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The Monarchy in Sweden An Anomaly in an Egalitarian Country?

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Executive Summary

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This document analyzes the evolution and current role of the monarchy in Sweden, a country known for its strong egalitarian and democratic tradition. Despite the fact that the Social Democratic Party, dominant for much of the 20th century, aimed to abolish the monarchy, it never carried out this measure due to other political priorities. The monarchy has managed to adapt to social and political changes, maintaining a high level of popular support.

Since the 9th century, Sweden has been ruled by monarchs. During the 16th century, Gustav Vasa consolidated royal power and established a hereditary monarchy. Over the centuries, the monarchy transitioned from a politically significant institution to a purely representative entity. In 1917, Gustav V accepted universal suffrage, and in 1975, with the new Constitution, the monarchy lost its last vestiges of political power, becoming solely symbolic.

King Carl XVI Gustaf, who has reigned since 1973, has shaped his role according to modern times. His approach includes representing the country at international events, supporting environmental initiatives, and advocating for the Swedish business sector. Crown Princess Victoria enjoys great popularity, further solidifying dynastic continuity.

The monarchy has proven to be a diplomatic and cultural asset for Sweden. The royal family adds prestige to official events such as the Nobel Prize ceremonies and state visits, which often include business delegations to promote Swedish exports.

There are criticisms of the monarchy, mainly from republican sectors arguing its high cost and lack of financial transparency. Nevertheless, public support for the institution remains stable between 65% and 75%. Recent research highlights that the monarchy has successfully adapted to the media era, becoming a key element of Swedish national identity.

One of the current challenges is the reduction of history education in schools, which could affect the understanding of the monarchy's historical role. Despite this, the monarchical model continues to be perceived as a factor of stability and continuity in Swedish society.

In conclusion, the monarchy in Sweden is an institution that has successfully evolved over time, adapting to the country's democratic and social expectations. Although there are critical voices, the continuity of the monarchy does not appear to be at risk in the short term. Its ability to represent Sweden on the international stage, its role in national cohesion, and the popularity of the royal family ensure its relevance in contemporary Swedish society.

Abstract

The monarchy in Sweden works well as an institution despite Sweden being a country dominated for much of the 20th century by a Social Democratic Party whose official goal, paradoxically, was to abolish the very same institution. However, the Social Democrats decided that other goals were more important. Three phases can be distinguished in the relationship between political power and the Monarchy. First, in 1917, the then king Gustav V accepted universal suffrage. At the beginning of the 70s, King Gustav VI Adolphus agreed to yield the only political prerogative the king had, which was to help with the formation of a new government in difficult situations. When the current king, Carl XVI Gustaf, acceded to the throne in 1973, his role was already merely representative.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the king and the Swedish Royal House enjoy the respect and affection of the population. Carl XVI Gustaf succeeded in creating a role different from that of his predecessors, a role in accordance with his personality and the new times. In addition to official functions, he is seen as a pro-business personality and fond of outdoor activities. The crown princess, Victoria, is even more popular than her father. Currently, there is no strong demand for change. Republicans exist, but they are few and their voice does not find much echo.

Keywords

Swedish monarchy; Carl XVI Gustaf; Victoria of Sweden; Sweden; Social Democracy.

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