



STATSKONTORET

Control of Autonomous Agencies

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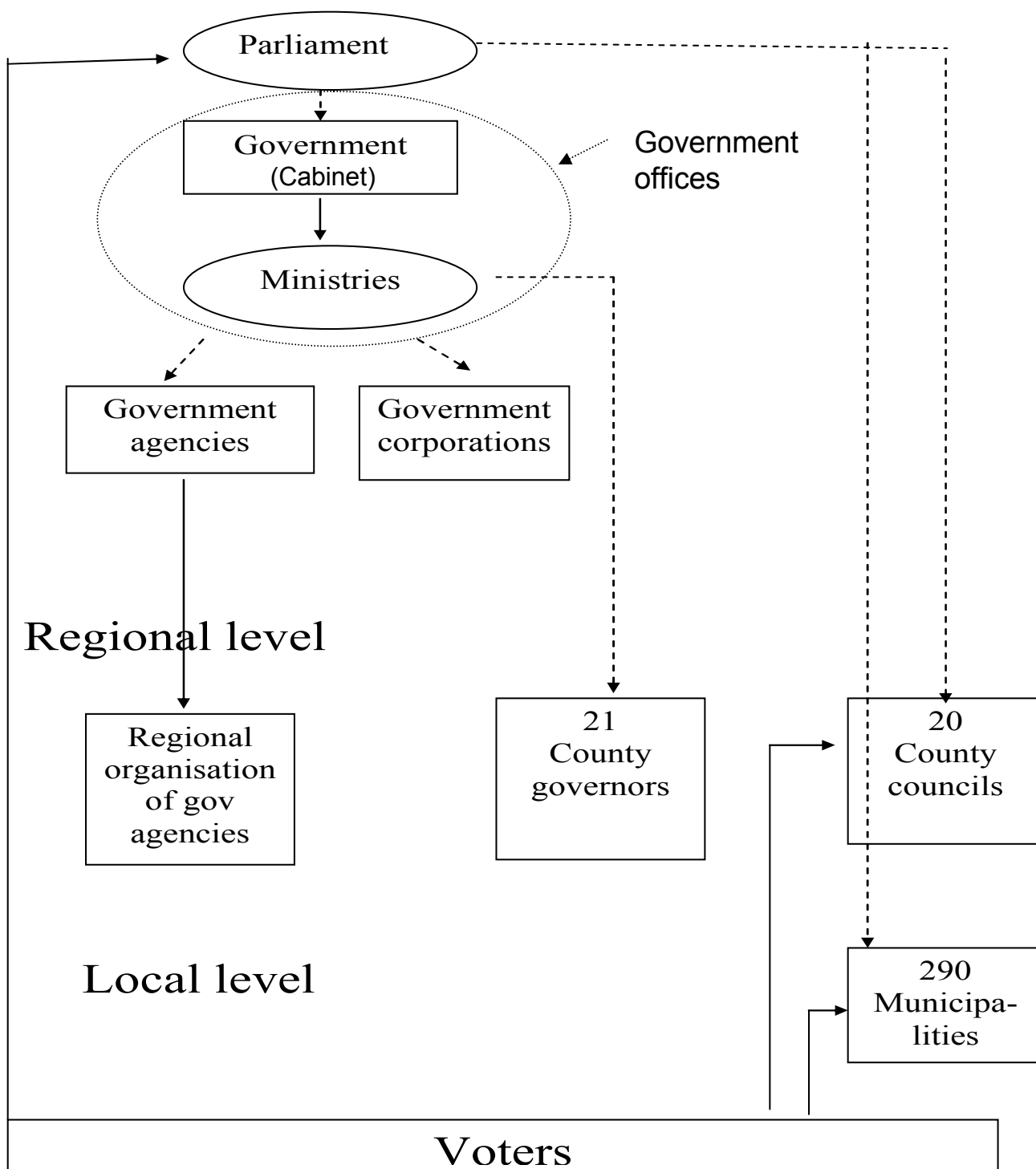
Swedish experiences

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Structure of government

National level



- ◆ 11 ministries (departments)
- ◆ 21 ministers
- ◆ 4 500 employees in ministries
- ◆ 200 000 employees in 500 agencies
- ◆ 200 000 employees in national government corporations
- ◆ 1 100 000 employees in local government
- ◆ Private companies make up 65% of total employment in the economy

National government:

Division of responsibilities

□ Parliament

- Legislates
- Appropriates budgets for agencies
- Sets goals for policy areas

□ Government (Cabinet)

- Specifies budgets and goals for agencies
- Issues assignments for agencies
- Appoints agency heads

□ Agencies

- Acquire resources
- Handle cases, perform business

National government:

Characteristics

- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies – courts and other agencies are treated alike
- ◆ No Civil Service – only judges have tenures
- ◆ Ministers don't rule – collective decision making of the Cabinet
- ◆ No one can interfere with agencies in their handling of cases (Constitution)
- ◆ Public access to documents
- ◆ Ex post control – no ex ante control

Parliament: Policy Area
Education

Objective

*Sweden should be a leading nation
in knowledge, quality of training,
lifelong learning for economic
growth and equality*

Policy Area: Education

- ◆ Program 1: Primary and secondary education
- ◆ Program 2: Adult education
- ◆ Program 3: Tertiary education
- ◆ Program 4: Student aid and loans

Government: Program 3
Tertiary education

Target

50 percent of a cohort should have started tertiary education at the age of 25

Government: Program 4
Student aid and loans

Objective

Student aid and loans should help people to undertake tertiary education regardless of wealth and disabilities

Government Control document:
**Swedish National Board of
Student Aid**

Objective

*Student aid and loans should help people
to undertake tertiary education
regardless of wealth and disabilities*

Targets

*Telephone responses within 3 minutes
shall increase*

Customer satisfaction shall increase

...

Government Control document:
**Swedish National Board of
Student Aid**

- ◆ Business area 1: Administration of student aid and loans
- ◆ Business area 2: Repayment of loans
- ◆ Business area 3-6:

Government Control document:
Business area 1: Administration of
student aid and loans

Objective

- ◆ *Promote enrolment and social equality*

Target

- ◆ *Proportion of handled cases within less than three weeks should increase*

Budget

- ◆ *Appropriation and fees (set by the Government) should cover administrative costs*
- ◆ *A limit on loans for administrative investments*
- ◆ *Open ended appropriations for aid and loans respectively*

Government Control document:
Business area 1: Administration of
student aid and loans

Special report requirements

- ◆ *Number of students, age, amounts granted, type of grant, loan etc.*
- ◆ *Number of cases handled, handling time, numbers rejected, unit cost per type etc.*
- ◆ ...

Government Control document:
Swedish National Board of
Student Aid

Special report requirements

- ◆ *Number of telephone calls, average waiting time, written responses and response time*
- ◆ *Customer satisfaction according to surveys*
- ◆ *Progress of adjustments of offices and information for disabled persons*

Government Control document:

Assignments

- ◆ *Monitor living conditions for students*
- ◆ *Evaluate extra support to students with children*
- ◆ *Evaluate efficiency and correctness gains in administration due to computerized communication with other agencies*

Agencies' business

- ◆ Hire and fire personell
- ◆ Bargain salaries and wages
- ◆ Rent and equip offices
- ◆ Borrow money for administrative investments
- ◆ Reorganize (up to a limit)
- ◆ Handle cases according to law without interference from anyone

Annual reports

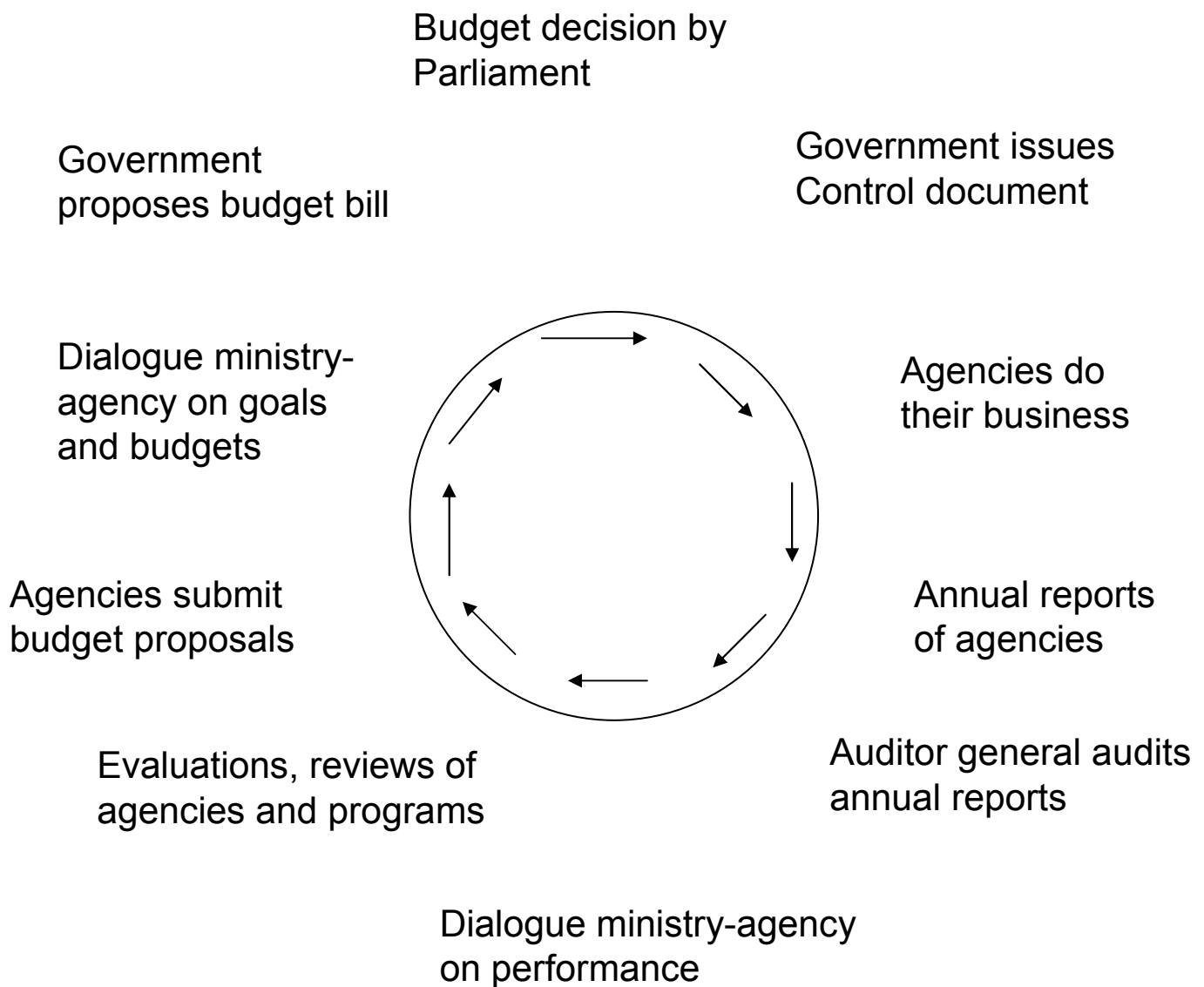
(for some agencies also half year reports)

- ◆ Financial report (yearly and monthly)
- ◆ Balance sheet
- ◆ Results report
 - Achievement in relation to goals (some agencies report four times per year)
 - Quantity and quality of output
 - Unit and program costs (in fixed prices)
 - Other required reports

Control

- ◆ Internal auditing
- ◆ External auditing
 - financial auditing
 - efficiency auditing
- ◆ Evaluations, reviews, inquiries, commissions
- ◆ Ombudsmen
- ◆ Appeals by clients/citizens
- ◆ Public access to documents – free press

Control cycle



Misunderstandings

- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies are free
- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies complicates accountability
- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies don't participate in policy making
- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies cannot be controlled
- ◆ Ministers may not talk with "autonomous" agencies
- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies are like executive agencies
- ◆ "Autonomous" agencies are controlled only via goals
- ◆ Performance management is only about goals and indicators – evaluations equally important

Problems

- ◆ Ministries don't act like real "owners"
 - Don't ask for relevant results
 - Don't analyze results and financial needs
 - Don't coordinate enough
 - Don't appoint real managers
 - Don't hold managers accountable
- ◆ Proliferation of goals ("political decease") and assignments
- ◆ Dialogue with agencies has mixed up accountability (ministerial rule via the back door?)