

Chapter 106 : Carl XVI Gustaf & Silvia Sommerlath - Everyday Business.

The activities of Carl Gustaf & Queen Silvia are too diverse for it to be possible to make a comprehensive description. Half has to do with the office as it is defined in the constitution. The other half is ancillary activities.

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The Court distinguishes between internal and external activities. The internal activities are the royal family's private life and administration. The Management Group meetings take three hours each week. The external activities are what is “displayed”. The Royal Court's information department publishes an annual activity report with the external activities in the form of a diary. In the annual report 1997-2011, 15 years, there are 7228 “events”. Per year Carl Gustaf participates in 291 events, Silvia in 211, Carl Gustaf alone in 110, Silvia alone in 81 & both at the same time in 130. During the last 10 years, Crown Princess Victoria has taken over some 70 events each year from Carl Gustaf and Silvia. The workload is uneven and has always been so. For example, in September 1974, Carl Gustaf was free 13 days and the rest of the time worked 190 hours.¹ It is difficult to assess their children's efforts based on the activity reports. Sometimes training is considered an external activity, sometimes not. In 1997-2011, Crown Princess Victoria had 43 percent of Carl Gustaf's external activities, Prince Carl Philip had 13 percent and Princess Madeleine 10 percent.

The activity report describes each event. The events have been coded according to the tables below. The coding has been done in three groups and then refined: *Torekov* is what has to do with Carl Gustaf's duties under the constitution. *Protection* is the organization in which Carl Gustaf is actively involved. *Representation* is everything else.

Carl Gustaf's constitutional activities according to the *Torekov* are 32 percent of the events, his *patronage* 17 percent and his *representation* 51 percent. At half of the events he makes a speech. All the events require administration so maybe the appanage is spent according to these percentages. Whether this is good or bad escapes my judgment. Carl Gustaf's critics tend to emphasize that his duties are too diffuse to be commented on. However, as the tables shows, they are not more diffuse than that they can be described. Another criticism is that his duties are up to himself, which is 50 percent correct, viz. have no connection to the constitution. Carl Gustaf's involvement in sports has been criticized but is not very extensive. He sees it as part of Swedish democracy. Everyone in the audience cheers for the winner.

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The court lists 66 organizations that Carl Gustaf protects. The list appears to be out of date. In the last 15 years, Carl Gustaf has been interested in only 48 of the organizations and only seven of them annually. Carl Gustaf protects the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) but WWF is not included in the list. The extensive “free” representation (category other) is that Carl Gustaf travels the country and takes an interest in most anything.

1997-2011 Carl Gustaf had 175 working days per year with 291 events. On an average Silvia participated in 45 percent of them. She has always devoted herself to family. Over time her own activities have grown in scope. The number of common working days has fallen from 130 to 83. The number of joint activities has fallen from 166 to 100.

¹ Kullenberg, 1975: ss. 252-260.

Silvia's other patronage is about disability issues and the Convention on the Rights of Children. Her other representation differs slightly from Carl Gustafs. Less of history & technology. More of medicine & culture. Every now and then, she complains that no one writes about it. I have found two such statements. One from 1979 and this from 1988: "I often participate in interesting seminars and congresses on e.g. medical issues. When the only result in the newspapers then becomes pictures and texts that depict my clothes and my hat - then I am sad."² On her 70th anniversary, the subject was once again in the papers: "She suffers from the same thing that many other women suffer from, namely that we are all too rarely described according to our skills, and all too often according to how we look. Silvia is not just tiaras and frayed dresses."³

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Further lists are published by the Court of Carl Gustaf's state visits, national tours and municipal visits. It is difficult to understand what the court wants to accomplish with the lists except proving Carl Gustaf's energy and endurance. In addition to the state visits, there are numerous official visits. For example, Sweden-America have never had state visits but 17 official visits 1973-2011, several of them with Carl Gustaf. He spends about 40 days a year travelling within the country and abroad.

1973-2011, Carl Gustaf carried out 69 state visits and received 56 response visits. A total of 125 state visits from and to 50 countries. Dividing the world into regions, Carl Gustaf has mainly visited nearby areas: Nordic, Baltic, North Sea, Mediterranean & Central Europe (47 visits = 67 percent). The response visits were also mainly from these neighbouring countries (45 response visits = 82 percent). Visits and response visits from nearby countries have on average lasted 3.5 days. The remote countries a day longer. Obviously, state visits are more political than economical. Marks of friendship between regimes. That is also how they are perceived. An analysis of the economic impact of the state visits, slight to none existent, is presented in a later chapter.

Depending on how you define it, representation is all or half of Carl Gustaf's profession. Despite this, the management team does not seem to have discussed what it should be used for. The guidelines are to spread the visits across the country and to cater for all interests perceived as serious. It was the same idea as with the medal award. To reward people by paying attention to them. Marshal of the Realm Ingemar Eliasson, as an old politician, wanted to politicize the representation by giving it a stated purpose, but that seems to have had no effect:

IE: Representing the people and being a symbol of the nation should also be given an intellectual content. It should include the task of forming and articulating values upon which Swedish democracy is based. In this sense, the Head of State participates in a continuous opinion-forming without, however, interfering in current political issues.⁴

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² Kerstin Alfredsson. Kungaparet i exklusiv intervju. Journalisten, 1988:33.

³ Lova Olsson. Intervju med Maud Olofsson. Svenska Dagbladet, 2013-10-20.

⁴ Eliasson 2013.

During Carl Gustaf's term of office, the Marshal of the Realm has been the consultative body for the laws directly affecting the royal house - the constitution proper (prop 1972:66), the succession order (prop 1977/78:71) and the church-state relationship (prop 1997/98:49). Since then, there have only been budgetary discussions.

Carl Gustaf's domain consists of the castle domain and the court domain. None of them have a political role within the parliamentary system. The "politics" are handled by Carl Gustaf himself. There are no political advisers (but sometimes the Marshal of the Realm is a former politician) and no investigative resources (but sometimes the information department collates newspaper articles). When asked why the answer is lack of money. When Carl Gustaf writes speeches, however, they are referred to politicians and sometimes to external consultants. One interpretation is that Carl Gustaf deliberately strives for a non political workplace. If employees start thinking politically, you never know where it ends. Marshal of the Realm Ingemar Eliasson, for example, claims that during his entire term of office he had to point out to the employees that the court was not a monarchist campaign organization but that the monarchy was best served by helping Carl Gustaf in his office so that the political majority was satisfied.⁵ After Brunei Eliasson tried to initiate a discussion: How did the royal family perceive their role? How did they think the Swedish people thought of them. What did they do well. What did they do bad? It came to nothing though.⁶ Eliasson later wrote an essay on his failed mission: Have the lawmakers left the head of state to his own devices?⁷

Attorney General Thomas Bodström was impressed that Carl Gustaf managed to stay as informed as he did. A prime minister had about 20 ministers and 4,500 officials as a comparison. Carl Gustaf used the opportunities he had. However, Bodström was critical of the ad hoc nature of it all: "That ministers inform him during dinner and the like, while eating and drinking, impacts the quality of it all. A prime minister has, of course, a much, much greater responsibility, but the preconditions are still wrong."⁸ As a complement, 2004-2007 theme days on subjects such as working life, public health & crime were organized with invited politicians and experts.

The first theme day held [2004] had the following set-up: Government, industry, scientists, trade union representatives, environmental organizations and individual forest owners answered questions. This half-day seminar was supplemented with a field excursion. Similar theme days have been conducted on some twenty subjects.⁹

In conjunction with the state visits Carl Gustaf has extensive contacts with the Department of Foreign Affairs. The highest political official there is called Cabinet Secretary. Carl Gustaf's contacts with this person have varied: Sverker Åström 1972-77 and Leif Lifland 1977-82 often accompanied the state visits. By contrast, not Pierre Schori 1982-91. Carl Gustaf also has extensive contacts with the protocol office that manages the practical. Carl Gustaf's reputation in diplomatic circles has improved with time. In the beginning he was spontaneous. A diplomat remembered that he could then ask questions "that made your hair curl".¹⁰

⁵ Ulla Waldén. Bodknoddaren som blev riksmarskalk. SR P4 Värmland, 2009-03-26. [Intervju med Ingemar Eliasson.]

⁶ Hultman, 2014.

⁷ Eliasson, 2012.

⁸ Bodström, 2011.

⁹ Eliasson, 2013.

¹⁰ Ann-Marie Åsheden. Våran kung: del 2. Dagens Nyheter 1985-12-23.

Each year, the annual reports of the court contain a description of the organization. Operation and maintenance is carried out by the castle domain. Representation by the court domain. The day-to-day operation of the court domain is organized by a management team chaired by Carl Gustaf. Over the years, it has been discussed whether Carl Gustaf ever takes advice from this management team. There is no indication that this is the case. No minutes are kept and no decisions are taken by vote. All decisions are made by Carl Gustaf alone. On the basis of his long experience, he thinks he knows best. It is alleged that Carl Gustaf takes advice from Silvia for his “policy profile” but it is unclear what that means. Documented advice from Silvia is all about the socializing and the ceremonial. She is expected to provide moral support. Princess Christina claims that over the years she has had a role as “sounding board, support and the devil's advocate” without wanting to enter into details.¹¹ On direct questions, Carl Gustaf and Silvia have said that they try to recruit people who have experience of “outside life”. They avoid yes-men, they like to have views on issues, but they want to decide for themselves. The management team and also unknown advisers - the “Executive Committee” - have nevertheless been criticized for Carl Gustaf's domestic policy mispriorities, his faux pas' and his crisis management.

The weakness of the organization was evident during Crown Princess Victoria's eating disorders in 1997, the Brunei crisis in 2004, the publication of “The Reluctant Monarch” in 2010 and also the revelations about Silvia's father 2002 and 2010. All things personal were anathema. As regards the eating disorders, no one dared to mention the issue. The Chief lady-in-waiting (now Mistress of the Robes) Alice Trolle-Wachtmeister was considered “most” responsible but dodged the issue. Afterwards, she experienced the whole situation as immensely unpleasant. The Brunei crisis was discussed, but no formal investigation was ever carried out. The management team consisted of Carl Gustaf, Silvia, Crown Princess Victoria, Marshal of the Realm Ingemar Eliasson, Chief of Staff Frank Rosenius, Head of Information Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg and Alice Trolle-Wachtmeister. This illustrious group found Carl Gustaf innocent and that everything was the media's fault. How they arrived at this conclusions we will never know. Since Tarras-Wahlberg later was replaced, Carl Gustaf seems to have reconsidered. At the time of the reluctant monarch in 2010, the management team seems to have stopped working because of family and loyalty conflicts. The natural thing would have been to penetrate the book in detail to determine what was true and what was false but that was never done. It would have been to doubt Carl Gustaf's innocence. The same thing with the revelations about Silvia's father. Silvia acted entirely on her own attempting to first deny the whole thing and then whitewash him.

What is not dealt with in the “Executive Committee” or the management team is dealt with in “family meetings”. Carl Gustaf tries to hold one every Sunday after a joint dinner. There is no information whatsoever about these meetings. What takes place must be inferred. Journalist Johan T Lindwall says he has insight but has never given a detailed description. Probably the most important thing is that the family should show a united front - in practice that wife, children and in-laws should subordinate themselves to what Carl Gustaf considers best for the monarchy, viz. himself. Some issues that risk dividing the family seem to be dealt with only between Carl Gustaf and the respective, e.g. Prince Carl Philip's claim to the throne, appropriate behaviour, marriage partners and various disciplinary errands.

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¹¹ Jenny Alexandersson. Utställningen om kungen och prinsessan Christinas fina tal. Aftonbladet, hovbloggen, 2013-09-13.

Staff turnover erodes the court's traditions. There are however seminars and lectures on historical and cultural subjects to preserve a core. It is unclear who is responsible for “keeping the flame alive”. Perhaps all these employees with a noble background. Since the importance of tradition is downplayed, tradition seems to boil down to loyalty and to ignorance of the past. Anything can be passed of as tradition.

Those who write about the court domain seem to expect that Carl Gustaf's employees have some distance to his role as head of state. This is not the case however. This was commented on in 1969 by journalist Åke Ortmark as an effect of the leadership's military and noble background combined with internal recruitment. Even bourgeois supposedly non-political ideals of office are common at court. Social change takes place, but slowly, slowly. The ravaging forces of time nibble at the monarchies sense of purpose. Probably Carl Gustaf isolates himself to preserve a sense of selfworth. You cannot profess democratic ideals without being influenced by it. Democracy eats your soul. Carl Gustaf and his sisters have dropped the nobility. Crown Princess Victoria and the siblings have dropped the high bourgeoisie. They feel more comfortable among upstarts.

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Carl Gustaf is the patron of six royal academies: The Academy of Free Arts, the Academy of Engineering Sciences, the Academy of War Sciences, the Academy of Music, the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Learning, History and Antiquities. Not forgetting the flagship, the Swedish Academy (of Literature). The Carl Gustaf is not involved in its day-to-day activities but has the right of attendance and approves the election of the members, the 18. Carl Gustaf awards the Nobel Prize and also since 1982 the Craaford Prize of the Academy of Sciences for topics outside the Nobel Prize: astronomy, earth science, life sciences (primarily ecology) and mathematics. Since 1992 also the Polar Prize. This was originally intended as a Nobel Prize in music but has had difficulty asserting itself.

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Since 1984, Carl Gustaf and IVA have organised what is known as the Royal Technology Missions. These are not sales trips as under Prince Bertil but industry delegations of 15-30 high level Swedish business leaders, government officials and university representatives. Also budding abilities participate. The aim is to establish contacts that can lead to a longer term exchange of ideas and business. The trips take place every 1.5 or 2 years and are one week long. They have gone to Japan, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, South Korea, South Africa, Brazil and India. By 2013, 21 countries. Carl Gustaf's participation acts as a door opener. Participants describe him as well-versed in all technical issues, energetic and keen for the delegation to benefit from the occasion.¹² To the extent that he has a position of his own, it is to revitalize old Swedish tradition with new technology.

His first trip in March 1984 was to Silicon Valley, California. The company travelled in a motorcade. First the motorcycle officers, then Carl Gustaf in a black Oldsmobil, the directors in two worn down Ford buses singing their heads off and at the end the Swedish Consul General in a cream-coloured Rolls-Royce. Carl Gustaf's chief of staff Stig Synnergren led the directors' morning gymnastics. Carl Gustaf also wanted them to join the evening gymnastics = disco but they weren't up to it. “At Stanford University, they listened to one of the world's

¹² Blomé, 2007.

foremost experts on visual thinking, Robert McKim. He let the Swedish delegation imagine that they were animals on a farm early in the morning. The king was appointed sheep, and was supposed to bleat and say bäh. [The others] were cows, hens and turkeys. They glanced nervously at the bleating king before themselves starting to moo and cackles. The purpose of the exercise: to illustrate the biggest obstacle to creative thinking - the fear of making a fool of oneself.”¹³ - “Bo Berggren, CEO of Stora, was on the IVA trip to Silicon Valley. He was amazed at the effect of a king abroad. “To experience how doors open is very strange. And the doors are really being opened, the companies are making great efforts to provide us with interesting information. During these trips, where the king is not challenged, where he feels he is useful as a door opener and appreciated, he's a completely different person than in official contexts at home. Both relaxed and sure of himself. On the IVA delegation's visit to Stanford University, it is reported that he gave a brilliant speech. - It is hard to take in that he is the same person who stutters his address at the opening of the Parliament. There is a difference between what you love to do and what you have to do, says one who heard the speech.”¹⁴

Later, the protocol has been further relaxed and Carl Gustaf travels in the bus with the others: “Royal technology mission is a curious conducted tour where the elite of the Swedish business community socialize in order to learn more about the country being visited, make contacts and tell about Swedish engineering. Politics is banned and in China [November 2010] neither human rights nor the Nobel Peace Prize is mentioned.”¹⁵ However, the Protocol is not completely abolished. The seats near Carl Gustaf are awarded by lot. It is probably these industrial delegations that in 1989 made Carl Gustaf an honorary doctor at the Royal Institute of Technology.

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Around every two years, Carl Gustaf organizes an international environmental symposium, named the Royal Colloquium. The symposium is of the order of 20 researchers and experts from different parts of the world who discuss climate and environmental issues in all possible aspects. They have a special character as a meeting ground of researchers and practitioners. As of 2013, there have been eleven symposia. The first three were held at Ulriksdal castle: The 1992 symposium was on the protection of tropical and subtropical coastal waters. The 1993 symposium was about recycling. The symposium in 1994 was about action - “going from knowing to doing” - with Maurice Strong as guest of honour. The fourth symposium in 1997 was on the Baltic Sea. One of the most ambitious symposia was the fifth symposium on November 18, 1999, at Stockholm Castle, entitled “Employment, environment and development”, a contribution to the UN Summit in Copenhagen in 1995 on measures to combat poverty.

Carl Gustaf also makes statements:

In 1989 he commented on the Norwegian seal hunt. The immediate reason was a report by Norwegian Odd F Lindberg “On seals and people”¹⁶, which showed how seal pups were clubbed to death. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper Expressen, Bo Strömstedt, travelled to Oslo to deliver a personal letter to Gro Harlem Brundtland

¹³ Veckans affärer, 1984-03-29.

¹⁴ Ann-Marie Åsheden. Våran kung: del 3. Dagens Nyheter 1985-12-27.

¹⁵ Fredrik Sjöshult. En nyfiken monark på strålande humör. Expressen, 2010-11-15.

¹⁶ Odd Flinderg. Om sälar och människor. Bo Lindin, miljöredaktionen i Karlstad, TV2, 1989-02-11, kl 21:15.

from Astrid Lindgren and three mail bags containing 48 thousand Swedish protest letters. Brundtland refused to receive him. Carl Gustaf contributed a statement during a state visit to New Zealand in an interview at the Swedish Embassy in Wellington: "If Gro Harlem Brundtland cannot take care of the seal problems, I wonder, how she will be able to take care of the Norwegian people?" This led to widespread criticism in both Sweden and Norway that he was out of line. Lars Werner (vpk) considered it as proof that the monarchy still had political significance. Even if he longer was part of the political system proper. While Carl Gustaf's deep feelings deserved respect, in this case he had violated the Constitution, if not in theory but de facto. Carl Gustaf replied that he did not regret a word of what he had said. The controversy, which spread to the Norwegian Parliament, became internationally known, and thus also the issue of seal hunting. At the end of the year, the Parliament decided that the clubbing of seal pups should be prohibited. As usual, Carl Gustaf's statement led to a debate on how to interpret the Torekov compromise:

So where is the limit of what the king can and cannot say?

- The King's rights to speak are regulated in the constitution. There is really nothing in it that the king may not speak politically, but in the comment to the bill there are vague limitations that are difficult to interpret says Sven-Olof Hedengren, Head of staff at the Swedish Marshal's Office.

- The King should, for example, [in his capacity as king] avoid expressing his opinion on controversial domestic issues, but may of course have private opinions like everyone else in Sweden.

Do you think the king has kept within this framework with the statement in New Zealand?

- I am not taking a position on that, but I can only observe that the issue is not really that controversial. Who wants to kill seal pups?¹⁷

(Afterwards, it was claimed that this was Carl Gustaf's revenge on Gro Harlem Brundtland for commenting sarcastically on him in Seoul in September the year before when Carl Gustaf and she were there to speak for their respective countries as host nation for the 1994 Winter Olympics. Carl Gustaf happened to arrive 20 minutes late for a breakfast meeting with President of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch. This was alleged being the decisive reason why Norway received the honour and not Sweden. Brundtland sprinkled salt in the wounds with the statement: Of course, you have to come in time if you want to get the hosting.

In June 1992, 17 Norwegian seal-hunters demanded an apology from Carl Gustaf through their lawyer. The reason was that Brundtland's committee of inquiry into their hunting methods had shown that everything had been according to regulations. Carl Gustaf withdrew his accusations via a letter from the Marshal of the Realm: "Since the information in both the press and TV was consistent and related to a particularly important conservation issue, it was natural for His Majesty to speak on the matter. This was done on the basis of information that has now subsequently proved to be not

¹⁷ Helena Thorfinn. Kungen kritiserar säljakten och norska statsministern. Svenska Dagbladet, 1989-02-16.

entirely accurate. The statement was not directed against any individual seal-hunter.”
The letter was then used in damages claims against the Norwegian media.¹⁸⁾

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In 1974 Carl Gustaf became an honorary member of the Swedish Scout Council, the cooperation organization of the five Swedish Scout Associations, the official representative of Swedish Scouting and affiliated to World Scout Foundation (WOSM). In 1977 he was asked if he also wanted to become honorary chairman of WOSM with the main task of financially supporting the Scout Movement through fundraising. Carl Gustaf agreed to this but felt he needed some support. He asked Marcus Wallenberg if he knew any suitable interested person. So Wallenberg did, one of his bankers, Sven Erik Ragnar (1937-2007).

In the 1990s all organised social activity declined, including Scouting. Despite the name, the Swedish Scout Council had had no real cooperation. This has now to come about. 2004-2006, the Council discussed a common objective.¹⁹ In 2007, it was assisted by Mats Dellham, Baden Powell Fellow and consultant, in conducting an organizational inquiry.²⁰ 2004-2006 Carl Gustaf contributed with a number of seminars on “Value-Based Leadership”. It was about the place of the Scout ideals in a new world: To practice what you preach, to stand up for your values and to act on them. Carl Gustaf launched the first seminar with a speech on the leadership ideals of business and scouting. In some way connecting them. Long ago he had met professor Oren Lyons (1930-), spokesman for the North American Prairie Indians. Lyons spoke a lot about “The Seventh Generation”, the need for long-term vision, “the long view”. So also Carl Gustaf. Lyons is one of the people Carl Gustaf admires.

Scouting has become part of Carl Gustaf's “foreign policy”. It has been most noted during his visits to various monarchies: Thailand, the Arab Emirates, Brunei. In the case of Thailand, Carl Gustaf visited a Jamboree in Sattahip at the end of 2002/2003, that had gathered 30 thousand Scouts. After the tsunami, he provided \$80,000 in study grants for the 400 Scouts who lost their parents and travelled around the country, thanking the Thai Scout Movement for their efforts in the rescue effort. In the Arab Emirates, Carl Gustaf has combined a kind of inspection tour of the Scouting business with semi-official state visits and business contacts. The same applies to Brunei.

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Carl Gustaf can be quite political in his consistency when he considers it risk-free (=does not clash with the Torekov-compromise). He's interested in the youth organisation “Fryshuset”. In 2006, shortly before his 60th anniversary, he, for example, invited 170 young people from Fryshuset to hold a seminar in the Bernadotte Library before the royal family, the school minister Ibrahim Baylan, MPs and foundations and organizations with similar activities. Anyone with a foreign-born parent had to raise their hand. It was 90 percent of the youth and 100 percent of the royal house. The young people rapped and talked about their experiences. Carl Gustaf insisted that what they were doing was heroic. Navigating a new world. To help ones comrades without without taking advantage of them. Many of the young people were very much moved by the experience. They did not seem to realize that in Sweden there is

¹⁸ Peter Svensson. Säljägare utnyttjar kungen i domstol. Expressen, 1992-08-12.

¹⁹ Johansson, m.fl., 2006.

²⁰ Blombergsson, m.fl., 2007.

neither high nor low. We all come from Adam. Carl Gustaf also visited Fryshuset unofficially on his way out into the archipelago, when it was still situated at the northern Hammarby port.

A similar initiative was an invitation to 14 anti-violence groups in 1995 with a follow-up in 1997. The meeting took place at the meeting room of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the castle. Laila Freivalds, at that time minister of Justice, also attended. In 1999 he held a round table conference at the castle on the topic of social violence. He put forward an idea of short prison sentences – a few days at the maximum – for deterrence which was widely criticized.