken over by professional staff. Professional campaign and media activities have become more important than internal ideological debate, popular mobilization, and study circles. The study concludes that during the past two decades, members in political parties have become fewer, older, and less active.²¹ Politics in Sweden is thus becoming a “spectator sport,” even though more people claim to be interested in politics than ever before.²²

CIVIL SOCIETY AND POPULAR MOVEMENTS

An important historical research project about the Swedish nineteenth century labeled the latter part of the century as the “age of the associations.”²³ Among these associations, the so-called popular mass movements (“*folk rörelser*”), such as the labor movement, the farmers’ movement, the temperance movement, and the free churches, played a very special and important role in state-civil society relations beginning in the 1860s.²⁴ To understand this, it is important to recognize that in Scandinavia, a popular mass movement was (and still is), to some extent, different from what in many other, especially Anglo-Saxon, countries is understood as a voluntary organization. First, although the popular movements had strong local branches to secure mass participation, the movement as such was a united national entity, thereby linking individuals and local branches to the nation as a whole. Second, historically, the popular mass movements saw themselves as protest movements against the bureaucratic, clerical, aristocratic, and capitalist elite who dominated Sweden at the turn of the century. The idea of a “movement” implied that society should be changed and that the vehicle was mass organization from below. Third, a popular mass movement consisted not of one but of a whole network of organizations. For example, the labor movement included (and still includes) not only the unions and the Social Democratic party but also the consumers’ organization, the tenants’ organizations, the workers’ educational organization, the organization of pensioners, the scout organization, the workers’ funeral organization, and so on.²⁵ Fourth, as organizations of both protest and self-help, the popular mass movements stood in sharp contrast to the charity organizations dominated by the middle and upper classes. Fifth, in the official Swedish mythology, the popular mass movements were the major schools of democratic and organizational training, making the transition to democracy a relatively civilized affair in these countries.²⁶

What seems to be unique about Sweden, as well as about the other Scandinavian countries, is the development of a very close collaboration between the state and the popular mass movements without destroying the autonomy of the latter.²⁷ To illustrate the historical pattern, I will focus on one aspect of the relationship between the state and the labor movement in Sweden. An especially interesting case was the establishment of the National Board for Social Affairs in 1912.

According to the commission that prepared the bill, the task of this agency was not primarily poor-relief, a function handled by local authorities, but instead was nothing less than the so-called *labor question*. The commission argued that the problem was concentrated in the cities, where the rapid process of industrialization had led to a potentially dangerous situation with masses of workers who had become alienated from traditional local communities and other social bonds. In the words of the commission:

The feeling of solidarity that has emerged among the working masses, in itself praiseworthy, is limited to themselves and they do not appear to wish to extend it to the whole society in which they share responsibility and play a part. This obviously poses a national danger, which must be removed in the common interest of everyone. Everywhere the government therefore faces the difficult task of mitigating conflicts of interest and repairing the cracks that are opening in the social structure.²⁸

The National Board for Social Affairs was established to handle this problem by implementing reforms in worker safety, labor exchanges, and social housing and by overseeing the poor-relief system managed by the local authorities. Its mandate was to handle the labor question, and the preferred method was to *incorporate* representatives from this new and threatening social class into the state machinery. As a result of the commission's proposal, the chairmen of the national trade union conference (the LO) and of the employers' federation (the SAF) were given seats on the board of the agency and, following the corporatist principle, other representatives from the LO and the SAF were given seats on various subcommittees. The commission's argument supporting this arrangement was that the representatives from the organizations

would behave as guardians not only of special interests but also of the interests of everyone, of society as a whole. . . . It should certainly be expected that a representative body structured according to these principles, official and thus functioning with a sense of responsibility, should provide valuable support for the new social welfare administration.²⁹

This mode of organizing the relationship between the state and the organizations was not a centrally commanded elite project because it had already been established at the local level when public employment exchanges were set up starting in 1902. A common pattern arose in which half the representatives in these local boards were taken from the labor movement and half from local employers' organizations. The boards had not merely an advisory role but took full responsibility for operating the labor exchanges under the city councils. While a public and corporatist employment exchange system rapidly became dominant in Sweden, it was usually the exception in continental Europe. When this question was raised publicly for the first time in Sweden in 1895, in the city council of Stockholm, the local commission of inquiry explicitly warned against such a development as had taken place in Germany, where the question of control over the labor exchange system had become a major source of conflict between

labor and capital. In addition, the local unions in Stockholm argued that if the exchanges were to function properly, it would be imperative that these exchanges be trusted by the employers as well as by organized labor, and for this, a corporatist mode of representation was needed.³⁰

In a report from 1916 to the government regarding the operation of the exchanges, the National Board for Social Affairs declared that “no objection has appeared from any quarter against the organizational principles on which the publicly operated labor exchanges were based.” On the contrary, the board argued that it was these very principles that had made it possible for the system to grow and that had been pivotal for strengthening the confidence their operations enjoyed among both employer organizations and unions, “which in our country have fortunately abstained from utilizing the employment service as a weapon in the social struggle, which in Germany has partially distorted the whole issue of labor exchanges.” The Board also observed that

despite the sharp social and political conflicts that have emerged in other areas of public life between members of the employer and worker camps, on the boards of the labor exchanges the same persons have, in the experience of the National Board for Social Affairs, continued to cooperate faithfully in the interest of objectivity.³¹

This type of corporatist relations spread quickly to other areas of the Swedish state and came to dominate the political culture of the Swedish model. Not only were the unions organized into the state but many other voluntary organizations also were organized. For example, the temperance movement was given the responsibility of handling the government’s propaganda against widespread misuse of alcohol; the farmers’ movement, the responsibility of handling subsidies to farming; small business organizations, the responsibility of implementing subsidies to support small business; and so on. A qualitative breakthrough came during World War II, when nearly all parts of the war-time administrations incorporated the major interest organizations of each policy area.³² The argument that was put forward repeatedly was that this would create trust among the members and followers of the organizations for the process of implementing the policy in question.³³

This case illustrates that the relationship between voluntary organizations and the state in Sweden and in Scandinavia more generally has been one of close cooperation, more so than of competition or conflict.³⁴ Most important is that the corporatist channel of popular influence over the state was accepted by both the popular movements and the governing elite *before* the democratic breakthrough in 1917. Up until the 1980s, conservative, liberal, and social democratic parties had all considered this type of “democratic corporatism” to be the most politically effective way to handle social and economic problems, arguing that it would generate trust between the parties involved and would make it possible to secure both

functioning compromises in the process of policy formulation and a smooth implementation.³⁵

One can hardly overestimate the importance of the popular movements for the type of democracy that came to characterize the Scandinavian countries since the turn of the century.³⁶ First as schools of democratic mass mobilization, where “members learnt how to handle a chairman’s gavel and to accommodate themselves to majority resolutions,” and second as intermediary and modernistic organizations, they filled the gap between the nation-state and the citizens by creating collective identities in an era in which the fall of the old estate order had left a huge social and political vacuum.³⁷ If there could be an “owner” of an entity such as social capital, in Sweden, it has been the popular movements.

It should be added that the dominance of popular movements meant that neither “friendly societies” nor charitable organizations came to dominate the organizational scene during the critical decades when modern Sweden was formed. This is not to say that such organizations did not exist, only that they played a minor role. It should perhaps also be added that many of the leading persons in the charitable organizations quickly got leading positions in the governmental agencies that were established to handle the “social question,” especially in the National Board for Social Affairs.³⁸ Another reason for the minor role played by charitable organizations was perhaps their “state-friendliness.” Instead of jealously protecting the right of their own organizations to handle social problems, they took a positive stance when public authorities stepped in.

The close collaboration between the state and voluntary organizations has sometimes led observers to question whether a civil society even exists in Sweden.³⁹ As will be argued in the next two sections, this is based largely on a misunderstanding of the specific configuration of state-society relations in Sweden. These analyses usually emphasize conflict and competition at the expense of collaboration between the state and voluntary organizations. In any case, it would be difficult to argue that a voluntary organization that collaborates closely with the state creates less trust among its members than would one that refrained from contact with the government. The important questions are the type and quality of member activity, that is, whether it is voluntary and whether citizens are active for the “right” reasons.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL LANDSCAPE—AN OVERVIEW

In a comparative perspective, Swedes are very organized.⁴⁰ Survey data from 1992 show that of all Swedish adult citizens, 92 percent belong to a voluntary organization. The average number of memberships per person, depending on the measure, is between 2.9 and 4. More than half of the population (52 percent) consider themselves active and 29 percent serve as an elected representative in a voluntary organization. Only 8 percent of the adult population stand outside the

world of organizations. The degree of unionization is the highest in the world among capitalist economies; around 85 percent of the workforce is unionized, which is equivalent to 62 percent of the adult population. The sports movement is second to the unions in number of memberships, with 33 percent, followed by the consumers' cooperatives (32 percent), tenants' organizations (27 percent), and the cultural organizations (12 percent).⁴¹

When it comes to activity, the sports movement is the most successful in being able to get one out of five citizens to actually do something. Other organizations with high levels of mobilization (defined as active members in relation to the whole population) are the union movement (10 percent), cultural organizations (6.9 percent), tenants' organizations (5.9 percent), and recreational organizations (5.4 percent). Organizations with less than 1 percent are the environmental, women's, and temperance organizations, along with the free churches. The Church of Sweden, in which all citizens born in Sweden become members unless their parents state otherwise, scores 1.8 percent.

"Trust, by keeping our mind open to all evidence, secures communication and dialogue," writes Barbara Misztal.⁴² If this is true, there may be one specifically Swedish way of organizing people that should be of special interest for establishing social capital. These are the so-called study circles, which have been the preferred educational method, especially in the popular mass movements. Study circles are small groups of adults, usually meeting one evening a week to educate themselves on a special subject. According to a recent report, the average number of participants is 8.6 and the average number of hours spent in each study circle is 35.6.⁴³ Study circles are organized by the associations for popular education (which are often part of a popular movement) on topics ranging from the study of foreign languages to cooking to computer knowledge to the European Union question to rock music. Of course, many participate out of an instrumental interest, but as many as 40 percent report that they participate for social reasons. The educational norm is that the leader/teacher is supposed to proceed in an egalitarian manner, and it has been shown that 40 percent of the participants thought they decided how to organize the work more often than did the leader/teacher.⁴⁴ A recent study shows that 75 percent of the adult population has attended a study circle at some point and that around 10 percent participate on a regular basis. The importance of this type of activity is shown by the fact that each year about 40 percent of the adult population attend a study circle of some sort.⁴⁵

As could be expected, there is a positive relationship between participating in study circles and activity in voluntary organizations, voting, and having a more civic-minded attitude in general.⁴⁶ In Sweden, this activity is seen as one of the cornerstones of a viable democracy, and consequently, about one-half of the costs are covered by governmental funds.⁴⁷ The associations for popular education also arrange open lectures, evening debates, and various cultural activities.

To summarize, I quote a recent evaluation based on extensive qualitative and quantitative research: "The circles have an important societal function besides the learning that is going on and also besides what the participants say about the value of their social functions. It is quite clear that the study circles maintain a civic network right across all social borders."⁴⁸ The government's economic support for the study circles and the educational associations may thus be seen as an example of "creating social capital from above."

How do social class, gender, and age relate to organizational activity? One of the most cherished arguments for the popular movements has been that they have endowed the lower social classes with organizational assets that would work in compensatory manner.⁴⁹ Contrary to many other countries, workers and farmers in Sweden would be as well organized as are citizens in higher social strata. A study with data from 1986 showed that the picture was more complex and, to some extent, contradicted the established myth. On one hand, there were no differences between workers and the middle class (i.e., salaried employees and self-employed) for many large and politically strong organizations, such as the unions and the consumer cooperatives. On the other hand, there were significant differences in several other strong organizations, such as the cultural and sports organizations. People from the middle class were also members of more organizations (3.8 compared to 2.6). None of the twenty-five types of organizations that were analyzed had more members from the working class than from the middle class.⁵⁰

CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Despite the great political differences between them, Sweden is one of the European countries in which cultural and lifestyle trends from the United States are quickly adapted. There would thus be good reason to believe that the decline in organizational life in the United States that has been reported by Robert Putnam also would occur in Sweden. To start with the conclusion, the data show that during the postwar period, voluntary organizations have been growing in size, level of activity, and financial resources.⁵¹ Of course, this growth has not been evenly distributed. Women's organizations, the free churches, and the temperance movement have lost members, while the sports, retired citizens', union, cultural, and environmental organizations have grown. The growth of the sports movement has been especially impressive, from about 200,000 members in the 1930s to almost 3 million in the 1990s. Two studies of a typical Swedish "middle-town," Katrineholm, conducted in 1950 and in 1988 tell an interesting story on this point.⁵² First, there is an increase in memberships and more people are members of many (i.e., more than five) organizations in 1988 than in 1950. Second, although men are members of more organizations, the gender gap is closing. The "Katrineholm study" reports very little change in the membership of different

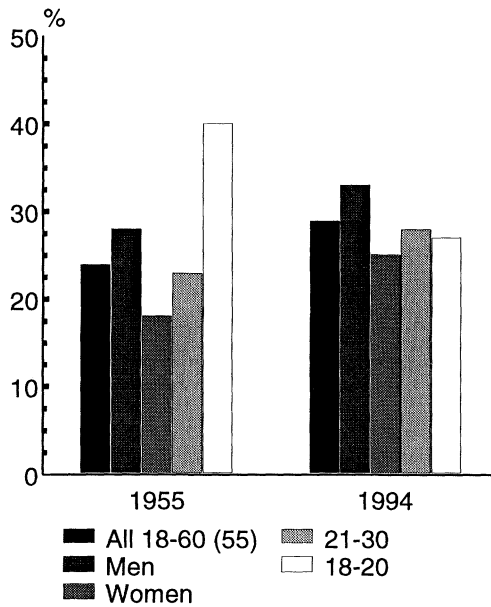


Figure 2. Interest in working in voluntary organizations.

Source: Data from Forskningsgruppen för samhälls-och informationsstudier (FSI), Stockholm (n 1955 = 2,050; n 1994 = 650).

types of organizations, except for the temperance movement, which has lost most of its members, but growth of other organizations more than compensated for this loss.⁵³ Third, the overall picture remains that hardly any Swedes fall outside the organizational world and that no decline in membership has occurred since the early 1950s. Other data tell the same story. The Swedish section of the World Value Studies from 1981, 1990, and 1996 shows a considerable increase in membership in charities, sport clubs, and environmental organizations and no decline in membership in political parties.⁵⁴

Some consider the problem with voluntary organizations to be not with formal membership or with resources but with activity level. Many traditional popular mass movements have been accused of having mostly “paper” members.⁵⁵ Some organizations, such as the unions, have made membership, at least to some extent, an instrument of economic rationality rather than of civic engagement by using various selective incentives to increase membership.⁵⁶ But as shown in Figure 2 from the 1950s to the 1990s, there has been no general decline in the willingness to engage in voluntary organizations; if anything, people are more willing now than they were four decades ago. The major changes are that women’s interest in voluntary work has gone up while the interest among the very young (eighteen to twenty years) has gone down.

In the Swedish section of the World Value Study, people also were asked if they had done any unpaid work in voluntary organizations.⁵⁷ Again, there is no general

decline between 1981 and 1990 for the voluntary sector in this respect. On the contrary, human rights organizations, environmental groups, and especially, sports organizations seemed to attract more people to voluntary work in 1990 than they did in 1981. This result is supported by Swedish Standard of Living surveys from 1968, 1981, and 1991 showing that the number of Swedes who live outside the world of voluntary associations did not increase between 1968 and 1991.⁵⁸ As for the study circles mentioned above, there has been a considerable growth in these. The number of adults who participate each year increased from 15 percent in 1960 to around 40 percent in 1975, a level that was pretty stable until the mid-1990s.⁵⁹

A different result is shown by survey studies conducted in 1987 and 1992, which report a weakening of “affinity” (“samhörighet”) for the major types of organizations and popular movements.⁶⁰ These results have been taken by several scholars as a clear sign of a major crisis for the voluntary organizations in Sweden.⁶¹ I believe, however, that one can give a different interpretation of this result about organizational “affinity.” What has changed may be not so much the willingness to participate in voluntary organizations as it is the Swedish population’s notion of collective identity in general and the collectivization of identity that traditionally has been the trademark of the popular movements in particular. This argument is based on interpretations of several different empirical studies. First, the “middle-town” study reported an interesting shift among blue-collar workers. In the 1950s, workers saw themselves as members of the working class and a labor movement committed to changing society. In the late 1980s, workers saw themselves as members of the middle class but not of a labor movement with a common goal. On the contrary, the study reported a sense of mass-elite cleavage within the labor movement. Second, a major survey report published in 1990 claimed that a new type of citizen, endowed with greater knowledge and resources, has emerged and that the educational level of these citizens makes it possible for them to question expert judgments.⁶² The virtue held most highly by Swedish citizens was, according to this study, the ability to form one’s own views independently of others.⁶³

Thus, it seems that the notion of individual autonomy has gained popularity among Swedish citizens, a change over time that can be confirmed. The proportion of citizens deeming themselves able to write a letter appealing an authority’s decision increased from 45.1 percent to 68.5 percent between 1968 and 1987. Third, work by Thorlief Pettersson within the framework of a larger study of European values supplies evidence that the citizen of 1990 was substantially more individualistic than his counterpart of ten years earlier and resented impositions and restrictions on individual means of expression.⁶⁴ According to this investigation, which used an index to measure values associated with individualism, an increase in this individualization index from -23 to +23 took place between 1981 and 1990.⁶⁵

One might expect this change in value patterns to be limited to the highly educated middle class, and it is true that individualistic attitudes are most marked in

that social group. Interestingly, however, it was only among blue-collar workers that any palpable change took place between 1981 and 1990; both high- and low-level white-collar employees, in contrast, remained largely at their earlier high levels when it came to embracing individualistic values.⁶⁶ Accordingly, the proportion of workers with an individualistic viewpoint in general increased from 39 percent to 53 percent between 1981 and 1990, and those expressing an individualistic outlook toward their working life rose from 17 percent to 43 percent.⁶⁷

One might assume that this new individualism would undermine forms of collective action (and for the universal welfare state); however, an individualistically minded citizen is not necessarily an egoistic citizen. On the contrary, in Sweden it appears that collectivism/individualism and altruism/egoism represent distinct and largely independent ranges of values. Accordingly, Pettersson and Geyer argue that the new individualists do not hold the values assumed by neo-liberals:

Compared with the less individualistically-inclined, moreover, they do *not* show any stronger interest in increasing today's wage differentials, they do *not* evidence any greater tendency to view the poor with a "they-just-have-themselves-to-blame" attitude, they do *not* show any stronger tendency to regard their fellow beings in less of a spirit of trust and fellowship. . . . They are neither the irrepressible entrepreneurs imagined by the Neo-liberals, nor the selfish egoists supposed by the Social Democrats.⁶⁸

These largely younger and highly educated citizens are, for example, no more critical of universal welfare programs than were their more collectivistically minded brothers and sisters.⁶⁹ One reasonable interpretation of these findings is that a solidaristic rather than an egoistic individualism has appeared. A concept such as "solidaristic individualism" may seem to be a contradiction in terms, but the meaning of this concept is that solidarity does not necessarily imply collectivism, that is, that people have more or less the same values and share the same lifestyles and may be interested in and engaged in the same organizations. By "solidaristic individualism" I mean that individuals are willing to give support to other individuals but also accept that they have other, different values and want to engage themselves for different causes. This support, however, is given under the condition that they can trust their fellow citizens to give the same support back for their own different lifestyles and organizational efforts. There is some empirical evidence from other sources that shows that individual autonomy and social responsibility go together. One such source is the analysis from the group behind the European Value Study, which argues that while individualism is increasing, "individualism may involve identification with, and action on behalf of, others."⁷⁰

One way to understand the diminishing affinity of Swedes for most movements/organizations is thus not as a declining interest in voluntary organizations but as an increasing demand for individual autonomy and a willingness to construct lifestyles and worldviews independently of large collectivities such as the old popular movements. The SOM surveys with annual data from 1986 to 1996 show no

decrease in the number of people who report being active in organizations. On the contrary, there seems to be a small increase in the percentage who report having some kind of assignment in a voluntary organization.⁷¹ Another survey asking respondents about the amount of work they have done in voluntary organizations during the past month shows a slight increase between 1992 and 1998.⁷² My conclusion is thus that the decreasing level of affinity for the major organizations/movements should not necessarily be taken as a sign of decreasing willingness to engage in voluntary organizations, thereby diminishing the amount of social capital in Sweden. It may instead reflect problems the old and established organizations face in creating the type of collective loyalty that existed in the past. If there is a crisis in the production of social capital, it must be manifested in changed patterns of activity, not just in changed attitudes of this sort.

In sum, I think there is something strange with the way the affinity question has been interpreted and that it is not a very good indicator of activity in or support for the voluntary organizations. The available data seem to show that when old and established popular movements, such as the free churches and the temperance movement, have a declining stock of members, it reflects a changed composition of organizational life in Sweden more than a general decline in voluntarism.

How should this new organizational landscape be described? Based on their extensive study of voluntary organizations in Norway (which show the same general tendencies as in Sweden), Per Selle and Bjarne Øymyr have argued that the composition of the voluntary sector in the Nordic countries has changed dramatically since the 1940s. First, the organizations have become less hierarchical; that is, the local clubs act more independently of the national organization, what organizational theorists call "loose coupling." Second, there has been a change from religious, temperance, and purely women's organizations to leisure and cultural organizations, while the economic organizations (unions and cooperatives) have largely stayed at their initially high level. Third, both the diversity and density of the organizational landscape have increased. There are many more organizations and many more different types of organizations in the 1990s than there were during the 1940s. Fourth, the 1990s were characterized by an increasing dynamism in the organizational world; that is, many organizations died but even more new ones were created. Last, nowadays, more people get organized in order to fulfill their own individual interests, while collective ideological movements, such as the temperance movement and the free church movement and probably also the labor movement, have become weaker. One way to describe this change is to say that the Scandinavian countries have gone from collective mass movements to "organized individualism."⁷³ There are good reasons to believe that this change in the organizational landscape has a connection to the type of individualism mentioned above. Choosing an organization may nowadays have more to do with the individual's deliberate creation of a specific lifestyle than with adherence to an established organized ideological collective.

SWEDISH UNIONS: A SPECIAL CASE

Of all Swedish organizations, the union movement is the one with the most members and that is, next only to the sports movement, activating the most people. If there is a general crisis in the idea of popular movements in Sweden, we should be able to detect it here. As stated above, the degree of unionization in Sweden is unusually high, more than 85 percent. The variation in degree of unionization is, in fact, one of the most peculiar differences between Western capitalist countries. It is peculiar for two reasons. First, hardly any other important political variable shows such a variation, with France at the bottom with less than 10 percent in unions and Sweden at the top. If it is rational, in any sense, to be a member of a union, then why are there more than eight times as many rational employees in Sweden than in France? Or, to follow the standard theory of collective action, if it is individually irrational to be a union member, then why should Swedes in particular be the most irrational people? Second, the level of unionization has changed dramatically during the whole postwar period. For example, the difference between the level of unionization in Sweden and in the United States, which today is more than five times, was much smaller during the 1950s. The effects of the recent and much discussed globalization and internationalization of capitalism have come at the same time that the differences in degrees of unionization have continued to increase.⁷⁴

The answer to this puzzle is, to a large extent, the existence of “selective incentives.” It pays more in some countries for the individual to be a member of the union. As I have shown elsewhere, one such selective incentive seems to be of special importance in this case, namely, the degree of control unions have over the unemployment funds. Figures from the late 1980s from eighteen OECD countries showed that the five countries with the highest degrees of unionization (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Belgium) all had unemployment systems in which the unions had control over the administration of the unemployment insurance scheme, whereas in the rest, this was handled by governmental agencies. The results from multiple regression analysis showed that this explained 18 percent of the variation in the degree of unionization.⁷⁵

The idea of giving the unions control over the unemployment insurance scheme is a very good illustration of the relationship in Sweden between voluntary organizations and the state. On one hand, the unions get a very powerful selective incentive to help them recruit members. On the other hand, the unions handle the very difficult question of deciding who is really to be considered unemployed, that is, what type of work one has to accept or else risk losing the benefits. The government is thereby relieved of having to take responsibility for these very difficult decisions, and this is something that probably increases the legitimacy of the scheme: first, because it is the union officials and not the governmental bureaucrats who take these decisions and second, because the union officials probably

know more about each segment of the labor market and thus the opportunities their members have for finding suitable jobs.⁷⁶

It should be added that this is not the only type of selective incentive the Swedish unions have been granted by the government. A vast number of industrial laws and regulations give the local unions a say over working conditions, the implementation of work safety regulations, and who has to go first when there is a shortage of jobs. In sum, this means that for many, if not most, employees, membership in the union is only formally a voluntary decision.⁷⁷

On the other hand, this does not mean that instrumental motives are the only reason for becoming a union member. Surveys both from the late 1970s and from more recent years show that instrumental and solidaristic motives are equally strong when union members are asked why they have decided to join.⁷⁸ Even so, an instrumental motive for joining a union may translate into activity in the next stage and thereby produce social capital. From the standpoint of producing social capital, there is nothing intrinsically bad in combining instrumental and noninstrumental reasons for organizational activity. After all, most people join choral societies in order to pursue a very instrumental and individual preference for singing, not to create interpersonal trust or to make democracy work.

What, then, has happened to union activity during the past two decades? Do the unions in Sweden consist of only passive paper-members who see the union as something like a public insurance company controlled by professional bureaucrats, or do unions engage their members in activities that are likely to produce interpersonal trust? Before I try to answer this question, I would like to underline the diversity of the Swedish union movement. Although the blue-collar trade unions organized nationally in the LO are the largest unions, unions for salaried employees organized in the TCO and unions for professionals with academic educations organized in the SACO have an almost equally high degree of unionization. Second, the Swedish union movement is both more centralized and more decentralized than is the case in most other OECD countries. The central organizations are very strong, but so are, in most cases, the local clubs in each workplace. By tradition, but also because of the laws regulating industrial relations, Swedish unions have a more direct presence in the workplace. The laws securing the rights of local union officials and the co-determination law have been especially important in this case.

A survey from 1993 shows that 36 percent of all employees had participated in at least one union meeting during that past twelve months and that 19 percent also had made some sort of statement. A similar study from 1988 shows a slight decrease in this type of union activity (45 percent and 20 percent). This report also shows that 14 percent of all LO members served as an elected representative, the figures for the two other national union organizations being slightly higher. Given the extremely high degree of unionization in Sweden, this means that a consider-

able part of the population as a whole (13 percent) is active or serves as an elected representative in the union movement.⁷⁹

The “Swedish Living Conditions” report, which has survey data from 1995, shows similar results. Of the adult population, 36 percent had been in a union meeting during the past twelve months and 11 percent reported that they were active as union officials. However, the difference between 1976 and 1995 is significantly negative, minus 7.6 percent.⁸⁰ One explanation for this may be that during the mid-1970s, an unusually high number of new and important industrial relations laws that implied increased local activity had just been launched, such as the co-determination law and the work safety law. Another important factor that may explain the decrease in union activity is the rapid increase in unemployment since 1992.

In sum, it would not be correct to describe the Swedish union movement as a group of vibrant organizations successfully activating a majority of their members, but it would be equally wrong to ignore the fact that 36 percent of the adult population go to a union meeting once a year and that 11 percent go to more than four meetings a year. The percentage reporting to be active went down during the late 1970s, but it has been pretty stable (10 to 12 percent) since 1980.⁸¹

INFORMAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

It has generally been thought that Swedes, either because of their national character or because of the “cradle to the grave” welfare state, had rather weak social ties. I will, for various reasons, leave the question of national character and concentrate on the latter problem, namely, what does a universal welfare state do to informal social networks? Interestingly enough, there are arguments from both the left and the right saying that there is an inverse relationship between these two. The argument from the political right is that when altruism and social problems are taken over by the government, people will stop caring; compassion will be shown only by paying taxes and informal social networks will be weakened. A recent major research project about the Swedish welfare state (financed by the employers’ federation) concludes, among other things, that “the twentieth century has been a lost century for the civil society.”⁸²

The argument from the left is, in fact, very similar. According to Jürgen Habermas, the welfare state has “colonized” civil society and undermines what he calls “natural” forms of solidarity. Alan Wolfe argues that the Scandinavian type of welfare state “squeezes families, communities, and social networks.”⁸³ Wolfe has further argued that a historical irony may exist here—when social obligations become public, intimate ties will weaken and “so will distant ones, thus undermining the very moral strengths the welfare state has shown.”⁸⁴ What is somewhat peculiar with these arguments is that they are hardly ever substantiated by any empirical evidence.

If it is true that the universal welfare state has been detrimental to informal social relations, then we should see a weakening of such relations since the 1950s. However, the data show that there has been a strengthening of informal social ties during this period. The Katrineholm “middle-town” study with data from 1950 and 1988 concludes that “the people in Katrineholm have become more socially active. They are members of more organizations and socialize more frequently with their fellow workers, neighbors and friends.”⁸⁵ The “Swedish Living Conditions” report conducted by Statistics Sweden (which is based on data from about 7,000 interviews from 1975 and 1995) gives the same type of result. Over this period, there is an increase of 12 percentage points in the number of people who get together with friends each week (from 45.5 to 57.5). The positive changes are statistically significant ($p < .05$) for all age groups, except those from fifty-five to sixty-four years of age, where the increase is only 3 percentage points, but there is another significant 12 percent increase among those sixty-five to seventy-four years of age. The greatest increase has taken place among those twenty-five to thirty-four years of age (23.5 percent). Interestingly enough, the figure for women who are homemakers is lower (51 percent) than for women in general (56 percent), and this figure is also lower than for women who work full time (56 percent). It can be added that the number of people who report not having a close friend is down from 26 percent in 1979 to 19 percent in 1985; these changes are statistically significant ($p < .05$) for all age groups.⁸⁶

This result is confirmed by data from two similar studies conducted in 1955 and 1995 asking if people were “interested in socializing with friends.”⁸⁷ These studies show that both men and women, young and not so young, seem to be more interested in socializing with friends in the 1990s than was the case in the mid-1950s. In the 1990s, hardly anyone reports being uninterested in socializing with friends.

However, the heart of the matter in the criticism of the welfare state mentioned above is not that people socialize too little but that they would not care enough for others who are in some form of distress and need their help. People in a universal welfare state would, according to its critics, turn away from others in need and cold-heartedly refer them to the welfare authorities.⁸⁸ Paying high taxes would morally relieve them from more traditional social obligations. There are, unfortunately, no data over time to test such a hypothesis; however, in a recent study, Karin Busch Zetterberg reports from a survey of 2,749 Swedish adult citizens (age 16 to 89) conducted in 1994.⁸⁹ Her study shows that more than every fifth adult (22 percent) is voluntarily regularly taking care of someone who is sick, handicapped, or elderly. Of these 22 percent, 5 percent were taking care of persons in their own household and 18 percent were caring for people who lived outside their household. The difference between men and women was surprisingly small: 23 percent of Swedish women and 20 percent of men were voluntarily helping out. Age also had a small effect, varying from 20 to 25 percent between different

cohorts. Social class, however, made a difference, with 31 percent caregivers in the upper class and 20 percent in the working class. The type of care given varies, of course, but sometimes included rather demanding tasks such as lifting and helping out with personal hygiene and medication.

“Still, when all is said and done, there is not and can never be any guarantee that stronger relations in civil society will create the practices that enable people to take personal responsibility for the fate of abstract others,” writes Alan Wolfe.⁹⁰ I tend to agree, but I would add that Wolfe’s fear that the strength of the Scandinavian welfare states would destroy such moral obligations seems unwarranted. Whether the amount of voluntary care in Sweden is high or low is, of course, difficult to say from this study, but it seems fair to conclude that the universal welfare state has not wiped out this sort of activity.

For various reasons, there is no equivalent to the British pub, the German *kneipe*, or the French bistro in Sweden. Historically, the severe restrictions on the selling of alcohol made such neighborhood places for socializing very rare. There has, however, been a rather remarkable change in this respect as well. In 1967, the number of fully licensed restaurants was a mere 1,249 (which is about one per 6,400 individuals).⁹¹ Twenty years later, this has increased seven times; that is, there are now close to 10,000 fully licensed restaurants in Sweden (which is about one per 900 individuals).⁹² Without going into details to explain this change, it has not taken place as a result of any legal change enacted by the Swedish Parliament. Instead, according to experts in this area, it largely reflects a cultural change (Swedes becoming more continental in their lifestyle), which has been reflected by a change in administrative praxis.⁹³ There has, moreover, been no increase in alcohol consumption during this period, which means that the great increase in the number of fully licensed restaurants is not caused by increased total consumption of alcohol. Instead, it must reflect a change in social habits; that is, consumption of alcohol has gone from private to public. Survey data also show that going to restaurants has now become one of the favorite leisure time activities in Sweden. In fact, this is the leisure time activity with the highest increase between 1982 and 1995; from 25 to 41 percent of Swedes say that they have gone to a restaurant more than five times during the past year (while only 9 percent report going to a religious service more than five times a year). Although the young are the most frequently in restaurants, the increase is significant ($p < .05$) in all age groups and highest among those forty-five to fifty-four years of age, among whom it has more than doubled (from 16 to 34 percent).⁹⁴

However, the effect of this type of activity on social capital remains unknown. There seems to be a strong connection over time between the decreasing activity in the temperance movement reported above and the increasing interest among Swedes in consuming alcohol in public places, but I dare not say the cause of this change. I leave it to the reader to determine whether this type of change is good or bad for the creation of trust and social capital, but it is surely an indicator of an

increased number of informal social contacts in Sweden. However, in the SOM survey data collected for this study, we found (to our dismay, we confess) no relationship at all between high levels of trust and high frequency of visits to restaurants (whether fully licensed or not). Thus, much of the criticism of modern society and of the expansion of the welfare state for creating passive and socially isolated citizens seems inconsistent with these empirical findings.⁹⁵

THE SWEDISH CIVIL SOCIETY IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

So far, we have tried to see what has happened over time with the voluntary sector and with more informal social relations in Sweden, and the conclusion is that, although there has been a change in the composition and direction of this sector, we cannot detect a general decline. But time-series data on this question must be supplemented with comparative data. How does the voluntary sector in Sweden fare compared to countries with different and/or less developed welfare states and a more pluralistic political system?

Thanks to two different comparative projects on the nonprofit sector and volunteering, we now have data with which to address this question. One of the most common ideas in the debate about civil society is that an encompassing welfare state would make people less willing to do unpaid work in voluntary organizations. If so, voluntary work would be very low in countries with large welfare states, but such a hypothesis is not validated in a recent survey comparing eight European countries.⁹⁶ The two countries with the most extensive welfare policies, the Netherlands and Sweden, also have the highest scores in the amount of unpaid work in voluntary associations.⁹⁷ In response to the question "In the past year, have you carried out *any* unpaid work or activity for or with an organization which has nothing to do with your paid work and is not solely for your own benefit or the benefit of your family?" 36 percent of the Swedish population answered yes as compared to an average of 27 percent across other European countries.⁹⁸ This says something about frequency but nothing about the volume of voluntary work. It may be that people do voluntary work every year but that the total amount is very small. According to this study, however, the Swedish population did not spend fewer hours a month in voluntary work than those of the other seven countries. In considering the type of organization in which the work was done, Swedes scored comparatively high on sports and recreation, trade union/professional organization, civil defense, international development/human rights, and peace and, as could be expected, low on health, social services, child education, and community development. Surprisingly for this author, Swedes were slightly more active in religious organizations.⁹⁹

Considering the general theory of the importance of social capital, the Swedish population also seems to volunteer for the right (i.e., noninstrumental) reasons. Of those Swedes who volunteered, 62 percent said they did so to "meet people and

make friends,” as compared to an average of 36 percent, while only 6 percent said they did so because “it gives me social recognition and a position in the community,” compared to an average of 18 percent.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, only 11 percent of the Swedish population agreed with the statement, “If the government fulfilled all of its responsibilities, there should be no need for people to do unpaid work,” compared to an average of 37 percent. And finally, in Sweden, 74 percent agreed that “engaging in unpaid work helps people take an active role in a democratic society,” compared to the average of 62 percent. These results are confirmed by another recent comparative study that found that the per capita amount of voluntary work in Sweden is considerably higher than in France, Germany, or Italy.¹⁰¹

This research project also provides data about the way voluntary organizations are financed. Although the size of the nonprofit sector in 1990, measured in terms of expenditures as a percentage of GDP, was 4.1 percent in Sweden, the average of the eight countries in the study was 3.6 percent. By this economic measure, the nonprofit sector in Sweden is smaller than that of the United States and the United Kingdom, but it is larger than that of Germany, France, or Italy.¹⁰² Even more surprisingly, although the average revenue from public payments was 42 percent for the countries compared, the Swedish nonprofit sector received only 29 percent of its funds from the government.¹⁰³ Accordingly, the Swedish nonprofits obtained 62 percent of their funds through earned income, the highest percentage among the eight countries (the average was 47 percent). The explanation for this is not that Swedes are more altruistic (they are not) or that Swedish nonprofit organizations are more successful in generating income on their own. Rather, as Lundström and Wijkström have pointed out, the nonprofit sectors in other countries are more dependent on public money to fund social services, health, and elementary education, which, because of the universal welfare state, are relatively small concerns for Swedish nonprofits.

Considering informal social relations, the study by Busch Zetterberg mentioned above on the number of people who voluntarily help others in need makes a comparison with Great Britain possible. Figures from a comparable study in Great Britain based on a survey from 1990 show that this type of voluntary activity is higher in Sweden (22 percent) than in Britain (15 percent). If we compare the number of people who helped people outside their own household, the Swedish figure is 18 percent, while for Great Britain it is 12 percent.¹⁰⁴

Comparing surveys from different countries is always difficult because the wording of the question can be interpreted differently. In this case, there is also a four-year time span between the surveys. On the other hand, this is not a question about attitudes but of actual behavior, which means that the methodological problems should be fewer. Great Britain's welfare system is, moreover, far less universal than Sweden's, and Great Britain is also known for its many charitable organizations. We should thus expect higher figures from Britain, but the data show the opposite. Thus, it seems safe to conclude that these results from Sweden and Great

Britain do not substantiate the claim that the more extensive and universal the welfare state, the less we will see of voluntary activity based on feelings of moral obligation.

To summarize, in terms of membership, activity, and finances, the voluntary sector in Sweden is as large or larger than those in most other Western industrialized democracies, and Swedish political participation ranks among the highest. Moreover, the nonprofit sector in Sweden is less dependent on governmental funding and is better able to raise money on its own than are many comparable countries. What differentiates the voluntary sector in Sweden, as well as in the other Scandinavian countries, is its structure. While historical and political factors have made it weak in areas such as social service, health care, and elementary education, it is strong in the fields of sports, recreation, culture, adult education, and the labor market.¹⁰⁵

THE TRUST SCENE

Being an active member of voluntary organizations and having lots of informal social contacts will, according to the general theory on social capital, serve to increase the level of trust in society. From the very first World Value Study in 1981, we know that Sweden and other Scandinavian countries are high-trust societies. More people than elsewhere say yes to the question "Most people can be trusted" and no to the statement that you "can't be too careful when dealing with other people."¹⁰⁶ As shown in Figure 3, recent Swedish survey data do not show a decline in the opinion about whether "most people can be trusted." On the contrary, generalized trust measured in this way has increased between 1981 and 1997.

In the 1996 SOM survey, we asked not only the dichotomous "trust" question as stated above but also a question for which respondents were asked to mark their opinion about whether or not other people could be trusted on a scale of 0 to 10. The result was that 9 percent can be considered as "low trusters" (value 0 to 3), 27 percent as "middle trusters" (value 4 to 6), and 58 percent as "high trusters" (value 7 to 10). The correlation between the dichotomous question and the scale question was pretty high (Pearson's $r = .58$). The average from this scale question was 6.6, which is an increase of 0.8 from 1994, when the same question was posed in the Swedish Election Study.¹⁰⁷

We have also used the three World Value Surveys and the SOM survey from 1996 to run regression analyses to see which variables could help us explain variation in trust. To summarize the results of the statistical analysis from these four data sets, the following variables had the highest (i.e., most positive) effect on trust while controlling for the other variables: *education*, *activity in organizations*, and *satisfaction with democracy*. In the SOM survey from 1996, we also found linkages between trust and negative views on *accepting more refugees*, *age*, and *happiness* (see Table 1).

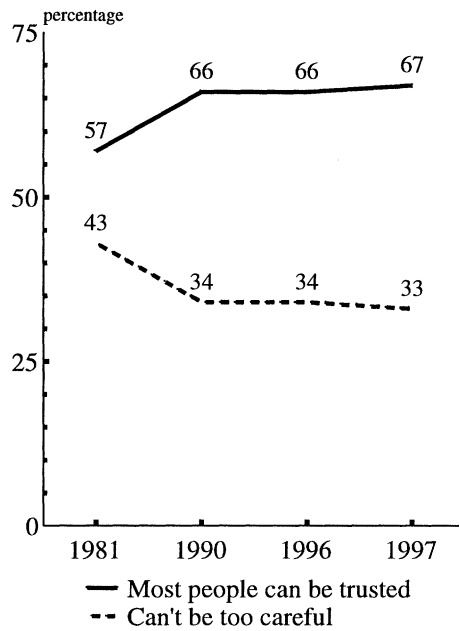


Figure 3. Opinions about trust in other people, 1981 to 1997.

Source: Data for 1981 and 1990 are taken from the Swedish section of the World Value Study ($n = 876$ and 994). In 1996, two different surveys were conducted in Sweden with this question, the third World Value Study ($n = 957$) and one made for this report by the Society Opinion Media (SOM) Institute at Göteborg University ($n = 1,707$). The figures shown are the means from these two studies. The data for 1997 are from a Forskningsgruppen för samhälls-och informationsstudier (FSI) survey ($n = 1,640$).

Table 1
Variation in Trust: Multiple Regression Models

Independent Variable	Model 1 ($n = 1,802$)			Model 2 ($n = 1,802$)			Model 3 ($n = 1,802$)		
	<i>b</i>	β	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	β	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Age	.23	.15	.000	.29	.19	.000	.24	.15	.000
Education	.21	.19	.000	.18	.16	.000	.13	.11	.000
Content with democracy				.22	.13	.000	.17	.10	.000
Economic situation				.11	.10	.000	.08	.07	.004
Activity in voluntary organizations							.31	.11	.000
Fewer refugees							-.19	-.14	.000
Happiness							.27	.12	.000
Intercept		.360**			.193**			.137**	
Standard R^2		$R^2 = .04$			$R^2 = .08$			$R^2 = .12$	

Source: 1996 Society Opinion Media (SOM) survey.

Note: *b* values are unstandardized regression coefficients; β values are standardized regression coefficients. To make the *b* values comparable, the independent variables have been standardized to a 0 to 1 scale.¹¹⁶

**Significant at .05 level.

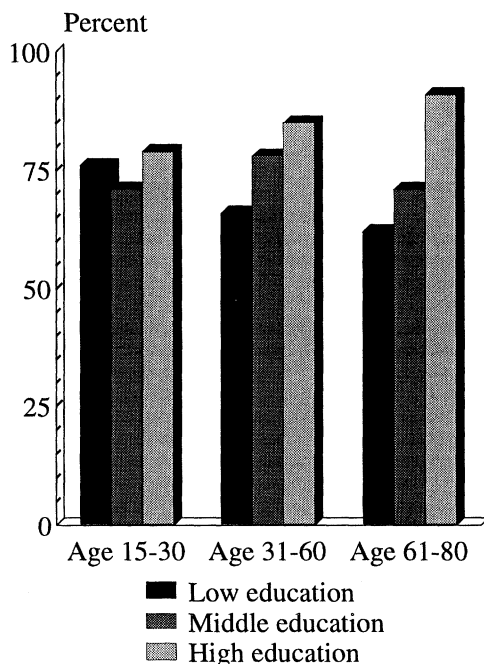


Figure 4. Percentage who express trust in relation to age and education.
 Source: Society Opinion Media (SOM) 1996 survey.

Starting with *age* and *education* in Model 1 gives an R^2 of .04. In the next model, it is shown that *economic situation* also has a significant effect on trust, but *satisfaction with democracy* has a greater effect. *Age* and *education* are, controlling for the two former variables, still important, with the b value for *age* increasing from Model 1 to Model 2. Model 3 shows that when we add *activity in voluntary organizations*, *happiness*, and the opinion that Sweden should accept *fewer refugees*, there is still some effect left from the former four variables. As could be expected, the explained variance is not high, even when we have added all seven variables ($R^2 = .12$).

An inspection of what is behind the regressions above may be necessary. It seems as if one of the possible political explanations for the continuation of high levels of trust in Sweden is the expansion of higher education, which would also explain the low level of trust in senior citizens since they missed the educational revolution. Such a conclusion is supported by the fact that the number of those who express trust is significantly higher in people sixty-one years and older who have a high level (i.e., university) of education than it is in the rest of the population.¹⁰⁸ Figure 4 shows that when we use the dichotomous trust question, education has a higher positive effect on trust than does age.

As can be seen from Figure 4, when we use the dichotomous trust question, there is no effect of education among those younger than thirty years, while there is a considerable educational effect among those older than sixty-one years. It thus seems that what people do after they receive a higher education matters more than having the education as such. One explanation for this may have to do with what happens in their work life: people with higher education are more likely to work in organizations that foster trust.

Of particular importance is, of course, the relationship between trust and how people view the political system. As shown above, there is a significant correlation between trust and degree of satisfaction with the Swedish democracy. In the group that expressed high trust (7 to 10 on the scale), 72 percent said they were "very satisfied with how the Swedish democracy works," compared to 42 percent who said they were "very dissatisfied."

The SOM surveys also have questions about trust in specific political institutions. People were asked whether they had very high, high, middle, low, or very low trust/confidence in different institutions such as the banks, Parliament, the unions, the police, the courts, and the Royal House. The question we wanted to get at was whether there is any correlation between horizontal trust (i.e., trust in other people) and vertical trust (i.e., trust in political institutions). Table 2 shows the correlations between these two types of trust for the four consecutive years:

Even though all of these sixty correlations are weak, they all point in the same positive direction. The more people trust other people, the more they tend to have confidence in the societal institutions (or the other way around).

One noteworthy result here is the comparatively strong correlations between horizontal trust and confidence in the institutions of law and order, that is, the courts and the police. There seems to be no reason why there should be a causal mechanism between trusting other people and trusting these two particular institutions. One possibility is that the causal link runs the other way around; that is, if you trust the institutions that are supposed to keep law and order, you also trust other people. The argument, inspired from noncooperative game theory, runs as follows. In a civilized society, institutions of law and order have one particularly important task: to detect and punish people who are "traitors," that is, those who break contracts, steal, murder, and do other such noncooperative things and therefore should not be trusted. Thus, if you think (i.e., if your cognitive map is) that these institutions do what they are supposed to do in a fair and effective manner, then you also have reason to believe that the chance people have of getting away with such treacherous behavior¹⁰⁹ is small. If so, you will believe that people will have very good reason to refrain from acting in a treacherous manner, and you will therefore believe that "most people can be trusted."¹¹⁰

Such an, admittedly speculative, interpretation of what causes people to trust others does in fact change what is usually thought about how the causal link oper-

Table 2
Correlations between Generalized Trust and Trust in Institutions

Type of Institution	1999	1998	1997	1996	Mean
The courts	.20	.19	.22	.18	.20
The Parliament	.23	.22	.19	.15	.20
The police	.21	.19	.18	.18	.19
Public health care	.17	.20	.21	.16	.18
The central government	.21	.18	.19	.12	.17
Local governments	.19	.18	.20	.13	.15
Public schools	.14	.15	.11	.10	.12
Daily newspapers	.13	.14	.12	.07	.11
The Swedish Church	.11	.11	.13	.10	.11
The Royal House	.13	.11	.08	.10	.10
Big companies	.10	.12	.11	.08	.10
Radio/TV	.10	.11	.08	.10	.10
Unions	.10	.09	.12	.08	.10
Banks	.11	.07	.06	.05	.09
The armed forces	.11	.11	.08	.08	.07

Source: The National Society Opinion Media (SOM) surveys, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999.

Note: *N* varies between 1,707 for 1996 and 2,586 for 1999.

ates, namely, that trust is caused by societal factors such as the vitality of voluntary organizations and other types of networks in civil society. If the above reasoning is correct, then trust in other people may have more to do with the way in which the political institutions of this type are operating.¹¹¹ If people believe that the institutions that are responsible for handling treacherous behavior are fair and effective, and if they also believe that other people think the same of these institutions, then they also will trust other people. Social capital would then have its origin in the political institutions more so than in societal factors.¹¹²

Another result from the regression analysis of the SOM data is the significant effect of activity in organizations. Are people who are active in volunteer organizations and politics more trusting than those who are passive? Concerning the relationship between trust and membership in volunteer organizations, the general hypothesis also gets support from the Swedish part of the World Value Study. As shown in Figure 5, the more organizations people are members of, the more likely they are to trust others.

This is supported by yet another survey relating membership and activity in unions and political parties with attitudes about trust. Two things can be concluded from this study. First, although the co-variation is weak, members of unions and political parties trust each other more than do nonmembers. Second, there is surprisingly little difference between active and nonactive members. This may increase the suspicion (as mentioned above) that it is not activity in voluntary organizations that creates trust and social capital.

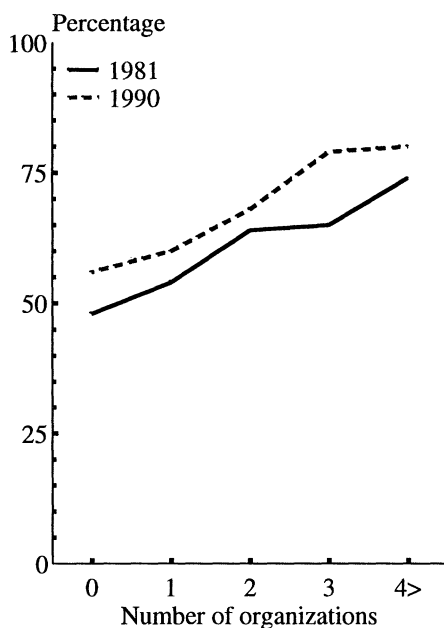


Figure 5. Interpersonal trust and membership in voluntary organizations.

Source: World Value Studies, 1981 and 1990.

Note: Differences between those who are not members and those who are members of two or more organizations are statistically significant at the .05 level.

CONCLUSION: THE UNIVERSAL WELFARE STATE, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

To summarize, the overall picture of Sweden is that of a rather vital, growing, and changing civil society. In most respects, the amount of social capital seems to have increased since the 1950s. We can thus tentatively conclude that whatever the troubles in the Swedish democracy, a decline in social capital, as it is usually conceptualized, is not likely to be the cause. Why, then, hasn't the encompassing Swedish welfare state destroyed trust and social capital? One reason may be in the way the Swedish welfare state system has been institutionalized. Its main architects sought a social policy based on the idea of "people's insurance" that would supply all citizens (or in some cases all but the very rich) with basic resources without incurring the stigmatization associated with poor relief. They not only shunned the means-tested poor-relief system but also the class-segregated Bismarkian-type of social insurance. The universal character of the welfare state may have two important implications for social trust. One is that people receiving support from the government cannot be portrayed as "the others." Second, compared to means-tested programs, universal ones are far less likely to create suspicion that people are cheating the system.¹¹³

Language is, I believe, a problem here. The term “welfare state” is not an adequate description of social programs in Sweden. The word *welfare*—at least in the United States—implies targeted means-tested programs and connotes stigmatization of the persons receiving it.¹¹⁴ For Sweden, “social insurance state” would be a more accurate term.

This is not to deny that there are parts of the Swedish welfare system that have been detrimental to social capital. As in other Western countries, a strong planning and managerial optimism, which could indeed take a rather paternalistic form, characterized welfare policy, especially in the late 1960s. High unemployment during the 1990s has increased the number of people who depend on means-tested social assistance. I argue, however, that the major bulk of the programs, precisely because they are universal, are not likely to have a negative effect on civil society. In fact, if one looks very closely, leading theorists of civil society agree that general welfare programs cannot be seen as subversive of civil society. In their voluminous book on the political theory of civil society, for example, Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato write (in a well-hidden endnote!):

We fail to see how social security, health insurance, job training programs for the unemployed, unemployment insurance, and family supports such as day care or parental leave create dependency rather than autonomy, even if the particular administration of such programs as AFDC (such as the man-in-house-rule) do create dependency and are humiliating. But these are empirical questions. The theoretical issue behind such questions is the extent to which social services and social supports are symbolically constituted as welfare for “failures” or as supports for all members of the community.¹¹⁵

Although it is only given footnote status, Cohen and Arato accordingly perceive the fundamental distinction between general and means-tested social policies for civil society. There may be other negative (and positive) effects of a universal welfare state, but it does not keep people from participating in voluntary organizations or helping others in distress.

NOTES

1. There are several good overviews on the “Swedish Model.” See, for example, Wallace Clement and Rianne Mahon, eds., *Swedish Social Democracy* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1994); Tim Tilton, *The Political Theory of Swedish Social Democracy* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1990); and Hugh Hecllo and Henrik Madsen, *Policy and Politics in Sweden: Principled Pragmatism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

2. See, for example, Andrew Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1965); Peter J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Jonas Pontusson, *Limits of Social Democracy: Investment Politics in Sweden* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

3. Since the publication of Robert D. Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), this literature has exploded. For recent overviews, see, for example, Piotr Sztompka, *Trust: A Sociologi-*

cal Theory (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Valerie Braithwaite and Margaret Levi, eds., *Trust & Governance* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998).

4. For a superb (and short) overview of the debate, see E. J. Dionne, Jr., "Why Civil Society? Why Now?" *The Brookings Review* 15 (1997): 4-8. According to a recent large-scale project about the Swedish welfare state, the twentieth century in Sweden was a lost century for the civil society because the welfare state has colonized civil society; see Hans Zetterberg and Carl-Johan Ljungberg, *Vårt land—den svenska socialstaten* (Stockholm: City University Press, 1997), 253. However, the project does not present any data to support such a conclusion.

5. For example, Michele Michelletti, *Civil Society and State Relations in Sweden* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1995).

6. Bo Rothstein, *The Social Democratic State: The Swedish Model and the Bureaucratic Problems of Social Reforms* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996).

7. Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 65-78; Robert D. Putnam, "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *P.S.: Political Science and Politics* 28, no. 3 (1995): 664-83; and Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

8. Donald Granberg and Sören Holmberg, *The Political System Matters* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5-7.

9. Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism*; Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets*.

10. For a very good case study, see Steven Kelman, *Regulating America, Regulating Sweden* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981).

11. Swedish Government, Official Report, *Demokrati och makt i Sverige—SOU 1990:44* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1990).

12. Leif Lewin, "The Rise and Decline of Corporatism," *European Journal of Political Research* 26, no. 1 (1992): 59-79.

13. Bo Rothstein, ed., *Demokrati som dialog* (Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 1995).

14. A number of political scandals in which politicians had used public money for private ends erupted in the early 1990s.

15. Ola Listhaug and Matti Wiberg, "Confidence in Political and Private Institutions," in Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs, eds., *Citizens and the State* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 320.

16. The Society Opinion Media (SOM) surveys are conducted yearly by the SOM Institute, which is jointly managed by the Department for Journalism and Mass Media, the Department of Political Science, and the School of Public Administration at Göteborg University. The data are from mailed questionnaires to 2,800 randomly selected individuals in Sweden between the ages of 15 and 80. For further information, visit www.gu.som.se.

17. Anders Widfelt, *Linking Parties with People: Party Membership in Sweden 1960-1994* (Ph.D. diss., Göteborg University, Department of Political Science, 1997).

18. Compare Åke E. Andersson, Thomas Fürth, and Ingvar Holmberg, *70-talister om värderingar förr, nu och i framtiden* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1993).

19. Data received from Statens Ungdomsstyrelse (National Board for Youth), Stockholm.

20. From Statistiska centralbyrån, *Politiska resurser och aktiviteter 1978-1994* (Stockholm: Statistics Sweden, 1995), 66. It should be mentioned that data from the Swedish section of the World Value Study show no decline in party membership between 1981 and 1996, but the sample is much smaller.

21. Mikael Gilljam and Tommy Möller, "Från medlemspartier till väljarpartier," in Swedish Government, Official Report, *På medborgarnas villkor: en demokratisk infrastruktur—SOU 1996:12* (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1996).
22. Rothstein, ed., *Demokrati som dialog*.
23. Lars Pettersson, "In Search of Respectability: Popular Movements in Scandinavian Democracy," in L. Rudebeck and O. Törnqvist, eds., *Democratization and the Third World* (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 1995).
24. Compare Micheletti, *Civil Society and State Relations in Sweden*.
25. Gunnar Olofsson, *Mellan klass och stat: om arbetarrörelse, reformism och socialdemokrati* (Lund, Sweden: Arkiv förlag, 1979).
26. Tommy Lundström and Filip Wijkström, *The Nonprofit Sector in Sweden* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997).
27. Kurt Klaudi Klaussen and Per Selle, "The Third Sector in Scandinavia," *Voluntas* 7, no. 2 (1996): 99-122; and Bo Rothstein, *Den korporativa staten* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1992). Compare Bo Rothstein, "State Structure and Variations in Corporatism: The Swedish Case," *Scandinavian Political Studies* 14, no. 2 (1991): 149-71. This is not to say that this close collaboration with the state did not cause problems of legitimacy for the organizations, cf. Per-Ola Öberg, *Särintresse och allmänintresse: Korporatismens ansikten* (Uppsala, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994).
28. Quote from Rothstein, "State Structures," 162; and Rothstein, *Den korporativa staten*, 89.
29. Quote from Rothstein, "State Structures," 164.
30. Rothstein, *Den korporativa staten*.
31. Quotes from Rothstein, "State Structures," 163-5.
32. Gunnar Heckscher, *Staten och organisationerna* (Stockholm: KF Förlag, 1946).
33. Rothstein, *Den korporativa staten*.
34. Per Selle, "The Transformation of the Voluntary Sector in Norway: A Decline of Social Capital?" in J. van Deth, ed., *Social Capital and European Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1998).
35. Lewin, "The Rise and Decline of Corporatism"; Rothstein, *Den korporativa staten*.
36. Per Selle and Bjarne Øymyr, *Frivillig organisering og demokrati* (Oslo, Sweden: Samlaget, 1995).
37. Pettersson, "In Search of Respectability," 303.
38. Lennart Lundquist, *Fattigvårdsfolket. Ett nätverk i den sociala frågan 1900-1920* (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1997), 137-94; and Tommy Lundström, "The State and Voluntary Social Work in Sweden," *Voluntas* 7, no. 2 (1996): 123-46.
39. John Boli, "Sweden: Is There a Viable Third Sector?" in R. Wuthnow, ed., *Between States and Markets: The Voluntary Sector in a Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
40. Jørgen Goul Andersen and Jens Hoff, *Democracy and Citizenship in the Scandinavian Welfare State* (London: Macmillan, 1998).
41. Statistiska centralbyrån, *Välfärd och ojämlikhet i 20-årsperspektiv 1975-1995* (Stockholm: Statistics Sweden, 1997): 327-9.
42. Barbara Misztal, *Trust in Modern Societies* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 1996), 95.
43. Swedish Government, Official Report, *Folkbildningen: en utvärdering—SOU 1996:159* (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1996), 18. Figures are from 1994.
44. Swedish Government, Official Report, *Folkbildningen: en utvärdering*, 35.

45. Rothstein, ed., *Demokrati som dialog*.
46. Swedish Government, Official Report, *Folkbildningen: en utvärdering*, 37 and 123.
47. *Ibid.*, 19.
48. *Ibid.*, 134.
49. Olof Petersson, Anders Westholm, and Göran Blomberg, *Medborgarnas makt* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1987), 216.
50. Petersson, *Medborgarnas makt*, 251.
51. The same goes for Norway; cf. Selle and Øymyr, *Frivillig organisering og demokrati*, 173.
52. Marek Perlinski, "Livet utanför fabriksgrunden och kontorsdörren," in R. Åberg, ed., *Industrisamhälle i omvandling* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1990).
53. The survey asked if respondents were members of unions, political organizations, sports organizations, temperance organizations, religious organizations, and "other" organizations; cf. Perlinski, "Livet utanför fabriksgrunden och kontorsdörren," 228.
54. Word Value Studies, data from 1981, 1990, and 1996, own computation.
55. Compare Olof Petersson, *Politikens möjligheter* (Stockholm: SNS Förlag, 1996), 57; and Michele Micheletti, "Organisationer och svensk demokrati," in Swedish Government, Official Report, *På medborgarnas villkor: en demokratisk infrastruktur—SOU 1996:1* (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1996).
56. Bo Rothstein, "Labor Market Institutions and Working Class Strength," in S. Steinmo and K. Thelen, eds., *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
57. From World Value Studies, 1981 and 1990. The question posed was, "Have you done any unpaid, voluntary work for any of these groups and organizations?" Sixteen different types of organizations/groups were presented.
58. Johan Fritzell and Olle Lundberg, *Vardagens villkor: Levnadsförhållanden i Sverige under tre decennier* (Stockholm: Brombergs, 1994), 241.
59. Rothstein, ed., *Demokrati som dialog*, 59.
60. Lars Häll, *Föreningslivet i Sverige* (Stockholm: Statistics Sweden, 1994), 26.
61. Micheletti, "Organisationer och svensk demokrati," 205, and Petersson, *Politikens möjligheter*, 57-9.
62. Swedish Government, Official Report, *Demokrati och makt i Sverige*, chap. 11.
63. Petersson, Westholm, and Blomberg, *Medborgarnas makt*, 262.
64. Thorleif Pettersson, "Välfärd, värderingsförändringar och folkrörelseengagemang," in S. Axelsson and T. Pettersson, eds., *Mot denna framtid* (Stockholm: Carlssons förlag, 1992), 51.
65. Pettersson, "Välfärd, värderingsförändringar och folkrörelseengagemang."
66. Thorleif Pettersson and Kalle Geyer, *Värderingsförändringar i Sverige. Den svenska modellen, individualismen och rättvisan* (Stockholm: Brevskolan, 1992), 13. The investigation defines a generally individualistic attitude as one marked by the possession of at least three of the following four characteristics: (1) recommending personal freedom over economic equality, (2) being inclined to hold firm and try to convince others, (3) desiring a stronger emphasis on individual development, and (4) wishing no greater respect for authorities.
67. Pettersson and Geyer, *Värderingsförändringar i Sverige*. Having an individualistic view of working life means that one embraces at least three of the following four statements: (1) it is fair that a more efficient secretary earns more, (2) employees should only follow their supervisors' instructions when they accord with their own convictions, (3) it is important to be able to take personal initiative on the job, and (4) it is important to be able to take responsibility on the job.

68. Pettersson and Geyer, *Värderingsförändringar i Sverige*, 28-31. Emphasis on last sentence removed. That these are two different dimensions among Scandinavian citizens is demonstrated as well by Jørgen Goul Andersen, "Samfundsind og egennyttte," *Politica* 25, no. 1 (1993). See also Dietlind Stolle and Christian Welzel, "Social Capital, Communitarianism and Human Development: How Threatening Is Rising Individual Self-Expression to Social Capital?" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C., 29 August–3 September 2000).

69. Pettersson and Geyer, *Värderingsförändringar i Sverige*, 28-30. This is also supported by a Finnish study, Helena Blomberg and Christian Kroll, "Välfärdsvärderingar i olika generationer-från kollektivism mot en ökad individualism?" *Sociologia* 32, no. 2 (1995): 106-21.

70. D. G. Barker, *The European Value Study 1981-1990* (Tilburg, the Netherlands: Gordon Cook Foundation of European Values Group, 1992), 5.

71. Data from the Society Opinion Media surveys, 1987 and 1998, see Bo Rothstein, "Förtroende för andra och förtroende för politiska institutioner," in S. Holmberg and L. Weibull, eds., *Ljusande framtid* (Göteborg: Göteborg University, SOM Institute, 1999), 393.

72. Eva Jeppsson Grassman and Lars Svedberg, "Medborgarskapets gestaltningar: Insatser i och utanför föreningslivet," Swedish Government, Official Report, *Civilsamhället—SOU 1999:84* (Stockholm: Fakta info, 1999), 134.

73. Selle and Øymyr, *Frivillig organisering og demokrati*, 241.

74. Rothstein, "Labor Market Institutions and Working-Class Strength."

75. Ibid.

76. Rothstein, *Den korporativa staten*.

77. Ibid.

78. Leif Lewin, *Governing Trade Unions in Sweden* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); and Sven Nelander and Viveka Lindgren, *Röster om fack och jobbet. Rapport nr 4* (Stockholm: LO, 1994).

79. Ibid.

80. Statistiska Centralbyrån, *Välfärd och ojämlikhet i 20-årsperspektiv*, 335-9.

81. Ibid.

82. Zetterberg and Ljungberg, *Vårt land-den svenska socialstaten*, 266.

83. Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 22.

84. Ibid., 142.

85. Perlinski, "Livet utanför fabriksgrunden och kontorsdörren," 231-3.

86. Statistiska centralbyrån, *Välfärd och ojämlikhet i 20-årsperspektiv*, 287-301.

87. FSI surveys, 1955 ($n = 1,509$) and 1995 ($n = 1,388$).

88. See, for example, Zetterberg and Ljungberg, *Vårt land-den svenska socialstaten*.

89. Karin Busch Zetterberg, *Det civila samhället och välfärdsstaten* (Stockholm: City University Press, 1996).

90. Wolfe, *Whose Keeper*, 258.

91. Kontrollstyrelsen, *Alkoholstatistik* (Stockholm: SCB, 1968), 21.

92. Swedish National Board for Social Affairs, *Alkoholstatistik* (Stockholm, 1997). Figure from 1997 by personal communication from Anders Edin at the National Alcohol Board, 8 January 1998.

93. Personal communication from Anders Edin at the National Alcohol Board, 8 January 1998.

94. Statistiska centralbyrån, *Välfärd och ojämlikhet i 20-årsperspektiv*, 119.

95. Fritzell and Lundberg, *Vardagens villkor. Levnadsförhållanden i Sverige under tre decennier*, 256.

96. Katherine Gaskin and Justin D. Smith, *A New Civic Europe? A Study of the Extent and Role of Volunteering* (London: The Volunteer Center, 1995), 28.

97. The other countries were Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom.

98. The interviewers prompted those who answered "no" to the question by showing them a list of the types of unpaid work that people do and checking whether they had done any of them. The "unprompted" figure for Sweden was 32 percent and the average was 23 percent.

99. Gaskin and Smith, *A New Civic Europe?* 35.

100. *Ibid.*, 50.

101. Lundström and Wijkström, *The Nonprofit Sector in Sweden*; cf. Lester Salamon, ed., *The Emerging Sector: A Statistical Supplement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, 1996).

102. Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, *The Emerging Sector: An Overview* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, 1994), 35.

103. Lundström and Wijkström, *The Nonprofit Sector in Sweden*. The study included France, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. The nonprofit sector in this project was defined as formal, private, self-governing, and voluntary organizations in the following areas: culture, recreation, education, health, social services, environment, development and housing, civic and advocacy, philanthropy, business, professional, and "other." Religious congregations, political parties, cooperatives, mutual savings banks, mutual insurance companies, and government agencies were excluded. Compare Salamon and Anheier, *The Emerging Sector*, 13-6. One problem with the economic measures from this study is that unions have been included. In Sweden, the state has given unions a great deal of power over working conditions for employees, such as choosing who loses their jobs first when there are layoffs. In practice, local unions have this power over employees whether or not they are union members. In many cases, this makes membership voluntary only from a rather formal point of view. As the unions' share of the economic size of the voluntary sector in Sweden is, according to this study, 17.6 percent, the Swedish figures may be exaggerated to some extent. But even if unions were not counted, the relative economic size of the Swedish nonprofit sector would still be as large or larger than in, for example, France, Germany, or Italy.

104. British data from OPCS, *General Household Survey: Careers in 1990, Monitor 17, Office of Population Census and Surveys* (London: The Government Statistical Service, 1992), quoted here from Busch Zetterberg, *Det civila samhället och välfärdsstaten*, 197.

105. Stein Kuhnle and Per Selle, *Government and Voluntary Organizations* (Avesbury, UK: Aldershot, 1992).

106. Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Countries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 172-5.

107. Bo Rothstein, "Sociala fällor och tillitens problem," in S. Holmberg and L. Weibull, eds., *Ett missnöjt folk?* (Göteborg: Göteborg University, SOM Institute, 1997).

108. Other than education, it may be that if you are old, most of the people you once trusted have died or that (even more sadly) the longer you live, the more likely you are to experience "treacherous" behavior from others.

109. Game theorists usually use the term "opportunistic behavior," which I think is a much too nice term to describe what this is all about.

110. This section has been inspired by Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy*

Work," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 389-97; and Margaret Levi, "Social and Unsocial Capital," *Politics & Society* 24, no. 1 (1996): 45-55.

111. Bo Rothstein, *Just Institutions Matter: The Moral and Political Logic of the Universal Welfare State* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Compare Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization*, 173.

112. Compare John Brehm and Wendy Rahn, "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital," *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 3 (1997): 999-1023. Dietlind Stolle has shown that at the micro-level, there is no evidence that over time, participation in voluntary organizations (in Sweden) increases generalized trust, see Dietlind Stolle, "Bowling Alone, Bowling Together: Group Characteristics, Membership and Social Capital," *Political Psychology* 19, no. 3 (1998); and Dietlind Stolle, *Communities of Trust: Social Capital and Public Action in Comparative Perspective* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University Press, 2000).

113. Compare Rothstein, *Just Institutions Matter: The Moral and Political Logic of the Universal Welfare State*.

114. Theda Skocpol, "America's Incomplete Welfare State: The Limits of New Deal Reforms and the Origins of the Present Crisis," in M. Rein, G. Esping-Andersen, and L. Rainwater, eds., *Stagnation and Renewal in Social Policy* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1987).

115. Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 664. AFDC is an acronym for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which has been a major means-tested social assistance program in the United States. The "man-in-house-rule" is a provision in the program that states that if an able-bodied, grown man lives in the household (as husband or co-habitant), then no assistance shall be rendered to that family. This rule has, according to critics of the program, created an incentive for the man to abandon the family and has contributed thereby to a very sharp increase in the rate of family break-up in socially disadvantaged groups.

116. Compare Christopher H. Achen, *Interpreting and Using Regression* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 70-1. Age measured in six categories with 60-70 set as 1; education, three categories with high = 1; satisfaction with democracy, five scale: very satisfied = 1; economic situation, three scale: improved = 1; activity in organizations, three scale: not member = 0, member = .5, member and active = 1; accept fewer refugees, five scale: very good suggestion = 1; and happiness, five scale: very happy = 1.