

Social Democracy and the Swedish welfare model

Ideational analyses of attitudes towards
competition, individualization, privatization

John Lapidus



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation consists of an introduction and five research papers dealing with institutional change and how different actors, mainly Social Democracy and its related trade unions, have interacted with the same. Sweden was one of the countries that developed a welfare model able to combine economic growth with increasing universalism and equality both on the labour market and in the welfare state arena. During the last decades, however, the model has undergone a lot of change. This includes developments such as the introduction of a new competition policy, the greater use of individual wage setting, the rise of private health insurance and the new state-subsidized topping up possibilities within major welfare services. By using different types of ideational analysis, these are the four areas investigated in the papers of this thesis. Papers 2-5 deal with more recent developments, while paper 1 focuses on a time before the emergence of this type of welfare regime.

Paper 1 examines why Social Democracy had such a permissive attitude towards cartels in the 1920s. It is found that the idea of socialization was the main factor behind the permissive attitude, i.e. that monopolistic associations were seen as suitable targets for future socialization.

Paper 2 investigates how different actors have viewed competition legislation over time. One of the findings is that a new consensus on competition policy became possible only after Social Democracy abandoned the idea to give the public sector a unique position in terms of competition legislation.

Paper 3 reviews and examines the arguments for individual wage setting brought forward by the largest Swedish trade union. I find a lack of sustainability in the arguments for individual wages.

Paper 4 analyzes the discrepancy between political rhetoric and practice with regard to the rapid rise of private health insurance. I also investigate the relation between privatized delivery and privatized funding.

Paper 5 describes the new state-subsidized topping up possibilities within three major welfare services. It is argued that it represents a departure from the idea of universal welfare services, which aimed to get rid of means-tested, selective elements.

KEYWORDS: privatization, individualization, competition, Social Democracy, Scandinavian welfare model, institutional change, trade unions, competition policy, cartel legislation, the idea of socialization, solidaristic wage policy, private health insurance, individual wage setting, ideational analysis

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Gothenburg, December 2014

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Introduction

1. Research background

This thesis contains five research papers dealing with institutional change and how different actors, mainly Social Democracy and its related trade unions, have interacted with the same. One of the starting points is the fact that Sweden was one of the countries that developed a welfare model able to combine economic growth with increasing universalism and equality both on the labor market and in the welfare state arena. One example of this was central welfare services such as health care, elderly care and education, which were publicly delivered and publicly funded to a very high degree. The idea was to provide high-quality welfare services to all on equal terms, something which, together with a universal social insurance system, was supposed to get rid of the stigmatizing means-testing for the poor which was considered to be a result of other types of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990). This implied that the public sector had a special status in terms of competition legislation, i.e. that public delivery of welfare services was not allowed to be challenged by private interests (Blomqvist 2004; Premfors 2007). Further, the labor market also had elements that made the Swedish model special in international comparison. The solidaristic wage policy aimed at increasing both productivity and equality, and the wage gap within the Swedish Trade Union Federation (LO) decreased by 50 percent between 1960 and 1975 (SOU 1981, 133).

The Swedish welfare regime is strongly associated with the era of Social Democratic governments in the twentieth century. In order to distinguish this Scandinavian type of model from *the Liberal welfare regime* and *the Conservative welfare regime*, it is simply termed *the Social Democratic welfare regime* in the most famous categorization of different types of welfare models (Esping-Andersen 1990). In explaining the rise of the Swedish type of welfare model, those who give the most crucial importance to Social Democracy are the power resource theorists. They argue that working class mobilization through active trade unions had its political expression in the Social Democratic governments, a fundamental power resource which also rested on the ability to create alliances with related organizations (Korpi 1981; Esping-Andersen 1985).

Although few would dispute that the Swedish welfare model got many of its characteristics from and because of the era of Social Democratic governments, their importance has been nuanced by those who indicate that employers were

also a driving force in many of the overall compromises that were decisive for the emergence of the Swedish welfare model (Swenson 1991).

One of these compromises was made on the labor market, where capital and labor agreed on certain rules of the game already in 1938 (Johansson 1989), and where the employers for a long time accepted the solidaristic wage policy (Dahmén 1977, 206). Other compromises took place in the welfare state arena, where the Social Democrats could reach agreements with employers who, under current conditions, affirmed some aspects of the general welfare policy (Andersson 2000).

Eventually, however, the employers' willingness to compromise came to an end, both on the labor market and on the welfare state arena (Boréus 1994; Blyth 2002). Already in the early 1970s, employers began to question the solidaristic wage policy. In the following decade, they were 'able to play different union interests against each other in their efforts to reorganize wage bargaining' (Pontusson and Swenson 1996, 224). Meanwhile, the employers' offensive started to target many other elements of the Swedish welfare model; an offensive that coincided with the international wave of neo-liberalism (Harvey 2005). But also within European Social Democracy there was a significant shift in political and economic thinking from the 1980s and onwards (Kitschelt 1994), often referred to as the Third Way (Giddens 1998).

The above indicates that the way of organizing the Swedish welfare regime has undergone a lot of change. The discussion on the magnitude of these changes forms part of an international debate on institutional stability and change in general and welfare state resilience and retrenchment in particular (Pierson 1994; Hacker 2004; Streeck and Thelen 2005). As mentioned earlier, I am interested in how Social Democracy and its related trade unions have interacted with these changes. While paper 1 focuses on an earlier stage in Social Democratic thinking, papers 2 to 5 all deal with the above mentioned questions in one way or another.

In different ways, papers 2, 4 and 5 revolve around new ideas about the public sector and its place in society, and what consequences it has had for the Swedish welfare model. The public monopolies delivering welfare services were the most distinctive (Blomqvist 2004; Cox 2004; Premfors 1991) and most socialist (Pontusson 1987) features of the Swedish welfare model, but in the 1980s they started to be exposed to competition from private actors. There was a time when Social Democrats regarded 'public sector expansion as equivalent to democratisation' (Premfors 2007), but now they gradually affirmed or even took the lead (paper 2) in the trend towards increased marketization of the welfare services.

The affirmation of increased marketization was based on the aforementioned ideological shift, which meant that the Social Democrats embraced a new view of competition policy and a new view of the relationship between equality and efficiency. Now, growth and social security had become ‘deeply contradictory ideological goals’ which meant that ‘a way of looking at social policy as an investment, as something that releases resources and contributes to growth, has thus been replaced by a view of social policy as a cost, something that takes up resources’ (Andersson 2003, 11). Further, the social policy ideas from the 1960s and 70s, including elements such as a ‘broadening of the social security systems, an expanded responsibility for the state vis-à-vis the individual’s welfare and social rights, as well as solidarity with vulnerable people’, was now replaced with increased emphasis on the individual’s own responsibility and duty vis-à-vis society (Junestav 2007, 41). This kind of altered view of the relationship between equality and efficiency also applies to the trade unions and their behavior on the labor market (Tilton 1989, 373), where they agreed on individual wages when the solidaristic wage policy was abandoned in favor of more decentralized bargaining (paper 3).

On a more direct level, the changing attitude towards the public sector was made possible by the fact that Social Democrats, in the early 1980s, began to question the public sector from two different directions. Firstly, there was a critique of bureaucracy and centralization which had its representatives not least in the Ministry of Public Administration. Secondly, there was a criticism of inefficiency and unproductiveness which came first and foremost from the Ministry of Finance.

Initially, the Ministry of Public Administration did not see privatization as the solution to the problem, but instead the public sector would be made more democratic for example by raising the level of service and create more participation via so-called user participation (*brukarmedverkan*) (SOU 1984). User participation was considered then to be an alternative to privatization (Montin 1992, 38). Organizationally, however, the emphasis on decentralization and self-management meant that the public sector was opened up for the Ministry of Finance’s demands for marketization (Antman 1994, 37-38). In this context, a number of influential Social Democratic economists are often mentioned. They belonged to a corps which had now been given expert status when it came to welfare sector efficiency, and they often defined the public sector as ‘constituting a problem’ (Hugemark 1994, 210; Blyth 2001).

Less noticed is that both types of criticism of the public sector also came from political scientists. An example of this is one of the most well-known interpreters of the Swedish welfare model, Bo Rothstein. In the Social Democratic

magazine *Tiden*, he attacked the aforementioned public monopolies which he considered to be ‘unfair in terms of distribution, politically uncontrollable, inefficient and unjust’, and that it was best to close down as much as possible of them (Rothstein 1988, 472). Further, he claimed that ‘because of ideological blindness, Social Democracy has created a privatization ghost and ended up in a sterile discussion of how welfare is to be organized’ (Rothstein 1988, 474).

Rothstein’s article in *Tiden* is interesting in more ways. Here and elsewhere he expresses an idea that has been a common argument for privatization of delivery, namely that privatization of delivery in no way affects the funding of welfare services which, therefore, can continue to be publicly funded in the same degree as before. In fact, privatization of delivery should not even be regarded as privatization (Rothstein 1988, 472). The conclusion is that ‘the amount of resources invested in the public sector is namely an issue that is separate from the question of how much of the operation that should be publicly delivered’ (Rothstein 1992, 7).

But is it really that simple? The possible relationship between privatized delivery and privatized funding is something that I problematize in a couple of the articles (papers 4 and 5) where I, for example, highlight the fact that privately funded patients would have nowhere to go if delivery of health care had not been privatized to the extent that has occurred over the past two decades. The same applies to the introduction of other types of topping up possibilities (for example in elderly care), which have also depended on the substantial privatization of delivery of welfare services that has taken place since the 1990s (paper 5). In many other ways there is an interesting interplay between private delivery and private funding, a field of research that is largely unexplored by scholars interested in recent development of the Swedish welfare model. What they have focused on is rather the process of privatization of delivery as well as a variety of interesting implications of the same, for example whether freedom of choice increases segregation or whether quality suffers when the profit motive is brought into education, health care or elderly care (for example Hanspers and Mörk 2011; Vlachos 2011; Anell 2011).

When it comes to the labor market, the new view of the relationship between equality and efficiency has also had a major impact. The solidaristic wage policy was very much the epitome of how efficiency and equality could go hand in hand, and today’s system is indeed different in many ways. Basically, there has been a tendency towards decentralization of industrial relations, which was originally launched by the employers (Pontusson and Swenson 1996; Thörnqvist 1999) and which includes the rise of individual wage setting for most of the members of the trade union that I study (paper 3). All in all, there is much

research on the rise and fall of the solidaristic wage policy (for example Elvander 1988; De Geer 1989; Lundh 2010) and also some research on the emergence of individual wages (for example Sjölund 1997; Nilsson and Ryman 2005). My contribution to this research is that I examine the arguments for individual wages brought forward by one of the major trade unions.

Further, the Social Democratic affirmative stance on opening up for private delivery in the public sector was a prerequisite for a new comprehensive competition legislation, including the ban of cartels. In paper 2, I show how a new consensus on competition policy became possible only after Social Democrats accepted the Conservatives' old demands to abandon the idea to give the public sector a unique position in terms of competition legislation. Further, the acceptance of a new competition policy can be seen as the final abandonment of the idea of socialization (see below).

The attitude towards restrictions on competition is also analyzed in paper 1, but the focus is now on earlier stages in Social Democratic development of ideas. Despite the time jump, thematically the paper has much in common with the other four articles. This includes the object of study and the importance of ideas and ideology for institutional stability and change. The question is why Social Democrats had such a permissive attitude towards cartels in the 1920s. Here, the Social Democratic idea of socialization plays a vital role (Tingsten 1967; Lewin 1970; Dahlqvist 1984).

Understanding the idea of socialization is important not only to understand the attitude towards restrictions on competition, but also to understand how the Swedish welfare model could emerge in the first place. If the idea to socialize big parts of Swedish industry had not been abandoned, it is hard to imagine the many compromises with capital made from the 1930s and onwards. However, to some of the influential actors, the idea of socialization continued to be a viable alternative for the future. One example is Gustav Möller, who in 1942 claimed that:

I have never understood why the idea of socialization is put in contrast to the so-called politics of welfare. The politics of welfare forms part of the same type of crutches as do the trade union movement. The trade union movement makes corrections of the result of production and adds more to the working class than it otherwise would get. The social policy transfers yet some small amounts to the poorest. But to say that this is a solution for the future, one by us in 1942 or let me say in the 1944 congress accepted solution for the problems of the future, this I can never imagine. (Cited in Johansson 1984)

From this perspective, it is worth thinking about the appearance of some features of the Swedish welfare model, especially the organization of central welfare services which was the ‘dimension of the welfare state that most directly contradicts the logic of capitalism’ (Clayton and Pontusson 1998, 70), and which in some ways was in accordance with the original idea of socialization. Here, Antman (1999) suggests that Möller and other Social Democrats of his generation had a ‘dual agenda’, and that there was a legacy of the idea of socialization in the Swedish welfare model at least until the 1980s, a legacy that much of the research (for example Lewin 1970; Rothstein 2010 [1994]) has ignored. Instead, curiously enough, Möller’s name has been used to argue against these features of the Swedish welfare state:

The recommendation is thus to reestablish the Möller-approach by investing in universal transfers / insurance systems and to close down as much as possible of the public service monopolies / / The Möller-approach, i.e. a universal and uniform cash-approach /.../ To be brief, send money to the citizens or provide them with rights to insurance because they themselves know best what they need. (Rothstein 1988, 472)

This interpretation of Möller’s thinking is probably due to an overinterpretation of his resistance against stigmatizing in-kind benefits proposed by Alva Myrdal in areas such as child benefits and maternal health, i.e. ‘discounts on food rich in protein and “practical” clothes for children’ which were expressions of a ‘know-all mentality and a paternalism that could be seen as insulting by ordinary people’ (Nyström 1989, 381). This is also the debate and the areas that Rothstein (1985, 157; 2010 [1994], 224) refers to. In general, however, I cannot find empirical support for the existence of this kind of ‘Möller-approach’ (cash-approach in contrast to in-kind-approach). Instead, Möller concludes that some services would apply to the cash-approach and others to the in-kind-approach (Möller 1946, 81). Hence, by drawing on the argument that Möller opposed stigmatizing (and in-kind) means-testing for the poor, it is strange to conclude that he would have had anything against a universal system of publicly delivered and publicly funded (and in-kind) welfare services.

2. Theoretical perspectives

This thesis revolves around institutional stability and change, especially with respect to some of the Swedish welfare model's most prominent characteristics. At the same time, I am interested in how the actors – mainly Social Democrats and their related trade unions – have interacted with the pressure for change. As shown below, theories of institutional change often lack a connection to ideational processes and analysis, which makes changes more difficult to understand and predict than they would otherwise have to be (Béland 2005). Instead, some ideas are taken for granted and enable the actors to hide the fact that important changes have taken place. Here, Cox (2004) has introduced the useful concept of *the path-dependency of an idea*, which means that the Swedish model had so appealing and desirable features – universalism, solidarity, decommodification – that the story and the myth of these characteristics persist even when great changes take place both in the model itself and in the actors' ideology, which underwent a sharp change (Kitschelt 1994) or neo-liberalization (Callaghan, 2000; Callinicos 2001; Arter 2002; Ryner 2004) from the 1980s onwards.

Given that many of the model's characteristics remain popular in the public opinion (Svallfors 2011), it is important for the actors to refer to these values when changes take place, i.e. 'scholars and policy-makers are compelled to justify their observations and proposals for reform by making reference to those values' (Cox 2004, 216). That is exactly what happens when it comes to the rapid rise of private health insurance in Sweden (paper 4). Here, politicians continue to argue that their proposals are consistent with the principle of equal access to health care, even though their decisions directly encourage or alternatively do not curb a trend towards a system where more and more people get faster access than others.

Further, it is not easy to say exactly what the Swedish welfare model was and is, and there are both narrow and broad definitions of its basic concepts. By combining these narrow and broad definitions of solidarity, universalism and decommodification, 'a wide variety of interpretations can be given to the reforms of the 1990s' (Cox 2004, 210). This is something that allows politicians to argue that all sorts of changes are in accordance with the principles of the prevailing welfare model. Cox argues:

One example of this is the shifting discourse about public pensions. Privatization is now framed, not as a rollback of the welfare state, but as a means of strengthening individual autonomy by giving people control over their pension savings. Likewise, under the old discourse means-tested public assistance was deemed degrading and inferior to universal assistance. Today,

means testing is promoted by those who want to make public assistance available for the truly needy and to exclude those who might qualify but do not need assistance. (Cox 2001, 476)

Scholars have also sometimes been inventive in combining different definitions of the basic concepts of the model. All developed countries are welfare states in some sense, but some scholars tend to forget what Esping-Andersen (1990) and others have said about the fact that there are big differences between the Liberal, Conservative and Social Democratic welfare models. One example of this is Pierson (1994, 29), who argues that ‘power-resources arguments have limited relevance because welfare states are now mature’. Even though he studies a couple of countries with a liberal welfare model, he often refers to all types of models of which he does not seem to make so much difference. If it is true that welfare states are somehow mature, however, they must be very different kinds of maturity since even the connotation of the concept of *welfare* differs widely in the different models. To study changes in an already selective US liberal welfare model where welfare is associated with people ‘living on welfare’ and ‘welfare dependency’ (Bowman 2013, 10), is reasonably something else than to study changes in a Social Democratic welfare model in which *welfare* has a different connotation due to the fact that welfare services have been utilized by virtually the entire population.

Another example is Bergh (2008), who argues that a variety of necessary and desirable changes have been made within the framework of the Nordic welfare state. The changes he refers to cannot even by the broadest of definitions be seen as increased universality, solidarity and decommodification (more options for topping up, reduced progressivity in the tax rate, etc.), but to Bergh it has nothing to do with retrenchment nor decline of the model. Klitgaard (2007) has a similar approach. He argues that Social Democrats’ aim with a series of market-oriented reforms is to rescue the Swedish welfare model, but he never asks whether all these rescue attempts may eventually transform the Social Democratic model into something else. According to Klitgaard, Social Democracy has succeeded to make market reforms a part of their own universal welfare model, for example in education: ‘Private schools were in effect conquered by the welfare state and offered as a universal opportunity independent of private incomes (Klitgaard 2007, 182).

But was there really any change? Here, there is an international debate on welfare state retrenchment and resilience, where Pierson (1994) famously argued that welfare states have shown great resilience against the attempts to undermine them. In contrast, a number of scholars have criticized Pierson’s approach as well as his major conclusions (Hacker 2004; Thelen 2004; Streeck

and Thelen 2005; Béland 2007; Mahoney and Thelen 2010). They suggest that earlier institutional theories and theorists have tended to ‘understate the extent of change’ (Streeck and Thelen 2005, 3) in terms of welfare state development.

According to the above-mentioned critics, the reasons for understating the extent of change is that institutional change has been seen as highly path dependent and therefore relatively stable, a stability that is long lasting and can be disturbed only by dramatic shifts (Pempel 1998, 3). This is often referred to as *punctuated equilibrium* and the consequence is that ‘institutions, once created, either persist or breakdown in the face of some kind of exogenous shock’ (Thelen 2003, 209). Further, the essence of path dependence theory is basically that it emphasizes the stability of institutions by claiming that previous decisions have great impact on future decisions. One of the broadest definitions of this would be that ‘what has happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time’ (Sewell 1996, 262-3). In this context, just like many other scholars, Pierson (1994, 43) refers to the QWERTY typewriter keyboard which ‘was so well established that alternatives could not gain a foothold in the industry’. The same goes for welfare states, where large public social programs are central features and where ‘dense networks of interest groups and strong popular attachments to particular politics’ (Pierson 1994, 8) will effectively prevent retrenchment, since ‘frontal assaults on the welfare state carry tremendous electoral risks’ (Pierson 1996, 178). Therefore, politicians who want to undermine the welfare state are not blessed with the fortune to be engaged in the simple art of credit claiming, but instead they must handle the difficult art of blame avoidance (Weaver 1986; Pierson 1996, 145).

Without completely rejecting the ideas of path dependency and punctuated equilibrium, scholars have criticized the one-sidedness of such an approach. They argue that welfare states have undergone changes in a liberal direction without much influence of previous decisions and without external shocks, i.e. changes that can neither be explained by path dependency nor by punctuated equilibrium.

One particularly intriguing aspect of this broad and multifaceted development is that it unfolds by and large incrementally, without dramatic disruptions like the wars and revolutions that were characteristic of the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, an essential and defining characteristic of the ongoing worldwide liberalization of advanced political economies is that it evolves in the form of gradual change that takes place within, and is conditioned and constrained by, the very same postwar institutions that it is reforming or even dissolving. (Streeck and Thelen 2005, 4)

In sum, these scholars are ‘often struck by the cumulative effect of ongoing but often subtle changes in institutional arrangements that persist over long time’ (Thelen 2003, 210). To better understand and describe how changes occur, a number of concepts such as *layering*, *drift* and *conversion* (see paper 5 for a description) have been presented (Streeck and Thelen 2005). These concepts represent different tools for gradual and often hidden change of policies and institutions, and their effects have been highlighted not least in the debate against Pierson and the idea of welfare state resilience. According to the critics, Pierson has stared himself blind on ‘authoritative changes in existing social welfare programs’ and he has thus missed a series of subterranean means of adjustment as well as a ‘wide range of agenda-setting and blocking activities that may well be quite crucial in shaping the welfare state’s long-term evolution’ (Hacker 2004). Speaking of the fact that change can come about even when overall policies stay the same, it must also be mentioned that increased levels of unemployment have many effects on the functioning and constitution of the welfare state. For example, increased unemployment in the 1990s meant that more Swedes had to apply for means-tested social assistance. This is something that is noted by Clayton and Pontusson (1998, 77), who conclude that: ‘Without any policy change, the employment crisis has thus shifted the balance between “universalism” and “residualism” within the Swedish welfare state’.

Something that Pierson’s critics seem to have missed, however, is that, although he comes to quite different conclusions, he makes similar and interesting analyses of the potential for gradual change of policies and institutions. He actually speaks of three broad strategies – obfuscation, division and compensation – that ‘retrenchment advocates’ can use in order to minimize the political resistance to retrenchment (Pierson 1994, 19). Within the framework of obfuscation there is the tactics of implicit privatization, where retrenchment advocates can achieve their goals with ‘limited political exposure’ by ‘freezing a program within a growing economy’, whereby, for example, the publicly funded welfare services gradually stagnate and whereby ‘social provision is shifted increasingly toward the private sector’ (Pierson 1994, 20-21). This ‘invisible’ way of retrenchment (similar to the concept of *drift*) is a good strategy for the policy-maker who wants to minimize the political costs of retrenchment, since ‘the contemporary politics of the welfare state is one of blame avoidance’ (Pierson 1996, 179). Furthermore, the strategy *compensation* aims at different ways of compensating the most vocal victims of retrenchment. One way to compensate for public-sector retrenchment is to increase private benefits, since ‘attractive private-sector options may mute opposition to the curtailment of public pro-

vision' (Pierson 1994, 23). These kinds of market solutions are often preferred by retrenchment advocates, 'even when they require some kind of subsidy'.

No matter what to call the different tools and concepts, the theories of incremental institutional change are fruitful ways to approach the issue of resilience or retrenchment. Of course there are elements of path dependency and punctuated equilibrium, something that is affirmed even by its harshest critics: 'Certainly, this kind of punctuated equilibrium model captures one important mode of change in political life' (Thelen 2003, 209). The gradual changes that can take place during periods of apparent stability, however, should not be underestimated.

Institutions can thus change both gradually and suddenly. Without changing ideas, however, there will not be much institutional change at all. This is so because behind almost every institutional change there is an idea or a policy spelled out (or not spelled out) by a particular actor or by different actors who have mutual interests or who have had to compromise to come up with the new policy. This is not to belittle the importance of structures. Of course, there are often structural changes behind ideational changes, but 'structural change does not on its own create a particular politics' and 'structures do not come with an instruction sheet' (Blyth 2002, 251).

In this context, it is interesting to consider the aforementioned shift in the 1980s. During this time there was a more difficult reality to relate to, but were there really no options for Social Democracy? Ryner (2002) has argued that the new structures were indeed open to more than only one idea:

There is nothing inherently neo-liberal about the technological forces behind contemporary 'post-Fordist' capitalist restructuring and globalisation, and these forces could be mobilised to address contemporary social problems in a manner that is compatible with the norms of social democracy and democratic socialism.

According to Ryner, there were feasible alternatives to the neoliberal development, alternatives related not least to the proposal on wage-earner funds which was in line with traditional Social Democratic thinking on economic democracy. This and other initiatives were abandoned not due to any predetermined structural logic, but instead due to the inability of the labor movement to withstand the power of external and internal ideas and actors.

On the one hand, there was the newly awakened offensive by the employers which was canalized for example through influential think tanks (Boréus 1994; Blyth 2002). The prime example of this offensive was precisely the resistance to the wage-earner funds, and most conspicuous the large demonstration in

Stockholm in 1983 to which 75,000 people were bussed to rally against the funds (Blyth 2002, 213-4; Elmbrant 2006, 95).

Above all, however, it was the Social Democrats themselves who blocked the alternative pathways. First, there was simply bad timing and miscommunication when the proposal was presented by the Trade Union Confederation (LO) (Ryner 2002, 235). Second, and more important, the labor movement was surprised by the employers' counter attack and was unable to stand up against it, partly because it was 'assumed that the issue could be resolved through the normal tripartite channels of mediation and compromise' (Ryner 2002, 173). Third, and most important, there had been a neoliberal turn among the influential party economists at the Ministry of Finance. For various reasons they were the ones who made the important decisions and, accordingly, 'the shift towards a social democratic compensatory neo-liberalism in the mid-1980s, /.../ although it had profound effects on Swedish society, was never established as policy through the procedures of mass politics' (Ryner 2002, 174).

The ideological turn among Social Democratic economists was partly due to the influence of international and national organizations and think-tanks in which the economists participated, but Ryner also, interestingly, traces the issue back in history and finds a gradual transition from a Keynesian-Marxist to a Keynesian-technocratic to a neo-classical discourse (Ryner 2002, 175-187).

The above gives importance to ideas and actions. It implies that the actor (in this case Social Democracy) had a certain room for manoeuvre and 'could have acted otherwise', as it is put in one of the most cited works dealing with the relation between structures and actors (Giddens 1979, 56). The relation between actors and structure is a long-standing problem in social science. However, it is reasonable to assume that there is some sort of interplay between these two, i.e. that structures do not determine everything and that individual and collective actors have some kind of autonomy in regard to structures (Lundquist 1984). This can be expressed in several ways. Philosophically, it is said that existence precedes essence, i.e. that human beings are quite capable of creating their own future (Sartre 1970 [1946]). One can also speak of dialectical materialism which, unlike mechanical materialism, gives weight not only to structures but also to the human capacity to change them. As Marx (1969 [1845], 80) put it:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that men themselves change circumstances and that the educator himself must be educated.

In this context, it has been pointed out that the welfare state is a creation within the capitalist system and should not be considered a socialist island, but neither a simple product of capital's need for reproduction and social control (Gough 1985). The welfare state is contradictory. More welfare can be squeezed out of the state and some welfare services can be completely removed from the reach of the market, sometimes in conflict with the interests of capital (Gough 1985, 30). Similar mechanisms and possibilities are noted by Gramsci who refers to the concept of hegemony (Gramsci 1971; Linderborg 2001). He considers capitalist society to be characterized by the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie, but simultaneously there can be counterhegemonies that challenge the prevailing hegemony, forcing it to make concessions. These counterhegemonies can be strong or weak. In recent decades, they have tended to be weak for example in the labor market, where 'the balance of power between class forces has shifted toward employers, unions have largely been on the defensive, and collective institutions and forms of labor market regulation have been weakened' (Bacarro and Howell 2011, 522).

The essence of the above is that nothing is set in stone. Structures do not determine everything and history has not come to an end, no matter what is said by some scholars (Fukuyama 1992). The power of ideas plays a vital role in this context, as correctly pointed out by representatives of very different political and economic traditions. As argued by Lenin (1971 [1902], 91), 'Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement'. Or as argued by Friedman (1970, 12), regretting the dominance of Keynesianism after the Great Depression, 'what mattered in the world of ideas was not what was true, but what was believed to be true'.

It can thus be said that economic ideas may be 'effectual weapons for transforming existing institutions' (Blyth 2002, 39), including a potential to delegitimize the previous ideas and create a 'third order change', i.e. a new policy paradigm (Hall 1993) where even those who previously thought otherwise participate or even take the lead, something which is welcomed by the ones who have long advocated this kind of change.

From the 1980s and onwards, Social Democracy embraced the new policy paradigm and implemented many changes. In this context it has been said that 'Like the democrats in the United States, the SAP appear simultaneously as the heir of the embedded liberal order and yet as the party most likely to dismantle it' (Blyth 2002, 246). However, even though the ideas of the Social Democratic so-called renovators (including the aforementioned economists at the Ministry of Finance) for different reasons were more effective weapons than

those of the traditionalists, these changes were not implemented without any sort of internal struggle nor according to a predetermined structural template.

One way of understanding institutional change is to study the underlying ideas. All types of institutional theory have been criticized for the lack of a connection to ideational processes (Béland 2005, 4), and hence a lack of a conceptual understanding of why changes take the forms that they do. This is highlighted for example in the introduction of paper 2, where I suggest that changes in competition legislation have been studied without distinguishing how they evolved through the actions of different actors with conflicting and converging ideas and interests. Instead, such studies tend to see change merely as the product of some bureaucrats' doings, and the explanations tend to get a deterministic trait where economic development enforces change without taking the slightest notice of ideas or ideologies. Béland holds that:

Because institutional change is generally related to the strategies of concrete social and political actors, understanding the effect of their ideas and assumptions on the social and economic world is essential for explaining the way in which these actors can bring about institutional change in a particular policy area, and the form and orientation this change will take. (Béland 2007, 23)

How should these ideas be described? How to explain them? Were they based on sustainable arguments? What is the manifest and latent ideology behind them? These are questions asked in the articles in this thesis, a procedure that is further developed in the following section.

3. Methods, materials and procedures

This section deals with the materials and methods employed in the respective papers. As most of the papers have been or will be published and the publishing format does not always allow detailed discussions on sources and methods, I take the opportunity to give a more elaborated presentation of the same. The section also includes some thoughts about how the research could be further developed. Before discussing the papers one by one, some general remarks will be made about the methods for data collection and the methods for analysis.

On a general level, when it comes to data collection methods, there are basically three ways to go about it: 1) to ask people, 2) to observe people and 3) to observe physical traces and results of human activities (Esaiasson et al., 193). As will be shown in the sections below, I have mainly used the third method for data collection, namely observing physical traces and results of human activities in a variety of written materials sought and found for example on the internet or in different libraries or in various archives around the country. To some extent, especially in papers 3 and 4, I have also used the first two methods mentioned above, i.e. observations and interviews.

In terms of methods for analysis, Beckman (2005) has fruitfully gathered some of them under an umbrella named ideational analysis (*idéanalys*). Beckman points out four different types of ideational analysis – explanatory ideational analysis, descriptive ideational analysis and commenting ideational analysis containing ideational critique (*idékritik*) and ideology critique (*ideologikritik*) – which are basically the four different forms of analysis that I use in papers 1 to 4 respectively. Furthermore, these forms of ideational analysis should be seen as overall methods for analysis which in turn, to varying degrees, require other types of methods for analysis.

The method of analysis employed in paper 1 can best be described as explanatory ideational analysis. The question the paper wants to answer is why the Social Democrats had such a permissive attitude towards cartels in the 1920s, and the characteristics of explanatory ideational analysis are precisely the attempts to understand and explain why a particular actor chooses to act in a certain way. The explanatory ideational analysis thus goes in depth with a particular decision and, consequently, tries to explain why the particular decision was made. Or, put in another way, ‘that actor A decided p for the reasons X, Y, and so on’ (Beckman 2005, 82). When it comes to explanatory ideational analysis, the most important activity is therefore to try to pinpoint the motives of the actors, that is, as closely as possible examine and find out the reasoning behind their decision. Further, it is important to consider that there is often more than

one underlying motive for the decisions, even though one of the motives may be the strongest one. Other motives must therefore be examined based on the material and the evidence that we find (Beckman 2005, 86), something that I have taken note of in the paper.

The method of analysis used in paper 2 is descriptive ideational analysis. The question the paper wants to answer is how different actors have viewed cartels over time, and descriptive ideational analysis is characterized precisely by describing the ideas of the actors and to ‘systematically sort the material in a way that cannot be immediately discerned in the material itself’ (Bjereld et al. 2009, 26). Just like the explanatory ideational analysis, the descriptive ideational analysis does not aim at testing the sustainability of the arguments, i.e. there is no intention to comment on the legitimacy of what the actors say or decide. The descriptive ideational analysis rather aims at defining and deciding how the actors’ ideas and arguments should be described, that is, to make a claim about the nature of them. In order to turn such a claim into a ‘determination (or “estimate”) of the material along one or more dimensions’ (Beckman 2005, 51), we need some kind of comparison. Two of the best ways are to compare the views of the actors at different times or to compare them with the views of other actors, both of which I do in the paper.

In paper 3, the method of analysis is ideational critique within the frame of commenting ideational analysis. The paper reviews and examines the arguments for individual wages brought forward by the trade union Kommunal, and ideational critique is characterized precisely by the efforts to decide to what extent a certain argumentation lives up to certain standards (Esaiaasson et al. 2012, 212), something which is often done by testing the sustainability of the arguments for a specific message or decision of a particular actor. The main aim of ideational critique is not to explain why decisions were made, but instead it is about ‘explaining which arguments for and against a view that are acceptable’ or simply ‘which arguments we have reason to believe in’ (Beckman 2005, 55). However, it is often an overwhelming task to conduct one’s own empirical study in order to do sustainability tests of the arguments. Therefore, in this particular type of ideational analysis, it is common that the critique is partly based on conclusions from already existing research. The task is thus ‘to make an effort to clarify how research in the field positions itself to the statements that are subject to investigation’ (Beckman 2005, 66).

The method of analysis employed in paper 4 is ideology critique within the frame of commenting ideational analysis. The paper analyzes the discrepancy between political rhetoric and practice with regard to the rapid emergence of private health insurance, and ideology critique is characterized precisely

by tracing the ‘manifest’ and the ‘latent’ (Liedman 1989) in an ideology by comparing what is said and written with what is actually done. Another way to put it is that ideology critique focuses on elements in the ideological expression that ‘never reaches the surface and is likely to remain hidden because it benefits the efficiency of the ideology’ (Liedman 1989, 30). When it comes to political parties, ideology critique raises questions about what the party says about itself, i.e. ideology critique looks for ‘similarities and differences between the party’s claimed and actual function in the society’ (Liedman 1989, 30). Ideology critique compares ideology with a ‘truer picture of reality, a picture that will possess a radical and unmasking potential’ (Bergström and Boréus 2012, 148). An ideology is reflected in speeches and writings of the actors, for example a party program. Ideology critique thus includes an examination of the reality outside the ideology. The researcher must ‘ask questions to a material context, without which an ideology cannot be understood nor revealed’ (Bergström and Boréus 2012, 149).

Paper 5 is a work in progress which aims at developing some of the procedures and findings from paper 4 and puts them into a broader context. The idea of the paper is to describe some new features of the Swedish welfare state (the state-subsidized topping up possibilities within three major welfare services) and to analyze them in light of Hacker (2002) and what he finds to be some of the consequences of the rise of private social benefits in the United States, namely 1) inequality, 2) invisibility and 3) the emergence of new actors in the welfare arena. The paper makes use of new theories of institutional change (layering, drift, conversion) and the method of analysis is a mixture of ideational and ideology critique within the frame of commenting ideational analysis. The overarching question is what these new features of the Swedish welfare state actually and supposedly represent in a comparative welfare model perspective. At the moment, the paper consists of a theoretical review and a limited empirical study of the new features in each of the three welfare services that I want to study. In order to trace and to analyze the development and the possible consequences mentioned above in a more profound way, a lot more work needs to be done. This paper is a draft that points forward to a more extensive research that I would like to pursue in the future.

3.1 Paper 1

As evidenced by the title, the overarching question for this paper is why Social Democracy had such a permissive attitude towards cartels in the 1920s. Or had they really? Some scholars have argued to the contrary and it made me want to examine the matter further. It was my prior understanding of the development

of cartel legislation on the one hand, and of the Marxist heritage within Social Democracy on the other, that made me a bit hesitant to the claims that Social Democracy was the driving force against the cartels at the time in question.

My first task was to collect information about how Social Democracy approached the issue. Where would I find relevant material for this study? The cartel issue was never one of the most debated and, consequently, there is not an abundance of physical traces and results of human activities in this regard. As will be seen below, however, I managed to find quite a lot of material mainly in parliamentary protocols and in the writings of leading Social Democrats.

The first thing I did was to go through all parliamentary publications between the years 1908 and 1925, looking for debates, motions and bills on competition policy in general and cartels in particular. This material gave a relatively clear picture of how Social Democratic MPs looked upon cartels and cartel legislation. Although there was some criticism raised against the cartels, there was not one single Social Democratic MP who campaigned for a far-reaching cartel legislation. On the contrary, all MPs agreed that such legislation would be counterproductive. Instead, the parliamentary protocols make clear that it was the Peasant Party who pushed for more restrictive cartel legislation.

In order to get a clearer picture of how the different actors thought and acted, I was looking for party programs, congress protocols and comments on official reports. Therefore, I spent some time at the National Archives (Riksarkivet) in Marieberg, Stockholm. For example, I went through the comments sent to the Trust Law Committee report in 1921 (Trustlagstiftningskommittén 1921). Further, I went to the Labour Movement Archives and Library (Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv) in Stockholm, where I found – among other things – the party programs of the time and also some publications written by the below mentioned Social Democrats. Further, in the hope of finding additional material at the Labour Movement Archives and Library, I carefully read the protocols from the party congresses at the time in question.

The next step was to focus on some of the most influential Social Democrats. Here, I chose to focus primarily on Gustav Möller and Ernst Wigforss, representing two partially different currents within Social Democracy at this time. I also read other prominent Social Democratic thinkers at this time, such as Nils Karleby and Sigfrid Hansson, but I focused mainly on Möller and Wigforss who both turned out to have quite a lot to say about cartels. In order to get a full understanding of their thinking, I read almost everything they wrote (and that is a lot) in the 1920s but also some of their later writings published as books or, in many cases, articles in the magazine *Tiden*.

Using the basic principles of text analysis (Esaïasson et al. 2012, 210-212), my careful reading of Wigforss and Möller made me realize how influenced

they were by two international political currents that sought a parliamentary road to some form of socialism. When it comes to Wigforss it was the English Guild Socialists, a movement that inspired many Social Democrats (for example Sigfrid Hansson, who wrote a book about his study visit in England). In Möller's case it was the so-called Austro-Marxists, led by the Austrian politician Otto Bauer.

In order to trace the roots of the Social Democratic attitudes towards cartels, I studied the writings of the leading representatives of the above mentioned movements. This also meant that I got the opportunity to brush up on my knowledge of German, since some of the material was available in only that language. During my careful reading of the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer, I suddenly recognized some of the passages. On closer examination, it turned out that Gustav Möller more or less plagiarized Otto Bauer and his thoughts about the cartels as suitable targets for future socialization, a glaring piece of evidence that Möller was very much influenced by the Austro-Marxist. Wigforss, on the other hand, was almost as influenced by one of the leading Guild Socialists, the Englishman George Douglas Howard Cole. In summary, when it comes to attitudes towards cartels, my investigations showed that leading Swedish representatives of Social Democracy were highly influenced by international socialists.

Despite these findings, it is relevant to ask how influential the idea of socialization really was for the individual but influential actors. That is a relevant question partly because there was more than just one motive for having a permissive attitude to cartels (see below), but also due to the fact that the so-called socialization committee was to be shut down in the 1930s. Hence, the idea of socialization would partly fade to oblivion or alternatively be reformulated beyond recognition, for example by Social Democratic MP Gunnar Myrdal who in 1936 claimed that: 'Without blinding doctrines and false prejudices, we want to do everything that possibly can be done to stabilize the industry and make it more efficient. That is what we mean by socialization' (cited in Dahlkvist 1984; Tingsten 1967). At least until the congress in 1932, however, the original idea of socialization was still a hot potato and the congress delegates were still much divided on the issue (Jonter 1994; Tingsten 1967). Here I would suggest that in the mid-1920s, no matter what the leading representatives really thought about it, the idea of socialization was still something that they had to relate to.

Although not as strongly emphasized by the Social Democrats, it is clear from the material that there were factors other than the idea of socialization that made Social Democrats have a permissive attitude towards cartels.

Firstly, drawing on parliamentary debates and other materials, it is clear that the Social Democrats saw some advantages with cartels also within the

capitalist system. To some extent, Social Democrats seem to have been influenced also by non-socialist views on the economy at this time. To see how non-socialist economists were thinking about cartels, I studied the writings of the Swedish economists Cassel, Davidsson and Heckscher, all of which had a quite positive view of the cartels in the first decades of the twentieth century. In turn, they were influenced for example by the German economist Robert Liefmann, whose book on cartels and trusts were translated into Swedish by Eli Heckscher's mother Rosa Heckscher.

Secondly, it was clear to me that Social Democrats were afraid that stricter cartel legislation would involve the affiliated trade union movement. Therefore, again drawing on parliamentary debates and other materials, I tried to find out what the representatives of the other political parties had to say about cartels and trade unions. It was quite clear that the Conservatives and some other political parties would have liked to see the trade unions involved in cartel legislation if such would be enacted. Meanwhile, I tried to figure out what representatives of Social Democracy and the trade unions had to say about it. For example, I studied the writings of Sigfrid Hansson who had a central role in both Social Democracy and the trade union movement. In one of his books (Hansson 1926), he talks at length about the attempts to equate the trade unions with cartels, something he believes to be no more than false.

3.2 Paper 2

The overarching question for this paper is how one political consensus on competition legislation in 1925 (permissive attitude) could turn into a completely different consensus in 1993 (restrictive attitude), and what was the ideational basis of these two consensuses. The paper makes the point that these two consensuses on competition legislation were reached from different directions with completely different motives and arguments.

I wanted to gain understanding of the ideational basis for the two consensuses, and I decided to do so by investigating how the actors reasoned when they debated and decided on the different competition legislations. Was it simply that the actors were in agreement? Or was it that the actors happened to come to the same conclusions on different grounds? If so, which compromises and sacrifices had to be made by the actors? As mentioned in the introduction of this section, this paper is thus an example of descriptive ideational analysis aiming at describing the ideas of different actors at different times in history.

This way of studying national actors and their views on competition legislation is not so much done, but instead most scholars have been occupied with international or global levels or they have studied the issue from a purely

economic or legal perspective (for a more detailed discussion see *Background and previous research*, paper 2).

Further, in order to get a more unedited version of the perceptions of the actors, I had the idea of going behind the committee reports on the issue. In addition to what is said about this in the paper, it may be added that this can be a particularly fruitful approach when there is an agreement on the political decision but the decision is grounded on different values and starting points. In such cases, naturally enough, there will be no or few reservations in neither the official reports nor other forms of expressed dissatisfaction with the decisions. By conducting a more direct study of the actors, however, one can catch a glimpse of how the issue was debated, and thus more in detail find out why the actors have come to their conclusions.

Where would I look for actors and their views on competition legislation over time? Issues related to cartels and competition legislation have rarely been particularly noticed in the party programs and other documents authored by the political parties, nor particularly circumscribed by individual politicians (there are exceptions of course, and I have to some extent made use of them). However, cartel legislation and the like have been repeatedly debated in the Swedish parliament. There have also been a number of parliamentary motions on the subject. Due to the relative scarcity of material, but also due to my intention of studying the unedited perceptions of the actors, I concluded that the main source had to be debates and motions from the Swedish parliament.

Furthermore, since I was interested in changing legislation, it seemed to be a natural choice to focus on the years before and after important changes in cartel legislation. Here, I chose to focus on the years before and after the three legislations in 1925, in 1953 and in 1993. Furthermore, since I was interested in studying the issue up until today, I also decided to follow developments after 1993.

The next question was which political actors to study. I decided to focus on the Social Democrats and the Conservatives. First, the two parties have been two of the most influential through the twentieth century. Second, they have had a lot of ideological differences, which makes it easier to distinguish and compare different attitudes. Third, they have had a close connection with interest organizations (in many cases the individual actors represented both the party and the interest group) which have played a major role in Swedish society, Social Democracy with the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) and the Conservatives with the employers' organizations. Of course I could have focused on more political parties than just these two. However, the other

political parties have not been as continuously active in the debate on cartels and, secondly, it was a matter of making the study manageable in time and space.

Another issue was how to make the best sample possible of the ideas of different politicians from the same political parties raised in debates, motions and bills in parliament. When conducting descriptive ideational analysis, it goes without saying that it is important to highlight possible differences between the individual actors for example in a political party. However, this proved to be almost a non-issue. It turned out that for each period studied there was a great deal of unanimity among the various MPs from the respective political parties. In fact, I could hardly find a single party representative from any of the studied parties who had a dissenting opinion in the parliamentary debates and motions that I studied. Here, it would have been interesting to have had more knowledge about the opinions of other member groups of the political parties, groups who might have had different opinions than the MPs. However, it can at least be said that the trade union movement was more restrictive in its view of the cartels at an earlier stage than was Social Democracy, and that the organizations of private industry were less willing than the Conservatives to go all the way and forbid the cartels.

The study is not based on only material from the Swedish parliament. Although there is not a wealth of material on actors and their attitudes towards cartels, there are at least some useful committee reports of which the most important have been the Trust Law Committee (1921), the official report from 1951 (SOU 1951: 27-28) and the official report from 1991 (SOU 1991: 59). I have also studied publications written by the politicians themselves, as well as publications written by the interest groups and by other scholars. For the last period (1993 up until today), the first evaluation of the competition legislation in 1993 plays a certain role (SOU 1997: 20). Here, I am also referring to the comments made by different actors from different parts of society. I found these comments in the Government Offices Archives (Regeringskansliets arkiv) in Stockholm, where I also found a lot of related material that was useful to read but not directly included in this study (for example the comments on a series of other recent official reports related to competition policy). Further, I spent time in the Labour Movement Archives and Library (Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv) in Stockholm, where I tried to find additional material on Social Democratic positions in cartel issues, however, with rather meager results.

Competition policy is a huge field which can be approached from a number of angles. One way to develop my particular study would have been to compare the Swedish development with that of other European countries. Another way to go would have been to include more political actors and parties in the study

but, due to time and space limitations, I think it was a good idea to focus on only the Swedish case and to select a limited number of actors and parties.

3.3 Paper 3

The overarching question for this paper is if the arguments for introducing and sticking to individual wages, brought forward by the trade union Kommunal, are sustainable. The approach can be described as ideational critique within the frame of commenting ideational analysis. The question is related to my interest in how institutional change happens and, more specifically, how and on what basis the Swedish model is modified or dismantled by the same actors (Social Democracy and the trade union movement) who were highly involved in constructing it.

My first task was to find out which arguments Kommunal actually has and had for individual wages. The main source was the investigations and reports that Kommunal itself has published on the subject. One of the most important documents was the report that preceded the 1993 decision. However, because the issue continued to be a hot potato in the organization, I was as interested in how individual wages have been motivated ever since. Further, in addition to the study of these investigations and reports, using the basic principles of text analysis (Esaiasson et al. 2012, 210-212), I also made interviews with two of those who have worked the most, and for a long time, with individual wages within the organization. One of them I met on several occasions, conducting qualitative interviews (Holme and Solvang 1997, 99-110) in order to fill in gaps and to get a better picture. One of my questions was how Kommunal has justified and continues to justify its decision on individual wages, and the response was in line with what I had concluded from investigations and reports. Further, I had good use of the fortnightly journal *Kommunalarbetaren* which, over the years, has written a lot about individual wages.

Finally, to get a better picture of how Kommunal is debating individual wages, I participated as an observer in the Kommunal Congress in 2013 in Stockholm, where the issue of individual wages got a lot of space. Prior to the congress, I read all of the motions from different parts of the country and the opinions and answers made by the board, as well as the wage policy report written for the congress. During the hearings, I documented what the delegates had to say about individual wages and I use some of it in the article. My following conversations with congressional delegates and other attendees were not documented and not used in the research, but they should still be mentioned as they gave me a better picture of how the issue was handled by the union. In methodological terms, my attendance at the congress was an

observation which aimed at seeing things when they happen, something that can be valuable in situations which are difficult to reconstruct by other types of methods (Esaiaasson et al. 2012, 304).

The result of the research mentioned was that Kommunal motivated and motivates individual wages with two main arguments, namely that it increases productivity which leads to higher wages, and that the members themselves want individual wages. The second argument has become more articulated over the years, especially since Kommunal presented member surveys which were said to show that members have ‘a lot of sympathy’ for the individual wage system.

Now I knew how Kommunal motivated individual wages. The next step was to test the sustainability of the arguments. I started with the member surveys. Firstly, I ordered the reports from the three member surveys in 2000, 2002 and 2012 (these reports present and discuss the questions and answers that were deemed the most important in the member surveys and, in addition, there is also a methodological appendix). Further, I read everything that Kommunal has had to say about the member surveys over the years. In order to assess the accuracy of the approach and the findings in these member surveys, I did a study of questions concerning survey methods, interview techniques, web panels and the like.

My conclusions of the validity of the member surveys are reported in the paper. It can also be added that the two interviewed representatives of Kommunal indicated that they themselves have been skeptical about the methods and results of the member surveys. It can also be added that it would be interesting to look closer to the background material for the member surveys, which is supposed to be in the custody of Kommunal. Here, I decided to make do with the material I already had. This was partly due to time constraints, but mainly because I felt that access to this background material was made difficult by the representatives of Kommunal.

Finally, it should be mentioned that I was in personal contact with the person responsible for the member surveys, mainly to double check that I had not misunderstood some things in the surveys. This applied particularly to the comparatively lower response rates in the survey from 2012. Here, I wanted to know if I was correct to assume that the first non-response (those who declined to be part of the web panel) was not included in the response rate, and I was correct to do so.

The second argument for individual wages was that they increase productivity, which in turn leads to higher wages. I wanted to examine the sustainability of the arguments and also try to figure out how Kommunal had come up with

them. Through an extensive reading of the research on the relationship between productivity and rewards such as individual wages, I found that scholars have come to very different conclusions and that it cannot be taken for granted that individual wages increase productivity. The second argument turned out to be even more problematic. If productivity increases are supposed to raise wages, there must first of all be a potential to increase productivity. The areas where the members of Kommunal are active, however, are doomed to relatively low productivity increases with or without individual wages (here, I studied the works of Baumol together with some Government official reports which also point out the natural differences in productivity growth between the goods and service sectors). Finally, I asked myself how Kommunal came up with their second argument for individual wages. To answer that question, I did a careful reading of every relevant report published by Kommunal. I was looking for spots where Kommunal motivated the reasoning in a more profound way, for example by referring to different theories or research on individual wage setting. As I point out in the paper, I found nothing of the kind.

The review of the two main arguments showed that they were not fully sustainable, and in the second case that Kommunal uses the argument routinely, without motivating it. Yet these arguments have been used to respond to those who criticize individual wages. Here, I thought that the article would be incomplete if I did not to some extent elaborate on the critics' counter-arguments against individual wages, and also how Kommunal has tackled these counter-arguments in reports and the like. I thought the article would be incomplete for two reasons: first, because the counter-arguments are interesting in themselves in a paper concerned with the reasons for why Kommunal introduced individual wages. And, second, because the possible strength of the counter-arguments, and the fact that Kommunal seems to agree with some of them, puts even more pressure on the strength of the two arguments for individual wages. In general, it is important to consider the counter-arguments that are not directly part of the argumentation (Bergström and Boréus 2012, 130).

There were of course other possible ways to go about it. One way would have been to examine every counter-argument as carefully as the arguments, but that would have required more time and space than I had. Instead, drawing on different kinds of sources, I chose to summarize the ten most important counter-arguments against individual wages. Again, I studied Kommunal's own reports. It then became clear that some of the ten counter-arguments are known and illuminated as problems by Kommunal (managers lack ability to set wages, individual wages have not resulted in the wage increases that were hoped for), or, in other cases, that there is obviously some truth in the coun-

ter-arguments even though the reports do not see it that way (particularly the complex and often contradictory discussions conducted on the different criteria applicable to individual wages).

Finally (or rather first), the rise of individual wage setting is linked to the decline of the solidaristic wage policy. This section is largely based on the findings and conclusions of other scholars.

One way to extend this study would have been to do an alternative member survey on attitudes to individual wages. I have not been able to do it within the frame of this paper, but in view of the conclusions it is tempting to do something like that in the future. Furthermore, it would be interesting to study the effects of individual wage setting on the sense of community and solidarity in the workplace, drawing for example on in-depth interviews with members of Kommunal.

3.4 Paper 4

The overarching question for this paper is what has enabled the rapid increase in private health insurance in Sweden. After extensive reading on the subject, I chose to focus on two factors that I found interesting, relatively unexplored and often misunderstood, namely the possible link between private delivery and private funding and the possible difference between political rhetoric and political action/non-action in issues related to private health insurance. Additionally, I found these two issues interesting to study in light of my overall theoretical perspective, where relatively large institutional changes can be made by implementing new rules alongside the existing ones (layering) and where political authorities maintain the image that everything is and will continue to be as it has been (path dependency of an idea).

I approached the first factor, i.e. the possible link between private delivery and private funding, from different angles. Firstly, in order to find out what type of health care providers the insurance companies collaborate with, I studied an insurance company (Länsförsäkringar) and its register over providers. First of all, in order to get an idea of how the insurance company works with 'their' providers, I conducted phone interviews with two administrative officials of the insurance company. Secondly, as mentioned in the paper, I was in contact with the insurance company to get the complete list of the 900 providers that Länsförsäkringar mentions on its website. Länsförsäkringar did not want to give me that list, so I had to limit myself to investigate the 115 geographically and size-wise dispersed providers mentioned on Länsförsäkringar's homepage. Mainly through the respective homepages of each and every provider, I managed to gather information about them. In some cases I phoned the providers to get

a clearer picture whether, for example, they have or have not an agreement with the county council. In many cases I managed to gather further information about the providers, for example from protocols or from public procurement meetings held by local politicians or from articles in newspapers.

Further, I was in contact with persons on different levels in the health care system and with experience from both publicly and privately delivered health care. The idea was to get a clearer picture of the relation/interaction between insurance companies/county councils – providers – staff/patients. My original plan was to do a lot of interviews and use them more systematically in the article, but eventually I chose not to do so. As it is now, I refer only to the in-depth interview with the former CEO of Lundby Hospital in the paper.

Based on the above mentioned material, together with studies and conclusions drawn by other scholars in the field, I then discuss some aspects of the relationship between private delivery and private funding of health care, and its role in the rapid rise of private health insurance.

When it comes to the question of political actions and non-actions in light of the rapid rise of PHI and VIP lanes, I decided to focus mainly on the most prominent effort to curb this development: the so-called Stop Law. First, I did a study of all related official reports and of the government bill in question. I concluded that the law was full of loopholes and that it would not have had much effect, something that has not been noticed by other scholars but indeed by many of the agencies/authorities that were given the chance to comment on the official reports. I found these comments at the Government Offices archives (Regeringskansliets arkiv) in Stockholm.

Further, in order to compare political practice with political rhetoric, I studied all the major debates in parliament during the years before and after the Stop Law. I also studied the party programs as well as how the parties portray themselves on their respective homepages etc. Specifically, I studied Social Democracy and its position on health care in general and PHI / VIP lanes in specific. I went through all healthcare-related documents published by Social Democracy from 2000 up until today. I also did a special study of all congress documents published before, during and after the Social Democratic National Party Congress in 2013, which I also attended as observer.

From these investigations it was clear that Social Democracy, in spite of a rather strong internal opposition demanding tougher measures against the rise of private health insurance, has not been very proactive in preventing or curbing the development even though they have portrayed an image of being proactive in this sense. In every document and in every parliament debate I have found and read, Social Democrats say they are against VIP lanes in health

care. Investigating it further, however, it turns out that Social Democracy refer only to hospitals and only to certain hospitals and maybe not even to certain hospitals. As pointed out in the Social Democratic Stop Law proposition, ‘The vast majority of private health care providers can thus continue to accept patients whose treatment is funded with private health insurance or own resources’. This is a rather interesting finding since it is generally thought that Social Democrats want to stop the VIP lanes in Swedish health care, and that they even implemented a law to do so.

Further, in order to find out whether Swedish scholars agree or disagree with the current level of public funding, I read a vast number of scientific publications in the field. The result of my investigations was that there is no consensus on the matter, and that there is a rather wide range of research advocating a greater proportion of privately funded health care.

Finally, as requested by one of the anonymous referees who commented on the paper, it would have been interesting to know more in detail about the different private policies, for example if it is the employer or the employee who ends up paying for the private health insurance. However, this is a kind of information that is very difficult to get. As I mention in the paper, the insurance company Länsförsäkringar did not want to give me the list of providers. And, as a matter of fact, even the trade association Swedish Insurance (Svensk Försäkring) has experienced similar problems when they have wanted to describe the development in a more detailed way. As I mention in the paper, I have been in contact with the responsible representative at Swedish Insurance who says that they have now hired a scholar who will (probably, maybe) have the right to see some company material, and who will publish a study in the end of next year. The closest we get to a picture (drawing on material published by Swedish Insurance and others) of different types of private policies is, therefore, the few percentages I now present in the paper. In this regard, it seems as if the rise of private health insurance has created a certain degree of invisibility of the kind that Hacker (2002) elaborates on in his work.

3.5 Paper 5

The overarching questions for this article are 1) what characterizes the new topping-up possibilities in the three Swedish welfare services health care, education and elderly care, and 2) how shall these topping-up possibilities be seen from a comparative welfare model perspective.

Recent developments in all three of these areas have not previously been compiled in this way. Where there are gaps, I have started to (as mentioned in the introduction, this is a work in progress) contribute with my own research.

An example of the latter is the section on elderly care where I made calculations based on Statistics Sweden's figures of the use of the RUT-deduction with respect to income for people over age 65. As for elderly care, through company websites and to some extent through media, I have also studied thirty companies dealing with elderly care in retirement homes and in home care. Part of this is included in the paper. Furthermore, when it comes to the section on education, I have studied the bills and parliamentary debates on the Free School Reform in 1992, in order to grasp the political parties' attitudes towards school fees. Further, I have gone through the last three years' decisions by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate regarding illegal school fees. I have also studied protocols from a variety of parents' associations to get a picture of how money can be collected in other ways. Further, I have gathered information about the largest companies in the homework assistance industry. Here, mainly through parliamentary debates, motions and bills, I have also studied the political parties and their attitudes to the RUT-deduction for homework assistance. When it comes to the health care section, I have tried to figure out why private health insurance is not taxed as a benefit and I have traced the issue back to a parliamentary bill from 1995. I have also studied the so-called gross salary deductions and how insurance companies provide information about the same. Once again I have chosen to study the insurance company Länförsäkringar, but it is a fact that most insurance companies highlight the possibility for employers and employees to reduce their costs and / or increase their goodwill through gross salary deductions.

The paper discusses and summarizes a certain kind of development in three important welfare services. Further, the paper draws some parallels to the so-called liberal welfare model. It is argued that the current subsidized topping-up possibilities represent a departure from the principles of the universal welfare state (the Social Democratic welfare model, the Scandinavian / Nordic welfare model), where welfare services were supposed to be equally distributed and where there should be no selectivity and no means-testing. The paper argues that the subsidized welfare services, which are mainly used and paid for by the wealthy, are a form of reversed selectivity. This reasoning is partly based on a reading of scholars who have attempted to distinguish between different types of welfare models. I have also had great use of scholars who describe and analyze the features of the liberal welfare states, not least the one in the United States. Here, I learned a lot from Hacker (2002) who demonstrates how the US welfare system became increasingly built on state-subsidized private benefits and what this has meant in terms of inequality, invisibility and the emergence of new actors in the welfare arena.

In this regard, I find great potential for further research that I myself would like to take part in and contribute to. This paper thus marks a beginning of a project aiming at comparing some features of the current Swedish welfare state with the features of the liberal welfare model, and analyzing recent changes in the Swedish welfare regime based on the concept of ‘inequality, invisibility, and the emergence of new actors in the welfare arena’. This paper gives a few hints about it. Regarding inequality, I show that topping-up is mainly targeted to the wealthy part of the population. As for the emergence of new actors, I show how the homework assistance industry has grown and how unions reluctantly become actors in this new reality. As for invisibility, this can be exemplified by my attempts to get information from the insurance company about health care providers and about the different kinds of private policies.

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Social Democracy and the Swedish welfare model contains five research papers dealing with institutional change and how different actors, mainly Social Democracy and its related trade unions, have interacted with the same. Sweden was one of the countries that developed a welfare model able to combine economic growth with increasing universalism and equality both on the labour market and in the welfare state arena. During the last decades, however, the model has undergone a lot of change. This includes developments such as the introduction of a new competition policy, the greater use of individual wage setting, the rise of private health insurance and the new state-subsidized topping up possibilities within major welfare services. By using different types of ideational analysis, these are the four areas investigated in the papers of this thesis.

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