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Employers and pension reform in Sweden from war to war
One piece added to the unresolved controversy of the 1946 Swedish pension reform

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Introduction

Universal old-age pension insurance was decided upon in Sweden in 1913. This pension insurance essentially covered the entire population. A pension was to be paid to anyone incapable of working on account of disability or having reached the age of 67. The insurance consisted of two parts:

1. A contribution pension, financed by national insurance contributions corresponding to taxable income. The size of the pension was related to the value of the contributions paid.
2. A tax-financed, means-tested supplementary pension, to be paid to those with little or no contribution pension. The aim of the supplementary pension was the quick removal of disabled and old people from poor relief.

Although the universal pension insurance had its defects and the benefits were low, the path was clearly staked out. It was explicitly stated that improvements would come. But decades were to pass before the contribution pension of 1913 was to have an acceptable effect in terms of social policy. The pensions that were paid out therefore essentially came from the means-tested supplementary pension. Amounts were low, and above all in the towns the old-age pensioners were forced to supplement their pension with poor relief. Thus a pension reform was launched in 1935.

New in the 1935 pension reform was that the contribution part (what may be called the insurance component) was toned down and actually called a *folkpension*, indicating its universal character. In 1937 the Swedish parliament passed an act to introduce cost-of-living indexing for pensions in 1937. The result was a considerable improvement for urban pensioners. Despite this, about 30 per cent of pensioners annually received poor relief in the period 1939–47. The proportion of pensioners who also received poor relief was roughly twice as high in the towns as in the countryside.

At the start of 1938 a Social Care Committee was set up with a broadly based mandate to inquire into social policy. In 1945 the Committee presented its report on pensions.² Three alternatives were presented. What they had in common was that pensions were to be financed by taxes and the level was to be at a level that pensioners would not need any supplement from poor relief. In the first two alternatives the pension was to be subject to a means test, while according to the third alternative it would be a flat-rate pension, the same for everybody. In 1946 a virtually unanimous parliament accepted the flat-rate pension. The 1946 pension reform was the world's first universal social insurance based on citizenship rights.

It is close to 20 years since Peter Baldwin and Sven E Olsson clashed over the issue of driving forces behind the 1946 Swedish pension reform.³ The effects of their exchange of ideas were, in the short term, limited and in many cases a question of choosing sides, implicitly or explicitly. Several studies have since been presented in either the one or the other tradition, some of them presented below. Although most newer studies have touched upon the questions raised in the debate no one has closely met the requests that a sum-up of the debate points out, namely to question the hegemony of the "power-resource" perspective in explanations of the shaping of welfare states (Baldwin) and to offer a wider structural dimension to the understanding of changes in habits of thought over the first half of the century (Olsson).

This article has the ambition to fill one of the several gaps in the understanding of the Swedish pensions' history. It was part of a project concerning employers' attitudes, ambitions and actions in the development of pensions in Sweden up to 1950. The questions that guided the study were shortly: How did employers' and their main organization (SAF; Swedish Employers' Confederation) position themselves in relation to pensions? With whom, where and when, did they co-operate in the question? How did the interplay between single employers and their organized interests develop concerning pensions? The perspective is limited to view the process inside the employer sphere, and the sources used are mainly derived from the archives' of SAF and single companies. The objective is not to explain pension reform as such, but to present a pattern of employer actions in a context of social policy development. In this manner it will provide us with one more ingredient to add to the bigger picture of pension reform. This is, in other words, a complement to Olsson's, Baldwin's and others' efforts, rather than a challenge.

There are close similarities between the two, not least visible in Peter Baldwin's answer to Sven E Olsson's critique, that are not highlighted in the debate. First, both discussions are based in paradigms of long term ideological change, and their theoretical stands, thus, should not need to engender dispute, but clarification. It is surprising how the discussion leaves the important distinction between their different levels of argument. Baldwin's reference to risk-groups⁴ as the main explanation to changes in political as well as other influential organizations, and Olsson's presentation of a change in social context as the explanation for welfare reform and modernization, do not rule out, but rather strengthen each other in an effort to understand welfare state development. While risk-group analysis is a rationalistic reference to, or assessment of, triggers and motives of action, the modernization process refers to evolving preconditions for action. The second comment therefore becomes methodological in nature. It seems clear that a discussion concerning driving forces in political change needs to include aspects of influence in a wider context than that of self-controlled internal bodies. This refers to any choice of agents under study. "The frontier of control", to borrow the

title from Carter Lyman Goodrich's⁵ dissertation, has to be defined if explanatory power over any group's influence on the outside context is desired.

However, in some cases the influence is of a more indirect character with only little, if any, visible impact on the political process in any one single pension reform, but rather more evident in the wider question of pensions as a whole. A study, then, seemingly needs to grasp the organizations' internal development, e.g. how they have acted and reacted in the process of political evolution. Notwithstanding that driving forces on higher levels of abstraction need not necessarily be the ultimate outcome of empirical investigations on a more practical level.⁶ These latter considerations can be summed up in the two following arguments, and although there are no real difficulties accepting them, they present to us a problem of scientific craftsmanship, which C Wright Mills helped us to address.⁷ We need to stick to abstraction levels that match methodologically, as well as question ourselves as to whether the material we use actually allows us to tell the story we intend.

- * The study of actions in and structure of, a single social agent can not alone present the driving forces of change in the context in which it resides. This is Olsson's strongest argument against Baldwin's thesis and his focus on the conservative party.

- * The study of an abstract form of preconditions derived from a wider context cannot force its identified driving forces upon single social agents as if they were their individual motives for action. This is Baldwin's strongest argument against Olsson's critique and the use of the "power-resource" model.

How to view employers' importance in pension reform and administration?

Corporations, and corporate managers, as employers, as well as entrepreneurs and administrators, are central actors in the organization and financing of pensions.⁸ However, it is in the latter aspect as financiers, employers have most often been presented in Swedish pension policy formation, and further, research in Sweden has had a clear bias to view organized interests as good representatives for members/owners' attitudes. Such a focus is the result of taking the starting point in a political decision on pension reform rather than to go beyond and view the process of the growth of an employer attitude. The importance of employers as financiers will not be challenged here, but will, and must, be seen in conjunction with other aspects.

A problem in Swedish pension history, as an example, is that public pensions, apart from the 1946 reform, are contribution based, resting on a base of moral codes, political legitimating processes and economic incentives.⁹ It is also obvious that employer attitudes and actions in the local arena consists of more than

financing, not least when considering that the ties between employer and employee prior to the 1935 pension reform often were lasting and close,¹⁰ but were increasingly seen as an obstacle to structural change and rationalization of the large scale industrial sector.¹¹ Another important aspect is to question the often presented single-dimensional profit maximizing employer. A paradoxical situation occurs when discussing employers, namely that they are seen as autonomous and powerful at the same time as their potential motive for action is limited to one. This confusion of 'on the margin made' business decisions and individual employers' attitudes towards pensions and other social questions is problematic, not least in the earlier days of varying forms of paternalistic organizations. In other words: The lack of economic possibilities does not necessarily mean a negative attitude towards pensions, but might have implications for choices concerning the construction and timing of pension reform.¹² Cause and effect is tidily mixed up. Further, there is an empirical problem heavily induced in the pension research in Sweden. Employers are often viewed through the lenses of governmental inquiries, or in other cases purely as theoretically derived entities. This might be due to the fact that the archives connected to employers' organizations have been closed to most researchers until the mid-1980's, resulting in extensive research into the labour movement, with limited corresponding research into its employers.¹³

Research conducted since the controversy between Baldwin and Olsson has basically followed three lines:

- methodologically, a broader view have been taken to put the Swedish experience into context. Studies, such as Joakim Palme's quantitative thesis¹⁴ comparing 18 OECD countries, as well as Kari Salminen's comparative thesis¹⁵ on the Scandinavian countries pension development, have effectively shown both the strengths and weaknesses of comparative approaches. Although different, both studies stress the connection between universality and the strength of the labour movement as the central cause for rising pension rights in Sweden.¹⁶ The broad perspective allows less depth, and is thereby open to the possibility of losing the questions' cultural and social context.¹⁷
- Theoretically, discussions on pensions since 1990 have centred on the newly introduced pension reform, and in so doing have brushed up on "old" arguments from earlier debates.¹⁸ However, some efforts have been made to bring to light the characteristics in the Swedish development. In line with a social administrative argument Per-Gunnar Edebalk has presented how the ideas from the 1910's have been followed through when the public financial situation allowed it. Especially important is the early introduction of an income replacement principle.¹⁹ The balance between different interests of moral requests on reform have been discussed, i.e. the choice between poor-relief and social insurance.²⁰

In line with Baldwin's arguments of changing bourgeoisie attitudes, Emil Uddhammar²¹ presents a view of the growing social state as a project developed with a consensus between different political groups. Stig-Björn Ljunggren's²² thesis on the conservative party's program development supports such a statement, although not as a streamlined simple change, but a rather violent clash between conservative and progressive internal groups. In a critical local level approach Lars Harrysson challenges the uses of pension provisions in industrial organization. The growing interest in rational decision models as explanatory understanding is questioned, and instead configurative aspects of relations between employer and employee on different levels are stressed.²³

- Empirically, the development are slower. In the aftermath of Åke Elmér's²⁴ work on the pension history until 1960, and Björn Molin's²⁵ thesis on the debate about the supplementary pension scheme decided upon in 1959, most studies have had to go beyond the question of developmental description or making a chase for new material. Several of the above mentioned studies have chosen to restate the question and by refined theoretical approaches challenge the pension question, mainly using the same empirical base. Baldwin, as well as Olsson, is partly exceptions due to their focus on certain aspects, not least with the help of material from personal archives. The re-reading of official material is of great importance. The way in which Swedish political reform traditionally has been introduced through thorough public investigations has produced large volumes of material in the archives of the committees that are still not fully excerpted. This material has proven to, on several occasions, call for a rewriting of causation, especially if there is an interest in the configuration of relations and consequential events.²⁶ Another trajectory has been the extensive research into companies and their treatment of labour and workplace relations, e.g. the employer role. A long array of studies has been presented, but most of them have left social questions unresolved and instead focused on the work-process.

A few studies, however, have included the study of retirement provisions on the company level. These studies use materials from otherwise more or less untouched archives, and derive information on strategy formation, decision making and social and economic consequences important to the understanding of company related provisions, and not least employer attitudes.²⁷ Finally, a growing interest in empirical research into unions and employer organizations, concerning the development of occupational welfare, can be observed. In several publications Joakim Palme and Olli Kangas have presented the case of the public-private mix in social welfare, thereby raising the question of private provisions in the institutional welfare state to the agenda.²⁸ This article is a contribution to this field and will hopefully shed some light on the preconditions of social policy reform as such, and employers' contributions in particular.

Employers and pensions

The driving forces behind employers' attitudes to pensions are multi-dimensional, and every mono-causal explanation should be viewed sceptically. Reasons as to why companies on a local level engaged themselves in people's retirement can be considered, ranging from direct emotional factors, through social and cultural conditions, to strictly economical business decisions. Due to the fact that old-age, and thereby retirement before the mandatory age of 67, was defined as a disability in legislative terms, the decisions made by an employer had to relate to the questions of reason for retirement, age and pension level. Old age was often seen by employers as reason enough for partial retirement.²⁹ However, by technical change and pressure for rationalization during the Inter-war years the question of labour mobility was introduced to the decision making process as an increasingly important factor.³⁰ The exact shape of considerations concerning this structural and organizational change differed from company to company, from branch to branch, but the question of early old-age retirement as a form of exit had entered the stage.³¹

The major questions concerning retirement for a majority of employees in private employment were, until the 1930's, dealt with at the company level. It was the arena where the "frontier of control" was configured through the implementation of pension legislation, agreements, and contracts in the work place culture. If a solution existed, which was not always the case, especially among small employers, it was locally designed.

In research and public committee work the complexity of pension arrangements have been organized into a number of categories related to the individual's right to their pension, i.e. the question of portability, or in other words, pension as a deferred wage. In comparison, forms with high portability³² were judged a better alternative in the debate flourishing from the 1920's up until the polarized debate on mandatory supplementary pensions in the 1950's. In discussions concerning social engineering, where the technical design of a pension reform becomes the focus, it is easy to make judgments of existing forms at the company level as more or less developed. Information about reasons behind different forms of pension promises, or how they were seen by the recipients,³³ is seldom presented. For example, is the restricted portability of pension rights in many friendly societies and pension funds, not least those initiated by private companies, commonly seen as evidence for lock in or exploiting motives of the labour force on behalf of the employer? However, it is questionable if the existence of the possibility is enough for a convincing case that it actually happened.³⁴ It is an empirical question if exploitation occurred or not, or if the provider had such an intention, or whether the recipients experienced the provisions as such. The hypothesis used here is that membership in company initiated friendly societies or pension funds changed

during Inter-war recessions and industrial rationalizations into an instrument for the definition of who was to be referred to as part of the regular workforce, i.e. the core of the employees, and, further, that the employees included in the core did not see the construction as negative.

The hypothesis is thus open to multi-dimensional causes for the introduction of pensions at the workplace, not least arguments of non-introduction. For those who held their relation to the company and its pension arrangement alive, the situation was positive, whilst critique focusing on the weaknesses of the system flowed from people outside the intimate employer-employee relation. Weaknesses, that of course existed, were not necessarily exploited by those involved. The extensive group of workers who were not eligible for member- or partnership in existing single-employer arrangements, being part-time or occasional employees, had only small chances of solving their retirement provisions in excess of public pensions on their own. The Inter-war period not only showed unemployment rates of catastrophic heights, but also a growing division between workers where, as mentioned above, companies' pensions arrangements served as one form of dividing post. The debate at the time had as its prime purpose to inform/promote single companies (branches), as well as local and town councils,³⁵ to make pension promises portable and secure with the help of external institutions. It was rarely a question of creating better conditions for the marginalized, even though the directions for several legislative committees during the period included a desire to increase voluntary retirement provisions following new regulative measures.

Corporations involved themselves primarily in pensions related to employment.³⁶ This can preferably be viewed on three levels; Firstly as a limitation of people eligible for a pension; secondly, as a dividing line between blue- and white-collar employees; and thirdly, as a division between good and bad employers in a perspective of social care.³⁷ This differentiation helps to provide an understanding as to what extent a company is responsible for those employees that have left due to old-age or limited work capacity, and their families. A distinction can be made between new companies with modern structures and companies with their roots in traditional organization and production, highlighting the problematic old-fashioned legislation (*legostadgan*) concerning employer responsibilities.

The universal mandatory pension insurance introduced in 1913 made the old legislation obsolete, but it did not solve the basic problem of provision of subsistence for old age people. Technically, however, the reform made clear that the government, from thereon, was responsible for everyman's old-age. It relieved this responsibility from the shoulders of family, as well as employers and local poor-relief institutions. The division between blue- and white-collar employees is, in relation to pensions, most central. Principally it was not eliminated, bridged, until the introduction of a collective agreement (STP; *Särskild tilläggs pensionering*) in 1972 which provided unionized blue-collar workers a supplement, on top of public pensions, comparable to that of white-collar employees. In a simple categorization, pensions on the company level can be

divided into three groups; a/ no pensions (most common when viewed from the perspective of the number of companies), b/ pension promises concerning white-collar employees and foremen (most common if promise existed), c/ pension promises including all employees (steadily growing during the 1930's along different technical lines between groups). In this context the distinction between good and bad employers played a vital role in the overall relationship between a company and its employees. The following quote is taken from Carter Lyman Goodrich:

"The popular distinction between "good" and "bad" employer may arouse his employees to devise means of controlling him, or as the "good" employer may also happen to believe, in Mr. Seeborn Rowntree's phrase, in "giving as much control as he can instead of as little as he must."³⁸

It is clear that pension promises worked as a base for creating a positive employer role and a climate of co-operation rather than conflict, not least in an Inter-war labour market characterized as a particularly hostile environment. Single employer plans were most often dependent on total discretion of the company's decisions, with a minor exception for staff in top managerial positions who, although irregularly, had individual contracts stipulating pension conditions. Only one industrial establishment in Sweden before the 1940's, Höganäs-Billesholm AB, solved their pension question in a collective agreement with the employees, and this happened as late as the beginning of the 1930's. The fulfilment of given promises could be organized in different ways, e.g. a friendly society to which company and members/partners paid equal shares. Discretionary single employer plans did not necessarily mean that the company paid the full cost for a chosen retirement solution, even though it was common, but only that the company's responsibility of financing was decided upon by the management in full discretion. Therefore it is possible to understand that the retirement question, in its technical aspects, was not an employer question except on the local level, but a general question of costs. This was the case until a more standardized solution was called for in the 1930's and 1940's. Several factors point in this direction.

The three major employer organizations SAF, Verkstadsföreningen (engineering industry), and Centrala Arbetsgivarförbundet (small handicraft industry)³⁹ showed little interest in the pension question until the late 1920's.⁴⁰ The question was not one open for negotiations, and had not been raised by the "The Swedish Trade Union Confederation" (LO) as a request for inclusion in collective agreements. However, local activities with far reaching consequences had been launched. On an initiative from salaried employees at Munkfors AB (steel mill) a group of white collar workers and workshop supervisors (masters) from the Bergslagen area gathered in 1906 to discuss the pension issue. They constituted a committee, which by 1907 was expanded to include a specialist to investigate the

possibilities of a collective solution to their retirement provision. It was soon concluded that it would not be feasible to set up a friendly society without the financial aid from their employers. A non-socialist white-collar organization, Brukstjänstemannaföreningen, was started in the summer 1909. The manager at Fagersta Bruk AB, Axel Wahlberg, became its first chairman. When, with the help of Verkmästareföreningen (workshop supervisor association), the question was presented to SAF it was immediately referred to Svenska Industriförbundet (SI; Swedish Industrial Association). The reaction from the SAF executive board showed, interestingly, how they reflected upon the request as a positive idea, but that in its undeveloped stage it could not be further discussed.⁴¹ Salaried employees, such as office clerks and managers, foremen, and supervisors, together with SI and regional Trade Chambers, constituted in 1916 the friendly society, Svenska Personal-Pensionskassan (SPP: The Swedish Staff Pension Society), which started its work a year later.⁴²

It points to that social questions were up for discussion in the early organizational phase was when the "good" employers engaged themselves. Primarily, it was a question of finding a uniform solution to the retirement issue concerning salaried employees. None wished pensions to be an area of competition, neither a question of negotiation. The introduction of SPP should not be seen as a negotiation, but as a principal discussion about how already existing pension efforts could be improved. The process can be described as pragmatic social engineering. Interestingly the instigators were employees of high ranking positions in, or just below, the executive leadership. Their influence as such, partly at the owner interests' expense, meant good possibilities of directing the development in a trajectory positive for employer co-financed portable and external occupational pensions. Negotiation or not, it was of great importance that all involved viewed the question as positive and important. The initial stage had been long, ten years from idea to decision and start. However, much of the work still had to be done; the implementation of the group insurance model into the business society.

Central to SPP were the questions of how to finance and secure (portability as well as capital fund management) given pension promises. It seems as if the choice of using an advanced funded defined contribution plan was anonymous.⁴³ This can be related to the evolving base of actuarial knowledge, the need for higher flexibility in the labour market, and a restrictive economic political regime during the first decades of the 20th century. Actuarial control was introduced into the pension area with the development of the public pension insurance, 1913, and the choice of a premium reserve model. The private systems were regulated in different ways depending on their form. In our context the most important regulation at the time was the introduction of legislation concerning friendly societies decided in 1912 and implemented in 1915.⁴⁴ The new legislation introduced actuarial control of registered societies. However, it was not compulsory to register, and while the control of larger societies seems to have

functioned, the smaller ones lived their own lives. In respect of the focus of control and knowledge on defined contribution plans rather than defined-benefit plans, the vast majority of the smaller societies were organized in the latter form.

To SPP, the introduction of legislation was one major reason for forming a friendly society rather than an insurance company. The latter was a solution that had been discussed in the early stages because of the lack of appropriate legislation. However, even if actuarial principles and thinking had penetrated the group of initiated, the meeting with individual employers and branch representatives was far from easy. In particular costs and traditions were in focus when the question of portability was brought into play. Several Trade Chambers and companies pointed out that portability was a threat to some prime purposes behind the introduction of pensions in their branches. Although heterogeneity among the groups involved the initiative towards solving the retirement question was severe, the wish to solve it, a responsible attitude, joined them.

Important aspects in understanding the actions of employer organizations in the pension field are their growing importance in the contacts with the state, their role in political debate, and their role as a synchronizer between members in the confederation. In the early 1920's only a fraction of all employers were members in employer organizations, and existing organizations competed for members. SAF showed itself to be the strongest and most appropriately organized, and by the beginning of the inter-war period SAF had developed to be the umbrella employer organization.⁴⁵ The situation was by this time principally, SAF with branch organizations dealing with questions concerning the relations between companies and their employees, while SI and other business organizations dealt with business questions in a broader sense. The division was not crystal clear. Many companies, not least traditional countryside mills with paternalistic traditions, chose not to become members in SAF but SI, and others did the opposite. SI's involvement in the pension question has already been discussed above concerning SPP. SAF's positioning did, on the other hand, look somewhat different.

As organization SAF stayed more or less passive until the late 1920's. Any direct action was not taken until the mid 1930's when members, in connection to the introduction of new public pension legislation, requested advice on how to handle existing forms of private retirement provisions for employees, especially for lower white-collar and blue-collar workers. Several large companies worked in favour of a universal solution covering all in private employment. The passivity can be explained in many ways. One of the more important was the fact that the representation in parliament, especially in the first chamber, for people in connection with private industry and the top layer of the organizations was strong. Influential conservative forces in parliament gave support to control of market power in only a few hands.⁴⁶ From the implementation of universal suffrage in the early 1920's this situation changed.⁴⁷ Two important questions during the 1910's concerned the cost for social reforms. First, business and organization leaders

were positive toward the proposed and enforced contribution model that was the base for the pension reform in 1913. The employers did not have to contribute apart from being tax-payers, and therefore did not have to finance the system of means-tested complementary pensions that was a part of the reform. Second, in line with a wider reform idea, the proposals for new accidental and health insurances were crucial. The latter was not implemented due to financial reasons, while the former was introduced in 1916. Compared to pensions, accidents had to be covered by corporate private insurances, and health/medical coverage was often included in collective agreements at central or local level. A public takeover of this responsibility was welcomed by the organizations representatives in the parliament since it was going to spread the costs over a larger financial base.⁴⁸

The 1920's showed a somewhat contradictory development of commercialism, competition and political regulation. During the first three decades of the 20th century, life insurance, and its hasty development, offered a possibility for individuals to safeguard themselves against accidents, early and late death. Insurance requires risk-sharing in a form of anonymous solidarity where the product in itself has to be convincing enough for trust. Risks are distributed by collective savings in where the group, statistically, equals the different individuals' risks, thereby constituting a normal distribution. Actuarial science engages itself, simplified, in the calculation of these risks and the level of insurance premiums in relation to mortality and interest rates. The growth of insurance companies and forms of life insurances suitable for groups in lower income brackets was considerable. Principally it was a question of presenting an insurance form that encapsulated the needs of the working class. The English "Industrial Assurance", became in Sweden "Folkförsäkring" (peoples insurance), a mix of capital and life insurance. It allowed small premiums paid regularly for short periods, e.g. weekly or fortnightly, and non-payment periods in case of failing work capacity or work conflicts. The better solution, in a pension context, of life annuities did not develop as quick.

In the middle of the 1920's SPP aimed at a widening of their product mix and an entry into the life insurance market, a market that they had not been able to enter earlier due to their organizational form as a friendly society. SPP was the only company offering collective occupational pension insurance, i.e. an advance funded annuity to be paid out for the rest of the insured's life. It had a set start date, and was organized with a passive member (the employer) responsible for collection and payment of contributions, and active members (the white-collar workers).⁴⁹ The insurance was signed in the active member's name and was fully portable. No other single insurance company provided such a pension solution.⁵⁰ SPP's ambition to diversify was not seen positively by the overall insurance branch and a resistance campaign was launched.

A joint venture between the majorities of Swedish life insurance companies introduced "Pensionsanstalten Sverige", which had as its objective the provision of occupational pension insurance aimed at the employers. Different to SPP, the new

company accepted non-portability under the slogan of "a non-portable pension is better than no pension."⁵¹ The situation became unbearable due to severe competition. Negotiations between SPP and the companies backing Pensionsanstalten Sverige ended with a division of the market. SPP got sole rights to sell collective pension insurances at the cost of leaving the individual life insurance markets to the others. In 1929 SPP decided to reorganize from being a friendly society to becoming a mutual insurance company. The ambition to supply fully portable occupational pensions, including disability and family coverage, was never altered. The agreement in the insurance market stayed intact even if more or less planned violations happened occasionally. Any real challenge, however, did not occur until the early 1940's when the insurance company Thule applied for concession to sell collective pension insurance.⁵²

The appearance of SPP, and the employers' partly financed policy of portable pensions, together with the questionable outcome of the public pension insurance and a growing critique against the life insurance companies' activities, opened the way for political intervention. The public investigation, in 1928, into the security of private sector employees' pensions was the first political attempt to define given pension promises as deferred wage and therefore portable within the new universal social insurance regime.⁵³

The outcome from the committee was heavily criticized. For example, the Board of Social Affairs (Socialstyrelsen) pointed out that a promise should be in written form to be valid, something that SI agreed with. SI furthered the critique to the proposal's rigidity on behalf of portability, and brought back the idea that it was better with a non-portable pension than none at all. The statement might look odd, as it was delivered from one of the founders of SPP, but the general stand was that it was a lot longer from no pensions to portability than if some form of pension entitlement existed. An important aspect is also SI's small interest in blue-collar workers pension provisions. They admitted the question to be one of negotiation and therefore better suited to labour market organizations such as SAF and LO. The committee proposal was further criticized due to its lack of realism concerning the spread of pensions among blue-collar groups. The proposal did not reach the parliament, but was referred to a new department, and later, the committee working with the reformation of the public pension system.

To SAF the 1928 committee became the first appearance on the pension stage of an interest in occupational pensions. The trigger was the introduction of blue-collar workers as a potential group for employer financed pension coverage. The first step was the committee's request for help to gather information about the existing retirement conditions in the private sector. SAF fulfilled a limited collection based on information from its own branch organizations. This first limited task introduced their internal investigation bureau, "Utredningsbyrå" into pensions.

In the question of differences between white- and blue-collar workers the choice of technical solution became an important indicator. Not least in view of how a

more wide spread pension provision to blue-collar workers increased the entitled group of employees by several 100's of percent. For those blue-collar workers that received a pension from their employer it was most commonly in the form of direct payments from the company. Promises, apart from tradition, did not often play a role, but rather it was fixed benefits paid from the company board in full discretion. Since most decisions were for one year at the time, it is hard to say that the formula was one of defined-benefit pensions. However, the development of different forms showed distinct characteristics fitting such a model, with a few exceptions. One exception to the formula was the payment of supplementary benefits due to inflation during the two world wars, when the supplement was given as a percentage of existing pension levels. Of course such a payment does not alter the defined-benefit basic structure since most recipients had the same level of pension, even though the gap between different pension levels widened. In many cases this was met by a regressive scale of supplements applied to those further up on the pension scales.⁵⁴

The defined-benefit form was normally the case even when internal funds or company initiated friendly (pension) societies were used. The differences, and they are quite important, when using a pension society model, were related to the clarity of the promise given and the possibility of letting the workers contribute to their pensions. The membership in a pension society strengthened a workers position, both as a member of the workforce and in his entitlement to a pension. Although not portable, the worker could, in case of employer change, often continue to pay into the society, but then, of course, without the share provided by the employer.⁵⁵ Worker contributions played a vital role in pension debate both at local and central levels, in business and politics. The major reason expressed behind the interest was the moral connection between an obligation to contribute and the pension right.⁵⁶ The most common division was 50 - 50 between employer and employee, but other splits were also used.⁵⁷

Pensions given to blue-collar workers became over time, clearly related to the public pensions. They were normally set at a level that was not inhibiting the full use of the public means-tested supplementary scheme. It was not possible to use this formula when giving pensions to most white-collar workers due to their higher salaries. Pensions given to them therefore often exceeded the limits in the public scheme. While pensions to blue-collar workers most often had the character of flat-rate benefits, white-collar workers enjoyed income-related pensions due to position and former salary. Foremen were an intermediate group that, by local standards, sometimes belonged to blue-collar groups and at other times to white-collar groups. Most commonly they were part of the latter and did, therefore, enjoy a better pension coverage.

Importantly, particularly to blue-collar groups, the retirement age in company run systems often was lower (55-65) than the mandatory public age of 67 years. Pension systems, therefore, played a somewhat different role in the workplace than in public debate. The low benefits were not to be seen as a pension expected

to provide a sufficient life and exclusion from the workforce, but to fill the gap of loss in productivity in a unit-priced wage system. Later, in the 1930's, pensions from the company came to exceed the income-limits for supplementary public pensions, but were by the age of 67 reduced to fall inside the brackets. The latter form was, compared to the former, a full-time retirement model, and came to play a vital role in SAF's argument during the second half of the 1930's.⁵⁸

As a consequence of discussions in parliament, initiated by an appeal⁵⁹ from the conservative first chamber parliamentarian Professor Gösta Bagge, concerning early retirement of the older workforce in industrial employment, several organizations were asked if they would consider such an initiative. SAF sent out questions to the branches. The answers pointed out that the accounts, on which the proposal rested, were unrealistic in the eyes of business. Far less old people than anticipated in the appeal were still in work, and the effect of early retirement would therefore be small. However, a more important aspect of the branches' answers was their interest in getting the privileged income in the public system raised to help older workers to retire, i.e. to let employer pensions be paid to a certain level without lowering the means-tested supplementary public pensions.⁶⁰ The context might have been wrong, but the timing was right. As a "suggestion" to the sitting committee for the reformation of the public pension insurance⁶¹ it could work as a guide.

The committee was well aware that the level of pensions provided by the existing universal pension insurance was not high enough for subsistence, even less if it was to provide for a family. With the introduction of new pension legislation, 1935/37 (enforced by 1938), several changes to the better was presented. The privileged income from occupational pensions was increased substantially, and even made it possible to give wives a pension without lowering the public supplementary pension. This development was seen very positively by employers, locally and centrally, and it would work as a boost for more positive attitudes among employers to organize blue-collar worker pension arrangements. Further, the new legislation changed the former insurance model into a redistribution system (pay-as-you-go). Contributions were still in play, as well as means-tested supplementary pensions, but the need for large public pension funds was gone. To an increasingly frightened group of capital owners, investors and others, the transformation into a redistribution system worked as a relief. The problem focused on by business people at the time, the second central question concerning pensions, was a question enlightening a complicated picture of contradictions, namely the consequences of growing funds on the performance of the capital market.⁶²

In the Inter-war period the sluggish economic cycles brought into focus the often unreliable means of securing pension promises. Full portability through the use of external insurances in the name of the worker would have solved the problem, but it was not a path possible to follow, short-term, since the advance funded insurance solution created huge and threatening funds, even though many

employers saw it as a positive formula. If blue-collar workers, as well as white-collar personnel already catered for in the ongoing pension developments, should be entitled to pensions organized through insurances the question would inevitably be one of costs.

The cost aspect was especially important among small employers with only a few employees, e.g. in retail businesses.⁶³ In the aftermath of the depression, entering the 1930's, it was seen by many employers as less attractive to release control of their internal capital formation. A political committee was launched in 1936 to investigate the possibility of corporate trusts specially designed for welfare purposes. This was seen as one possible way of securing internal funds in companies in case of liquidation and as a way of clarifying employee entitlements to pensions, but it was not intended to favour any pension model before another.⁶⁴ The legislation did not force employers to give a promise, but it forced companies that wanted to make offsets to pensions to do so in a legal and socially acceptable way.

At the same time as this legislation was introduced another committee worked with the modernization of the friendly society legislation from 1912. The introduction of the new legislation in 1938 practically closed the possibilities of single-employer use of pension societies as a solution to occupational pensions. Only larger, multi-employer societies survived this change, but even they merged into other solutions over time, leaving only the payments to entitled pensioners to be administrated. The new legislation, together with technical changes in the production leading to closure, lay-offs or decrease of the workforce, efficiently pointed out existing, and blocked new, society formations working from unsound actuarial principles.⁶⁵ Both these legislations were aimed at securing existing and future funds and promises, while yet another committee, "Harteliuskommittén", worked with a proposed legislation concerning the right to a pension for people in private employment. As such, it was a continuation of the committee from 1928 presented earlier.

The committee presented its final ideas in 1938, principally the same as presented in 1929 and 1932. SAF had the chance to reflect upon a draft from the secretary of the committee concerning the coming proposal. The critique was severe in relation to unclear argumentation on; a/ when a pension promise should be seen as given; b/ the compulsory form when a promise exists without reference to when this form is fulfilled; c/ the retroactive effect on already existing pension promises; d/ the consequences of full portability; and, perhaps most important, e/ how a legislation with a prime purpose of supporting the growth of voluntary occupational pensions can present solutions that can only be met by a few very big companies.

Notwithstanding that the proposal, by its construction, forced companies falling inside the boundaries of the legislation to secure their promises with the help of insurances. This was seen to create considerable negative consequences on the capital market due to the size of funds and on lowering the internal capabilities of

companies' investments. Despite all criticism, the delivered proposal was not in its essential parts altered much from the draft, and of course the final proposal received an equal dose of criticism. However, the committee proposal did not reach the parliament, which was partly due to a comment sent to the ministry by the chairman of the committee investigating the insurance market,⁶⁶ O A Åkesson, pointing out the obvious risks connected to a growth in pension funds and the possible need for changed investment rules on behalf of the insurance companies.^{67 68}

To SAF, the legislation on friendly societies did not engender much notice, but had a large impact at the local level. However, the two others gained more interest and at times intensive research. Several factors can be seen as important to the new attitude in the sphere of organized employers as well as large corporations, or in other words, the centralization of the occupational pension question. A growing demand for portability from political and commercial (SPP) as well as union camps, changing work conditions due to new forms of work organization, degrading a lot of office work to routine,⁶⁹ partly undermined the earlier division between white- and blue-collar workers. Increased profits particularly among larger companies gave better possibilities for a blue-collar retirement solutions. Demands from members in SAF to show a united front towards a labour movement that strengthened its position both in the labour market and in politics, and, likewise member demands, for a standardized model that minimized pensions as a means of competition for labour.

From having been a question of industrial organization, the pension question developed, with the introduction of blue-collar worker pensions on a wider scale, into a collective negotiation problem. SI withdrew from the scene, and SAF entered. The renewed political interest in legislation for occupational pensions by the mid-40's elevated the question to a joint problem between the two organizations.⁷⁰ Centralization within the employers' camp was a fact, though still fragile. On several occasions did employers on their own, or in concert, violate the united front up to and during the time the public committee into occupational pensions was working, 1944-1946.⁷¹ The well known agreement between SAF and LO in 1938, the so called "Saltsjöbadsavtalet" included a passage about pensions. Even so, it took 4 years, until 1944, before the labour-market committee (Arbetsmarknadskommittén) had its first briefing on the question. Two consequent meetings discussed it, but no formal result, apart from a realization of the LO's closeness to the State, was achieved externally. The committee did not discuss the matter again until 10 years later.⁷² In SAF the work continued with focus on a blue-collar worker pension based on an agreement between them and LO, but a solution did not occur until the 1971 agreement of STP (supplementary pensions for blue-collar workers).⁷³ Pension reform did, however, go on and the new public pension legislation was passed by 1946. That is the reform that S E Olsson and Peter Baldwin argued about.

Concluding remarks

It is difficult to pinpoint triggers in historical processes. The real reasons behind positioning or actions taken are very seldom possible to uncover. In relation to the organized employers', SAF's, path to a positioning on the pension question it is possible to see a pattern in available sources. Some characteristics of this pattern reveal that well developed (extensive and reasoning) answers from branch organizations or single employers were given a large weight in the organization's recall to governmental inquiries and information seeking members. In each question a few answers (1-3) have played the vital role for the ongoing research done in SAF. Further it seems as if some aspects during the 1930's, repeated on different occasions, were seen as more important than others, and were therefore put forward as central in, more or less, every external comment. These aspects were strengthened by the internal research department's updating procedures, and the lack of board discussions altering the direction.⁷⁴ With the help of experts in areas of actuarial, economic and political issues, the pension question was put in perspective. The four crucial aspects were:

- A. Occupational pensions for blue-collar workers should be seen as a complement to public pensions, and as such not interfere with public means-tested supplements.
- B. Pensions paid directly by, and in full discretion of, the employer did in a better way correspond to the real situation on the labour market.
- C. The use of advance funded insurances were not possible as an overall solution due to its negative effects on the capital market and on the companies' ability to plan and fulfil investments.
- D. An occupational pension for blue-collar workers equal to SPP's normal plan (60% of former income) should move a responsibility on to industry that was voluntarily instituted by the State.

With these aspects in mind it is easier to grasp the meaning of SAF's answer to the legislative council concerning the new 1946 universal and flat-rate pension law. A quote, commented by Anders Kjellström as one of the bigger blunders of judgment seen in retrospect, points to SAF seeing a public pension reform lifting provisions above subsistence level and in line with all of the proposed alternatives, as the final solution to the question of pensions for manual workers and comparable groups, and thus no more need for occupational pensions extending the public pension.⁷⁵

To SAF, and most of the large employers, it had been clear for some time that it was inevitable that a common solution had to be reached concerning the pensions for blue-collar workers. The idea was, until the political decision on the 1946

reform, to solve it in agreement with LO, and, as research has shown about the different alternatives to the 1946 reform, it was not until very late that the actual chosen model was presented. The choice surprised SAF and others, but in SAF's view the issue was settled. Their statement should not be seen as a forecast of the future pension development, but as one based on prior expectations and experience. A development, as Kjellström correctly pointed out, that followed a very different trajectory.⁷⁶

However, the situation of SAF possibly trying to make some ground in their relation to LO can not be fully ruled out, neither that the new legislation actually fulfilled one of the big employers' wishes, namely to spread the financial burden on more shoulders. On the other hand it seems as if the often recalled employer request of pensions as payments for long service fell outside the consideration. Its importance might have slackened in a changing environment, or perhaps SAF played along with the large employers who were positive of pensions, rather than the many small ones with a more restrictive view. The organizations actions during the late 1940's strengthen such a hypothesis.⁷⁷ It is obvious when analysing the material from SAF that the staff working with pension questions internally developed a very positive attitude towards the solution of the question. It is therefore doubtful if SAF can be seen as a sole or even good, representative of employer attitudes.

Another aspect is the turning point in SAF's attitude towards the labour unions. Although the proposal from the 1928 committee into private employees' pensions and their portability (Det Laurinska förslaget) had been met by compact negative critique from most quarters, the ideas from that proposal were transferred into the new committee (Harteliuskommittén) seated in 1936. In relation to the work of this committee, irritation grew among the SAF staff concerning the worker organizations' choice of seeking a political solution to a negotiation problem. Until this time SAF had mainly worked as an intermediary source between employers and the state, as well as a negotiating partner with the labour movement. The proposal did produce some disturbing consequences, not least because it had been positively met by several trade unions. It is clear that SAF, from this point, took a more clear and normative stand on the pension issue. In letters to branches and members in the process of organizing or reorganizing pension arrangements a set of rules was presented. These included a wish to keep pensions out of collective agreements, to give pensions as a gift with full discretion of the company, and to keep the pension level inside the brackets of the supplement from the public pension.

In some branches/companies the rules were hard to follow, e.g. in the brewery industry, which for a long time had given higher pensions, attempts at lowering them met heavy resistance. Some companies solved the earlier promises by dividing them into one part pension and one part capital insurance. The former inside the brackets of the public supplementary system, and the latter, as a one time payment, not invoking on the public system as long as it was paid before the

employee reached the age of 67. Both SAF and SI promoted the use of internal trusts, in line with the 1937 legislation, as a solution. This would allow funds to be kept in company control, as well; it would be easier to assess a company's economic position when pension trusts had to be shown in their annual report. Payments to pension trusts were deductible as a production cost, and thereby exempted from tax payments, a feature that made them tempting to use.⁷⁸ The frontier of control was to change. The importance of pensions in this development is impossible to describe without contextualizing it in a wider labour relations perspective. However, it is possible to note that the pension question, compared to many other question holding aspects of control, has far-reaching economic consequences that are very hard to foresee. The wish for control over capital formation and spending on pensions does not display employer attitudes to retirement provisions as a social necessity, but rather their attitude towards the financial risks involved.

In this context it is important to point out that, even with new forms and possibilities, the most common form of occupational pension provisions were in the form of direct payments at the full discretion of the employer. This was the case for blue-collar as well as white-collar workers, even though a growing share of the latter became insured through SPP. In industry close to SAF, however, the most common situation, in terms of number of companies, was that no pensions were provided by the employer, while the majority of employees actually had some form of pension because they worked for large companies where the pension question had been provided a solution by the end of the 1940's.⁷⁹ The push for equalizing blue-collar and white-collar workers in relation to occupational pensions, despite the large differences in numbers between the groups, enhances the focus on financing. The costs of a blue-collar pension model in the form of an advance funded insurance model (like SPP) would undoubtedly be very high and, at least short term, impossible for most companies to carry out.

So, even though the question of pensions was referred to as a payment for long and eminent service in most public statements, it seems as if that control device question became shadowed by worries of costs. A portable insurance solution was, no doubt, viewed as far too expensive. The rationale in this is, despite its financial argument, not necessarily the attitude of the employers. Most employers, not all, which answered or discussed SAF's inquiries in the 1930's and 1940's were positive toward a solution of the pension problem. It is clear that employer attitudes were formed by more than economic considerations, and that even if many on the economic margin were forced to take negative stands, not all decisions are made on that margin. This becomes obvious when focusing on configuration, i.e. how agents relate and actions come to be.

Finally, the controversy between Peter Baldwin and Sven E Olsson was one of research focus and choice of abstraction level, rather than the weighing of explanatory components. It seems both are correct in their stands. However, the most forceful view is the one connecting them. That is a view that shows the

forces of centralization, and the comparatively weaker links between local everyday life and central political decisions. Such a process is visible within the relationship of SAF and the local employers, as well as in a wider context. The increased importance of SAF, and other employer organizations, in the political debate reflects the creation of a more "efficient" political decision-making process, but not necessarily a better understanding of single employer attitudes. Arne Helldén⁸⁰ completed, some years ago, a study looking into how the SAF fortnightly magazine, "Industria", in the 1930's presented a view of social arrogance. Helldén criticizes the views presented in "Industria" as being extremely conservative. His conclusion calls for a consideration of importance, namely a hypothesis of SAF's "two faces". It is clear that SAF during the 1930's developed, either forced or voluntarily, an explicit platform of labour market consensus, a view that was supported by many big companies in the late 1930's and 1940's. SAF developed a more pronounced big business stand, but had to, at the same time, keep the vast majority of employers, the small ones, still under its wing. It seems that small employers held a more restrictive, conservative attitude toward welfare spending than big employers, and that "Industria" worked as a forum to keep these small employers content with the organization.

On the central organizational level it is clear that SAF, as well as the conservative party, moved their positions closer to the core of reform promoters. For SAF the political choice of a flat rate, tax financed, public pension system discharged an internal problem of legitimacy regarding the relationship between "small and big" members. SAF promoted a pension solution based on agreements in the labour market, but did not see itself, or its members, as solely responsible for the old age retirement provisions, but as a complement to existing systems. The governmental provision of a subsistence level pension relieved them from a growing social obligation. The negative attitude towards occupational pensions as deferred wages, their portability and security, that stayed alive far into the debate in the 1950's, was not one against supplementary pensions as such, but against loss of control.

However, and importantly, pensions presented for small employers, regardless of the control aspect, financial obstacles often not considered in the big business agenda. Bertil Kugelberg's, the general manager of SAF during late 1940's and 1950's, view of welfare growth points to the fact that SAF moved into line with a wider context of welfare reform. His words end this paper: "I have only pointed to the form of superstition that the labour movement alone is to thank for their high living standards."⁸¹

¹ This basic work with this text was fulfilled with financial help from the Swedish Council for Social Research, SFR during 1995 - 1998

² SOU 1945:46

³ The debate was originally published in *International Review of Social History* in 1989, and has been reproduced, in translated but otherwise unchanged form, in *Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia* No 50, 1991. Baldwin P (1991), "Hur socialistisk är den solidariska socialpolitiken"; Olsson S E (1991), "Arbetarnas makt och 1946 års

pensionsreform"; Baldwin P (1991), "Klass, intresse och välfärdsstat". Soon after the debate in IRSH both the debaters presented their PhDs. Baldwin P (1990), *The Politics of Social Solidarity. Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. Olsson S E (1990), *Social Policy and Welfare State in Sweden*, Lund Studies in Social Welfare III, Arkiv, Lund.

⁴ For a more contemporary discussion of risk and risk-groups as an explanation for Swedish welfare development see Svallfors S, (1996), *Välfärdsstatens moraliska ekonomi*, Borea, Umeå.

⁵ Goodrich C L (1921), *The Frontier of Control. A Study in British Workshop Politics*, New York. See also Lundh C (1986), Hur har arbetarnas inflytande i arbetslivet förändrats under 1900-talet?, in *Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia* No. 33, Arkiv, Lund.

⁶ See Sunesson S (1974), *Politik och organisation. Staten och arbetarklassens historia*, Arkiv, Lund, for a discussion on the distinction between different analytical levels. A more recent study using Sunesson's distinction can be found in Lindqvist R (1990), *Från folkrörelse till välfärdsbyråkrati. Det svenska sjukförsäkringssystemets utveckling 1900-1990*, Arkiv, Lund.

⁷ Mills C Wright, (1959), *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford University Press, US. Appendix: On Intellectual Craftsmanship, pp 195-226.

⁸ See for example Farnsworth K (2004), *Corporate power and social policy in a global economy*, Policy Press, Bristol; Ghilarducci T et.al. (2005), *In search of retirement security*, The Century Foundation Press, New York; Stevens, B (1986), *Complementing the Welfare State: The development of private pension, health insurance and other employee benefits in the United States*, ILO No. 65, Geneva; Bodie, Z et.al. (1996), *Securing employer-based pensions*, Pension Research Council Publications, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia; Rein M & E Wadensjö (1996) *Enterprise and the Welfare State*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham; Rein M & W Schmähl (2004), *Rethinking the Welfare State*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

⁹ Important to notice is that in the Swedish welfare development research the institutional setting is most often broken down into parts without consideration of their relation to each other. Research, e.g. Per-Gunnar Edebalk (1996), *Välfärdsstaten träder fram. Svensk socialförsäkring 1884-1955*, Arkiv, Lund; Hecló H, (1974), *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden. From Relief to Income Maintenance*, Yale University Press, London; shows clearly the importance of existing social administrative procedures; Edebalk about the developments during the 1910's; and Hecló concerning the post-war period. This has later been reformulated in the work of John Myles and Paul Pierson (2001), "The comparative political economy of pension reform", in Pierson, *The new politics of the welfare state*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. Lars Harrysson and Michael O'Brien did a comparative study based on the theoretical concept of retrenchment and path dependence; "Pension reform in Sweden and New Zealand", in *Scandinavian Insurance Quarterly* 2004. The existence of contributions as a form of work ethics, a morale, to secure recipients' attitude towards self-reliance has never been abolished. In this perspective the 1946 pension reform is a discontinuity of the trend, and the explanations have to be found outside normal social political trends. The perspective is strengthened by the fact that the Swedish social insurance model basically is built on income replacement/compensation formulas. Edebalk P G (1994), "Möllermodellen", in *Socialvetenskaplig Tidskrift* Vol 1 No 1, Lund; provides us with a picture of the minister of Social Affairs, Gustav Möller, as having a clear idea, a model, of how he wanted the evolving welfare state to rest on universal flat-rate formulas. That pattern of Gustav Möller's actions, challenges Rothstein B (1985), "Managing the Welfare State: Lessons from Gustav Möller", in *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol 8, pp 151-170; where he presents Gustav Möller as more of a pragmatic politician than stuck to a fix model. Gustav Möller looked for a way to solve the problem of support for old-aged and sick people that could relieve most of them from poor-relief. In this situation it might be in place to say that Baldwin's thesis of changed conservative attitudes plays an important role in fulfilling any of the above presented explanations to the occurrence of a universal flat-rate old-age pension. The trend, however, still points to the close connection between labour market developments (the frontier of control) and the existing work ethics. To be able to understand employer attitudes concerning pensions, the constitution of the labour market, i.e. the relation with employees on different levels, plays a vital role. A recent example of a wider focus is Larsson M et.al. (2005), *Den svenska försäkringsmodellens uppgång och fall*, Svenska försäkringsföreningens förlag, Stockholm, which discusses the context of insurance development in Sweden in the 20th Century.

¹⁰ See for example Olsson L, (1986), *Gamla typer och nya produktionsförhållanden. Om rationalisering och medbestämmande, åldrande och solidaritet bland typografer i Sverige från slutet av 1800-talet till omkring 1960*, Lund; Nordström G, (1993), *Mo och Domsjö och arbetareorganisationerna intill 1940*. Uppsala Papers in Economic History, Uppsala; Magnusson L, (1986), Patriarkalism och social kontroll, i *Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia*, nr 33; Harrysson L, (1997), *Disponent i brytningstid. En problematisering av AB Robertfors bruks lednings ambitioner och möjligheter vad avser utvecklingen av lönevillkor och sociala anordningar i Robertfors åren 1925-35*, Meddelande från Socialhögskolan, Lund.

¹¹ This view was strongly held among many promoters of portability of pensions, e.g. among large companies and insurance company officials. The answer to how well the view fitted all employers, and the timing for this process, as such, is more complex. One aspect is that this process fits a structural economic theoretical perspective with the

ambition to show trends in economic development very well. See for example Schön L, (1994), *Omvandling och obalans*. Bilaga 3 till LU 94, Fritzes, Stockholm. The problem with such a view in connection with pensions and employers is that large companies with many employees and an existing pension system shade the amount of small employers without. Employers' attitudes then become big business, or a success story in economic growth terms and pension coverage, rather than an understanding of the employer attitudes as such.

¹² This argument holds both the view of S E Olsson that there are different causes behind long term trends and choice of a particular solution, but also that of P Baldwin stressing a growing consensus in traditional conservative lines pushing for a solution to the long debated workers pensions.

¹³ The reflection shall not be seen as undermining the importance of the labour movement, but as a lack of studies into the employer part in the relation with the labour movement increasingly important to welfare development in Sweden.

¹⁴ Palme J (1990), *Pension Rights in Welfare Capitalism. The development of Old-Age Pensions in 18 OECD Countries 1930 to 1985*, Swedish Institute for Social Research, Stockholm.

¹⁵ Salminen K (1993), *Pension Schemes in the Making. A Comparative Study of the Scandinavian Countries*, The Central Pensions Security Institute 1993:2, Helsinki.

¹⁶ The use of a comparative approach in a modernization perspective has been used before by many others. See for example Flora P & Heidenheimer A (1985), *The Development of Welfare States in Europe and America*, Transaction Books, London. In this volume is S E Olsson's chapter on Sweden found; Esping-Andersen G & Korpi W (1987), "From Poor Relief to Institutional Welfare States: The Development of Scandinavian Social Policy", in Erikson R, Hansen E J, Ringen S & Uusitalo H, *The Scandinavian Model. Welfare States and Welfare Research*, M E Sharpe, London, pp 39-74. It is hard not to assume a connection between pre-defined assumptions on causality when focusing on the paradigmatic environment surrounding the Swedish Institute for Social Research and the "Power-Resource" perspective.

¹⁷ The context will either be left out or superimposed by the theoretical framework used. In Palme's case the example of using only one source of describing the Australian welfare experience as the base for extensive statistical analysis, especially since the source proves to be quite heavily criticized in Australian research. When viewing Salminen's discussion which in a more thorough way discusses agents, you are surprised over the sources that are used, none really going beyond secondary sources. This latter point reflects some questionable points concerning the view on employers and their attitudes. Salminen does not establish a convincing argument for his tri-polar theoretical reference point, especially when looking at Baldwin's argument concerning a consensus between different classes. However, Salminen does not seemingly worry about inconsistencies in trends, but rather accepts the trend as a proper solution.

¹⁸ SOU 1994:20 *Ett reformerat pensionssystem*, Fritzes, Stockholm. See also Ståhlberg A C (1995), "Pension reform in Sweden", in *Scandinavian Journal of Social Welfare* No. 4, pp, 267-273. The Swedish reform in the 1990's has rendered in intensive debate and also many publications where chapters are offered on a discussion about the Swedish solution. E.g. Sundén, A (2005), "Pension reform in Sweden", in Ghilarducci et.al. *ibid*. A critical discussion has been going in the Scandinavian Insurance Quarterly and is available at their website.

¹⁹ The income replacement principle has to be seen as one of the crucial components in the much admired Swedish model from 1950-60's as e.g. Sven E Olsson points out. The fact that its introduction as a guiding principle in social insurance was seen as early as the 1910's, under liberal and conservative rule, puts into question the relative importance of the Social Democrats as founders or designers of the Swedish model. However, more important, perhaps, is the socialist use of such a principle rather than flat-rate redistribution. It seems as if Peter Baldwin has a case, but perhaps not as much regarding the 1946 reform as for individualistic insurance thought and legitimized of increasing taxes and fees. For a law discussion on the principle see Mannelqvist, R (2003), *Samband i socialförsäkringen*, Iustus förlag, Uppsala.

²⁰ Edebalk P G (1996), *Op.cit.* : Edebalk P G (1995), "Fattigvårdsfolket och pensionsstriden 1912/13", *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift*, Vol 2 No 3, Lund; For the latter see also, Lundquist L (1997), *Fattigvårdsfolket*, Lund University Press, Lund. For a discussion on social administration as a tradition from Richard Titmuss and onwards see Mischra R (1986), *Samhälle och Socialpolitik - teoretiska perspektiv på välfärden*, Prisma, Kristianstad. For a somewhat different perspective see Berge A (1995), *Medborgarrätt och egenansvar. De sociala försäkringarna i Sverige 1901-1935*, Arkiv, Lund.

²¹ Uddhammar E (1993), *Partierna och den stora staten. En analys av statsteorier och svensk politik under 1900-talet*, City University Press, Stockholm.

²² Ljunggren S B (1992), *Folkhemskapitalismen: Högers programutveckling under efterkrigstiden*, Stockholm.

²³ Harrysson L, (1997), *Op.cit.* See Elias N, (1978), *What is sociology?* London, Brown P, (1982), *Historical Sociology*, London, or, Tilly C, (1998), *Durable inequality*, University of California Press, Berkeley for a coverage on configuration. In an article Olofsson G (1995), "Det svenska pensionssystemet 1913-1993; historia, struktur och konflikter", in *Arkiv för studier i arbetarrörelsens historia*, No 58-59, Arkiv, Lund, touches upon the configurative

thesis in relation to different actors involved in the process. The article, however, is much too broad to catch the essence of configuration on a local level.

²⁴ Elmér Å (1960), *Folkpensioneringen i Sverige. Med särskild hänsyn till ålderspensioneringen*, CWK Gleerup, Lund.

²⁵ Molin B (1965), *Tjänstepensionsfrågan. En studie i svensk partipolitik*, Akademiförlaget, Lund.

²⁶ There is always a risk of exaggerating the importance of the material found since it often is detailed and personal. The importance, and thereby the positive effect of Elmér's as well as Molin's dissertations when it comes to pensions, is in relating the findings to the already existing extensive knowledge, and rewriting it.

²⁷ Nordström G, (1993), Op.cit.; Greiff M, (1992), *Kontoristen. Från chefens högra hand till proletär*, Malmö; Harrysson L (2000), *Socialkonservatism i nya kläder. Tjänstepensionering vid Aktiebolaget Robertsfors Bruk 1900-1948*, Socialhögskolan, Lund; Harrysson L, (1997), Op.cit.; Ericsson C (1997), *Vi är alla delar av samma familj. Patron, makten och folket vid Nyby Bruk 1880-1940*, Carlssons, Stockholm. See also the review by Johansson A O (1998), "Patriarkalism som arbetarintresse Nyby Bruk 1880-1940", in *Historisk tidskrift* 1998:1 pp 111-116.

²⁸ Kangas O & Palme J, (1996), "The Development of Occupational Pensions in Finland and Sweden: Class Politics and Institutional Feedbacks", in Shalev M. ed, *The Privatization of Social Policy*, London. See also Esping-Andersen G (1990), *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity Press, London. See also Martin Rein and Eskil Wadensjö (1997), *Enterprise and the welfare state*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham. Sjögren Lindqvist G and Wadensjö E (2006), *National social insurance not the whole picture*, Report for ESS 2006:5, Ministry of Finance.

²⁹ Even though the 1913 pension insurance legislation was mandatory, its compensation levels were low and many workers had to continue to work beyond that age (see Wadensjö E (1991), "Sweden: Partial exit", in Kohli M, et.al ed. *Time for retirement. Comparative studies of early exit from the labour force*, Cambridge University Press, London, pp 284-323. Many early solutions, in the form of friendly societies or company pension funds or other, were primarily directed to compensate for lower work capacity. The often low levels of compensation will, in such a perspective, be easier to understand.

³⁰ See Harrysson L (1997) Op.cit., and Olofsson J (1998), "Yrkesutbildning och tillväxtpolitik", in *Arbetsmarknad & Arbetsliv*, Vol 4 No 1.

³¹ It was highlighted during the depressive years in the beginning of the 1930's, when unemployment among young people forced the thought that it could possibly be lowered by the retirement of "over-aged" workers. However, the proposal from the conservative parliament member professor Gösta Bagge (Riksdagens motion 1933:232), was shown to far overestimate the number of over 67's still in industrial work. (Comments from SAF members answering a survey sent out by the organization: SAF Archive A15120:18a 1934.) The answering companies were not negative to the idea, but could not see that it would make much difference due to the small amount of employees in question. It seems as if most of them already had met retirement requirements. An example is Höganäs-Billesholm AB (closure of factory 1932 where pensions were paid to most workers above 55 years of age).

³² This is a reopened issue within a report written by Agneta Kruse for the Globalisation Council, Ministry of Education and Research. Kruse A (2009), *Socialförsäkringar och globalisering*, Underlagsrapport nr 32 till Globaliseringsrådet, Utbildningsdepartementet, Stockholm. See also Peter Diamond's expert report nr 32 in the same series; *Economic Globalisation and Swedish Pensions* (2009)

³³ Ericsson C (1997), Op.cit. gives a partial description of this problem.

³⁴ It is obvious that some of the arrangements on the local level developed increasing obstacles to labour mobility, but this is a consequence of external changes rather than internal motivations. The initiation of friendly societies by employers should not be seen in retrospect of its far later consequences, but as a decision based upon existing knowledge at the time of introduction. This does not rule out the wish to keep a good labour force connected to the company as a reason, but it is to be seen as one reason among others.

³⁵ The local and town councils as employers became increasingly important. However, before the 1952 act on merging local councils into bigger and more economically sustainable communities, many country side councils were simply too small to have anyone employed, and if by chance anyone was employed their economic potential was very limited. In townships the development was quicker and thus provided a forefront of "good examples". Already town councils set the goal of being "the good employer, the example", see for example Rinman E B (1907), "Städerna som arbetsgivare", in *Centralförbundet för Socialt Arbete No. 14*, Stockholm; Berglund H (1943), "Kommunerna som mönsterarbetsgivare", in *Tiden*, Stockholm. A similar approach to the role as employer was taken by Kooperativa Förbundet (KF), Stolpe H & Guldberg S (1967), *Trygghet på gamla dar*, KF-förlag, Stockholm, and Stolpe H (1968), *Kooperationen som arbetsgivare 1850-1967*, KFO, Stockholm.

³⁶ On occasion they showed interest, apart from personal interest from industrial leaders, in the development of social insurance. It is hard to measure, but one indication has been shown in the program for speeches held at one company's "public" lectures in 1914. AB Robertsfors Bruks archives, Nov 13 1914; Program för föreläsningssällskapet: Den nya ålderdomspensioneringen (the new old age pension insurance).

³⁷ An useful perspective to enhance the understanding of pensions on the local level prior to the widening distance between employer and employees, impersonality, is through the concept of "rationality of caring". It includes ethical judgements into the decision-making concerning the social welfare of people in the company. The concept helps us to give paternalism a face apart from domination and exploitation. See Eliasson Lappalainen R & Nilsson Motevasel I (1997), "Ethics of care and social policy", in *Scandinavian Journal of Social Welfare*, No 6, pp 189-196, Munksgaard; for a discussion of the terminology and its history.

³⁸ Goodrich C L (1921), Op.cit., p 52 note 1. See also Harrysson (1997) Op.cit. chapter 1 for a discussion.

³⁹ By 1918 the two latter had merged with SAF, VF as a branch association, while members of CA were split into different branch associations. Important to note in this context is that all employer organizations had their early development in regionally limited areas. SAF was typically Stockholm centered, VF had their strongholds in Malmö and Göteborg, while CA had most of its members around Mälardalen (the belt between Stockholm and Göteborg). See DeGeer H (1985), *SAF i förhandlingar*, SAF, Stockholm, and DeGeer H (1992), *Arbetsgivarna, SAF i tio decennier*, SAF, Stockholm.

⁴⁰ This means that central organizations were fairly passive, but, still, kept themselves informed and did in internal contexts discuss the question. However, corporate pensions were, in the two first decades of the 20th century, something mainly organized through single employer activities, and in personal involvement of corporate managers or executives in debate. In a Nordic employers organizations' meeting in Kristiania (Norway) of employer representatives from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden in 1910, the chairman of VF, Ernst F Wällgren, gave a speech concerning the pension question. The basic point stressed was that employers show an increasing interest in solving the problem, and that, since the question at that stage developed into a question of universal rather than purely worker needs, the political development should take accurate response to already existing private solutions. The expectation was, in 1910, after the presentation of the Raab proposal (Folkpensioneringskongressen 1910, protocol in *Ålderdomsförsäkringskommitténs (1907) betänkande Vol II*), which involved employer fees, that new legislation would incorporate increasing economic responsibilities on the employers (*Det 3 Nordiske arbeidsgivermøde i Kristiania 1910*, Norsk Arbeidsgiverforening, Kristiania). This was never fulfilled in the 1913 reform due to heavy criticism from farmers and their political representatives. The large amount of farmers, as small non-organized employers with small personal incomes, could not possibly pay the bill for pensions to their employees while still being able to afford saving for their own retirement. The important employers in the situation, as well as later on, are the small ones. It is hard to say whether the explanation lies in a lack of interest in or wish for a solution, or mainly a lack of pecuniary abilities. Most probably we find the major part of the answer in the latter. For a thorough discussion on the Raab debate and 1913 pension insurance reform see Elmér Å (1960), Op.cit; and for a shorter summary Olofsson G (1995), Op.cit. See also Heclø H (1974) Op.cit..

⁴¹ In board minutes from SAF 17/1 1910 §3.

On 11/4 1911; §9, the board left a question of a private insurance solution (Svenska Livränteförsäkrings AB Framtid) to the pensions question aside because it did not fall inside the purpose of the confederation.

⁴² SPP (1942) *Svenska Personal-Pensionskassan 1917 - 1942*, Stockholm.

⁴³ In the early formulations, more or less purposely, the idea was to use a defined-benefit plan.

⁴⁴ The call for new legislation was mainly due to the changing situation concerning societies working with health insurance and governmental subsidies. They received new legislation in 1910, leaving others outside, e.g. funeral and pension societies.

⁴⁵ The financial organization is seen as the most important factor making SAF strong compared to other organizations at the time. See DeGeer H (1992), Op.cit.

⁴⁶ An example can be seen in the Conservative Party leader's, Arvid Lindman, speech in parliament in 1920 where he denies the need for an investigation into and regulation of the insurance market.

⁴⁷ Söderpalm S A (1980), *Arbetsgivarna och Saltsjöbadspolitiken. En historisk studie i samarbetet på svensk arbetsmarknad*, Stockholm.

⁴⁸ Edebalk P G (1996), Op.cit. See also, Edebalk P G & Olofsson J (1999), "Sickness benefits prior to the welfare state: The case of Sweden 1850-1950", in *Scandinavian Journal of History* 1999;24.

⁴⁹ SPP did not insure blue-collar workers, and even though the question had been up for discussion on several occasions the company stayed in the niche of insuring only white-collar workers. See SPP (1942) Op.cit., and Lagerström L (1974), *SPP: Social insurance and private occupational pensions in Sweden*, SPP, Stockholm.

⁵⁰ An exception was the joint-venture initiative, by 4 insurance companies, of a workers pension society (Arbeter-Pensionskassan APK) in 1933. The venture failed due to too optimistic actuarial calculations, and even though the society re-emerged in 1936 it had it hard to attract passive members (SAF Archives, A15120:18g I, 1936 March Nils Holmström: "PM angående olika sätt för anordnande av arbetarpensionering.")

⁵¹ Pensionsanstalten Sverige (1927), *Arbetsgivarna och tjänstemannapensioneringen. Några ord till belysande av frågan om pensionsrättens oantastbarhet*, in *Industria* 1927.

⁵² See chapter 4 in Grip G (1987), *Vill du frihet eller tvång. Svensk försäkringspolitik 1935-1945*, ACTA Universitatis Uppsaliensis, Uppsala.

⁵³ Sakkunnig för tryggnad av vissa i enskild tjänst anställda personer 1928. Finalized in SOU 1929:3 *Betänkande och förslag angående tryggnad av hos enskild arbetsgivare anställd personals rätt till utfäst pension*, Stockholm. However, the question of portability was not new but had been on the agenda for most of the 1920's. The committee on public employees' pensions instated 1921, presented their report in October 1924 and showed great interest in the question. The 1928 investigation, mentioned above, caught on to their ideas. In a pamphlet from 1925 an interesting discussion is presented on the question of portability, see "Förslag till civil tjänstepensionslag", in *Från Svenska Statsförvaltningen*, No. 1 1925.

⁵⁴ SAF's archives A15120:18o "Korrespondens rörande kristillägg" 1940, 41, 42: Also, AB Roberstfors Bruks Arkiv, correspondence 1918-20, 1928-32. See also Holmström P (1988), *Bruksmakt och maktbruk. Roberstfors AB 1897-1968*, Umeå; and Harrysson L (1997), *Op.cit.*

⁵⁵ Hahr E (1953), *Om pensionsstiftelser*, Norstedts, Stockholm.

⁵⁶ For a partial discussion see Olsson S E (1990), *Op.cit.*. The attitude is extensively expressed in correspondence between SAF and their members, as well as on a company level when constructing contributory pension models. Even in a perspective of employers not giving any pensions the expectation was for the workers to organize their own provisions.

⁵⁷ In SPP the normal plan divided the contributions 2/3 for the employer and 1/3 for the employee, wherein the employee contribution was limited to a certain level that could in a single case change the division.

⁵⁸ SAF archives A15120:18m "PM angående arbetarpensionering", av Nils Holmström 1940.

⁵⁹ Motion 1933:232 om arbetslöshetens bekämpande.

⁶⁰ SAF archives A15120:18a Yttrande från SAF till Kommerskollegium om pensionering av äldre arbetskraft för att ge lättnad åt ungdomsarbetslösheten, 1934, Gustaf Söderlund. Also, correspondence from branches and companies. See also note 28.

⁶¹ 1928-års pensionsförsäkringskommitté.

⁶² See Ghilarducci T (1992), *Labor's capital, The economics and politics of private pensions*, MIT Press, Cambridge, for a discussion on the complex problem of capital formation within pensions.

⁶³ Partly, this problem was a revision of the small employer phenomena in 1913, where farmers found it hard to fulfill payments for an occupation based pension model. In the 1930's and onwards this position was held fairly firmly by the retail business organization.

⁶⁴ SOU 1937:13 Förslag till lag om aktiebolags pensions- och andra personalstiftelser. See also Schmidt F (1974), *Op.cit.*

⁶⁵ Lag om Understödsföreningar 1938. Following this new legislation the control functions were transferred from Socialstyrelsen to Pensionsstyrelsen. All societies wishing to continue their activities had to fall inline with the new legislation before the 1/1 1942. Meddelanden, Pensionsstyrelsen; cirkulärskrivelse nr. 14 & 15 1938.

⁶⁶ 1937 års Försäkringsutredning.

⁶⁷ SAF's archives A15120:18k Försäkringsutredningens kommentar till Harteliuskommitténs förslag 1938. See also Grip G (1987), *Op.cit.*

⁶⁸ SOU 1938:18 Betänkande med förslag till lag om frivillig pensionering av i enskild tjänst anställda m.m., Stockholm. Anders Kjellström (1987), *Normbildning och konfliktlösning*, SAF, Stockholm presents SAF as very conservative and steady standing in the patriarchal culture, and further that the organization did not accept portable pensions. Both are true, but an important aspect in the critique of the proposal from the committee was the inconsistency (lack of logic) in having a legislation that enforce a form but not a promise. It seems as if, although in a very restrictive way, compulsory legislation on pension promises rather than form would have opened the agenda already in 1938. This would have enabled the employers to, despite having to give pensions, formulate the principles of pension arrangement, an argument that falls in line with the view of SAF to ease off on the request for control of "freedom of work" (the right to employ and lay off) in favour of an untouched or extended freedom of agreement that was of major interest to SAF (Kjellström p93).

⁶⁹ See for example Greiff M (1992), *Op.cit.*; and Nilsson T (1985), *Från kamratföreningar till facklig rörelse. De svenska tjänstemännens organisationsutveckling 1900-1980*, Arkiv, Lund.

⁷⁰ This discussion of supplementary pensions is widely discussed. For an employer perspective see Söderpalm S A (1980), *Op.cit.*; and Kjellström A (1987), *Op.cit.*; Sandell A (1989), *Avtalsförsäkringarna*, i Edlund m.fl. red. *Saltsjöbadsavtalet 50 år. Forskare och parter begrundar en epok 1938-1988*, Arbetslivscentrum, Stockholm. However, there are many other sources where Edebalk P G & Wadensjö E (1989), *Arbetsmarknadsförsäkringar*, Ds 1989:68, Finansdepartementet, Stockholm; and Kangas O & Palme J (1996), "The Development of Occupational Pensions in Finland and Sweden: Class Politics and Institutional Feedbacks", in Shalev M, *The Privatization of Social Policy: Occupational Welfare and the Welfare State in America, Scandinavia and Japan*, Macmillan, London, are just two among many.

⁷¹ Tjänstepensionsutredningen 1944. SOU 1946:26 Betänkande angående tjänstepensionsförsäkringens organisation, Stockholm. The lack of unity is further described by S A Söderpalm (1980), *Op.cit.*

⁷² Kjellström A (1987), Op.cit., Stockholm. Speech from Fritiof Söderbäck held at "Arbetsmarknadskommittén" 31/5-1/6 1944, SAF archives A15. See also a proposal prepared by the Bureau Secretary Meurk at Pensionsstyrelsen representing a possible agreement between SAF and LO, SAF archives A15.

⁷³ See Edebalk P G & Wadensjö E (1989), "Contractually Determined Insurance Schemes for Manual Workers", in Gustafsson B A & Klevmarken N A, *The Political Economy of Social Security*, Elsevier Science Publishers, Amsterdam, pp 195-210.

⁷⁴ The amount of times when the pension question had been discussed on the board between 1910 and 1945 is 10.

⁷⁵ Kjellström A (1987), Op.cit., p.76.

⁷⁶ SAF's Archives A15120 18ä, Correspondence between Norrköpings Elektrotekniska Fabriker AB NEFA and SAF, and comment SAF to Verkstadsföreningen (Swedish Engineering Industry Association).

⁷⁷ It is a paradox that the majority of workers in industry were covered by occupational pensions (large employers), while the vast majority of employers did not give out pensions (small employers).

⁷⁸ Companies could not use pension trusts to avoid local building taxes. However, there was the possibility of using fixed company assets in the form of buildings, forests etc., to guarantee the payments.

⁷⁹ In other sectors than industry, branches had solved it through well functioning friendly societies or collective savings programs, e.g. The Co-operative Retailers, Banks, Insurance companies, Private railways, and perhaps most important as they played the role of the good employer, the local councils. S A Söderpalm (1980), Op.cit., p83, presents this development in the public sector as seen as a threat to views held by SAF.

⁸⁰ Helldén A (1994), *Social Arrogans. Också ett kulturarv*, Stockholm.

⁸¹ Kugelberg B (1956), "Arbetsgivarna och arbetarrörelsen", in Nilsson, K, *Arbetets Söner*, Part IV, Örebro.