Jussi Kurunmäki

REDESCRIBING THE POLITICAL PAST

*National Rhetoric in the Swedish debate
concerning the Parliamentary Reform of 1866*

Nation and Representation

In 1866, the political Estates in Sweden — the Nobility, Clergy, Burghers, and Peasants — gave way to a bicameral Diet in which both chambers were equal in power, but different in terms of their socio-economic composition.¹ In this article I analyse how the rhetoric of the “nation” and “national representation” was used against the political Estates in the debate over reform, i.e. how “the nation” was defined when the political nation based on the Estates was to be replaced with something new.² This leads me to examine the temporal commitments included in the debate, and especially the ways of the rhetorical redescription of the past that the main participants of the debate used in order to legitimise their different political goals.

A reform of political representation deals with questions concerning what and who are to be represented, and by what means. Since the French Revolution, the represented were viewed, in several European pro-reform campaigns, in terms of “the nation” as opposed to particular interests and privileges of Estates and orders. This led to a contest over the meaning of the term “the nation”. The combina-

tion of the concepts “representation” and “nation” was first presented during the French Revolution by Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès who stated that a nation is “a body of associates living under *common* laws and represented by the same *legislative assembly*” (Sieyès 1963 [1789], 58). It has been possible to maintain that a nation is ‘established’ only after the creation of an independent representative body. The issue of national representation was, together with the “social problem”, one of the main topics of the political debates during the era of European parliamentary reform (e.g. Podlech 1984, 509; Baker 1990, 244-246; Colley 1992, 336; Wokler 1998, 48-54).³

There was a lively debate on the issue of reform in newspapers, pamphlets, and the Estates. The Minister of Justice, Louis de Geer, who took the initiative and wrote the proposal for the reform, defended the need for reform by maintaining that “the changes in the nation and the changes of the times require changes to the form of representation” (e.g. Central-Komité 1864, 17). The question of whether or not to reform political representation was clearly a “national” matter in Sweden in the 1860s. As the pro-reform, “national liberal”, journal *Politisk Tidskrift* argued, the reform dealt with “a political rebirth of the nation” (*Politisk Tidskrift* 3/1862 [1863], 138).⁴ Those who opposed the Bill, in turn, often claimed that the proposal was not based on a national political tradition (e.g. KU 7 1863, 14-21; Nordström 1865, 90).⁵

The idea of creating a representative body based on a national gathering of individuals instead of the representation based on corporate privileges had already been discussed in 1809. The 1809 Instrument of Government and the Riksdag Act of 1810 were not “Swedish history translated into legal paragraphs”, as has been maintained (Lagerroth 1942, III), but neither did they lead to the creation of “the young nation” that the radicals had hoped for (see Petterson 1993, 34). Radical proposals presented in the memorandum of the Committee on the Constitution in 1810 were defeated in 1815 (e.g. Hildebrand 1896, 629; Edén 1935, 229).

Despite some signs of the revolutionary idea of national representation in the 1860s it was of great importance for the political actors to be able to show that representation was based on the national tradition instead of “theories” and that the proposed new representation was in accordance with this tradition. It was, therefore, im-

portant for those participating in the debate to be able to give the tradition an appropriate meaning. To a considerable extent, the reform debate was about interpretations of the past. Swedish discussions of the political system and democratisation have usually referred, and often still refer, to the domestic political tradition (e.g. Premfors, 115-116).⁶ The weight of the domestic tradition has not only been emphasised by *ex post facto* academic commentators, but also by contemporary political actors. Yet, the future of “the fatherland” was in question when the reform Bill was debated in the 1860s. And all this was to be decided upon at once, in the present. Consequently, there was also a question of timing involved in the debate. It was asked, whether the moment was right for reform. Different views regarding the nature of the domestic political tradition, the appropriateness of constitutional change and expectations for the future were combined together to shape the debate over parliamentary reform. It was of the utmost importance to be able to argue with “time”. The past tense was the most important, for it was the ground for arguing in favour of, as well as against, the need for the reform. The future was dependent on the interpretation of the past, yet it was quite obvious that those who could argue convincingly with the demands of the future were in a better rhetorical position in the debate.

Parliamentary Reform, Rhetoric and Conceptual History

It has often been argued that the realisation of bicameral political representation and the replacement of the political Estates in 1866 was more or less a natural step in the course of political progress and a consequence of social changes. In other words, the Riksdag Act of 1866 has usually been interpreted as a necessary adjustment in line with socio-economic demands and foreign constitutional examples. According to this view, the Estates did not adequately represent the various interests in Swedish society, so they had to be reformed (e.g. Rexius 1915; Andrén 1937; Stjernquist 1996). Although I acknowledge the importance of socio-economic changes, the problem with

this manner of reasoning is that it often presents a story of progress which is linear and one-sided, and implies that there was only one direction for political actions at the time. Contrary to common understandings of the reform, I argue that the reform was neither an automatic consequence of the social and political demands of the time, nor an uncontested matter.⁷ It is understandable that the necessity-line of explanation is so common because the political actors themselves often used this kind of rhetoric. However, it is striking that this kind of rhetoric has not been subjected to empirical analysis.

When we take political and social concepts as historical and always at least potentially contested (e.g. Koselleck 1972, XXII), we can better understand that political struggles were often, and still are, a matter of redefining what the question in dispute was. Concepts can be understood as “pivots around which all arguments turn” (Koselleck 1996, 65). Moreover, it should be noted that the concepts were to be recycled in order to make the argument understandable to other participants in the debate (cf. *ibid.*, 63). This means that, in practice, certain interpretations of the concepts were picked up from history. Accordingly a synchronic analysis must be complemented with a diachronic analysis, i.e. with an analysis that scrutinises the concepts diachronically through time (see Koselleck 1972, XXI). This is why I take the reform debate as a matter of a rhetorical redescription in relation to the key concepts involved in the debate (cf. Skinner 1996, 138-180; Skinner 2002, 153-155, 182-187). Concepts like “representation” and “nation” were used in a rhetorical manner for partisan purposes and were produced by referring to their historical meanings.

It is possible to view the debate on political reform as a case for an “innovating ideologist” and an “apologist”. The task of an “innovating ideologist” is to use linguistic conventions rhetorically in a manner that even a problematic or radical action can seem to be acceptable (Skinner 1988, 112; see also Skinner 1978, xii). It is an issue of a contest over meanings of concepts and, consequently, of potential conceptual changes. Because an “innovating ideologist” is supposed to use commonly accepted evaluative concepts, such a strategy seems moderate. This is why Skinner has stated that “every revolutionary is [...] obliged to march backwards into battle” (Skinner 1988, 112).⁸

While an “innovating ideologist” aims to change politics by applying commonly evaluated positive terms in a new way in order to bring about a change in the existing state of affairs, an “apologist” defends the existing system by describing it in favourably evaluative terms. In such cases, the purpose is to answer critics by applying a rival evaluative description to the same political system. Two conditions must then be fulfilled. Firstly, it must be plausible to apply the rival evaluative description; secondly, the description must be made with such commending terms that the unfavourable evaluations can be defeated or overruled. The commendatory force of the term used must also be strong enough. (Skinner 1973, 302-303).

Both an “innovating ideologist” and an “apologist” rhetorically redescribed the political situation. The task was, through this redescription, to re-evaluate the action that was proposed (cf. Skinner 1996, 145; Skinner 2002, 153-155, 182-187).⁹ There are two ways of performing this redescription. One is to claim that the concept is misleadingly defined. The other is to claim that the concept is correctly defined but that the state of affairs, or the action in question, does not have the quality or character that the term alleges (Skinner 1996, 139-143). Thus, the contestedness of a concept can refer either to its meaning or its applicability. It is possible to assume that, for example, the concept of “patriotism” is evaluated and understood in a consensual manner, but there is a disagreement on its application. In other words, the question is not necessarily *about* “patriotism” but about who is allowed to speak *with* a “patriotic” voice. Given the centrality of the “nation” and “national” in the rhetoric, both an “apologist” and an “innovating ideologist” tried to describe the reform as corresponding to the national tradition of the country.

National Representation

The struggle for Parliamentary Reform in Sweden in the 1860s dealt with a redefinition of the polity, i.e. the political nation. “The nation” was used as a rhetorical tool in order to legitimise the need, or the lack of need, for the reform in the debates. There were two different,

yet not mutually exclusive, views of “representation” and “nation”, the one that took as its point of departure the idea of nation-by-representation and the other that was based on the idea of representation-by-nation. We can call these views constructive and descriptive models of representation (see Jones 2000, 17) or aesthetic and mimetic views on representation (see Ankersmit 1996; 2002).

The concept of “national representation” often meant the current institution of political representation, in which case the Estates were included in the concept. This kind of use of the concept was common to both the supporters and opponents of the reform Bill. It was a part of the political tradition to speak about “national representation” without any overtly radical connotations. The supporters of the Bill sometimes used the term in such a manner. Despite the shortcomings of the body of representation it was, nevertheless, “national” in the meaning of “historical”. (e.g. KU 7 1863, 21-22). The fact that the idea of the representation of provinces, as well as social interests, was believed to be outdated among many of the supporters of the Bill did not hinder the use of such a language.

However, there were those who supported the Bill and made a clear distinction between the current representation and “the national representation”. “The national liberals”, as they called themselves, often used the concept of “national representation” in a consciously revolutionary manner. “The national representation” in its “complete and valid sense” was something other than the representation based on the Estates or classes (*Politisk Tidskrift* 3/1861, 40). As mentioned earlier, a creation of a real “national representation” was also seen as “a political rebirth of the nation” (*Politisk Tidskrift* 3/1862 [1863], 138). This idea of nation-by-representation indicates a constitutive idea of nation and a constructive model of representation, according to which “the nation” was recreated by the political representation.

Thus, the Swedish national liberals joined the European tradition of political radicalism which took many of its ideals from the French Revolution. It was sometimes stated very explicitly. For example, Carl Fredrik Ridderstad, a national liberal politician and newspaperman, maintained that the French Revolution opened a new period after which there was no historical ground for representation (Protokoll, Borgare-Ståndet 3 1862-1863, 645 [Ridderstad]). This kind of radicalism was,

however, often combined with the common way of referring to the domestic political tradition. In particular, the idea of the coalition between the people and the kings was often repeated. (e.g. *Politisk Tidskrift* 1/1860, 21-23, 53). This mixture of radicalism and traditionalism made the national liberal rhetoric appealing to a wide audience, but at the same time it watered down their radicalism.

The Estates abolished themselves in Sweden without having declared themselves a Constitutive Convention or a National Assembly. Unlike in France in 1830 and 1848, there was no revolutionary situation in Sweden. The Parliament Act of 1832 in Britain was, in turn, not a reform which had considerably changed the structure of political representation. In this light, the 1866 Riksdag Act was of a quite special character. The task of an “innovating ideologist” was, therefore, particularly demanding. His (sic) task was to use linguistic conventions rhetorically in a manner that even a radical action could be made to seem acceptable. Because the traditional Estates were to decide upon the Bill, it was necessary to appeal to tradition in order to legitimise the need for a thorough reform. Had there been a constitutive assembly, then, in principle, the legitimising power of tradition might have been of less importance.

The task of an “innovating ideologist” fell, first of all, upon the Minister of Justice, Louis de Geer. He had to convince the opponents of the Bill that the reform would be in accordance with tradition. Yet, simultaneously, he also had to demand great changes in representation. What he, and other supporters of the Bill, did was to use favourably evaluative-descriptive terms to legitimise the actions he proposed. He appealed to a language of organism in his defence of the Bill. Instead of the Estates or classes, the organism was now maintained by the municipalities which were included in the formation of the First Chamber. The rhetoric of “nation” and “patriotism” was also useful in this respect. (Central-Komité 1864, 26).

An “apologist” who opposed the Bill would try to describe the existing system in favourably evaluative terms. It was important to be able to argue convincingly that society and, as a consequence, the political institutions were organic in character. In principle, this was not a difficult task. The problem for an “apologist” was that there were different interpretations of what organic meant. It was important for an “apologist” to refer to the ancient freedom of the country

which was under serious threat if the Bill was passed. (e.g. Södergren 1865, 51-52). The opponents of the Bill also tried to play the role of an “innovating ideologist” by introducing the system of class elections as a substitute for the Estates. (e.g. Nordström 1865, 93). However, this attempt was neither new nor successful.

An “innovating ideologist” had more scope to use foreign examples than an “apologist”. The opponents of the Bill did not have many inspiring examples outside their own domestic political tradition, whereas supporters of reform could draw upon Norway, with its unicameral *Stortinget*, and Denmark with its universal male suffrage. It was argued that Sweden should develop its parliamentary representation in line with that of other Scandinavian countries so as to improve the chances of a future union with them. (*Politisk Tidskrift* 3/1861, 54-55). Neither side in the debate wanted to refer to Napoleon’s France or Bismarck’s Prussia in the 1860s. The English political system offered some inspiration to both sides of the debate. For the supporters of the Bill, England was the model of modern parliamentary politics, although they did not openly argue for parliamentarism. They also directed some criticism towards the “aristocratic” – as it was referred to – House of Lords. (e.g. *Preste-Ståndets Protokoll* 3 1862-1863, 147 [Almqvist]). An “apologist”, in turn, held that only England and Sweden had a constitution of ancient origin. (e.g. *Preste-Ståndets Protokoll* 3 1862-1863, 139 [Annerstedt]). However, the opponents of the Bill had difficulties in using England as an example in support of an organic understanding of the constitution, because it could also be used to support the very kind of parliamentary reform they sought to stop.

The Estates vs. the Nation

The task of an “innovating ideologist” was to redescribe the tradition in a manner which would show that the role of the political Estates needed to be reduced. It was important to argue that the Estates were not the original form of political representation. (e.g. *Protokoll, Ridderskapet och Adeln* 3 1862-1863. 211-212 [de Geer]). Even if the Estates had served the country well, as it was often held, it was

nevertheless necessary to maintain that they were outdated and actually divided the nation. An “apologist” tried to affirm that the Estates, the Nobility in particular, had often saved the country from foreign threats as well as from absolutism. The current dangers were parliamentary rule and democracy, and, as a consequence, the decreased power of the monarch. (e.g. KU 7 1863, 7).

Different interpretations of the Age of Liberty (1719—1772), the period of rule of the Riksdag and especially of the two parties within it, are of special interest in this respect. Both sides of the debate viewed it in a negative light. For the opponents of the Bill, it was a period of parliamentary rule and party divisions. The reason for these had been the lack of the separation of powers between the King and the Riksdag. The supporters of the Bill, in turn, considered the period as characterised by the rule of the Estates. (e.g. Protokoll, Bårgareståndet 3 1862-1863, 168 [Blanche]). Both sides viewed the absolutist regimes of the monarchs before and after the Age of Liberty with distaste. There was also consensus over the idea of the free and egalitarian origin of Sweden’s political culture.

The rhetorical redescription of the meaning of the 1809 Instrument of Government and, in particular, the memorandum of the 1810 Committee on the Constitution was highly important. Both sides of the debate used the “men of 1809”, who had formulated the Constitution, as their support. An opponent of the Bill argued that the Constitution of 1809 was based on the idea of the separation of powers which was in danger if the Bill was passed. The Riksdag Act of 1810, which preserved representation by Estates, was a natural consequence of the Instrument of Government, or so the argument went. As the basic idea of the constitution was commonly positively evaluated, the purpose of an “apologist” was to maintain that the existing political system was in accordance with the idea of the “men of 1809”. (e.g. Södergren 1865, 70-71). For many supporters of the Bill, the rhetorical strategy was more complicated. The “men of 1809” were positively evaluated, the Riksdag Act of 1810 was not. The memorandum of the 1810 Committee on the Constitution, which stated that the Estates had divided the nation, was used to support the demands for the reform. (Central-Komité 1864, 6, 11). The “men of 1809” and the memorandum of 1810 were rhetorically associated with each other in order to show that the original idea of the “men of

1809” had been to abolish the political Estates. Thus there was a possibility to be critical of the Instrument of the Government while still considering the “men of 1809” as part of the appreciated tradition.

The opponents of the Bill argued constantly that it was based on foreign “theories” instead of the domestic tradition. (e.g. Protokoll, Ridderskapet och Adeln 3 1862-1863, 221 [Tersmeden]). In principle, the argument was powerful: hardly anyone wanted to publicly maintain that “theories” should replace the continuity of the political system. However, the opponents of the Bill also based their ideas of organism and continuity on foreign theories and echoes of Burke were clearly heard in their argumentation (e.g. Södergren 1865, 94-95). The supporters of the Bill referred to the Norwegian and Danish systems rather than to “theories” in order to avoid the label of “theorists”. It was much better to argue using “public opinion” and “the demands of the times” than to present some theoretical patterns. It was important to find good examples in the domestic political past. The “men of 1809” and the memorandum of 1810, as well as the famous historian Erik Gustaf Geijer, who in the 1840s was the foremost promulgator of liberal ideas of free associations and the “principle of persons”, were then of crucial importance. (de Geer 1865, 60). The political theorist who was used by both sides of the debate was Tocqueville, since his views on the inevitability of the progress of democracy, and his cautious attitude towards its consequences was well suited – selectively – for both sides of the debate. (de Geer 1865, 6-13; Preste-Ståndets Protokoll 1 1865-1866, 316-322 [Palm-lund]).

For many of the opponents of the Bill, the concept of “freedom” was something that was inherited in the tradition. The passing of the Bill would jeopardise the existence of “freedom”. The country was free because there was neither foreign oppression, absolutist rule, nor rule of the mob. The power of the masses was the worst threat imagined. (e.g. KU 7 1863, 28). Often the supporters of the Bill also appealed to the idea of inherited freedom. However, there were some exceptions. For example, *Politisk Tidskrift* questioned the general view that the Swedes were, or had been, free (*Politisk Tidskrift* 5/1862 [1863], 298). The radical opponents of the Bill, for example the newspapers *Söndagsbladet* and *Fäderneslandet*, which were close to workers’ asso-

ciations, upheld rhetoric which also pointed out the lack of freedom in the country. (*Söndagsbladet* 14.5. 1865; *Fäderneslandet* 14.11.1863).

A New Nation?

The concept of “nation” was used in a manner which would suggest that the contest dealt with the ability to convincingly use the concept rather than to associate it with a radically new meaning. However, the concept of “nation” also gained several different interpretations. There are several examples of “the nation” being presented as opposed to the Estates and classes in the debate. It was argued that it should be “the nation” which would be represented in the Riksdag, not any particular classes or corporate interests (e.g. *Preste-ståndets Protokoll* 3 1862-1863, 146 [Almqvist]). The concept of “nation” was also associated with “the people” and contrasted with “caste interests” (*Politisk Tidskrift* 3/1861, 40). Moreover, the supporters of the Bill associated “the nation” with “the principle of persons”. (e.g. *Protokoll, Borgare-ståndet* 3 1862-1863, 151 [Witt]). “The principle of persons” was in turn closely linked with “the principle of associations” which meant that “the nation” was considered as consisting of individual persons, who were gathered in free associations, which were formed without any limitations of Estate privileges. Following the “liberal” ideals these slogans expressed, “the nation” was also identified with “the public opinion”. (e.g. *Politisk Tidskrift* 2/1862, 127).¹⁰

Among the opponents of the Bill, “the nation” was associated with “the King” and “the Estates” (e.g. *Palmstierna* 1865, 5). Most of them understood “the nation” as an organic whole. The conservative organic view of the nation was not necessarily in conflict with the views of the pro-reform side, since “the principle of associations” was understood as a transformed version of the idea of an organic togetherness, rather than opposed to it. Both sides of the debate usually took “the nation” to be the bearer of tradition and the unit which was based on common origin and experiences. However, this view was also criticised. For example, *Politisk Tidskrift* required “political life” within “the nation” and was critical towards the rhetoric of “originality” of “the nation”. The argument was directed against “the histori-

cal school” in Sweden (*Politisk Tidskrift* 3/1861, 40). Here *Politisk Tidskrift* described “the nation” in terms of free political life instead of its originality. The periodical viewed “the nation” as having an aspect of voluntaristic characteristics instead of purely primordial ones. However, the interpretation did not deny the existence of the ancient nation, it simply stated that it had lost its original character.

The supporters of the Bill often spoke in the name of “the whole people” and “the public opinion”. It was the unprivileged nation that ought to be the source of righteous representation. However, the pro-reform side was by no means free from the idea of the representation of interests. Despite their rhetoric of “persons” as well as their criticism of privileges, their rhetoric maintained a clear line of demarcation between the educated sections of society and the masses. In their view, giving representation to the interests of educated people was the best way to guarantee the representation of the interests of the whole. Moreover, the language of “interests” was used in order to legitimise the need for reform. For example, de Geer argued that new social interests made the Estates outdated (de Geer 1865, 60).

Citizens of Capacity and Property

The application of the system of census was difficult for the supporters of the Bill. To argue against privileges and, at the same time, for a system of census required considerable rhetorical skills. As with nineteenth-century liberals elsewhere, Swedish reformers used the idea of *citoyen capacitaire* to legitimise a restricted franchise. According to the argument made by Sieyès and other liberal theoreticians of political representation, the right to vote should be tied to property and income qualifications. The census was the best way to distinguish those who had the capacities to participate in political life from the uneducated and labouring masses. (e.g. Central-Komité 1864, 19). Capacity was most often equated with wealth. Thus, in practice, the idea of *citoyen capacitaire* was applied as *citoyen propriétaire*. The idea that the right to participate in the formation of political representation was reserved for “the politically thinking part of the nation” – as de Geer put it (ibid.) – was clearly a version of the idea of *citoyen capacitaire*.

Despite the general appeal to the representation of “the whole”, the argument for a census was linked to the idea of representing different interests. Even de Geer admitted that “the basic principle of national representation” was limited to the representation of “the most important interests” of society. “The mobile element” of society was meant to be represented by the Second Chamber, “the lasting element” by the First Chamber. (Central-Komité 1864, 19-21). The 1863 Committee on the Constitution saw the proposed reform as being “in accordance with the times” because it followed the idea of “national representation without any other restrictions than” what was needed in order to give the society “a safe guarantee”. This guarantee was ensured by the application of the census and the two chamber system. (KU 7 1863, 13).

The opponents of the Bill made a case against the inner contradiction of this kind of argument by asking how plausible the “liberal” principles were if the protagonists of reform did not dare to follow their central principle to the end? How could the proposed system achieve equality and speak in the name of “persons” when it was to be based upon “plutocratic” criteria? (Södergren 1865, 16-19). de Geer and other supporters of the Bill argued that the proposal was not plutocratic in character, but it contained necessary guarantees against “democracy” and the power of the uneducated masses (de Geer 1865, 52). Some radical national liberals clearly had difficulties with this balancing act. For example, *Politisk Tidskrift* and *Fäderneslandet* printed both supportive and critical arguments in their columns. It was partly a question of a rhetorical strategy – the purpose of which was to show some threats as well as to ask for more than what they realistically expected. Yet, it was also a sign of confusion. Sometimes the radical consequences of the Bill were presented in order to hide the scepticism of the radicals.

In fact, there was also opposition to the Bill from the ‘left’ of the political spectrum. Some radical papers gave the concept of “national representation” a pejorative meaning. For example, *Söndagsbladet* contrasted “national representation” with the “representation of the people” (*Söndagsbladet* 14.5.1865). In 1863, when it still was against the Bill, *Fäderneslandet* wrote that de Geer’s proposal dealt with “plutocratic representation” rather than the “representation of the people” (*Fäderneslandet* 14.11.1863). The criticism these radical papers

voiced was on the fringes of the debate and was not a threat to de Geer or his Bill. However, it offered some arguments to conservative opponents of the Bill. It also showed the limits of “the national” in the national liberal rhetoric by replacing “nation” with “the people”.

The Rhetoric of “Time”, “Opinion” and “Patriotism”

The rhetoric of “time” played a crucial role in the struggle over reform. For example, the 1863 Committee on the Constitution maintained that the Bill was “in accordance with the times”. *Politisk Tidskrift* argued in favour of progress and stated that “each and everyone who wants to go forward” should work for “the rebirth of the nation” (*Politisk Tidskrift* 1862 [1863], 138). Those who supported the Bill had “the time” on their side in terms of “horizon of expectations” (cf. Koselleck 1985, 272-279, 284). The concepts of “progress” and “public opinion” were linked with the concepts of “nation” and the “fatherland” in the rhetoric of the national liberals. The progress of civilisation had its expression in “public opinion” which demanded the reform.

The language of “time”, “progress”, and “public opinion” was problematic for the conservative opponents of the Bill. Accordingly, they had difficulties with the rhetoric of “patriotism”, since the concept was closely linked with “public opinion” and “progress” in the pro-reform campaign. (e.g. *Politisk Tidskrift* 2/1862, 127) Some conservatives tried to appeal to “progress” in their defence of the existing system. An “apologist” tried to take the favourably evaluated “progress” on the side of the opponents of the Bill by stating that the progress of society in fact suggested that no drastic changes were needed. Progress would take care of the needed changes in the political system. (e.g. *Preste-Ståndets Protokoll* 3 1862-1863, 150 [Anjou]). In the 1860s, Swedish conservatives were in a similar position to that of the English Tories in the early 1830s: both displayed an inability to use “opinion” effectively (cf. Steinmetz 1993, 243-259, 291).

The supporters of the reform also referred to the domestic tradition. Thus, it cannot be concluded that “the space of experience”

would have lost its position as a crucial point of reference to “the horizon of expectations” (cf. Koselleck 1985, 272-279, 284). Rather, the supporters of the Bill had a wider arsenal of arguments due to their ability to speak more convincingly in terms of the future than those who were against the Bill, and who had problems with the concepts of “progress” and “public opinion”. “The opinions of the twinkling of an eye” were described as “anti-Swedish” (Borgare-Ståndets protokoll I 1863, 462). It was also argued that “the wind of opinion” was to be stopped (Preste-Ståndets protokoll I 1865, 385-386). The opponents of the Bill had difficulty in creating a positively evaluated picture of the future. They tried to appeal to “progress”, but they were unable to give it a new meaning which would have allowed them to create a convincing view of a better future. They were more or less forced to adjust and respond to “the demands of the times” without being able to question those demands.

The reform of 1866 was promulgated by using the rhetoric of necessity. It was argued that social changes, the progress of political ideas and constitutions in other countries, as well as “public opinion”, all indicated the need for reform. Most of the participants in the debate had a strong sense of the inevitability of reform. “Public opinion” was not on the side of the opponents of the Bill. The concept of “public opinion” was often used in a manner that implied that it was beyond human actors. However, “public opinion” was actively created, and it can be viewed as a relevant audience for political life rather than just a kind of *Zeitgeist*. In this sense, the reform signifies the breakthrough of a new political culture in which it was necessary to appeal to “the public”.

It was important for political actors to be able to speak in the name of “the fatherland”. Those who supported the Bill were more successful in doing so. They were able to combine “patriotism” with concepts like “public opinion” and “time” and were thus able to imply a certain necessity in their demands. Those who were against the Bill were losing hold of “patriotism” primarily because they were not effective enough in using the rhetoric of “opinion” and “time”.

Despite the ethos of togetherness as the elementary part of the rhetoric of “patriotism” the concept was contested. Different understandings of “patriotism” followed the inner tension within the history of the concept. In the republican tradition, “patriotism” re-

ferred to a political citizenship, civic virtues and laws. (e.g. Dietz 1989; Viroli 1995; Skinner 1992) However, it also carried within it loyal meanings, which were inspired by understandings of a real or mythological common origin and by meanings that come from a privileged hierarchy of society. (e.g. Dietz 1989; cf. Nordin 2000 and Ihalainen 2003 on patriotism in eighteenth-century Sweden). The national liberals had an explicitly political concept of “patriotism”, but this political civic patriotism was often combined with an ethos of natural togetherness. (e.g. *Politisk Tidskrift* 1/1860, 8-9). The ethos of togetherness, combined with social and educational paternalism, had a tendency to override intended political aspects. This is one of the reasons why the rhetoric of patriotism can be said to have played an important role during the debates on the Bill. One could show respectability by using the rhetoric of patriotism. This way one could limit the politicising potential of the reform. The old was to be reformed, not left out.

The national liberal idea of “fatherland” was based more on a paternalistic social implication, than on an idea of a political citizenship (cf. Rosanvallon 1994). Potentially radical political consequences were taken back and made harmless. After the question of political representation was solved, the national liberals began to lose their grip on the concepts of “nation” and “patriotism”. Before the reform the national liberals were able to use the question of an unsolved representation in their national cause, but the patriotism they had wanted to show had not allowed them to distance themselves from the moderate reform. After the reform the national liberals presented more radical demands, but these were then presented in a marginal position. Accordingly, it has not been common to call Sweden after 1866 “the new nation”. August Strindberg, who was also an excellent political observer, named his satire about the Era of Oscar II *Det nya riket*, “The New Empire”, in 1882 (Strindberg 1992 [1882]).

Conserving Reform

The Swedish Parliamentary Reform of 1866 can be viewed as a conservative strategy. Often political reforms are motivated by a con-

servative desire to avoid uncontrollable changes in the future. The reform act of 1866 tried to safeguard the principles of the 1809 Instrument of Government. Formally, the reform did not touch upon the existing separation of powers. Even the most radical supporters of the Bill were relatively quiet about parliamentarism. However, the 1866 Riksdag Act has been interpreted as a crucial step towards parliamentarism. As has been correctly noted, annual sessions of the Riksdag changed the rhythm of political life. (e.g. Verney 1957, 125). Although the debate on the reform dealt, to a large extent, with the past and tradition, the present became a more important point of reference than it had been before.

By analysing the rhetoric of “the nation” in the Swedish reform of political representation, it is possible to argue that the reform marked an important point in the formation of the modern nation-state. The Estates lost their formal political status. The King did not become as weak as the opponents of the reform Bill thought. However, the centre of political power changed. Even if the constitution was not formally changed, and even if there was no parliamentary rule after the reform, the old power of the King and the Estates was undermined. When the Estates were no longer represented in the Riksdag, something new replaced them. Often this new entity was referred to in terms of the “nation”. Consequently, this change can be viewed as a sign of the formation of a modern nation-state. As the Estates before, the “nation” that was represented by the Riksdag was exclusive in character. The “masses”, including women, were excluded from the “political nation”. Moreover, it was more or less defined in terms of a common origin and common tradition. The deliberative potential that was involved in the reform of political representation did not actualise as the “nation” was understood exclusively and traditionally rather than politically.

Notes

- 1 The destiny of the Government's reform Bill was in the hands of the Noble Estate who voted for the Bill on December 7, 1865. The Burghers and the Peasants had already given their support to the Bill, the Clergy waited for the Nobility. According to the 1866 Riksdag Act, the suffrage

was limited by a high census in the case of the Second Chamber, and by even higher tax and property qualifications in the First Chamber. Only about six per cent of the population, about 20 per cent of the adult male population, were able to partake in Parliamentary elections. The election was joint and direct to the Second Chamber, indirect to the First Chamber, which was elected by the Provincial Councils and by the representatives of the larger towns. Only 6000 men were eligible to be candidates for the First Chamber.

- 2 For a more extensive analysis, see Kurunmäki 2000.
- 3 This relationship between “representation” and “nation” is not solid and unchanging, as noted by Hanna Pitkin: “The history of representative government and the expansion of the suffrage is one long record of changing demands for representation based on changing concepts of what are politically relevant features to be represented. The nation is not like a geographic area to be mapped – solidly there, more or less unchanging, certainly not changed by the map-making process.” (Pitkin 1967, 87).
- 4 The concept of “liberalism” as well as “liberal” was commonly used yet contested in Sweden in the middle of the nineteenth century (see Liedman 1995, 35-37, 45). The French word “libéral” was translated into Swedish as “generous” (*frikostig*) and “libéralité” as “equality” (*jämlikhet*) in 1808. In 1809, “liberal” was used in order to denote the political group behind the new constitution. To be “liberal” meant first of all that one was willing to give up the privileges of the Estate. The concept was linked with the ideas of equality before the law, and the separation of powers in a constitutional manner reminiscent of Montesquieu. “Liberal” and “constitutional” were often used as synonyms (Thomson 1926, 153-154, 169-174, 185-186). It was the fraction of Spanish constitutionalists who introduced the term “liberal” as a party label to European use during the first decade of the nineteenth century (Vierhaus 1982b, 751; Liedman 1995, 35). In Sweden, “liberal” became commonly used in the 1820s and 1830s. It meant the opposition to the King and, moreover, ideas which were imported from English and French political life by papers like *Argus* and *Stockholms Courier* (Andersson 1917, 58-63; Hellqvist 1980, 571). *Aftonbladet*, a newspaper founded in 1830, became the flagship of “liberalism” in the country. It was against political and economic corporations, and according to it “the social question” was best answered by voluntary associations. (e.g. Christensen 1997, 26-31).
- 5 The concept of “conservatism” was a neologism and a counter concept to “liberalism”, “democracy”, and “radicalism” at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Vierhaus 1982a, 531-541, 562-564). During the

first half of the nineteenth century, it was more common to claim that one was “a true liberal” instead of “a conservative” (Heckscher 1939, 88-89). Characteristic to “conservatism” was an organic view on society and state, as well as traditionalism and anti-individualism (e.g. Elvander 1961, 5-14; Tingsten 1939, 11-19, 94).

- 6 Against this background the role of foreign impulses behind constitutional and parliamentary reforms has been an issue of some controversy. Especially in the case of the constitution of 1809 there has been much scholarly debates on its possible Montesquieuan features. The reform of 1866 has been associated mainly with the bicameral model as formulated by Tocqueville (e.g. Rexius 1915).
- 7 The idea can be formulated as follows: “Inversely, inasmuch as the extension of the franchise in Western Europe in the course of the nineteenth century was achieved in a fairly gradual and peaceful manner, the temptation is to think that opposition to that process was not particularly strenuous. Nothing could be farther from the truth”. (Hirschman 1991, 20).
- 8 In a later article Skinner has radicalised his rhetorical view and stated that there is no standard meaning in evaluative terms (Skinner 1999, 67). In my mind, this radicalisation does not water down the task of “an innovating ideologist”, rather it makes it more open. In the minds of contemporary actors, there are always more correct and more illegitimate uses of concepts. This does not deny the point that ‘correct’ uses of concepts are ideological in character, yet some uses are more easily acceptable for contemporaries than others. Nevertheless, an “innovating ideologist” needs to be skilful in her/his rhetoric.
- 9 Skinner writes about description and re-evaluation: “We simply replace whatever descriptions our opponents may have offered with a different set of terms that serve to describe the action with no less plausibility, but place it at the same time in a different moral light. We seek to persuade our hearers to accept our redescription, and hence to adopt a new emotional attitude towards the action involved – either one of increased sympathy or acquired moral outrage.” (Skinner 1996, 145).
- 10 “The principle of persons” (*personlighetsprincipen*) together with “the principle of associations” (*associationsprincipen*) were set against the privileges which were understood in terms of the Estates, the guilds, the state, and the bureaucracy. In the middle of the nineteenth century, “liberals” were both protagonists of the right to create free associations, and opponents of the economic restrictions that the state had in economic life (e.g. Nilsson 1988, 17). The new political language that emerged during the first half of the nineteenth century was linked with new political and social practices which emerged at the same time. Voluntary

associations, public meetings and banquets as well as “liberal” newspapers were examples of them. “Public opinion” was viewed as the forum, the result, as well as the primary subject of the new public life. (cf. Johannesson et al. 1987; Jansson 1985).

References

- Anderson, Ivar (1917): *“Oppositionen” och ministeransvarigheten. Parlamentariska strömningar i svensk politik 1809-1840*. Uppsala.
- Andrén, Georg (1937): *Tvåkamarsystemets tillkomst och utveckling. Sveriges Riksdag. Senare avdelningen. Riksdagen från 1866. Band 9*. Stockholm: Viktor Petterson.
- Ankersmit, Frank (1996): *Aesthetic Politics. Political Philosophy Beyond Fact and Value*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ankersmit, Frank (2002): *Political Representation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Arendt, Hannah (1973): *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Baker, Keith Michael (1990): *Inventing the French Revolution. Essays on French political culture in the eighteenth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burke, Kenneth (1950): *A Rhetoric of Motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Central-Komité (1864): *Om Representationsfrågan. Framställning af den vid slutet af 1862-1863 årens riksdag utsedda Central-Komité*. Stockholm: tryckt hos N. Marcus.
- Christensen, Jan (1997): *Bönder och Herrar. Bondestandet i 1840-talets liberala representationsdebatt. Exemplen Gustaf Hierta och J P Theorell*. Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.
- Colley, Linda (1992): *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707-1837*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- de Geer, Louis (1865): *Några ord till försvar för det hvilande representationsförslaget*. Stockholm: tryckt hos Joh. Beckman.
- Edén, N. (1935): *Den svenska riksdagen under femhundra år*. Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag.
- Elvander, Nils (1961): *Harald Hjärne och konservatismen. Konservativ idédebatt i Sverige 1865-1922*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Fäderneslandet 1860-1866.
- Heckscher, Gunnar (1939): *Svensk konservatism före representationsreformen. I. Den historiska skolans genombrott i Sverige*. Skrifter utgivna av statsvetenskapliga föreningen i Uppsala. IX. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.

- Hellqvist, Elof (1980): *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*. Malmö: Gleerup.
- Hildebrand, E. (1896): *Svenska statsförfattningens historiska utveckling från äldsta tid till våra dagar*. Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & Söners Förlag.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1991): *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Ihalainen, Pasi (2003): "The Concepts of Fatherland and Nation in Swedish State Sermons from the Late Age of Absolutism to the Accession of Gustavus III", *Scandinavian Journal of History*, Vol. 28, No. 1.
- Jansson, Torkel (1985): *Adertonhundratalets associationer. Forskning och problem kring ett sprängfult tomrum eller sammanslutningsprinciper och föreningsformer mellan två samhällsformationer c:a 1800-1870*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.
- Johannesson, Kurt et al. (1987): *Heroer på offentlighetens scen. Politiker och publicister i Sverige 1809-1914*. Stockholm: Tidens Förlag.
- Jones, H. S. (2000): Political Uses of the Concept of 'Representation'. How the French Debated Electoral Reform, c. 1880-1914. *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*. Vol. 4. University of Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä: SoPhi, 15-36.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (1972): Einleitung. In O. von Brunner, W. Conze & R. Koselleck (Hg.) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 1*. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, xiii-xxvii.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (1985): *Futures past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (1996): A Response to Comments on the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. In H. Lehmann & M. Richter (Eds.) *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*. German Historical Institute, Washington D.C. Occasional Paper 15, 59-70.
- [KU] *Konstitutions-Utskottets Memorial N:o 7* (1863): Bihang till samtliga riks-ståndens protokoll vid Lagtima Riksdagen i Stockholm Åren 1862 och 1863. Stockholm: tryckt hos E. Westrell.
- Kurunmäki, Jussi (2000): *Representation, Nation and Time. The Political Rhetoric of the 1866 Parliamentary Reform in Sweden*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
- Lagerroth, Fredrik (1942): *1809 års regeringsform: dess ursprung och tolkning*. Stockholm: Svenska Bokförlaget, P.A. Norstedt & Söner.
- Liedman, Sven-Erik (1995): Liberalism in the Nordic Context. In I.K. Lakaniemi, A. Rotkirch & H. Stenius (eds.): *"Liberalism". Seminars on Historical and Political Keywords in Northern Europe*. Helsinki: The Renvall Institute publications 7.
- Nilsson, G. B. (1988): *Kreditens jättekraft: svenskt bankväsen i brytningstid och genombrottstid vid 1800-talets mitt*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.

- Nordin, J. (2000) *Ett fattigt men fritt folk. Nationell och politisk självbild i Sverige från sen stormaktstiden till slutet av frihetstiden*. Eslöv: Symposion.
- Nordström, J. J. (1865): *Bref om det från år 1863 hvilande förslag till ombildning af svenska representationen*. Stockholm: tryckt hos E. Westrell.
- Palmstierna, C. O. (1865): *Ö.P.M. angående representationens ombildning*. Upsala.
- Petterson, Lars (1993): *Forskning om svensk politisk historia 1809-1865*. In B. Lövgren, T. Möller, T. Nilsson & L. Petterson (red.) *Svensk politisk historia. En kommenterad litteraturöversikt*. Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet (HSFR). Uppsala: Swedish Science Press, 7-64.
- Pitkin, Hanna. F. (1967): *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Podlech, A. (1984): *Repräsentation*. In O. von Brunner, W. Conze, R. Koselleck (Hg.) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 5*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 509-545.
- Politisk Tidskrift för Sveriges Allmoge 1860-1864*.
- Premfors, Rune (2000): *Den starka demokratin*. Stockholm: Atlas.
- Preste-Ståndets protokoll. 1859-1860, 1862-1863, 1865-1866.
- Protokoll, Borgare-ståndet. 1859-1860, 1862-1863, 1865-1866.
- Protokoll, Ridderskapet och Adeln. 1859-1860, 1862-1863, 1865-1866.
- Rexius, Gunnar (1915): *Det svenska tvåkammerssystemets tillkomst och karaktär. Med särskild hänsyn till principernas grundläggning 1840-41*. Skrifter utgifna af K. Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala. 17:2. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre (1994): *The Republic of Universal Suffrage*. In B. Fontana (Ed.) *The Invention of the Modern Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sieyès, Emmanuel, Joseph (1963) [1789]: *What is the Third Estate?* Translated by M. Blondel. London and Dunmow: Pall Mall Press.
- Skinner, Quentin (1973): *The Empirical Theorists of Democracy and Their Critics: A Plague on Both Their Houses*. *Political Theory* 1 (3), 287-306.
- Skinner, Quentin (1978): *The foundations of modern political thought. Vol 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, Quentin (1988): *Some problems in the analysis of political thought and action*. In J. Tully (ed.) *Meaning and Context. Quentin Skinner and his Critics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 97-118.
- Skinner, Quentin (1992): *The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty*. In G. Bock, Q. Skinner & M. Viroli (Eds.): *Machiavelli and Republicanism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Skinner, Quentin (1996): *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, Quentin (1999): Rhetoric and conceptual change. *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*. Vol 3. University of Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä: SoPhi.
- Skinner, Quentin (2002): *Visions of Politics. Volume I. Regarding Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Söndagsbladet 1865.
- Södergren, J.A. (1865): *Satser angående det från riksdagen 1862-1863 hvilande Förslag till national-representationens ombildning*. Stockholm: tryckt hos A.L. Norman.
- Steinmetz, Willibald (1993): *Das Sagbare und das Machbare. Zum Wandel politischer Handlungsspielräume England 1780-1867*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Stjernquist, Nils (1996): *Tvåkammartiden. Sveriges riksdag 1867-1970*. Stockholm: Sveriges riksdag.
- Strindberg, August (1992) [1882]: *Det nya riket*. Stockholm: Fabel Bokförlag.
- Thomson, Arthur (1926): "Liberal". Några anteckningar till ordets historia. In: *Festskrift tillägnad Theodor Hjelmqvist*. Lund.
- Tingsten, Herbert (1939): *De konservativa idéerna*. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag.
- Verney, D.V. (1957): *Parliamentary Reform in Sweden 1866-1921*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Vierhaus, Rudolf (1982a): Konservativ, Konservatismus. In O. Von Brunner, W. Conze & R. Koselleck (Hg.): *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 3*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Vierhaus, Rudolf (1982b): Liberalismus. In O. Von Brunner, W. Conze & R. Koselleck (Hg.): *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland. Band 3*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Viroli, Maurizio (1995): *For Love of Country. An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wokler, Robert (1998): The Enlightenment and the French Revolutionary Birth Pangs of Modernity. In J. Heilborn, L. Magnusson & B. Wittrock (Eds.) *The Rise of the Social Sciences and the Formation of Modernity. Conceptual Change in Context, 1750-1850*. Dordrecht, Boston and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 35-76.