

Abstract

Kjellgren, H. *State Propaganda or Legitimate Information? Notions of the State in Swedish Information Policy*. (Swedish Title: Staten som informatör eller propagandist? Om statssyners betydelse i svensk informationspolitik). Swedish text. English summary. Göteborg Studies in Politics 77. 404 sidor. ISBN-nr: 91-89246-05-5, ISSN-nr 0346-5942.

Which ideas, about the relationship between the state and its citizens, have been institutionalized in Swedish information policy? This is the first research question in the dissertation. Since public information is a frequently used policy tool nowadays, it is important to investigate the normative aspects of this tool. Who controls the content of public information? What perspective on the relationship between government and the public, notions of the state, is revealed by the organizational principles of information policies? A closely related question is why certain ideas about the relationship between the state and its citizens have been more important than others in the organization of Swedish information. This is the second research question in the dissertation. The answer is sought in institutional theory, where institutionalized ideas in a political system are considered important when deciding the ideas that will be guiding political actors' decision about future politics.

The dissertation studies the organization of information policies, and the political discourse about information policies, according to three notions of the state. These are the Constitutional State, the Citizen State (majoritarian and consensual) and the State of Expertise. Public documents from the Swedish Riksdag, such as government bills and enacted laws, are used in the investigation of the organizational principles of information policy. Commissions of Inquiry reports, archive material from public authorities and secondary sources, such as earlier studies and biographies, are also included. In this part, the method applied is mainly historical institutional, which means that the focus is on the sequence of events and the development of institutional principles. The parliamentary discourse is examined via text analysis of public documents from the Swedish Riksdag. The material consists of government bills, parliamentary bills, committee proposals and debates in the chamber. Commissions of Inquiry reports are also studied.

The findings of the dissertation are that the internal logic of Swedish information policy has been rather weak, in spite of the fact that the notions of the state embedded in the institutions of the policy area have been stable over time. On that account it is argued that the notions of the state in Swedish information policy are the reflection of the very same notions embedded in public administration in general, and in those policy areas where public information is used. The notions of the state being strong over time are the consensual Citizen State and the State of Expertise. Lately, the majoritarian Citizen State has been strengthened. This development is very consistent with the general development of the state.

Key Words: notions of the state, information policy, public information, reproduction of ideas, institutions, public administration, neutrality, perfectionism, historical comparison.