

**Influence on accounting standard-setting in
Sweden by holding positions
– An empirical analysis**

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Abstract

In this study a ranking is made of persons based on the number of years that the persons have held positions in standard-setting bodies in Sweden during a period of ten years. The positional approach assumes that people holding positions in units with important functions are able to exercise influence. Applied to accounting standard-setting units of importance are the actual standard-setting units. A decision to issue a standard may be made by a board. However, this decision could be formal in character. Another unit may be the actual standard-setter if that unit produces the standards i.e. if it does everything but making the final formal decision. The number of years that a person has held a position becomes interesting as the process of producing accounting standards frequently goes on during a long period of time. This study shows that there are many persons who have held a position. However, there is a small group of persons who have held a position during many years and also in more than one body. Thus, they have had the opportunity to exercise larger influence than others. As these persons belong to various interest groups it becomes interesting to discuss potential effects for these groups. Furthermore, a comparison is made between the standard-setting bodies focusing the criteria used when selecting the members of the actual standard-setting units. This study shows the importance of considering political aspects when studying accounting standard-setting in Sweden.

1. INFLUENCE ON ACCOUNTING STANDARD SETTING

There is a legal basis for accounting in Sweden. Apart from the law there are non-legal standards produced by a number of Swedish standard-setting bodies. Influence on accounting standard-setting may be exercised in different ways. One way is by participating at hearings arranged by standard-setters in order to give comments orally. Furthermore, written comments can be given on exposure drafts or a person can be active in the debate in journals etc. Another way is by holding a position in a standard-setting body producing standards. For a person wanting to exercise influence the most direct way to exercise influence is by holding a position in a standard-setting body thus being a person who really participates in the decisions. The positions that are available then become interesting.

In Törnqvist, Lumsden and Marton (2000a) the organizational structure of the Swedish standard-setters producing non-legal standards was studied, i.e. the inclusion in the bodies of different types of units that are involved in the standard-setting activities. In that study it was found that applied to accounting standard-setting, units of importance are the actual standard-setting units. A decision to issue a standard may be made by a board. However, this decision may be formal in character. Another unit may be the actual standard-setter if that unit produces the standards i.e. if it does everything but making the final formal decision. Thus, for a person wanting to exercise influence it is important to hold a position in an actual standard-setting unit.

Horngren (1973) argues that the setting of accounting standards is as much a product of political action as of flawless logic or empirical findings due to the need of acceptance by the interest groups affected. In the US a new standard-setting body was founded in the early 1970's. The previous standard-setter had problems in getting the producers of accounting information to follow non-legal standards. One of the reasons for this lack of acceptance was that only auditors participated in the standard-setting process. As a consequence, the opinions of other interest groups were not taken into consideration (Van Riper, 1984, Zeff, 1984, Wyatt, 1991). As a result of this criticism a new standard-setting body, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), was founded in 1973 composed of persons with different backgrounds to avoid the dominance of any particular interest group.

For a political organization the conflict between its members is important for the legitimacy of both the organization and the individual members according to Brunsson (1989). It seems reasonable that the possibility to exercise influence for a

person belonging to an interest group in Sweden may be dependent upon the composition of the actual standard setting unit i.e. which interests are represented and the potential for conflict. Thus, consideration of politics becomes relevant when studying the influence on accounting standard-setting in Sweden.

2. RESEARCH ISSUES

In a study of accounting standard-setting in Sweden in the beginning of the 1980's the focus was on identifying the most influential individuals (Jönsson, 1984). A reputational approach was used. The same approach was also used in a study later in the 1980's (Sandin, 1988b). In the reputational approach the researcher studies names produced by knowledgeable informants (Scott, 1991). In these studies a questionnaire was used as the basis for a ranking. The respondents gave the names of the persons who they thought belonged to the accounting elite. The respondents also classified the elite persons into the following four categories: accountant, auditor, opinion leader or rule maker. The respondents could classify a person into more than one category. The study by Jönsson (1984) resulted in a ranking list encompassing 39 persons who had been judged as influential by the respondents. In the ranking list there were five persons who in comparison with the others on the list were judged as much more influential as their names had been given by many of the respondents. Of the five at the top all had been classified into all four categories. Three of the five at the top had been classified into primarily the category auditors. The auditors were in majority at the top of the ranking list and the group was also important when taking the total number of persons on the ranking list into consideration. Three of the persons at the top of the list were also at the top in the study by Sandin (1988b).

A problem with the reputational approach is that it is not possible to distinguish between having real power and having a reputation as powerful. Another problem with the reputational approach is that it is static in the sense that a questionnaire is sent or interviews are made at a certain point of time. Compared to the reputational approach the positional approach can be more dynamic as it can be considered that a person may have held a position during many years. A positional approach is defined as a sampling from among occupants of particular formally defined positions (Scott, 1991). The number of years that a person has held a position becomes interesting because the process of producing accounting standards frequently goes on during a long period of time.

The reason why a positional approach was not used in the study made by Jönsson (1984) was the aim of not disregarding that there could be authorities on accounting declining participation in institutional procedures (Jönsson, 1985). Furthermore, there could be newly arrived elite members who had not yet found a position and there could be persons who had retired from an institutional position but maintaining their influence anyway. However, it was argued that the standard-setting procedure is to a large extent institutionalized. Furthermore, it was argued that influential people are likely to be found in institutional positions and the interest groups will probably choose to be represented in those positions by their most respected members. The results of the study confirmed these assumptions as the accounting elite had a very good anchorage in the institutional structure involved in the accounting policy formation process. Three of the five persons at the top had positions in important standard-setting bodies.

In Sweden a new standard-setting body, the Foundation of Good Accounting Practice, was founded in the end of 1989. The Swedish Institute of Authorized Public Accountants (FAR), the Swedish Accounting Standards Board (BFN) and the Federation of Swedish Industries (SI) established this body jointly. Before 1989 the FAR, with only auditors as members, had been the most important accounting standard-setter in Sweden. When the new standard-setting organization was established the aim was to involve different interest groups in the process of setting accounting standards in order to increase the acceptance of standards. During the 1990's this body has been the most productive Swedish standard-setter. Thus, it becomes interesting to study which interest groups and persons that have exercised influence on non-legal accounting standard-setting in Sweden during the 1990's. The aim is to apply a positional approach.

Regarding the opportunity to exercise influence the consideration of politics makes it important to focus especially on potential effects for both the persons and the interest groups of the availability of positions and the application of appointment principles.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

When collecting information about positions available, Swedish standard-setters were selected based on the production of non-legal standards during the period 1990 to 1999 and the availability of positions in the actual standard-setting units. The application of these criteria for selection had the effect that four Swedish standard-setters were selected.

One of these is the private Association of Good Accounting Practice. The Association is a result of a reconstruction in 1998 of the Foundation of Good Accounting Practice. BFN was one of the founders in 1989 but was excluded in connection with the reconstruction. There are two standard-setting units: the Financial Accounting Standards Council (RR) and the Urgent Issues Task Force (UITF). The RR emphasizes the self-regulation concept and has the objective of adjusting accounting standards closely to international standards. In recent years adjustments have only been made to the standards of the IASC. Due to the shareholder-orientation the primary target group is listed companies. According to the rules on the Stockholm Stock Exchange, listed companies are required to apply standards issued by the RR, and if these are not applied information about the reasons for deviations must be given. In practice, also non-listed companies have applied its standards. During the 1990's the RR has been the most productive Swedish standard-setter. The standard-setting function of the UITF is to issue interpretations rather than full standards.

Another standard-setter selected is the public BFN with the aim to issue standards that are applicable to all companies. The importance of a broad representation of different interests groups was emphasized when the body was established in the 1970's. The standards deal with technical book keeping matters and financial reporting.

The third standard-setting organization selected is the private Swedish Society of Financial Analysts (SFF) with the aim to issue standards that provide guidance for financial analysts and companies. Furthermore, the aim is to influence the other Swedish standard-setters by being a pressure group. The SFF has been producing standards since the 1970's.

The fourth standard-setter selected is the private FAR. The FAR finished producing standards when the Foundation of Good Accounting Practice was established in 1989. An exception was made in 1996 when guidelines to be used when applying the Financial Reporting Act were presented. Also, when needed, the FAR updates standards that have been issued earlier. The FAR is a member of the IASC and has during the 1990's together with representatives for the auditor organization in other Nordic countries held a position on the board of the IASC. The FAR has been invited to submit written comments on the exposure drafts issued by the IASC.

Besides the four standard-setters that were selected, there is also another body that has produced standards during the period 1990 to 1999. This standard-setter is the public Financial Supervisory Authority (FI). However, in the actual standard-setting unit in this body there are only FI personnel involved in the standard-setting. Therefore, the FI was excluded in this study.

Also, in this study standard-setters producing legal standards have been excluded as there are no actual standard-setting units in these authorities with positions available to hold for persons belonging to various interest groups.

Information has been collected through interviews at the offices of the standard-setting bodies in 1999. Questions were asked concerning the organization, principles applied when appointing members of the actual standard-setting units and the standard-setting process. This provides a motive for interviewing the administrative heads. When it comes to collection of information the standard-setters have contributed by providing various documents, published and internal.

The persons holding positions were classified into eight different interest groups. These groups could be regarded as interest groups or professional groups. In this paper only the notation interest group will be used. The basis for the classification has been the employer. With employer in this context is meant the following:

Auditors:	The employer is a public accounting firm or a consultancy firm.
Financial analysts:	The employer is a stockbroker company.
Accountants:	The employer is a department in a company that produces accounting information for financial reporting purposes.
Academics:	The employer is a school or university.
Legal experts:	The employer is the government.
Trade unions:	The employer is a trade union.
Tax authorities:	The employer is a tax authority.
The others:	The employer is another one than those above or there are several employers for one person.

It seems reasonable that a person may have a better opportunity to exercise influence if that person participates in the decisions on standard-setting over a long period of time. It also may take some time for a person to get a strong position in an actual standard-setting unit. Furthermore, it seems reasonable that a person may have a better opportunity to exercise influence on accounting standard-setting in Sweden if that person participates in the standard-setting in more than one actual standard-setting unit.

The basis when producing the ranking list has been the total number of positions a person has held during the period 1990 to 1999. If a person for instance has held a position in one actual standard-setting unit during the years 1990 to 1993 and positions in two actual standard-setting units during the years 1994 to 1999 this person will be regarded as having held 16 positions.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Appointment principles applied and positions available

In the four Swedish standard-setters selected in this study there were five actual standard-setting units. The availability of positions in these units and how members of these units have been appointed will be described below.

The Association of Good Accounting Practice has a board of trustees that supports the standard-setting units. The board of trustees is not directly involved in the standard-setting but is responsible for the financing and for appointing members to the actual standard-setting units that are the RR and the UITF. The number of positions available in the RR has been nine since the start in 1989. The UITF was established in 1994 and there have been five or six members since the start. There is no limitation for neither the RR nor the UITF when it comes to how many years a person can be a member. Four persons have been members of the RR since the start in 1989. Also in UITF four persons have been members since the start in 1994. Four members of the UITF have also been members of the RR.

When appointing members to these units the aim has been to have a composition that allows for the expression of different points of view. The members of the RR and the UITF have been appointed based on expertise and on interest. The members are not looked upon as representatives for interest groups. However, when the Foundation of Good Accounting Practice was established the three founders, the FAR, the BFN and the SI, nominated three members each to the RR. The effect was that in the RR there were three auditors, three accountants and three persons with other professions, among them an academic and a legal expert. When replacing a member of the RR the new member has had the same background as the member replaced. Furthermore, the members of the RR and the UITF are not employed full time by the Association and have employers that belong to different interest groups. Therefore, in practice there seems to be a small difference between the participation as an expert with an employer belonging to a certain interest group and the participation as a representative for an interest group.

The actual standard-setting unit within the BFN is the board. The appointment of members of the board of the BFN is based on proposals from different interest groups. Consideration is taken to skills and knowledge of accounting when a representative is nominated. However, it is the Ministry of Justice that makes the formal decision. The board of the BFN has had between ten and eleven members during the 1990's. There is no limitation when it comes to how many years a person can be a member of the board and the members of the BFN are not employed full time by the standard-setter.

The actual standard-setting unit within the SFF is a committee. The board of the SFF has the responsibility to appoint members to the committee. The members who have

been appointed are financial analysts and persons belonging to the interest group others. The number of members of the committee has varied between seven and twelve during the 1990's. There is no limitation when it comes to how many years a person can be a member of the committee and the members are not employed full time by this body either. The members of the committee do not get any financial compensation at all from the SFF.

Also for the FAR the actual standard-setting unit is a committee. The board of the FAR has the responsibility to appoint members to the committee. The members are appointed based on expertise and interest in accounting. The committee has had six members and there is no limitation when it comes to how many years a person can be a member of the committee. All members are auditors who are not employed full time by the FAR. In fact, they do not get any financial compensation from the FAR.

One thing that is common for the Swedish standard-setters is that none has a limit for how many years a person can serve as a member of the actual standard-setting unit. Therefore, some persons in the RR, the BFN, the SFF and the FAR have been members of the actual standard-setting unit during the whole period 1990 to 1999. However, there are standard-setting bodies in other countries that have a limit when it comes to how many years a person can be a member of the standard-setting unit (Miller et al, 1998) in the aim of making it possible for new persons to exercise influence on accounting issues. One reason why Swedish standard-setters do not have a time limit may be difficulties in attracting competent persons who are willing to work part time for the standard-setters with a very limited or no financial compensation.

Another thing that is common for the four Swedish standard-setters selected is that the members of the actual standard-setting units are not employed full time by the standard-setter. Standard-setting bodies in other countries e.g. the FASB and the ASB (Beresford, 1995) apply the principle that persons must be independent during the period when they are members of a standard-setting unit. The members of the standard-setting units are employed by the standard-setter and cannot have any affiliation with another employer. However, the Swedish standard-setters do not have such a financial situation that would make it possible to have members employed full time.

For the period 1990 to 1999 Table 1 shows how many persons belonging to various interest groups that have been members of the five actual standard-setting units during one year. In the RR nine positions have been available to hold during each year. It is interesting to note that for the accountants three positions have been available to hold in the RR each year but during some years only one accountant has actually held a position. For an interest group to exercise influence it seems important that persons belonging to that group also hold the positions available. In another study of accounting standard-setting in Sweden (Törnqvist et al, 2000b) it was found that among the members of the board of the BFN the accountants had a low degree of attendance at meetings.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Persons belonging to the interest group auditors or others have participated in the standard-setting in four of the five actual standard-setting units. In contrast persons

belonging to the interest groups financial analysts, trade unions and tax authorities have been members of one actual standard-setting unit only.

Table 1 also shows the number of positions one person belonging to a certain interest group could have held in one or more actual standard-setting units during the period 1990 to 1999. For persons belonging to the interest group auditors or others it has been possible to hold 36 positions in total. However, for the financial analysts and persons belonging to the interest groups trade unions and tax authorities the maximum has been ten positions.

If instead a comparison is made between the interest groups Table 1 shows that persons belonging to the interest group auditors have held 131 positions in total in four actual standard-setting units during the period 1990 to 1999. This means that the auditors have participated in the standard-setting to a much higher degree than the other interest groups. One explanation is that only auditors are members of the actual standard-setting unit in the FAR. But even if these 60 positions are excluded the number of positions held is much higher compared to the other groups except the financial analysts. For the financial analysts a high number of positions have been available each year in the actual standard-setting unit in the SFF. The total number of positions that persons belonging to various interest groups have held in the five actual standard-setting units amount to 375 for the period 1990 to 1999.

4.2. Ranking of persons holding positions

There are 58 persons who have participated in the standard-setting by holding positions in or more actual standard-setting units during the period 1990 to 1999. Table 2 shows the result of ranking the persons according to the total number of positions the persons have held.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

What is common for the persons who are at the top of the list, the first seven persons in this study, is that they have been members in more than one actual standard-setting unit. Five of them have been members of the RR. The seven persons at the top of the list seem to have had opportunities over time to exercise influence on many types of accounting issues. Two of the seven persons belong to the group others, three are auditors, one is an accountant and one is an academic. Thus, four of the eight interest groups are represented.

Four auditors, four financial analysts, one person belonging to the interest group others, one accountant and one person belonging to the group trade unions have participated in one of the actual standard-setting units during the whole period 1990 to 1999. The person with the highest ranking, belonging to the group others, has been a member every year during the period 1990 to 1999 of two actual standard-setting units. The representatives for the tax authorities have participated during six years at most. The total number of positions for those persons at the top who belong to the interest groups auditors, accountants and academics is much higher compared to the

average number of positions for persons belonging to these groups. For the auditors 17, 16 and 12 positions can be compared with an average of seven positions. For the accountant 15 positions can be compared with an average of six positions and for the academic 13 positions can be compared with six positions. However, for the group others the 13 positions for one of them at the top is lower than the average for this group as there are only three persons belonging to the group others and the one at the top of the list has held 26 positions.

Table 2 also shows the total number of positions held in relation to the total number of positions that could have been held by one person belonging to a certain interest group during the period 1990 to 1999. The ratio is 1.0 for four financial analysts and one representative for trade unions. For the financial analysts this means that the persons have held a position every year during the period 1990 to 1999 in the actual standard-setting unit in the SFF, and that they have not had the opportunity to hold positions in other actual standard-setting units. For the person, classified into the group others, that was ranked highest the ratio is 0.72. For the others among the seven at the top it varies between 0.65 for the academic, 0.58 for the accountant, 0.47, 0.44 and 0.33 for the auditors and is finally 0.36 for another person classified into the group others. It is thus easier for a person to have an opportunity to exercise influence if that person belongs to such an interest group that has a high number of positions available to hold for the persons belonging to the group.

In the studies by Jönsson (1984) and Sandin (1988b) a reputational approach was used when producing a ranking list. In this study the positional approach has been used instead. In Table 3 the comparison of the ranking lists in the three studies is restricted

to the persons at the top of the lists, and in the studies by Jönsson (1984) and Sandin (1988b) there was a group of five persons at the top. In these studies the respondents classified the elite persons into the following four categories: accountant, auditor, opinion leader or rule maker. In table 3 the employer has been used instead and the persons at the top of the lists have been classified into those interest groups that have been used in the study for the period 1990 to 1999 in order to facilitate the comparison.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Table 3 shows that there are three auditors, one academic and one person belonging to the group others at the top of the ranking list in the study by Jönsson (1984). In the study by Sandin (1988b) there are instead three auditors, one academic and one person belonging to the group others. Among the seven persons at the top of the list for the period 1990 to 1999 there are three auditors, two persons belonging to the interest group others, one accountant and one academic.

An auditor was ranked highest in the two studies in the 1980's while a person belonging to the group others got the highest ranking for the period 1990 to 1999. However, in this context it should be noted that Rolf Rundfelt who has been classified into the group others in this study has been employed for many years as a consultant at a public accounting firm. But he has also been employed part time as a university professor and has earlier been employed by the SI in the 1980's when he started a reference group for accounting issues. Also the other person classified into the group

others, Hans Edenhammar, has been an auditor for many years before he worked as a journalist and was later employed by the Stockholm Stock Exchange.

Also, the comparison of the three studies shows that it is only for the period 1990 to 1999 that a person belonging to the interest group accountants is included among the persons at the top of the ranking list. This is interesting as the standard-setter that was established in 1989, the Foundation of Good Accounting Practice, had the aim of obtaining better acceptance from the producers of accounting information.

Since some of the persons at the top 1980 and 1987 have participated for many years in standard-setting organizations the reputation of being influential may have reflected that a person has held a position in a standard-setting unit during many years. However, in the ranking list of the first study there are two persons who have been judged as influential but who have not held positions in standard-setting organizations. Those persons could not have been included at the top if a positional approach had been used. One of them is an academic, Sven-Erik Johansson, a professor at the Stockholm School of Economics. In this context it is interesting to note that his colleague at the same school and co-author of some publications, professor Lars Östman, is included among those at the top of the list for the period 1990 to 1999. The other one is Boris Carlsson who has been administrative head at the BFN. As the administrative heads have not held positions in actual standard-setting units they have not been included in the study for the period 1990 to 1999.

One person, Hans Edenhammar, is included among those at the top in all three studies. Also five of the other six persons that are at the top for the period 1990 to

1999 have been included in the ranking list in at least one of the earlier studies, however not at the top of the list. The ranking for these persons in 1980 and 1987 are as follows: Rolf Rundfelt 9 and 7, Lennart Huldén 21 and 6, Sigvard Heurlin 18 in 1987, Lars Ohlsson-Leijon 15 in 1987 and Lars Östman 26 and 8 (Jönsson, 1984 and Sandin, 1988a). This shows that it may take some time to get a high ranking.

However, for the period 1990 to 1999 there are two persons who have not held positions during many years but who ought to have been rather influential. One of them is Peter Malmqvist, a financial analyst, who has been very active in terms of presentations at conferences and publications. He has been a member of the actual standard-setting unit in the SFF during three years. The other one is Margit Knutsson. She has been a member of the RR during four years. But she is also employed as an accounting expert at the SI being the one that arranges meetings for discussions of exposure drafts within the reference group of the SI. As the positional approach has been applied these persons have got a rather low ranking. It is of course hard to speculate about which ranking they would have achieved if a reputational approach had been used instead. As mentioned above it has taken some time for the persons at the top of the list to get a high ranking.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Swedish standard-setters studied are all producing non-legal standards and the acceptance by interested parties is important. According to Horngren (1973) accounting standard-setting is as much a product of political action as of logic or

empirical findings due to the need of acceptance by the interest groups affected. Brunsson (1989) argues that for a political organization the conflict between members is important for the legitimacy of both the organization and the individual members. Therefore, it may be easier to achieve acceptance if there is such a composition of the actual standard-setting unit that positions are available for persons representing various interest groups and evenly distributed.

The criteria for selection used when appointing members has been expertise and interest. In the RR the members are not regarded as representatives for specific interest groups. However, in practice there seems to be a small difference between the participation as an expert with an employer belonging to a certain interest group and the participation as a representative for an interest group.

This study shows that in the RR there have been positions available to hold for persons belonging to five interest groups. For the auditors three positions have been available to hold. Also for the accountants three positions have been available while persons belonging to the other three groups have each had one position available to hold. In the BFN positions have been available for seven interest groups and most of the representatives for these groups have held up to two positions per year. The auditors have held between two and three positions, the group others one and the tax authorities one. Thus, in the BFN more interest groups have been represented and the distribution of positions has been more even compared to the RR. Regarding effects for the legitimacy it is interesting to note that, since January 2000, the national government has, through the BFN, the main responsibility in Sweden for the

development of good accounting practice, except for the financial service companies, in which case the FI has the right to issue standards (FAR, 1999).

Auditors have participated in the standard-setting to a much higher extent than the other interest groups. Even if the positions in the FAR are excluded auditors have held a higher number of positions than most of the other interest groups. Thus, even if the FAR finished producing standards in 1989 the auditors still have had good opportunities to exercise influence on accounting standard-setting in Sweden during the 1990's. Especially, as there is another group that during some years have not even taken the opportunity to exercise influence by having several persons from the group participating as members of an actual standard-setting unit. Persons belonging to the group accountants have during some years held only one of the three positions available for accountants in the RR.

What is common for the Swedish standard-setters studied, concerning appointment principles applied, is that there is no limitation when it comes to how many years a person can be a member of an actual standard-setting unit. Furthermore, none of the members has been employed full time by the standard-setters due to lack of financial resources.

The result in terms of ranking for the period 1990 to 1999 shows that it is important for a person belonging to a certain interest group that the interest group is represented in many standard-setters. The seven persons at the top of the list have all been members of more than one actual standard-setting unit and they have held more than

ten positions in total. This study also shows that it may take some to get a high ranking.

Two studies of influence on accounting standard-setting in Sweden were made in the 1980's. In both of them a reputational approach was used. In this study a positional approach has been used instead. In all three studies there is a group of five or seven persons at the top of the list with such characteristics that this group deviates from the others on the ranking lists. There are three auditors at the top in the three studies. However, only for the period 1990 to 1999 there is an accountant among those at the top. This may be an effect of the aim, when a new standard-setting body was founded in 1989, to have a broader participation of interest groups than earlier in order to increase the acceptance among the producers of accounting information.

In Jönsson (1985) some of the problems with the reputational approach were commented upon. Besides being static in character it becomes difficult when applying this approach to distinguish between having real power and having a reputation as powerful. When the positional approach is applied other problems arise. The ranking does not show to which extent the persons who have held positions have really influenced the decisions taken in the actual standard-setting units. Furthermore, the number of positions available in an actual standard-setting unit e.g. the high number of positions in the SFF has affected the ranking in such a way that many persons have been included.

However, compared to the reputational approach the positional approach is objective in character as the ranking is based on documentation about positions held by certain

persons. Furthermore, the reputational approach is focused on the persons even if the persons are classified into various interest groups while the positional approach makes it possible to focus on both the persons and the interest groups. This is an advantage as it is important to consider political aspects when studying influence on accounting standard-setting in Sweden.

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Table 1. Availability of positions in actual standard setting units during the period 1990-1999

<i>Interest groups</i>	<i>RR</i>	<i>UITF</i>	<i>BFN</i>	<i>SFF</i>	<i>FAR</i>	<i>Total number of positions that could have been held by one person belonging to an interest group during 1990-1999</i>	<i>Total number of positions held by persons belonging to an interest group during 1990-1999</i>
Auditors	3	2	2-3	-	6	36	131
The others	1	1	1	2	-	36	46
Accountants	1-3	1-2	1-2	-	-	26	46
Legal experts	1	-	2	-	-	21	30
Academics	1	0-1	0-2	-	-	20	22
Financial analysts	-	-	-	5-10	-	10	71
Trade unions	-	-	1-2	-	-	10	19
Tax authorities	-	-	1	-	-	10	10
Positions held per year during the 1990's	7-9	5-6	10-11	7-12	6		

Table 2. Ranking list for the period 1990-1999

<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of positions held in total*</i>	<i>Ratio **</i>	<i>Interest group</i>	<i>Actual standard-setting units</i>
Rolf Rundfelt (10 RR+6 UITF+10 SFF)	26	0.72	Others	RR+UITF+SFF
Lennart Huldén (10RR+6 UITF+ 1 FAR)	17	0.47	Auditors	RR+UITF+FAR
Sigvard Heurlin (10 RR+ 6 UITF)	16	0.44	Auditors	RR+UITF
Lars Ohlsson-Leijon (10 RR+4 UITF+1 BFN)	15	0.58	Accountants	RR+UITF+BFN
Hans Edenhammar (10 SFF+3 BFN)	13	0.36	Others	SFF+BFN
Lars Östman (7 RR + 2 UITF + 4 BFN)	13	0.65	Academics	RR+UITF+BFN
Bo Engström (9 FAR+3 BFN)	12	0.33	Auditors	FAR+BFN
Carl-Eric Bohlin	10	0.27	Auditors	FAR
Mikael Gunnarsson	10	1.00	Financial analysts	SFF
Björn Jansson	10	1.00	Financial analysts	SFF
Per Jungqvist	10	1.00	Financial analysts	SFF
Connie Ljung	10	1.00	Auditors	BFN
Jan-Eric Moreau	10	1.00	Trade unions	BFN
Ulf Strömsten	10	1.00	Financial analysts	SFF
Olof Cederberg	9	0.25	Auditors	FAR
Jan Eriksson	9	0.25	Auditors	RR
Gösta Karlsson	9	0.90	Trade unions	BFN
Peter Markborn	9	0.25	Auditors	FAR
Åke Näsman	9	0.25	Auditors	FAR
Siv Berlin	8	0.22	Auditors	BFN
Bengt Rydén	7	0.19	Others	BFN
Gustav Sandström	7	0.35	Legal experts	BFN
Per Thorell	7	0.35	Legal experts	RR
Leif Borin	6	0.23	Accountants	UITF
Gunnar Johansson	6	0.23	Accountants	BFN
Jan Svanberg	6	0.30	Legal experts	BFN
Anders Thorell	6	0.60	Tax authorities	BFN
Stig von Bahr	5	0.25	Legal experts	BFN
Jan Blomberg	5	0.19	Accountants	RR
Ulf Fahlgren	5	0.50	Financial analysts	SFF
Sven-Erik Johansson	5	0.24	Academics	RR
Hans Lindblad	5	0.19	Accountants	RR
Kerstin Plogner	5	0.14	Auditors	BFN
Dennis Svensson	5	0.14	Auditors	FAR
Erik Danielsson	4	0.11	Auditors	BFN
Olle Gunnarsson	4	0.11	Auditors	FAR
Margit Knutsson	4	0.20	Legal experts	RR
Anders Rydin	4	0.40	Financial analysts	SFF
Jan Siling	4	0.15	Accountants	RR
Patrik Tillman	4	0.40	Financial analysts	SFF
Per Afrell	3	0.30	Financial analysts	SFF
Annika Andersson	3	0.30	Financial analysts	SFF
Pontus Ekman	3	0.30	Financial analysts	SFF
Ingrid Engshagen	3	0.14	Academics	BFN
Sten Holmberg	3	0.30	Financial analysts	SFF
Peter Malmqvist	3	0.30	Financial analysts	SFF
Åke Stavling	3	0.12	Accountants	BFN
Rolf Törnqvist	3	0.30	Tax authorities	BFN
Lars Höglund	2	0.20	Financial analysts	SFF
Sven-Åke Svenberg	2	0.08	Accountants	RR
Peter Andrén	1	0.05	Legal experts	BFN
Clas Blix	1	0.03	Auditors	FAR

Bo Fridman	1	0.03	Auditors	FAR
Per Hanner	1	0.03	Auditors	RR
Bo Norrman	1	0.10	Tax authorities	BFN
Thomas Mossberg	1	0.10	Financial analysts	SFF
Eva Sandström	1	0.03	Auditors	BFN
Agneta Stark	1	0.05	Academics	BFN

* Number of positions held by one person in one or more actual standard-setting units during the period 1990 to 1999

** Number of positions held by one person in relation to the number of positions that could have been held by the person, a number that varies between the interest groups.

Table 3. Persons at the top of the ranking lists and the interest groups that these persons belong to

<i>Reputational approach</i>				<i>Positional approach</i>	
<i>1980*</i>		<i>1987**</i>		<i>1990-1999</i>	
	<i>Interest group***</i>		<i>Interest group***</i>		<i>Interest group***</i>
Per Hanner	Aud.	Per Hanner	Aud.	Rolf Rundfelt	Others
Hans Edenhammar	Aud.	Sven-Erik Johansson	Acad.	Lennart Huldén	Aud.
Sven-Erik Johansson	Acad.	Bo Fridman	Aud.	Hans Edenhammar	Others
Boris Carlsson	Others	Hans Edenhammar	Others	Sigvard Heurlin	Aud.
Sune Carlsson	Aud.	Bertil Edlund	Aud.	Lars Ohlsson -Leijon	Account.
				Lars Östman	Acad.
				Bo Engström	Aud.

* Results presented by Jönsson (1984).

** Results presented by Sandin (1988b).

*** The classification is based on the employer of the persons.