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BOOK REVIEWS

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE: CLEAN AIR POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND SWEDEN

By LENNART J. LUNDQVIST

Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 1980.

Lennart Lundqvist of Uppsala has written a thoughtful analysis of the differences between the clean air policies of the United States and Sweden as they developed over the decade beginning in the late 1960s. He has sought to answer the question why, as he says, "policy-makers in two highly industrialized nations—Sweden and the United States—selected and pursued different policy alternatives to cope with common and technically similar problems of air pollution," (p. 23) and what the fate of those policy choices has been. Indeed, the very commonality of the problem made air pollution policy a fruitful area for comparative political analysis. In the process, he has compiled and organized a good deal of information about the approaches taken in the two countries and the degree of success which has been attained in each. This in itself should be very helpful on a practical level to policymakers and administrators in other countries. He has also used diagrams and tables effectively for organizing abstract policy choices and administrative schemes.

The author points out that the policy objective of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970 was to protect the public health, even if this might be technologically or economically impractical. In Sweden, no such "technology-pushing" policy was adopted. Rather, the Swedish Environmental Protection Act of July 1, 1969 pursued an incremental approach geared to technological and economic feasibility. The mode of air quality protection also differed in accordance with these policy differences. With respect to stationary sources, the United States adopted ambient air quality standards, whereas Sweden chose individual source control based on nuisance concepts. At the same time, the American approach was adversary and uncompromising in tone, while the Swedish implementation was based on negotiation and consensus. The U.S. approach focused on the need to make air quality standards uniform throughout the nation to promote domestic competitive equality. Sweden, on the other hand, focused on the need to avoid pricing its products out of the international market, and to this end, provided subsidies to industry for air pollution control measures.

The American policy called for substantial public participation before both administrative agencies and the courts, whereas the Swedish scheme allowed for no direct public participation. Lundqvist cor-

rectly points out that the reliance on public participation and judicial review in the American scheme stems from "the strong cultural belief in due process and the rule of law" (p. 120) in the United States. There may have been several other factors at work creating the differences in this regard, however. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ralph Nader was effectively criticizing the U.S. regulatory agencies for complacency and for being controlled by those whom they had been established to regulate. In Sweden, by contrast, the trust in government was much greater, stemming from a long tradition of excellence. Consequently, there was no significant call for public participation at any stage of the regulatory process, nor was there any outcry because the policy as a whole was being developed and implemented in close consultation with the industries to be regulated.

Lundqvist takes advantage of his opportunity to compare the parliamentary and congressional forms of government. One of the most significant differences between the two systems in this context is the separation of the functions of policy adoption and policy implementation under the American system and the union of those two functions under the parliamentary system. The author ably makes the point that, when the U.S. Congress took radical policy initiatives in the 1970 Clean Air Act Amendments, it could do so in the comfort of knowing that it would not be responsible for the implementation of the new policy. Therefore, the motivation to make implementation practicable was greatly diminished. In contrast, under the Swedish parliamentary system, the majority party in Parliament also forms the cabinet, and is therefore responsible for implementation of the policies adopted. Other factors, however, make it difficult to compare definitively the two systems. For instance, as the author points out, the ideological goal of the Social Democrats in Sweden was full employment, something consistent with technologically and economically realistic approaches to air quality control. Lundqvist points out that individual members of the legislative bodies are more likely to seek high visibility under the congressional system, but the author's reliance on this factor as one explanation for the more aggressive and impractical policy adopted by the United States is not completely convincing. The difference in the perceptions of the policymakers was more likely the result of stronger public demand for air quality control measures in the United States than the result of a greater tendency of participants in a congressional system to seek high visibility.

The author's conclusions are well considered. Despite the dramatic retreat during the 1970s by the United States from its earlier clean air objectives, compared with the slow but unswerving efforts in Swe-

den, he eschews simplistic measures of progress. He finds that, overall, the two countries are essentially neck and neck, with Sweden leading in controlling non-highway emissions and the United States leading with respect to highway emissions.

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