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Title: Personal Agency and State Building in Sweden (1560-1720)

Year: 2017

Version:

Please cite the original version:

Karonen, P., & Hakanen, M. (2017). Personal Agency and State Building in Sweden (1560-1720). In P. Karonen, & M. Hakanen (Eds.), Personal Agency at the Swedish Age of Greatness 1560-1720 (pp. 13-45). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. Studia Fennica Historica, 23. <https://oa.finlit.fi/site/books/10.21435/sfh.23>

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Personal Agency and State Building in Sweden (1560–1720)

Structures, institutions and personal agency

Who took care of the civil administration and ecclesiastical tasks in the kingdom of Sweden in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? What kind of agency they performed in their official duties? What was the significance of the personal agency of officials in their usually unrewarding position between the government and local communities? In this book, early modern state building in Sweden is studied particularly from the point of view of personal agency and collective biography. This brings a new personal level to the much debated state building process, which has so far been mainly studied from a structural perspective. Macro-level studies have forgotten the practical significance of persons as agents, a factor which offers the opportunity to see the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reality from a new point of view.

In this period, the realm of Sweden saw significant progress in various areas of social activity. The major reason for this was simply the demands of wartime, which had forced the country into developing its activities. Practically speaking, Sweden was on a continuous war footing from 1560 to 1721, which in a country with poor resources and a small population caused a significant need for development. The whole of Swedish society had been harnessed to support the preparation for war and engagement in it and to a lesser extent the transition from war to peace. War, together with its after- and side-effects, was a significant factor in the formation of society and political life right up to the mid-eighteenth century.

Our study deals with an era when centralized states of a new kind began to emerge in Europe. Internationally, the case of early modern Sweden is especially interesting as the state building process at the beginning of the seventeenth century transformed a locally dispersed and sparsely populated area into a strongly centralized absolute monarchy that possessed an overseas empire in Europe.¹ The Swedish state building process began in the sixteenth century, although the major structural changes were not implemented until the next century. The administrative system was mostly in place by the beginning of eighteenth century, when Sweden's position as a great European power collapsed as a result of the Great Northern War (1700–1721).

From the point of view of state building, the sixteenth century was indeed chronologically a long one, and consequently the studies in this collection analyze the so-called “long great power period”, which in the case of this work embraces approximately the years 1560–1721. Many of the events connected with the development of Sweden’s external position took place in this period, but most importantly it was then that the central organizations and their individual actors that were crucial for the development of the state assumed their forms and functionalities. Concomitantly, many far-reaching administrative reforms were carried out during those years, and the Swedish state developed into a prime example of the early modern “power-state”. The time period chosen here does not follow the usual timelines, which have generally emphasized the sovereignty of the Swedish Crown and Gustavus Vasa’s (1496–1560) rise to power in the 1520s.²

The chosen period does not, however, undermine the important steps taken by Gustavus Vasa. Among other things, he recruited several experts from Germany who were crucial in the formation period of the administration in the 1530s. However, radical changes were not implemented until after 1560, which is also the starting point for this study. Thorough-going reforms in central and local government, state finances, the Church and everyday life likewise took place only in the latter half of the sixteenth century. This era of change continued into the seventeenth century.

This book’s emphasis on individuals also corresponds well with the early modern reality. The powerful, all-pervasive centrally controlled structures that characterized the Swedish power state of the following century simply did not exist in the sixteenth century. The administration of the state lay in the execution of various tasks that the king delegated to his followers, and the most important posts, such as the lordship of castles and the government of territories were reserved for members of the nobility.

During its time as a great power, Sweden was internally relatively peaceful, which gave it a competitive advantage over its neighbors with their greater resources. It was important for the unity of the Swedish realm that the position of the monarch was strong and that there were only a few truly powerful noble families in the country. Thus the ruler was able control the activities of the nobles and to regulate the successful development of the small towns by granting special rights (privileges). Noble privileges were important for many of those groups of office-holders who occupy a central place in this volume. Common (non-noble) servants of the Crown also received strong backing for their activities through authorizations and directions issued by the ruler, although no group could base its actions on such normative texts alone.

Significant changes took place in the administrative system of the Swedish realm during the period studied in this work. Figure 1 shows the main features of these organizational changes: local and intermediary administration was mainly developed in the sixteenth century, while in the first decades of the seventeenth century the focus shifted to reinforcing the central administration.³ The centralized system was also preserved in the period known as the Age of Liberty (1718–1772) that followed the Age of Absolutism (1680–1718), although in practice the focus of power

and political activity shifted significantly to the ruling estates and the Diet (which was composed of the representatives of the four estates: the Nobles, the Clergy, the Burghers and the Peasants). Even so, the organizations and practices in the central administration that had prevailed in the Age of Absolutism survived in the Age of Liberty. An illustrative example with regard to the distribution of resources is the Office of State (*Statskontoret*), which from the very outset was a monocratic agency, i.e. one in which the decisions were made by one state official. Previously the collegial system of governance had been adhered to according to the principle that no-one should be able to take decisions alone.⁴

In the latter half of the sixteenth century and the early decades of the seventeenth, an administrative organization that worked well considering the conditions of the time was created in the capital, Stockholm. It was based on a system of collegiums (central agencies). The system was specifically designed to operate in wartime and to serve the needs of war. Sweden was forced by the continual wars to transform itself into a new kind of state, one that could exploit its scarce material resources. In practice, the state extended its strict control throughout the whole of society. This intensification of administration and control considerably increased the number of offices and administrative units. A concentrated, relatively simple and clear structure ensured what was for the period an effective communication of information and orders from the summit of government down to the remote regions and back. Taken as a whole, the system was in its time the most efficient in Europe. Later the Swedish model was copied in both Denmark and Russia. In the mid-seventeenth century there were about 700 civil service posts (including those of officials serving in castles), while around 1730 the number of posts was about one thousand.⁵

The reorganization of the position of the Church had occupied a central position in the foundations of Gustavus Vasa's state structure. In Sweden, the ecclesiastical administration had been established according to the Roman Catholic model as an independent concentration of power that enjoyed special rights in the secular sphere as well: for example, the bishops held a strong position in the Council of the Realm (*Riksrådet*). The heavy debts of the Swedish Crown and the huge property of the Church enticed Gustavus Vasa first into reforming the organizational and economic structure of the Church and subsequently into extending these reforms into a full-scale reformation. The Diet of 1527 opened the door to the Reformation, and a large part of the Church's property was transferred to the Crown and the nobles who supported the King. The political power of the Church was crushed, and there was a swift shift to a Lutheran people's church with the King at its head. Naturally, ties with the Vatican were broken. The bishops were ejected from the Council of the Realm, which became mainly the seat of the King's noble advisers.⁶

In the period studied here, the bishops were appointed by the ruler. However, the bishops who were in charge of dioceses still possessed considerable power, for example in choosing their direct subordinates. The cathedral chapter (*consistorium ecclesiasticum*) was the highest administrative organ in the diocese and it possessed judicial power all in

cases that came under the jurisdiction of the Church. In the early part of the period under investigation here, the cathedral chapters were for the most part mainly stooges of the bishops, but the situation changed before the mid-seventeenth century, when the collegial system that prevailed in the state administration was adopted by the Church as well. The cathedral chapters had considerable power in the appointment of clergymen for the parishes, especially if the diocese was a consistorial one, when the choice of a clergyman was jointly made by the chapter and the parishioners. In patronage parishes, on the other hand, the appointment was entrusted to a leading local noble, and in royal parishes to the ruler alone. In any case, the Church continued, despite the Reformation, to hold a significant position in the local community and also to wield some administrative and judicial power.⁷

In the short run, the Reformation weakened the educational system, which had been administered by the Church, but by the seventeenth century it had become necessary to develop education at all levels and to provide resources for it. The ever-expanding realm, the continuous warring, the growing bureaucratic machinery and the concomitantly intensifying control at all levels of society required a constant supply of educated new clergymen to communicate the official message and political education of the Crown to all subjects in every corner of the realm. The pressure gradually pushed the educational system throughout the country into reform and expansion with the aim of producing professional officials in both ecclesiastical and secular administration.

In Sweden and Finland, we cannot speak of the profession of civil servant until the nineteenth century, when the criteria pertaining to the qualifications for a civil servant were defined.⁸ Even so, many of the groups and persons studied in this work are called civil servants, functionaries or officials because the functions and limits of their work were defined in official guidelines.⁹

The administrative changes that began in earnest in Sweden in the early seventeenth century meant an increase in bureaucracy and a change in the position of functionaries. Their activities started to be governed by official rules, and attention began to be paid to their qualifications. However, through the awarding of privileges accorded to the nobility, the highest posts passed over to that estate, whose members had previously sought above all to pursue a military career. Thus in 1569 John III (1537–1592) awarded considerable advantages to the higher nobility in particular, but at the same time the members of this estate were required not only to engage in military service but also to take a greater part in administration both in the royal court and in the provinces. Subsequently, in 1611, 1612 and 1617, Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632) promised that all the “high posts” (*höga ämbeten*) would remain in the hands of the nobility and that many other duties should also preferably (*hållst af*) be entrusted to nobles. The Instrument of Government 1634 (*regeringsform*), which was of central importance in the administrative reorganization of the realm, marked off a large number of posts in central and local government and in the judiciary

for members of the nobility, although there are very few direct mentions of this in this important document.¹⁰

Appointments to official posts were linked to expertise and education, although the reality was to some extent different as a result of clientage networks. The higher estates kept a strong hold over the hubs of power, and thanks to the status they enjoyed the civil service professions continued to maintain close contact with the ruling class. However, the privileges that went with official posts were no longer the sole preserve of a single estate, but were now rather reserved within the family and the clan.¹¹

In terms of numbers, there might have been enough members of the nobility to man the civil service, but the army took the vast majority of the potential candidates, and for the rest of the available nobles a general inability to handle the posts was an impediment. As the administrative machinery swelled, the situation soon became difficult.¹² The development and growth of university education took place alongside the increase in the number of official posts, and the ruler was forced to elevate university-educated lower functionaries with ecclesiastical or bourgeois backgrounds to the nobility so that higher posts in central and local government might be open to them.¹³

The increased significance of education did not, however, lead directly to the creation of a civil service profession, in which expertise gained through education constituted the qualification for functioning as an office-holder. Formal competence requirements only became common in the Nordic countries, and indeed elsewhere, from the eighteenth century on.¹⁴ The application of merits as a qualification for official posts was to some extent impossible in the seventeenth century because no criteria for the necessary competences had been established. The regulations mainly concerned times and ways of working. For example, the qualifications for lawyers working in the courts of appeal did not require a university education. All in all, then, suitably trained men were needed for many judicial and administrative posts and for the collection and registration of taxes: indeed, in many cases, sound experience alone was qualification enough.¹⁵

Interaction, conflict and agency

State building has been studied from numerous points of view in both the European and the Swedish contexts. The traditional approach, concentrating on the actions of kings and other rulers, has broadened to encompass conditions at the local level, which largely determined the extent of the central government's power. The relationship between kings and their subjects has been described as a form of bargaining. Depending on the point of view adopted, researchers have emphasized either the "top-down" model, represented, in the Swedish context, in a strong-power state in the seventeenth century, or the "bottom-up" model, in which the subjects are the decisive factor behind all state organization.¹⁶

In an agrarian state like Sweden, the Crown had to have an efficient machinery of taxation and control in order to carry out its ambitious

plans. In many states, like the Dutch Republic, with a largely monetary economy, funds could be collected through quickly improvised temporary arrangements, but this was not possible in Sweden. According to Charles Tilly, war and preparation for it were in a key position in the actual process of state building. He asserts that states that based their activities mainly on coercion and the use of armed force had to create massive administrative machineries in order to efficiently gather the taxes and men needed to wage war. Such states were, according to Tilly, often agrarian and little urbanized. At the general level, this categorization would seem to describe Sweden in the era studied here, although the typology is too strict. Sweden at that time certainly lacked capital, the cities were weak, the land was centrally governed and Swedish society was militarized. Even so, it is difficult to regard the state of Sweden as being based on “coercion” since there was also an undeniable need for negotiation and compromise. The chapters in this volume for their part bring new perspectives on these phenomena and processes.¹⁷

From the 1970s on, there has been extensive discussion on the nature of the relationship of subordination between the rulers (*élites*) and the ruled in the Nordic countries during the early modern period. Put simply, the interpretations are mainly divided between the “interaction model” and the “military state model”: the former approach stresses the importance of negotiation and interaction, while the latter underlines coercion and a general focus on the military sphere. However, both of these major characteristics were present in Swedish society during the early modern period, and consequently the ‘truth’ lies somewhere between these two extremes. Since the beginning of the 21st century, intermediate views have also appeared, but research has not yet reached any final conclusion on this issue.¹⁸

In general, the ruler-ruled relationship seems to have been a quite viable one, especially during the Great Power period. For instance, there were few major violent conflicts in the Kingdom of Sweden during the period under investigation.¹⁹ Most of the people were represented at the four-estate Diet, in whose meetings representatives of all the four estates in society from all corners of the realm participated and could decide on matters freely, at least in theory. The relationship between the Crown and the Diet was normally based exclusively either on positive interaction and negotiation or the imposition of the king’s authority. In practice, the relationship was a combination of both and varied according to the circumstances. During the period of intense conquest (approx. 1600–1660), the rulers were constantly obliged to turn to the estates with requests to levy new taxes and draft new men into the army. It was during the heaviest periods of warfare that the interaction between the monarch, or a regency acting for him or her, and the people was most intense.

The role of individuals in state building has been mostly overlooked in previous research. A widely accepted idea is that the scope for action of the central power was circumscribed because it had to legitimate its power and integrate the subjects into the decision-making processes. The approaches taken by earlier research have not permitted a synthesis between agents and institutions. We believe that studying persons and their actions can reveal

new mechanisms of the distribution of power in practice and the dynamics of networks of influence.²⁰

The much discussed subject of state building needs new basic research at the micro-level that focuses on the concrete manifestations of the phenomenon. The broad outlines and structural development have already been well researched at the macro level especially with regard to political events and war history. The basic problem of the current picture is that state building is usually seen as an institutional process that develops inexorably, following its own internal logic. The role of persons at different levels of society in initiating and realizing the process of state building has largely remained uninvestigated.

The point of view of personal agency has long remained in the shadow of the study of structures and institutions. We believe that by adopting this novel perspective we can shed light on numerous important questions about the nature of administration and the conditions of state-formation. The emphasis on individuals also corresponds well with the sixteenth-century reality. The powerful, all-pervasive, centrally controlled structures that characterized the Swedish power state of the following century simply did not exist in the sixteenth century. Administration consisted in the execution of various tasks that the king delegated to his followers.

The concept “agency” has been widely used, especially in sociology, economics and political science,²¹ and indeed it is the perspectives of sociology that are most closely akin to the approaches adopted in this volume. In sociology, the concept has a long history, going back to the studies of Max Weber.²² Edgar Kiser has reviewed the varieties of agency theory in different disciplines and found that the approaches differ considerably. According to Kiser, “Agency theory is a general model of social relations involving the delegation of authority, and generally resulting in problems of control, which has been applied to a broad range of substantive contexts.”²³

However, even in sociology, there are differing conceptions of how “the relationship between ‘the individual’ and ‘society’, or ‘social structure’” is to be seen and valued. For example, according to S. Barry Barnes, “The central problems of sociology are actually problems of collective agency.” For Barnes, it is a question particularly of collective agency since his approach is an “anti-individualist” one.²⁴ Likewise, Stephan Fuchs is suspicious of personal agency “at least when it comes to explaining society and culture.” However, he notes, clearly with justification, “Agency and structure, and micro/macro, are not opposite natural kinds but variations along a continuum.” He also interestingly suggests: “As a variable, ‘agency’ increases when the numbers are small, the distance is short, the relations are intimate, and the observer takes an intentional stance [... while] ‘structure’ increases when the numbers get larger, the distance between observer and referent becomes longer, and the observer employs more mechanical and deterministic explanatory frames.”²⁵

Rational choice theory actually consists of a set of theories, some of which have been imported from economics. The governing principle of rational choice theory is utility maximization: an individual makes choices based on reasoning, weighing costs against benefits. This controversial

theory has also been accused of over-simplifying human behavior.²⁶ Aware of the criticism, we use rational choice theory merely as a tool and in a modified form to emphasize the role of private agency in administrative structures. We take into account the fact that choices are culturally bound to values, ideals, norms and emotions, which causes humans often to act in a seemingly irrational way. “Rational” does not have to mean adherence to some traditional, often economically understood logic. What is important is that the theory regards human action as rational as opposed to random. Costs and benefits can vary from economic to symbolic or social. We use the theory as a hypothetical implement to evaluate the real choices that individuals made against the ideal, rational ones. In this way, we can analyze their actions at a deeper level and get fuller answers about the functioning of society.

We believe that, applied in a modified form to early modern history, rational choice theory can help conceptualize different forms of individual agency. Taking the basic concept of rational choice to a deeper level, rational reasoning can here include cultural factors like honor and life style as determined by status. The concept of rational choice provides a tool to analyze individual actions and, knowing the outcome, to estimate how successful they were. It helps us to understand the choices early modern individuals made and to analyze their reasons for making them. We also use this theory to create unity between our separate studies of biographies that highlight different aspects of the state-building process. We want to explore whether the theory can help to reveal patterns of individual agency: individuals in similar positions in similar situations make similar choices because the costs and benefits are similar. Agency theory in economics treats information as a commodity that can be purchased and exchanged. In this respect, it is analogous to the patron-client networks in the early modern period.²⁷

“Agency” is one of the key concepts in this anthology, even when it is not directly mentioned, because when we analyze personal (conscious or unconscious) actions within the state-building process it is always a direct result of human actions, even when it is unintended. Agency connected to the “self” opens up people’s decision making and actions to closer analysis, and through social interaction, intervention or influence it is possible to map out individual agency in the state building process. Moreover, when we combine personal agency with a collective approach dealing with particular groups, we can understand much better how the state structures were built.²⁸

State building was a more diversified and personalized process than has previously been assumed. In the case of Sweden, the state formation process has often been presented as an ongoing evolution directed by the ruler and his closest counselors or institutions. However, numerous individuals – noblemen, office-holders, etc. – were also crucially important actors in the process, and the development itself was not a straightforward progression but fundamentally intertwined with the ability and activeness of these “lower-level” actors. Consequently, this research re-evaluates the process of state building by focusing on actors and individuals rather than macro-level institutions.

Our approach to state-building thus concentrates on individuals within structures. It could be best described as a “sideways” approach in contrast to the better known “top-down” and “bottom-up” models, without however forgetting the broader picture formed by the macro-level context. In addition, our approach makes it possible to study how personal power and institutional power were interwoven. Patron-client networks and informal relations within “public” institutions have so far received little attention in research dealing with Sweden.²⁹

The structure of societies, especially in the field of state-building studies, has been a central theme in a number of scholarly fields like cultural anthropology, sociology and history. Most of the time, these studies have concentrated on the role of social structure in searching for the reasons behind human actions.³⁰ However, if we turned that order around, could we better understand how the individuals within the structures knowingly or unconsciously shape existing structures or create totally new ones? In other words, the question is: Should we devote more study to the agency of particular individuals or groups of professionals whose actions played a key role in the state-building process?³¹ At that time, Swedish society was based on a strict system of estates, in which every person’s formal rank was defined at birth. That, at least, is how the system should have functioned in theory, but since humans are social animals who are capable of achieving goals by cooperation,³² purposive agents who have reasons for their activities and are able to elaborate discursively upon those reasons,³³ in reality the people of the time had ways of influencing their situation and could move between estates. Thus individuals clearly had the possibility to alter or influence their surroundings and the structures of society.

It is clear that if we want to understand the motives for human activities, we must also understand the context in which human action takes place. In social theory, the notions of action and structure presuppose one another, even though it is possible to study these different factors separately. From a functionalist point of view, social systems are reproductions of relations between actors and collectivities, organized in the form of regular social practices. These systems are structured, and the totality of systems of social interaction constitutes the structure of society. In these interactive social systems, an important role is played by social practices and the social actors who produce and reproduce the systems and who at same time know a great deal about the institutions and the practices that comprise them.³⁴

In writing about the structure of society and the social systems within it, Anthony Giddens emphasizes the significance of tradition.³⁵ It is important to note that new systems are always linked to the past, particularly when social systems are changing. On the other hand, we cannot regard social systems as progressing in a linear manner through time and space. Much of the time, new systems simply adopt parts of older ones and adjust them to the new values and practices of contemporary society. For this reason, an examination of how people advanced their interests within the context of seventeenth-century institutions provides an unusually lucid window onto the ways in which individuals strategized and exercised their personal agency within networks that nonetheless arose within a fairly rigid social hierarchy.

Each of the writers in this volume has had to address the question of biographical research. In many studies it has been claimed that the position of structuralism has declined over the last few decades, generally after the end of the Cold War.³⁶ Barbara Caine has noted the advent of “a biographical turn” in international research around the year 2000. However, scholars have varied considerably in their views about the ability of biographies to provide more general information about the life and ways of thinking of particular periods.³⁷ From the end of the nineteenth century on, Finnish and Swedish researchers produced a wealth of biographies dealing with people of that period: rulers, officials, military commanders, members of the nobility, scholars, clergymen and even influential peasants. There is, therefore, a need to exploit this enormous repertory of available basic information in order to produce an overall picture based on modern methodological approaches.

Particularly in Sweden, numerous biographical works and historical studies dealing with individuals in this period have been published. At the beginning of 2014, the Swedish National Union Catalogue of Libraries (LIBRIS), which is the joint catalogue of Swedish academic and research libraries, contained nearly 750 biographical research works dealing with the period extending approximately from 1500 to 1799. At a rough estimate, only about five percent dealt with the sixteenth century, and less than a third with the seventeenth, while about two thirds concerned the eighteenth century.³⁸ In Finland, there were rather fewer biographical studies and historical works dealing with individuals in this period, but their distribution over the centuries is considerably more even.³⁹

Thus the last few decades have seen a revaluation of biographical studies, especially in Sweden. One focus has been on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Swedish rulers, almost all of whom have been the subjects of new biographies: Gustavus Vasa, Eric XIV (1533–1577), John III, Charles IX (1550–1611), Gustavus Adolphus, Christina (1626–1689), Charles X Gustav (1622–1660) and Charles XI (1655–1697).⁴⁰ There have also been biographical studies of important individuals and their actions in history outside the royal families: Chancellor of the Kingdom of Sweden (*kanslern*) Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654), Lord High Chancellor (*drots*) Per Brahe the elder (1520–1590) and Lord High Chancellor Per Brahe the younger (1602–1680). In addition to individual biographies, influential dynasties like the Creutz, Fleming, Kurck, Tawast and Tott families (and therefore individual members of these families) have been the subjects of biographical studies.⁴¹

Many of the afore-mentioned research works have been of a high quality in their own genre, but apart from those that were originally approved as doctoral dissertations, they almost all lack a proper scientific definition of research questions since most of them were written for the general public. Consequently, the observations made in them very rarely differ from previous findings, as their lack of precise source references and a failure to address the results of earlier research emphasize.⁴² Moreover, only rarely have these studies moved outside the so-called ruling groups. That is one important justification why this work takes precisely groups below the top echelons of society as the object of its examination.⁴³

There still remain a number of controversies concerning the role of individuals in our current picture of state-building. As Simone Lässig says, “The fundamental question of biographical research is thus [...] the individual *in* society;” and “... a good biography rises once again above the individual; it is neither structure nor agency, but always *both*.”⁴⁴

Methods and source materials

Our researchers’ varied methods, which include the use of public and private sources, mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches and a comprehensive comparative approach, make it possible to exploit sources that have formerly remained little utilized and also to re-interpret already used source material from a fresh point of view.

Our source material focuses in many ways on persons and their agency, but mostly it is not personal, nor does it deal with individuals as such. Sources like personal correspondence, diaries and personal accounts involve both the public and the private spheres, thus reflecting the reality in which their writers lived; the public and the private were inseparably intertwined and were not perceived as separate spheres of life. That is why our sources are very well suited to approaches that combine the two; in other words, sources that deal with the diverse aspects of personal agency within administrative structures.

The authors of the chapters in this volume exploit the “national biographies” that have been written and published by scholars ever since the latter half of the nineteenth century in practically all European countries. Barbara Caine considers these often extensive series dealing with “national heroes” to be collective biographies.⁴⁵ The concept ‘collective biography’ is often understood very broadly: it can include comparative biographical research, which goes back to ancient times, prosopography and group biography. For Caine, prosopography is above all the classified and systematic examination of people’s activities: “Prosopography is heavily dependent on the huge quantities of biographical data contained within national dictionaries of biography, but in my view it is impossible to accept it as a biographical enterprise.” She further states: “Its aim is not in any way to create or establish a better understanding of individuals and their motives or their life experiences.”⁴⁶

By combining agency theories and the methods of prosopography and collective biography, this book seeks to develop within historical studies a new interpretive approach that is more focused on personal agency.⁴⁷ Prosopography is used as the data-collection method by which the same biographical information (concerning positions, activities and marital and blood relations) is systematically collected for a selected group of individuals. Collective biography refers to the method by which these data are then systematically analyzed, comparing the life histories of individuals within the selected group so as to discern strategic alliances within it (marriage and patronage ties, for instance) and examining overlaps in the activities of its members (when they served together in official capacities, for instance).

Several of the researchers in this work have systematically utilized previous biographical research. We want to give the individuals and their actions under discussion backgrounds that reflect the contemporary structures of their individual life cycles. There exist several national biographical collections and publication series that include hundreds of persons who lived in the early modern period: for example, *Kansallisbiografia* (the National Biography of Finland) and *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* and its predecessor *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon*. In addition, there are many more or less biographically orientated studies which describe various social groups from the time period under discussion: noblemen, officers and local state officials and judges. Although their approach is descriptive, they still contain a vast amount of information that can be used to provide a solid background for our own approach. *Turun hiippakunnan paimenmuisto* (the Pastoral register of the Diocese of Turku) and *Ylioppilasmatrikkeli* (Matriculations register of the University of Helsinki) are also crucial sources for this purpose.⁴⁸

With the existing biographical research, it has been possible to create a comprehensive set of databases that provide the general outlines of individual lives or the career tracks of various estates or social groups, and even to construct collective biographies of certain groups. Individuals can be compared with the groups' 'average' figures. Comparative methods are also applied in outlining temporal changes and geographical differences.

The research carried out here is not biographical in the traditional sense, and thus the source material consists mainly of documents that describe the activities of individuals. While there are plenty of personal and biographical sources available, such as the correspondence of noble families, in previous research they have not been regarded as source material that is relevant beyond the private spheres of their authors' lives. However, correspondence is not the only source we utilize: local court records, in particular, often provide a continuous fount of source material, revealing the activities of individuals in both civil and criminal cases, and particularly in their office-holding functions. The material offered by sixteenth-century local administrative records such as bailiffs' accounts (*landskapshandlingar*) has been sparsely exploited in recent decades, although these accounts furnish not only quantitative but also qualitative data. These records have also been used in this work. Thus various types of sources are combined here in order to construct a cohesive picture of state-building and its implementation both at the micro level and more generally.

The methods employed by the sub-areas of research in this publication are partially different depending on the source material and the subject, but an eclectic approach is also characteristic of this project as a whole. This means that both qualitative and quantitative material is combined, different ways of making sense of it (i.e. research traditions) are brought together, and a multi-method design is used in analyzing the source materials. The aim of using mixed methods is to enable us to pose different kinds of questions, to use different ways of analyzing sources, and to prove our general hypothesis by combining different kinds of source material and methods. The project thus uses mixed methods both within the sub-areas of research and at the overall level.

This volume

In this volume, state-building in the Swedish Age of Greatness (1560–1720) is analyzed from the perspective of personal agency. The ten chapters of this volume will provide concrete examples of how personal agency enabled, limited or influenced activity at the personal level of office-holders or special groups inside the civil administration. The authors in this volume argue that even while the administrative machinery expanded significantly over the course of the seventeenth century, space remained for personal agency. As seen in figure 1, there are several levels of administration during the research period which needs to be studied. Starting from the top, the councillors of the realm and the secretaries of the royal chancellery are included to the analysis. The role of the stewards and governors are crucial at the county level. For the local rural communities there are three especially important functionary groups which affected a great deal to the subjects of the Swedish King: the judges, bailiffs and the clergymen. Even though the urbanization rate of Sweden was during this period extremely low, the burgomasters and mayors of the towns were the most heavy-weighted officials in the urban environments. Thus, this anthology analyses, including the students of the Academy of Turku (*Åbo akademi*), the actions and agency of the most important office-holders of the civil society in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Sweden Sweden.⁴⁹

The development of the nation state had peaked by the end of the seventeenth century, at which time the bureaucratic administrative machinery was already in place and merely gained strength in later centuries. In this volume, authors concentrate on elucidating the construction and maintenance of individual office-holders' agency within the context of state building in the early modern Swedish empire. In order to gain a holistic perspective, certain groups of office-holders at every level of the civil administration in Sweden c. 1550–1720 have been selected for scrutiny. By concentrating on individual volition and action rather than normative administrative structures, it is possible to examine the process of state building from the inside out.

Approaching state-building processes from a primarily structural point of view, without looking at the actors involved, can create a misleading impression given that the number of actors working within early modern state institutions was often small. In this volume, the focus is on the actors inside the state-building process and the chapters reveal that these individuals and their actions had significant influence on the direction taken by the state-building process. In many administrative offices, the loose structure of civil administration provided plenty of room to maneuver. In some cases the agency exercised by the office-holder was more the result of his personal character and social network connections than of strict job descriptions or regulations. But the further the state building process proceeded, the less room there was for individual choice of action. The Swedish Age of Greatness can be seen as a lengthy period of transformation in which individual office-holders created piece by piece an administrative machine which gradually took away their possibilities to influence matters and gave more power to collective action.

In two separate chapters, Marko Hakanen and Ulla Koskinen study changes in the central administration of the kingdom of Sweden during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They concentrate on two groups, councillors of the realm (*riksråd*) and the secretaries (*sekreterare*) working at the royal chancellery (*kansli*, *kanslikollegium*). The position of the councillors of the realm was well recognized by the whole society. They were an elite group which enjoyed formal position in the power structure. Their job was to help the monarch reach decisions. The secretary's job was also to help the monarch, but the points of departure of the two were totally different. Their position was not based on noble birth and almost all of them came from a lower status background. Even their position was informal, but they possessed significant power through social networks, which increased in importance over the course of the seventeenth century. In practice, the internal crisis taking place in the central administration at the turn of the seventeenth century meant that the type of power wielded by secretaries and councillors of the realm changed places: the formal power of secretaries shifted from the limelight to behind the scenes, while the councillors of the realm were brought out from the shadows of the palace back rooms to be seated at the same table as the monarch. The research in both chapters is based on biographical source materials collected by using prosopographic methods. By using the resulting database as a foundation and incorporating analysis of additional narrative source materials, the chapters offer important insights into the personal agency of councillors of the realm and royal secretaries.

Stewards (*ståthållare*) and later governors (*landshövding*) play a central role in the chapter written by Mirkka Lappalainen. These were high local office-holders who formed the backbone of the administration at the local level and played a pivotal role in centralizing power in seventeenth-century Sweden. Lappalainen's point of departure has been to analyze how the system of stewards and governors was constructed. It is crucial to first understand the administrative system before we can understand how these officials exercised personal agency and begin asking: how did these officers carry out their duties? What were the boundaries they had to deal with? Although their job was to extend the centralized system into the local level, they were also subordinate to the monarch and thus themselves objects of centralizing processes. Lappalainen argues that despite this, the personal agency possessed by stewards and governors' personal loyalties were based on personal loyalties.

In many cases, an individual's personal agency was defined by his personal skills or personality, but sometimes the duties of an office were so demanding and significant for the whole community that it limited the amount of personal agency possible within his position. Olli Matikainen studies how the role and status of judges (*häradsbövding*, *lagläsare*) developed prior to the important reform of 1680, when Swedish judges were granted lifelong tenure. Lord High Chancellor Per Brahe stressed the important role of judges in society, because "the welfare of the fatherland was dependent on their calling". Matikainen states that most existing studies have focused on the social background, education and careers of judges, and

there has been surprisingly little interest in historical studies of the judge's position as an actor in the society. Matikainen shows that over the course of the seventeenth century, judges became educated juridical experts, but more importantly the judge's office meant the birth of a profession.

It can be argued that the bailiffs (*fogde, häradsfogde*) were the most important individuals in the early modern Swedish countryside. In the early stages of state building in the sixteenth century, bailiffs were the key group acting as a bridge between the king and local resources. In the following century, bailiffs remained an important part of the expanding administration at the local level. The chapter by Janne Haikari raises interesting questions about the personal agency of these bailiffs as well as their personalities, when they faced the all-too-common situation of having to answer various demands made by people who did not always want to pay taxes or disputed the amount to be paid. The job of these bailiffs was extremely demanding and to succeed in it, they needed to cultivate their interaction skills and maintain good personal relationships in the local community. Haikari studies which factors shaped the limits of bailiffs' agency and how the community viewed the bailiffs' actions within the community.

The Reformation in sixteenth-century Sweden was one of the major issues which dictated the direction of the state-building process, and at the local level the clergy (*präst, kyrkoherre*) played a central role in transferring Reformation ideology to the common people. In his chapter, Mikko Hiljanen draws upon his sizeable clerical database in which he has collected information from various sources including official documents but also informal biographical information. He asks: if the position of the clergy at the center of the local community was important for connecting local and central levels of power, who was appointed to the clergy and why? Who had the right to make appointments and who was consulted during the process? The answers reveal not just clergymen's personal agency, but also shed light on the boundaries of that agency.

In his chapter, Petri Karonen takes a closer look at the so-called royal mayors (*kungliga borgmästare*). These civil officials, appointed by the King and other state authorities, had to deal with problems in their local communities that were often serious. Karonen analyses the reasons why the King appointed these men to their posts, their duties and activities in their towns and what kinds of obstacles and problems these mayors faced – and sometimes caused. He argues that conflicts were exceptional, since the interaction between state authorities, royal mayors and members of local communities tended to function smoothly.

Political circumstances have always influenced urban administration and therefore personal agency. This was especially true for Swedish administration in the late sixteenth century and first decades of the seventeenth century. Traditionally Stockholm's burgomasters (*borgmästare*) and magistrates (*borgmästare och råd, magistrat*) had worked mainly to guard the interests of their own group, but that changed in the 1620s when royal burgomasters began to act as guardians of the common good for all town subjects. In her chapter, Piia Einonen looks at social and organizational structures as constituting the functional limits of agency, and studies the changes that

took place when burgomasters and magistrates became more educated and the agency of office-holders was gradually formalized.

A sizeable database⁵⁰ providing information on the young men who studied at the Academy of Turku is the core around which Kustaa H. J. Vilkkuna builds his chapter. Using this source material, he addresses one of the key problems faced by seventeenth-century state builders: how to recruit a sufficient number of well-educated officers to work in local administration. The founding of more universities was too slow a solution, and many young men were told that getting educated abroad would be of greater benefit to them personally, but was such education a solution to the problem of administrative recruitment? By studying the ideology that influenced students' life choices and combining this with biographical information on students' social origin, Vilkkuna illuminates the role of personal agency in the early careers of crown officials.

1560			1650			1720		
JUSTICE		CIVIL GOVERNMENT	JUSTICE		CIVIL GOVERNMENT	JUSTICE		CIVIL GOVERNMENT
Appeal to his/Her Royal Majesty		The Monarch and the Council of the Realm	Beneficium Revidens Göta, Åbo, Dorpat, President		The Monarch and the Council of the Realm	Privy Council Lower Judicial Review Dept. Diet		The Monarch, the Privy Council and the Diet (four estates)
Royal Court of Justice		Chancery Chancellor	Treasury Treasurer	Lord High Steward	War Collegium Admiralty of the Fleet Admiralty of the Fleet Treasury Collegium Treasurer Chancery Collegium Chancellor	Courts of Appeal (Svea, Göta, Åbo, Dorpat, President)	Courts of Appeal (Svea, Göta, Åbo) President	War Collegium Marshall Admiralty of the Fleet Treasury Collegium Treasurer Treasury Review Dept. Treasurer State Treasury State Commission Chancery Collegium Chancery President
District Judge Lawspeaker's Court Lawspeaker		Prefect		District Judge Lawspeaker's court Lawspeaker	County administration (counties: Sweden 17, Finland 7) County governor County Secretariat: Secretary County Accounts Office: Accountant		District Judge Lawspeaker's Court Lawspeaker	County administration (counties: Sweden 20, Finland 4)
Rural District Court District Court District Mayor and judge and eldersmen jurors		Counties (Sweden approx. 25, Finland approx. 10) Castellan		Rural District Court District Court Judge Board Mayor(s) and administrative Lower Town Court	Hundred (district) Crown Bailiff		Rural District Court District Court Lower Town Court Special courts: customs and excise courts, industrial courts, etc.	
Bailwick District bailiff				Administrative parish District police chief		Hundred (district) District police chief		
						The parish Assistant bailiff		

Figure 1: The Administration and Legislature of Sweden 1560–1720.



Map 1. Kingdom of Sweden c. 1560. Map compiled from Jukka Paarma, *Hiippakuntahallinto Suomessa 1554–1604*. Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran Toimituksia 116 (Helsinki: The Finnish Society of Church History, 1980), 163; Montgomery, “Enhetskyrkans tid”, p. 136; Marko Lamberg, Marko Hakanen, Janne Haikari (eds), *Physical and Cultural Space in Pre-Industrial Europe: Methodological Approaches to Spatiality* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011). Map: Jari Järvinen.



Map 2. Changes in the boundaries of the Kingdom of Sweden 1660–1721: Provinces, Court of Appeal districts, and Towns. Map compiled from Petri Karonen, "The Worst Offenders in the Provincial Towns. Serious Urban Crime and its Perpetrators in the Early Years of Sweden's Period as a Great Power", *Scandinavian Journal of History* (23, 1998), p. 23; Villstrand, *Sveriges historia*, p. 425; Lamberg, Hakanen & Haikari (eds), *Physical and Cultural Space*. Map: Jari Järvinen.

The research on which this publication is based was funded by the Academy of Finland (grant no. 137741).

NOTES

- 1 Jan Glete has noted that the Swedish state building process was not a unique one as such, but that the speed and earliness of its implementation was exceptional among European “fiscal-military” states. Jan Glete, *Swedish naval administration, 1521–1721. Resource flows and organisational capabilities*. The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic, c. 400–1700 A. D. Peoples, Economies and Cultures. Volume 46 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 652–653.
- 2 On the grounds for periodization, see for instance Michael Roberts (ed.), *Sweden's Age of Greatness 1632–1718* (Aylesbury: Macmillan, 1973); Michael Roberts, *The Swedish Imperial Experience 1560–1718* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Stellan Dahlgren, Anders Florén, Åsa Karlsson (red.), *Makt & vardag. Hur man styrde, levde och tänkte under svensk stormaktstid. Femton uppsatser* (Trelleborg: Atlantis, 1993), pp. 8–9; Nils Erik Villstrand, *Riksdelen. Stormakt och rikssprängning 1560–1812*. Finlands svenska historia 2. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland 702: 2 (Helsingfors: The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, 2009), pp. 342, 344; Nils Erik Villstrand, *Sveriges historia 1600–1721*. Norstedts Sveriges historia (Stockholm: Nordstedt, 2011); Petri Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta. Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521–1809* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2014).
- 3 Figure 1 is based on the following sources: Per Frohnert, “Administration i Sverige under frihetstiden”. In: *Adminstrasjon i Norden på 1700-talet*. Det nordiska forskningsprojekt Centralmakt och lokalsamhälle – beslutsprocess på 1700-talet 4 (Karlskrona, 1985); Björn Asker, *Hur riket styrdes. Förvaltning, politik och arkiv 1520–1920*. Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet 27 (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 2007); Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, pp. 488–492.
- 4 See for instance Pasi Ihalainen, Michael Brengsbo, Karin Sennefelt, Patrik Winton (eds), *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolutions. Nordic Political Cultures, 1740–1820* (Cornwall: Ashgate, 2011); Nils Herlitz, *Grunddragen av det svenska statsskickets historia* (Stockholm: Nordstedt, 1967).
- 5 David Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst. En kollektivbiografi av stormaktstidens hovrättsauskultanter*. Studia Historica Upsaliensia 63 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1975), p. 86; Ingvar Elmroth, *För kung och fosterland. Studier i den svenska adelns demografi och offentliga funktioner 1600–1900*. Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis L (Lund: Lunds universitet, 1981), p. 208.
- 6 Herlitz, *Grunddragen*, pp. 57–59; Ingmar Brohed (red.), *Reformationens konsolidering i de nordiska länderna 1540–1610* (Ottå: Universitetsförlaget, 1990); Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, pp. 72–77.
- 7 See for instance Kauko Pirinen (toim.), *Turun tuomiokapituli 1276–1976* (Loimaa: Turun Arkkihiippakunnan Tuomiokapituli, 1976); Pentti Laasonen, *Papinvirköjen täyttö Suomessa myöhäiskaroliinisena aikana 1690–1713*. SKHST 124 (Saarijärvi: The Finnish Society of Church History, 1983); Kauko Pirinen, “Keskiaika ja uskonpuhdistuksen aika.” In: *Suomen kirkon historia 1* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1991); Pentti Laasonen, “Vuodet 1593–1808.” In: *Suomen kirkon historia 2* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1991); Åke Andrén, “Reformationstid.” In: *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 3* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1999); Ingun Montgomery, “Enhetskyrkans tid”, In: *Sveriges kyrkohistoria 4* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2002).
- 8 Even in the nineteenth century, the highest administrative posts were still mainly filled through family networks. Esa Konttinen, *Perinteisesti moderni. Professioiden yhteiskunnallinen synty Suomessa* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1991); Raimo Savolainen, *Suosikkisenaattorit. Venäjän keisarin suosio suomalaisten senaattoreiden*

- menestyksen perustana 1809–1892*. Hallintohistoriallisia tutkimuksia 14 (Helsinki: Valtioneuvosto, 1994), pp. 229–232; Kristiina Kalleinen, “*Isänmaani onni on kuulua Venäjälle*”: vapaaherra Lars Gabriel von Haartmanin elämä. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia 815 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2001), pp. 12, 35–36; Rolf Torstendahl, Michael Burrage (eds), *The formation of professions: knowledge, state and strategy* (London: Sage, 1990). The present-day qualifications for a profession are regarded as including at least the following components: a member of a profession should possess theoretical knowledge of his or her special field and be able to demonstrate through particular job descriptions (and symbols) a specialized mastery of the field. In addition, he or she should be capable of functioning independently in his or her field of activity and be (officially) responsible for his or her decisions. See for example Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, “Training and Professionalization” In: Wolfgang Reinhard (ed.), *Power Elites and State Building*. European Science Foundation, The Origins of the Modern State in Europe, 13th–18th Centuries, Theme D. General Editors: Wim Blockmans & Jean-Philippe Genet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 149.
- 9 However, for a person of the time studied here, the Swedish word *profession* meant above all a university professorship. See SAOB (<http://g3.spraakdata.gu.se/saob/>), “profession”.
 - 10 See for example Konungaförsäkrän 1611, 5§, 1634 års regeringsform, 12 §. In: *Sveriges regeringsformer 1634–1809 samt konungaförsäkringar 1611–1800*. Utg. av Emil Hildebrand (Stockholm, 1891); Herlitz, *Grunddragen*, pp. 63, 95–96, 104, 107–108, 134; Elmroth, *För kung och fosterland*, pp. 218–221; Svante Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna. Kanslitjänstemännen i 1600-talets Sverige och Europa*. Umeå Studies in the Humanities 117 (Stockholm: Umeå universitet, 1993), p. 153.
 - 11 Konttinen, *Perinteisesti moderniin*, pp. 24, 90; Petri Karonen, “Kuninkaan luottomiehiä, siniverisiä puoluejunkkareita, päteviä byrokraatteja ja säätyläisten parhaimmistoa: virkamiehet ja yhteiskunnan muutos uuden ajan alussa (noin 1520–1810)”. In: Heikki Roiko-Jokela (toim.), *Siperiasta siirtoväkeen. Murrosaikoja ja käännekohtia Suomen historiassa* (Jyväskylä: Kopi-Jyvä, 1996), pp. 60–61.
 - 12 See for example Herlitz, *Grunddragen*, passim.; Elmroth, *För kung och fosterland*, pp. 10–11, 206–207; Gunnar Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna i sin tid I–II* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), p. 253.
 - 13 Norrhem, *Uppkomlingarna*, pp. 36, 39–40.
 - 14 Konttinen, *Perinteisesti moderniin*; Karonen, “Kuninkaan luottomiehiä”; Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600–1789* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 2–5, 15–17.
 - 15 Gaunt, *Utbildning till statens tjänst*, pp. 34–38; Pia Letto-Vanamo, *Suomalaisen asianajolaitoksen synty ja varhaiskehitys. Oikeushistoriallinen tutkimus*. Suomen Lakimiesyhdistyksen julkaisuja. A: 181 (Vammala: Suomen lakimiesyhdistys, 1989), pp. 10–12, 41–43; Heikki Kulla, “Valtion virkamiehistön kehitys”. In: Pia Letto-Vanamo (toim.), *Suomen oikeushistorian pääpiirteet: sukuvallasta moderniin oikeuteen* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 1991), pp. 168–170, 172–174; Ridder-Symoens, “Training and Professionalization”, pp. 149–151; Liisa Lagerstam, Jessica Parland-von Essen, “Aatelin kasvatus”. In: Hanska, Jussi, Vainio-Korhonen, Kirsi (toim.), *Huoneentaulun maailma: kasvatus ja koulutus Suomessa keskiajalta 1860-luvulle* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2010), p. 204; Mia Korpiola (ed.), *The Svea Court of Appeal in the Early Modern Period: Historical Reinterpretations and New Perspectives*. Rättshistoriska studier 26. Stockholm: Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning, 2014).
 - 16 See Jan Lindegren, “The Swedish “Military State”, 1560–1720”, *Scandinavian Journal of History* 10, 1985, pp. 305–336; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990–1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Giorgio Chittolini, “The “Private”

- the “Public”, the “State””. In: Julius Kirshner (ed.), *The Origins of the State in Italy, 1300–1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Reinhard (ed.), *Power Elites*; Peter Blickle (Hrsg.), *Gemeinde und Staat im Alten Europa* (München: Oldenbourg, 1998); Harald Gustafsson, “The Conglomerate State: A Perspective on State Formation in Early Modern Europe”, *Scandinavian Journal of History* (1998), pp. [189]–213; Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Mirkka Lappalainen, “Regional Elite Group and the Problem of Territorial Integration: The Finnish Nobility and the Formation of the Swedish “Power State”, c. 1570–1620”, *Scandinavian Journal of History* 26, 2001, pp. 1–24; Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe. Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500–1660* (London: Routledge, 2002); André Holenstein, “Gute Policey” und lokale Gesellschaft im Staat des Ancien Régime. Das Fallbeispiel der Markgrafschaft Baden(-Durlach) (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca-Academica-Verlag, 2003); Mats Hallenberg, *Kungen, fogdarna och riket. Lokalförvaltning och statsbyggande under tidig Vasatid* (Stockholm: Symposion, 2001); Mats Hallenberg, Johan Holm, Dan Johansson, “Organization, Legitimation, Participation. State Formation as a Dynamic Process – the Swedish Example, c. 1523–1680”, *Scandinavian Journal of History* 33, 2008, pp. 247–268; Mats Hallenberg, *Statsmakt till salu. Arrendesystemet och privatiseringen av skatteuppbörden i det svenska riket 1618–1635* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2008); Wim Blockmans, André Holenstein and Jon Mathieu (eds) in collaboration with Daniel Schläppi, *Empowering Interactions. Political Cultures and the Emergence of the State in Europe 1300–1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009); Villstrand, *Riksdelen*.
- 17 See for instance Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*; Petri Karonen (ed.), *Hopes and Fears for the Future in Early Modern Sweden, 1500–1800*. *Studia Historica* 79 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2009); Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, pp. 183, 329–331. Jan Glete (for example *War and the State*) has also noted Charles Tilly’s difficulties in locating Sweden within the European system of state organization.
- 18 On the interaction model, see esp. the studies of Eva Österberg (*Gränsbygd under krig. Ekonomiska, demografiska och administrativa förhållanden i sydvästra Sverige under och efter nordiska sjuårskriget*. BHL XXVI (Lund: Lund universitet, 1971); “Svenska lokalsamhällen i förändring ca 1550–1850. Participation, representation och politisk kultur i den svenska självstyrelsen. Ett angeläget forskningsområde”, *Historisk Tidskrift* 1987; “Bönder och centralmakt i det tidigmoderna Sverige. Konflikt – kompromiss – politisk kultur”, *Scandia* 1989; “Folklig mentalitet och statlig makt. Perspektiv på 1500- och 1600-talets Sverige”, *Scandia* 1992: 1; “Vardagens sträva samförstånd. Bondepolitik i den svenska modellen från vasatid till frihetstid”. In: Gunnar Broberg, Ulla Wikander, Klas Åmark (red.), *Tänka, tycka, tro. Svensk historia underifrån* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 1993). The military state model in Sweden has been discussed by Sven A. Nilsson in “Den karolinska militärstaten. Fredens problem och krigets”. In: Gudrun Ekstrand (ed.), *Tre Karlar: Karl X Gustav, Karl XI, Karl XII* (Livrustkammaren: Stockholm, 1984); *De stora krigens tid. Om Sverige som militärstat och bondesamhälle*. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 161 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet 1990) and Jan Lindegren (for instance *Utskrivning och utsugning. Produktion och reproduktion i Bygdeå 1620–1640*. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 117 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1980); “The Swedish ‘Military State’”; see also Sören Klingnéus, *Bönder blir vapensmeder. Protoindustriell tillverkning i Närke under 1600- och 1700-talen*. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 181 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1997); Peter Ericsson, *Stora nordiska kriget förklarar. Karl XII och det ideologiska tilltalet*. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 202 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2002); Martin Linde, *Statsmakt och bondemotstånd. Allmoge och överhet under stora nordiska kriget*. *Studia Historica Upsaliensia* 194 (Uppsala:

- Uppsala universitet, 2000); Martin Linde, *I fädrens spår? Bönder och överhet i Dalarna under 1700-talet* (Hedemora: Gidlund, 2009). A synthesis of work in this field can be found in Leon Jespersen (ed.), *A Revolution from Above? The Power State of 16th and 17th Century Scandinavia* (Odense: Odense University Press, 2000). On the “third interpretation model”, see for instance Johan Holm, “Att välja sin fiende. Allmogens konflikter och allianser i riksdagen 1595–1635” (*Historisk Tidskrift* 123, 2003: 1); Johan Holm, *Konstruktionen av en stormakt. Kungamakt, skattebönder och statsbildning 1595–1640*. AUS – SH 90 (Stockholm: Stockholm universitet, 2007); Joakim Scherp, *De ofrälse och makten. En institutionell studie av riksdagen och de ofrälse ståndens politik i maktdelningsfrågor 1660–1682*. Stockholm Studies in History 96 (Stockholm: Stockholm universitet, 2013). For a general discussion of the field, see also Karonen. *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, p. 22, note 15. See Börje Harnesk’s critical views of the so-called interactive point of view in Swedish research in “Den svenska modellens tidigmoderna rötter?”, *Historisk tidskrift*, 122, 2002; “Konsten att klaga, konsten att kräva. Kronan och bönderna på 1500- och 1600-talen”. In: Harnesk, Börje (red.), *Maktens skiftande skepnader. Studier i makt, legitimitet och inflytande i det tidigmoderna Sverige* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2003).
- 19 One extreme exception to this rule was the so-called War of the Cudgels (*klubbekriget, nuijasota*) in Finland at the turn of 1596 and 1597, in which as many as 3000 peasants were slain, a considerable figure in terms of the population of the country. On the debate on the Cudgels War, see esp. Eric Anthoni, *Konflikten mellan hertig Carl och Finland. Konflikten uppkomst och hertigens seger* (Helsingfors, 1935); Eric Anthoni, *Konflikten mellan hertig Carl och Finland. Avvecklingen och försoningen*, Skrifter utgivna av svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland (Helsingfors: The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, 1937); Pentti Renvall, *Kuninkaanmiehiä ja kapinoitsijoita Vaasakauden Suomessa* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1949); Pentti Renvall, “Ruotsin vallan aika”. In: *Suomen kansanedustuslaitoksen historia*, Vol. 1: *Suomen kansanedustuslaitoksen vaiheet 1850-luvun puoliväliin* (Helsinki: Eduskunnan historiakeskus, 1962); Heikki Ylikangas, *Nuijasota*, 3rd edition (Helsinki: Otava, 1996); Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, pp. 106–21, and note 42; Kimmo Katajala (ed.), *Northern Revolts. Medieval and Early Modern Peasant Unrest in the Nordic Countries* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2004); Mirkka Lappalainen, *Susimessu. 1590-luvun sisällissota Ruotsissa ja Suomessa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2009); see also Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (eds), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1997).
 - 20 The situation has not changed a lot since Björn Asker’s comment over two decades ago, when he remarked that there was not much research on seventeenth century civil servants or military personnel in Sweden: Björn Asker, “Från godsägarstat till ämbetsmannastat. Byråkraterna, officerarna och enväldets införande”. In: Stellan Dahlgren, Anders Florén, Åsa Karlsson (red.), *Makt & vardag. Hur man styrde, levde och tänkte under svensk stormaktstid. Femton uppsatser* (Trelleborg: Atlantis, 1993), pp. 68–69.
 - 21 On philosophical definitions of agency see for example Michael E. Bratman, *Structures of Agency: Essays* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2006).
 - 22 See Edgar Kiser, “Comparing Varieties of Agency Theory in Economics, Political Science, and Sociology: An Illustration from State Policy Implementation”, *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Jul. 1999), for instance p. 162. Kiser remarks that especially in economics few references to Weber have been made. For sociological approaches, see also Susan P. Shapiro, “Agency Theory.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 31 (2005), pp. 263–284.
 - 23 Kiser, “Comparing Varieties”, p. 146.
 - 24 Barry S. Barnes, *Understanding Agency: Social Theory and Responsible Action* (London: Sage, 2000), Preface x–xi (quotation), pp. 1–2, Chapter 4.

- 25 Stephan Fuchs, "Beyond Agency", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Mar. 2001), pp. 26, 29 (quotation), 39–40 (quotations).
- 26 Pioneers of the idea of rational behavior have included Max Weber, Bronislaw Malinowski, Marcel Mauss and later Talcott Parsons. The actual theory of rational choice in sociology has been developed by G. Homans, P. Blau, M. Olson, J. Coleman, J. Elster and R. Boudon, among others. Key literature regarding rational choice theory includes: Gary S. Becker, *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978); James Coleman, *The Mathematics of Collective Action* (Chicago: Transaction Publishers, 1973); Peter Hedström, *Dissecting the Social. On the Principles of Analytical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On the use of rational choice theory and criticism of it in historical research, see for instance Juha-Antti Lamberg, *Taloudelliset eturyhmät neuvotteluprosesseissa. Suomen kauppasopimuspolitiikka 1920–1930-luvulla* (Saarijärvi: Suomen Tiedeseura, 1999); Petri Karonen, *Patruunat ja poliitikot. Yritysohjattajien taloudellinen ja yhteiskunnallinen toiminta Suomessa 1600–1920*. Historiallisia Tutkimuksia 217 (Tampere: The Finnish Literature Society, 2004). For a critical assessment of rational choice, see for instance Barnes, *Understanding Agency*, ch. 2. For perspectives in economics, see also Ilana Gershon, "Neoliberal Agency", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (August 2011), pp. 537–547. On agency theory with regard to organization theory (principal – agent relationships in firms), see also for instance Kathleen M. Eisenhardt, "Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review", *The Academy of Management Review* 14, 1989, pp. 57–74; for a critical approach, see Kiser, "Comparing Varieties", pp. 150–151.
- 27 Eisenhardt, "Agency Theory", p. 64.
- 28 Ellen Messer-Davidow, "Acting Otherwise". In: Judith Kegan Gardiner (ed.), *Provoking Agents. Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1995), p. 25.
- 29 Marko Hakanen, *Vallan verkostoissa. Per Brahe ja hänen klienttinsä 1600-luvun Ruotsin valtakunnassa*. Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 157 (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2011).
- 30 For a good overview of different views of agency theories, see Messer-Davidow, "Acting Otherwise", pp. 23–51.
- 31 Ivar Svalenius, *Rikskansliet i Sverige 1560–1592*. Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Riksarkivet 7 (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 1991), pp. 4–6.
- 32 Michael Mann, *The sources of social power. Volume 1. A history of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 5.
- 33 Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), p. 3.
- 34 Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory. Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (Houndmills and London, Palgrave MacMillan, 1979), pp. 53–59, 66, 71.
- 35 Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems*, pp. 198–201, 236–243. See also Barnes, *Understanding Agency*, p. 27: "In Giddens' well-known formulation, structure may both constrain and facilitate action, but not determine it, just because individuals have agency."
- 36 See for instance Simone Lässig, "Introduction: Biography in Modern History – Modern Historiography in Biography". In: Volker R. Berghahn, Simone Lässig (eds), *Biography between Structure and Agency. Central European Lives in International Historiography*. Studies in German History 9 (S. l.: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 3–4; Ian Kershaw, "Biography and the Historian. Opportunities and Constraints". In: Berghahn, Lässig (eds), *Biography*, p. 31; Volker R. Berghahn, "Structuralism and Biography. Some Concluding Thoughts on the Uncertainties of a Historiographical Genre", Berghahn, Lässig (eds), *Biography*, pp. 234–235.

- 37 Barbara Caine describes the relationship between biographical research and history in *Biography and History*. In: Donald MacRaild (ed.), *Theory and History Series* (S.l.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1 and 23 (on “the biographical turn”), 24–25 (on different attitudes among researchers), and especially Chapter 2 (on historiography). Volker Berghahn and Simone Lässig (“Preface”. In: Berghahn, Lässig (eds), *Biography*, p. vii) date the “return of biography” to the 1990s.
- 38 The search criteria were the general keywords “Sverige”, “biografi”, “1500-talet”, “1600-talet”, “1700-talet”. The calculations do not take account of the matriculations registers or of articles that appear only sporadically in the database of *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (<http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/Start.aspx>) . – <http://libris.kb.se/> (accessed 27 January 2014).
- 39 Petri Karonen, “Ruotsin ajan tutkimuksen nykytila ja resurssit”, *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 2010: 4.
- 40 Biographies on rulers and other important persons include Peter Englund, *Silvermasken. En kort biografi över drottning Kristina* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2006); Marie-Louise Rodén, *Drottning Christina. En biografi* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2008); Svante Norrhem, *Ebba Brahe. Makt och kärlek under stormaktstiden* (Lund: Historiska Media 2007); Björn Asker, *Karl X Gustav. En biografi* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2009); Lars-Olof Larsson, *Gustav Vasa – landsfader eller tyrann?* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2002); Wetterberg, *Kanslern Axel Oxenstierna*; Lars-Olof Larsson, *Arvet efter Gustav Vasa* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2005); Lars Ericson, *Johan III. En biografi* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2006); Bo Eriksson, *I skuggan av tronen. En biografi över Per Brahe d.ä.* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2009); Erik Petersson, *Vicekungen. En biografi över Per Brahe den yngre* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2009); Göran Rystad, *Karl XI. En biografi* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2001); Erik Petersson, *Den skoningslöse. En biografi över Karl IX* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2008; Lennart Hedberg, *Karl IX: företagare fursten och enväldshärskaren* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2009).
- 41 Biographies of noble families and individuals include Mirkka Lappalainen, *Suku – valta – suurvalta. Creutzit 1600-luvun Ruotsissa ja Suomessa* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2005); Alexander Jonsson, *De norrländska landshövdingarna och statsbildningen 1634–1769*. Skrifter från institutionen för historiska studier 10 (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2005); Tuula Hockman, *Kolmen polven perilliset. Ingeborg Aakentytär (Tott) ja hänen sukunsa (n. 1460–1507)* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2006); Anu Lahtinen, *Sopeutuvat – neuvottelevat – kapinalliset. Naiset toimijoina Flemingin sukupiirissä 1470–1620* (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2007); Liisa Lagerstam, *A Noble Life. The Cultural Biography of Gabriel Kurck (1630–1712)*. Suomalaisen tiedeakatemia toimituksia, Humaniora 349 (Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2007); Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, *Sophie Creutzin aika. Aateliselämää 1700-luvun Suomessa*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia 1183 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2008); Svante Norrhem, *Kvinnor vid maktens sida 1632–1772* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2010); Ulla Koskinen, *Hyvien miesten valtakunta. Arvid Henrikinpoika Tawast ja aatelin toimintakulttuuri 1500-luvun lopun Suomessa*. Bibliotheca Historica 132 (Helsinki: The Finnish Literature Society, 2011). For an overview, see Bo Eriksson, *Svenska adelns historia* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2011). A biographical work that places the clergy in context is Simo Heininen, *Agricolan perintö. Paulus Juusten elämä* (Helsinki: Edita, 2012). On the burgher elite and the manifestation of their power in various circumstances in towns in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Gudrun Andersson, *Stadens dignitärer. Den lokala elitens status- och maktmanifestation i Arboga 1650–1770* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009). On women and power in Sweden in the early modern age, also see Anu Lahtinen and Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, “Valta ja naiset esimodernia koskevassa historiantutkimuksessa. Pohjoismaista keskustelua toimijoista ja rakenteista”. In:

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- 42 An important exception is Asker's *Karl X Gustav*, which engages extensively with earlier research. Even so, the work does not set out from a basically theoretical or “strictly” scientific point of view. Jan Berggren for his part, presents the grim image of his main character given in historiography in *Rikets mest hatade man. Georg Heinrich von Görtz. En biografi* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2010). A presentation that takes an interesting stand on the culture of history is Andreas Marklund, *Stenbock. Åra och ensamhet i Karl XII:s tid* (Lund: Historiska media, 2008).
- 43 Women have also received scant attention: cf. however endnote 41 above and the works mentioned therein. Svante Norrhem (*Kvinnor vid maktens sida*) investigates the use of power by the wives of privy counsellors, which was most evident in “arrangements” in the domestic and political spheres relating to such matters as the allocation of diplomatic posts and recommendations. Particularly in the seventeenth century, their opportunities for exerting influence were considerable since their spouses were often away at war or engaged on other state duties. Henrik Ågren, for his part, uses genealogical research among other methods to study the Höök dynasty of high-ranking office holders from the province of Uppland in “Herremän och bönder. En uppländsk ämbetsmannasläkts sociala rörlighet under 1600-talet och det tidiga 1700-talet”, *Karolinska förbundets årsbok 2006*.
- 44 Lässig, “Introduction”, pp. 11, 21.
- 45 Caine, *Biography and History*, Chapter 3, quotations p. 50.
- 46 Caine, *Biography and History*, 57–58. Lawrence Stone, “Prosopography”, *Daedalus* 100(1) (1971); Gunner Lind, “Prosopografi med relationelle databaser”. In: Peter Aronsson, Solveig Fagerlund, Jan Samuelsson (red.), *Nätverk i historisk forskning. Metafor, metod eller teori?* (Växjö: Växjö Universitet, 1999); Donald Broady, French prosopography: definition and suggested readings, *Poetics* 30, 2002. Cf. for instance Merja Uotila, *Käsityöläinen kyläyhteisönsä jäsenenä. Prosopografinen analyysi Hollolan käsityöläisistä 1810–1840*. Jyväskylä Studies in Humanities 237 (Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2014), pp. 31–43. For more on prosopographical studies, see <http://prosopography.modhist.ox.ac.uk/bibliographyHand.pdf>
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- 49 The role of the army and the military functionaries are instead not included to the study; this huge entity deserves a study of its own.
- 50 Collected by Yrjö Kotivuori, located in university of Helsinki [<http://www.helsinki.fi/ylioppilasmatrikkeli/>].

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