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POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE CONCEPT OF THE SCANDINAVIAN UNITARY REPUBLIC

David M. Sexton

The modern state is the culmination of human cooperation and organization. Politics govern interactions, the use of technology, all social institutions and combined efforts; it is the foundation of modern society, leaving virtually no aspect of life unaffected. The evolution has seen government serve a more active role in everyday life and the role of government rapidly expanded, for better or worse. The objective of western government, especially in Europe, has shifted in the last century from projecting power on an international scale to international cooperation and the provision of services to citizens that would've been unheard of 70 years ago. Government and politics have a profound effect on citizens' quality of life in a state, and it should be the primary objective of a government to maintain a high quality of life, and ensure the prosperity of its citizens. The institutional structure of the Scandinavian Unitary Republic is designed to fulfill this objective.

Rebalancing and dispersing power, capitalizing on the successes of modern representative democracies, and concentrating the institution of government in a unitary system are the central themes that distinguish this state from any standing republic. Furthermore, several themes of Plato's and Aristotle's more foundation level theories of a government's role in society can be identified as more complex institutions, expanded through millennia of human existence, crucial to the stability and success of modern democratic governments. It should be acknowledged that the evolution of the Scandinavian Unitary Republic would be something to likely occur after Gunnar Wetterberg's proposed Nordic Federation, being a more loosely associated economic and defense cooperative that has more respect for the original nations within the proposed federation (*The United Nordic Federation*). Evolution is a major part of this proposed unitary state. With this example and Wetterberg's proposal, there exists an assertion that governments may not have to decay until they fall and are replaced by a more (or less) perfect alternative, but could evolve out of themselves into a greater form (Aristotle 154-161).

National Statistics and Resources

The Scandinavian Unitary Republic (SUR) is composed of all the nations of the Nordic Region, being Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and excluding Iceland. Iceland's physical isolation made it an unlikely candidate for a unitary state based in Scandinavia. However, the inclusion of such areas as Greenland and the Faroe Islands are not necessarily concerned with their physical distance, but their status as territories of Denmark. The Scandinavian Unitary Republic boasts a moderate population of 26,280,471 citizens, compared to its size of 3,384,307 km² including Greenland (OSF; Statistics Denmark; Statistics Norway; Statistics Sweden; *The United Nordic Federation*). Additionally, the SUR boasts an excellent national gross domestic product of \$1,341,320,000,000 translating to a per-capita GDP of \$51,038.66. The Republic's economy will also remain sustainable far into the future because of the vast crude oil resources in Norway and its territories, the manufacturing industry of most Scandinavian countries, and the trade dominance in the North and Baltic Seas (OSF; Statistics Denmark; Statistics Norway; Statistics Sweden; *The United Nordic Federation*).

Plato, in establishing his Kallipolis dwells on the size of his state, and wanted to ensure sustainability and control of the population. While Plato has created a government for a city and small society, the principle persists when discussing a larger republic (Plato 61). The SUR occupies a large amount of land for the size of its population, which is a positive position to be in considering there is room for growth. However, populations in western European countries have been stabilizing in the last half a century because of prolonged prosperity and economic stability (*The United Nordic Federation*). With the SUR's abundant natural resources and the economic stability of the original nations within the Republic, a major population shift is unlikely so long as those conditions persist under the unitary government. So, Plato's ideal city-state can be expanded to fit a larger nation so long as stability is established and persists.

Government Structure

The Scandinavian Unitary Republic will operate under a hybrid, representative-republican democracy that concentrates governing power in the central government, but establishes more checks and balances. Firstly, the SUR will be a unitary state, with local municipal and regional governments being subservient to the Central Government. Local governments shall only establish ordinances and proclamations specific to their community. The Central Government shall legislate nationally, doing the job of state and federal entities in a federation. To begin explaining this system, Fig. 1 illustrates the flow of legislation through the branches of government. A representative democracy can be described as the modern inception of Aristotle's polity (Aristotle 159-161). Governments must be bound by rules

and regulations in the form of a constitution and those rules preserved by checks and balances between individuals and branches of government. So while the power of governing is concentrated in the Central Government, there are many checks and balances on that power that must be navigated to actually legislate.

Legislative Branch

The function of a government is to legislate and execute; so to specifically define the Scandinavian Unitary Republic's government, the legislature must be established. The Legislative Branch of government is a bicameral legislature with a lower and upper house. The lower house shall be the Cabinet Assembly whose leaders are to be appointed by the chief executive (the Chairman of the Executive Council), and confirmed by the higher house of legislation (the Legislative Assembly). The Cabinet Assembly is composed of several individual councils corresponding to the Ministries of the Chairman's Executive Cabinet. Cabinet Ministers are appointed by the Chairman with the advice and consent of the other members of the Executive Council, then confirmed by the Legislative Assembly. The Cabinet ministers then make appointments for their undersecretaries to be confirmed by the Legislative Assembly in a simple majority. Undersecretaries serve on their corresponding Cabinet Councils. There are not a set number of undersecretaries (and therefore council members) for any Ministry and Cabinet Council, except for the Defense Forces Council. Cabinet Ministers' appointments usually reflect the number of individual departments within their ministry. Therefore, sometimes undersecretary positions are added or dropped administration to administration. The Council of Justice should not be comprised of a single cabinet ministry. Rather, the Council of Justice should consist of the Minister of Justice and his/her undersecretaries, the Advocate General of the Courts, the Attorney General, and the Solicitor General. The Cabinet Assembly is comprised of all the individuals Cabinet Councils. The assembly is led by a Parliamentarian appointed by the Chairman of the Executive Council with the advice and consent of the other members of the Executive Council. The Parliamentarian maintains a staff which sees to all full Cabinet Assembly matters. Staff includes sergeant-at-arms, assembly secretary, and other necessary logistical positions. The full Cabinet Assembly sees legislation proposed and votes on which individual Cabinet Council or conference (multiple Cabinet Councils) will review and vote on the legislation to be passed and sent to the Legislative Assembly. Also the full Cabinet Assembly polices the ethics of its members. Ethical violations by any member of the assembly will be discussed in full assembly. The highest disciplinary action the assembly may take is to recommend a member's suspension to the Executive Council. In extenuating circumstances assembly members in question may be placed on emergency suspension pending a

decision by the Executive Council. The full Cabinet Assembly shall be responsible for formulating a Central Budget with the advice and consent of the Chairman of the Executive Council. The Cabinet Assembly must pass the budget for approval by the Legislative Assembly, and then by the Executive Council. Assembly members' terms last for the four-year term of the administration which appointed them unless they are otherwise removed.

The concept of the Cabinet Assembly is sort of a combination of the sub-committees in the American congress, and the U.S. Senate before the passage of the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Legislation originates in a branch that was appointed by an elected executive and confirmed by an elected legislature; so this lower house is intended to be an assembly of experts who filter legislation before it is discussed and debated by a directly elected assembly.

The Legislative Assembly is directly elected by the people in a system of proportional representation. There will be 250 seats in the Legislative Assembly that are to be distributed among the five election districts of Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and the Greenland/Faroe District in a mix of population proportionality and equal distribution. The National Election Commission should meet every 10 years after a census is conducted to determine if a change is needed in the distribution of seats. Currently the distribution should be 96 seats for Sweden, 42 seats each for Denmark and for Norway, 50 seats for Finland, and 20 seats for the Greenland and Faroe Islands District. The Legislative Assembly will be elected in a system of proportional representation where parties are given seats based on the percentage of the vote they receive with an 8% electorate threshold in each election district; so if there are remaining seats and no party has obtained 8% of the electorate of a province, the seat will be awarded to the party with the plurality of the remaining electorate's votes. The Legislative Assembly will be led by an Assembly Speaker chosen from the elected members of the assembly by the assembly, and shall determine its own rules for proceedings and police its own members. The Legislative Assembly approves or rejects legislation, sent to it by the Cabinet Assembly, based on a simple majority. While legislation may not originate in the Legislative Assembly, members of the Legislative Assembly may propose legislation to the Cabinet Assembly. The Legislative Assembly may override a veto by the Executive Council with a 2/3 majority vote. Members of the Legislative Assembly will have six-year terms. Every two years 32 Swedish seats, 14 Danish and Norwegian seats, 6 or 8 seats for Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and 16 or 18 Finnish seats will be up for reelection.

Executive Branch

The executive branch of government is where the previously discussed increased dispersion of powers occurs. The Executive Council

holds the legislative powers of the executive branch, and maintains checks on the military powers held by the Chairman of the Executive Council. The Executive Council is headed by a Chairman of the Executive Council, who serves as the official head of state, and Commander in Chief of the Defense Forces. The focus of the Chairman should be on military and diplomatic matters, however he or she must also moderate the proceedings of the Executive Council and ensure the efficiency of the executive branch. The Chairman also sets precedent for domestic policy by appointing Cabinet Ministers which lead and create the additional structure for the Cabinet Assembly. The Chairman's appointments must be made with the advice and consent of the other members of the Executive Council, then confirmed by the Legislative Assembly in a simple majority. Similarly, the Chairman will make appointments of judges for the Central Courts and for Justices of the Supreme Court to be approved and confirmed in the same fashion. This power and process of appointment extends to upper level military positions with the advice and consent of the sitting members of the Defense Forces Council and confirmation by the Legislative Assembly. The Chairman shall retain the powers of Commander in Chief of the National Defense Force, and maintains operational authority for the defense of the nation. However, the Chairman's power for long term campaign type operations are subject to the approval of the full Executive Council. The Chairman is elected by the whole body of citizens of the Republic in a majoritarian system where the winner has won the plurality of votes among the candidates for the office. The Chairman shall hold a vote in Council on legislative, military, and bureaucratic matters, however, the Chairman shall not hold a vote on matters of the Executive Council's operation and procedure. The Chairman does not hold the power of veto over the Executive Council on matters of the passage of legislation but does hold the power of veto on military and bureaucratic matters.

There are five sitting members forming the Executive Council; each member represents one election district, and is elected by that constituency. The offices of Council members are elected in a majoritarian system where the victor has won a plurality of the votes among the candidates for office in his/her constituency. One sitting member of the Executive Council is designated Head Councilmember, and serves as secondary chair to the Chairman. The position of Head Councilmember is the next in line for the executive, and shall obtain the powers of the Chairman in the event he/she should be impeached, leave office, or otherwise be unable to hold office. The Executive Council must sign legislation into law and holds the power of veto over the legislative branch, which may be overridden by a 2/3 majority vote of the Legislative Assembly. The Executive Council should be advised of the ministerial appointments to be made by the Chairman, and should give their consent to his/her appointments if they are moved to do so. The Executive

Council also holds the power to issue executive orders to Cabinet Ministries, government agencies, and government corporations pertaining to issues of bureaucratic administration and the enforcement of laws. Executive orders should be issued with a majority vote of the Executive Council and signed into effect by the Chairman, who may veto an executive order, but his/her veto may be overridden by a 4/5 vote of the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall set its own rules for procedure and police its own members. Suspension of any member of the Executive Council should be approved unanimously by all other members of the Executive Council and approved by the Chairman as a temporary disciplinary measure. If impeachment of any member of the Executive Council should be necessary, the Executive Council must vote unanimously, excluding the member in question, to send the Councilmember to an impeachment trial lead by the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly must vote in a 2/3 majority to impeach a member of the Executive Council. Should the impeachment of the Chairman of the Executive Council be necessary, the same procedures apply, however the Head Councilmember should also be excluded from voting due to a conflict of interest.

Judicial Branch

The judiciary of a democratic state should be an independent entity to ensure the fair practice of justice and the absence of politics from decisions affecting the rights of citizens and the state of the Republic's Constitution. The Judicial Branch shall be comprised of the Legal Courts of the Republic, highest Court being the Supreme Court; who's Justices are appointed as prescribed in the powers of the Chairman of the Executive Council. The Supreme Court has the power to choose which cases it hears and which it does not and also has the power to call a case up from a lower court. The Legislative Assembly has the power to determine the number of seats on the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court shall have the power to review the constitutionality of laws in relation to the cases it hears. The Justices of the Supreme Court shall also have the power, every four years corresponding to the terms of the Executive Council, to appoint an Advocate General of the Courts who shall advise the legislative and executive branches as to the state and needs of the Judicial System. Furthermore, the Advocate General of the Courts shall serve in the Chairman's Cabinet, and shall create his/her own staff of advisers. Below the Supreme Court there are a network of Central Courts which see cases of felony violations of Central Law, cases of equity violations on the part of the Central Government, and cases involving maritime zones. Central Courts exist in Judicial Districts separate from the established Administrative Regions (local government areas). Central Appellate Courts are established within the District Courts to hear appeals and determine if a mistrial has occurred. District Courts are established in

every Administrative District, municipal and rural, and hear cases of misdemeanor and infractionary violations of Central Law, as well as violations of District ordinance. Judges of District courts are appointed by either municipal governments or regional commissions. District Appellate Courts exist within the District Court system which should be restricted to determining if a mistrial had occurred in the previous instance of a case. Civil Courts exist in each Administrative Region as well, and shall hear cases of civil disputes where no law or ordinance has been violated, and Judges for civil courts are appointed in the same manner as those of the District Courts.

Election Law and Citizenship

The means of elections is a crucial part of the efficiency of the Central Government. A separate, popularly elected National Elections Commission is designed to enforce strict election laws to encourage citizen participation in government, and a higher level of debate in politics. Each member of the National Elections Commission serves 10-year terms that are offset by five years from each national census. The members of the National Elections Commission must be nonpartisan, and may not have had any prior affiliation with a political party. Candidates are approved by the vacating Elections Commission and then confirmed by the Legislative Assembly. The National Elections Commission sets election rules for all levels of government and is responsible for enforcing a high standard of politics and discussion in the Republic. Campaigning for any office shall not occur longer than three months, and no candidate may accept campaign contributions or fund their own campaigns. Campaigns shall be funded equally by the Central Government, and each candidate will be given the opportunity to have their platform heard multiple times via the NBO, local television, and radio. Only citizens may vote in elections, whether natural born or naturalized. The government maintains an applicative immigration policy, with separate rules for accepting asylum seekers and refugees and maintains a policy of assisting endangered and impoverished peoples around the world.

Cabinet Ministries and Government Agencies

The bureaucracy of government is comprised of Ministries of the Chairman's executive cabinet which enforce the laws of their corresponding policy areas. Fig. 2 shows the extent of Cabinet Ministries and Government agencies at the level of executive appointment and legislative confirmation.

Cabinet Ministries and Government Agencies

Cabinet Ministries

- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of National Safety
- Ministry of Justice
 - Office of the Attorney General
 - Office of the Solicitor General
- Ministry of Health
 - Office of the Surgeon General
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Public Assistance
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Urban Development
- Ministry of Commerce and Trade
- Ministry of Natural Resources
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Energy
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of the Treasury

Government Agencies

- Nordic Broadcasting Organization (NBO)
- Census Bureau
- National Elections Commission
- Central Maintenance Service
- Registrar General's Office
- National Legislative Library
- National Banking Service
- Central Postal Service
- Central Monetary Policy Bureau
- Office of the Comptroller General
- Executive Budget Advisor

Several of the Cabinet Ministries differ or expand heavily from Aristotle's proposed magistrates, however those base level bureaus have expanded into a complex bureaucracy that manages an entire nation of millions. While such ministries as Labor, Energy, and Public Assistance are difficult to find matches for; the Treasury, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Defense have almost exact matches to Aristotle's ideal bureaucracy (Aristotle 116). Also, the bureaucracy of the Scandinavian Unitary Republic contains individual positions for records and accountability (the Comptroller General and Registrar General), unlike in the United States where the duties of those offices are mostly dispersed among multiple agencies (Aristotle 114).

State Policies

From an American constitutional perspective, the idea of including specific policies in the description of an ideal state is peculiar. Often, policies such as healthcare, military service, taxes, and even public services would be viewed as fluid from administration to administration, and subject to change over time. However, this is the point in the structuring of the Scandinavian Unitary Republic where issues are less in the form of constitutional establishment, and more in the preferred policy values held in government.

The government has the authority to regulate the commerce of the Republic, both locally and internationally, but shall not undermine the nature and function of a free market economy. Furthermore, the government shall maintain a policy of free trade, unless in a time of crisis. Wage floors and ceilings should be set to encourage a more equitable distribution of wealth,

and industries should be regulated to prevent monopolization and encourage competition. Plato establishes the regulation of society in the division of classes under his “noble lie.” As Plato regulates class to push the classes apart, the function of the Central Government’s economic regulations is to draw the classes closer together, strengthening the middle class and creating a fair, healthy, regulated capitalist system (Plato 116).

Both levels of government may levy taxes. The Central Government levies a progressive income tax on all citizens, and a corporate tax on all businesses that shall be progressive based on brackets of profit. The Central Government shall levy a further capital gains tax on citizens and businesses for the exchange of stocks, bonds, precious metals, and property; as well as a national sales tax. In order to maintain the Nordic Broadcasting Organization (NBO), the purchase of a TV License will also be required. Administrative Districts and Regions levy a property tax based on the value of owned property, to be assessed by the District Appraiser’s Office; and may levy further taxes on personal vehicles, and additional services taxes based on the requirements of local municipal and regional governments. The Central Government’s progressive taxes should not receive reductions except for those citizens living below or in close proximity to the poverty line; but should establish tax deductions for citizens and businesses who make charitable donations or who volunteer their time. Municipal and Regional governments should establish tax deductions to encourage sound environmental and health habits such as fuel efficient vehicle ownership or a sugar tax, or if a homeowner/business has invested in a supplemental renewable energy source.

Plato is very concentrated on the concept of common meals, that they strengthen bonds among the guardians and serve to bolster a community (Plato 119). However, the common meals serve a function as a public service that should be recognized. Modern governments are often compelled to establish public health and pension services, and the same is true for the SUR. The Central Government established a Central Healthcare Service to provide for all citizens’ preventative and emergency medical services, long-term treatment, family healthcare and planning, dental care, pharmaceutical services, hospice care, assisted living, and necessary cosmetic care. Also a Pension Program is established for all citizens who have reached the age of retirement or who are otherwise unable to work for physical or mental reasons. Finally for the government’s public services, a Central Welfare Service provides financial assistance to families or individuals living below or in close proximity to the poverty line before tax deductions are factored in to personal or household income.

Education is an issue that is very prevalent in the minds of Plato and Aristotle. Both philosophers are interested in setting strict curriculums for students to follow, and make education a major issue of the state (Aristotle

119; Plato 99). Public education is a staple of virtually all industrialized nations, and the state naturally has an interest in ensuring students are being taught properly. However, the Scandinavian Unitary Republic has interest more invested in letting teachers teach rather than focus on standards. The Central Government establishes base level standards for primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions that receive state funding. However, the specifics of curriculum and how individual community schools and universities exceed the national standards should be established by the local administration of the aforementioned organizations. The objective of the Central Government in education should be to provide the means for schools to educate students. It should create an environment that encourages educational creativity and teaches students responsibility, curiosity, and a love for knowledge. To quote Plato, "...for the object of education is to teach us to love what is beautiful" (Plato 100).

Modern democratic governments usually maintain (or claim to maintain) a policy of separating church and state, which is in direct contrast to Plato's Kallipolis. Plato's noble lie is the establishment of a religion in its self, and therefore establishes a state partially as a theocracy (Plato 116). The Scandinavian Unitary Republic will follow the trend of separating church and state, because a democratic government must be representative of all citizens, not just those of a certain religion. No level of government shall pass a law, enact an ordinance, issue an edict or order that respects an establishment of religion or recognize the state as affiliated with a religion. Nor shall the government prevent the free exercise of religion provided that exercise does not endanger one's self, one's fellow citizens, or the society as a whole.

Military institutions have evolved greatly since Plato and Aristotle's time. Modern governments engage in warfare only when necessary, preferring to use diplomacy and economics to 'conquer and pillage.' The Central Government maintains a National Defense Force consisting of five branches, the Land Defense Force, Maritime Defense Force, Air Defense Force, Home Guard, and Coast Guard. Military engagements shall be solely for the defense of the Republic, and the Defense Forces should not be used for conquest or oppression of other sovereign nations. Additionally, all able bodied citizens who are not attending post-secondary education shall be compelled to devote two years of service, including training, to one of the five branches of service, or the Humanitarian Service Corps under the National Service Act after they have reached adulthood. They shall be compelled to remain as a reservist for 8 years after the initial service requirement has been fulfilled; however, they may choose to attend post-secondary education after the two years of service. The National Service act and the National Defense Force will not discriminate between male and female, viewing all citizens as equally capable.

Local Governments and Services

As the Scandinavian Unitary Republic is a unitary state, municipal and regional governments, while not institutions of the Central Government, are subservient to it, and their function is minimal. Local governments have limited means to tax and may be funded additionally by the Central Government. Local governments exist in two categories: Municipal Administrative Districts administered by city style governments with mayors and municipal councils, and Regional Administrative Districts that cover rural areas outside the municipal districts, and are governed by Regional Commissions with the same capacities as the municipal governments. Local governments are responsible for maintaining most public services. Local Police Services are compelled to enforce all laws of the republic, both Central and of their respective administrative regions. The Central Government shall contribute some, but not all of the funding for local police forces, municipal governments providing the rest of the funding. Local governments shall fund emergency fire services. Emergency medical services are funded under the Central Healthcare Service, however, municipalities shall be responsible for contributing some funding to local services. Municipalities will maintain and provide for infrastructure such as local and regional roads, water and sewage services, parks, and other public services; while national infrastructure such as central motorways and national highways, as well as large-scale power grids connected to nuclear or hydroelectric energy shall be maintained by the Central Government. Finally, prisons are established, administered, and maintained by the Ministry of Justice, while jails for temporary incarceration by local authorities are maintained by local law enforcement.

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