When the Anti-Establishment Becomes the Establishment

The relationship between public administrations, and municipal governments led by the Sweden Democrats

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Abstract

The Sweden Democrats is the prominent populist right-wing and anti-establishment party in Swedish politics. Since the election of 2018, the party have held the chair of the executive committee in five municipalities. The thesis' purpose is to examine the relationship between these municipal governments and the respective public administrations. Peters and Pierre's (2019) three options for populist governments are applied to the material, as the thesis hold theory testing and developing ambitions. The data is gathered through interviews with leading party representatives and a survey distributed to public administrators in each municipality. The findings suggest that the first three municipal governments to form chose different options, with varying outcomes. The two that formed later chose the same option, resulting in beneficial relationships. This suggests that while the national party organization was unprepared for the first local governments, it successively developed a coherent strategy based on their experiences. The theory is suggested to be broadened to its modification in this thesis – to encompass all of the public administration, to widen the applicability of the third option, and to include a fourth option where the political leadership backtracks on controversial policies to facilitate a favorable relationship with a strong public administration.

Key words: populism, public administration, Sverigedemokraterna, unelected officials, municipal government.

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1   Introduction

"If I put it like this: I had apprehensions before we physically took office and entered the municipal building that we would be counteracted from within and that it would be a bad atmosphere." This is a quote from Louise Erixon (2022), chair of the executive committee (*kommunstyrelsens ordförande*) in Sölvesborg municipality, regarding her expectations of the cooperation with the municipal officials, as her party, the Sweden Democrats (SD), had just formed the local government for the first time. Prior to the election of 2018, the SD had never governed a municipality. However, as the SD made historical strides in the election, the party was included in seven municipal governments during the tenure of 2018-2022. In five of these, including in Sölvesborg, representatives of the party held the highest local political office – chair of the executive committee (Eriksson 2019). As the SD is often labelled as holding anti-establishment characteristics, both by the media and by its own party representatives (Lönegård 2016), one could ask themselves how such a party would manage once they arguably become the establishment.

This introductory chapter will begin by presenting the purpose of the study, as well as its overarching research question. It will then proceed to discuss what is encompassed in the two most central definitions of the thesis – populism and unelected officials. The relevance of the study to the subject of political science will be presented, before the disposition of the thesis will be presented.

1.1   Purpose and research question

Populist parties are inherently formed and subsequently grow through their critique of the mainstream political leadership – the establishment. The political status quo of the country in which a populist party function has created the problems of the contemporary society through a deviation from reality and by being morally corrupt. To expose this is the raison d'être of the anti-establishment movements. However, when a populist party has received enough voter support to challenge the mainstream parties, it is presented with a choice of either remaining in opposition, or of forming a government of its own. If it opts for the latter alternative, the anti-establishment effectively becomes the establishment. Consequently, they must adopt an attitude toward parts of the establishment that have previously featured in their critical discourse – the public administration (Heinisch 2010, p. 91-92).

The aim of this thesis is to examine Swedish municipalities where the Sweden Democrats – the only right-wing populist party to be represented in the Swedish Riksdag – have formed local governments since the election of 2018, and the

subsequent relationships between the new political leadership and the public administration. More specifically, five municipalities will be examined where the SD hold, or have held, the highest local political office – the chair of the executive committee. These municipalities are: Bjuv, Bromölla, Hörby, Svalöv and Sölvesborg. Four of these are located in the county of Skåne, and one in the neighboring county of Blekinge – Sölvesborg.

The main research question that is to be answered is the following:

- *What is the nature of the relationship between the Sweden Democrats and the public administration officials in the respective municipalities where the party has held the position of chair of the executive committee since the election of 2018?*

The research question could be viewed as an overarching question, which encompasses a number of explorable themes. When dissecting the nature of the relationship between the party and the officials in the different municipalities, one does, for example, also explore whether the SD pursued a uniform strategy when working with the public administration, or whether the local party organizations chose different options depending on their unique circumstances. Furthermore, one could draw conclusions regarding whether the SD view the unelected officials as part of "the elite" or "the establishment" given their interview responses and which option they pursued.

This thesis will be both theory testing and theory developing, using Peters and Pierre's (2019) set of options for a populist government, which are further discussed in 3.2.1. It will be a case study in terms of examining local governments headed by the SD, and a comparative case study in terms of comparing these respective municipalities and the relationships between the political leadership and the officials within them. Despite the thesis not being a traditional comparative case study – as it examines all cases in which the SD head the municipal governments – it holds the ambition to contribute to the general knowledge through its use of theory (Toshkow 2018, pp. 233-235).

1.2 Definitions

It could be regarded as something of a cliché to begin a thesis with definitions of its central concepts. It could be regarded as an even greater cliché to begin a thesis on populism by addressing the general absence of consensus on its core tenets (van Kessel 2015, p. 2). However, as the term is disputed, a discussion on different definitions, how they relate to each other and to the neighboring anti-establishment sentiment, and a conclusion on what is meant with populism in this thesis is in place. This is what will be explored in chapter 1.2.1.

Populism could be argued to be one of the two most central concepts of this thesis. The second concept would be related to the unelected officials. In contrast to populism, however, this is not as straightforward as being only one word.

Bureaucracy and public administration, bureaucrats and officials can represent one thing in one context, and something quite different in another. Chapter 1.2.2 will further explore this, and the relationship between elected officials – politicians – and unelected officials – public administrators.

1.2.1 Populism

While many associate populism with a view of society as a struggle between "the good people" and "the corrupted elite", the form in which populism manifests itself is where the conflict resides. Is populism an ideology, a political style, or a strategy? Are there a finite number of politicians that can be regarded as populists, or can the term be applied to any political actor if or when that person applies an opportunistic rhetorical tool (van Kessel 2015, p. 2)?

Populism is not restricted to the political right. Albeit, in recent decades, populism has been more prominent on the right of the political spectrum (van Kessel 2015, p. 2). Despite the claim that populism grew out of the financial crisis of 2008, and its following recession, populism is far from a new phenomenon. The situation after 2008 did indeed provide a room to thrive for national populists, but populist parties began growing in numbers in Europe during the 1980s. Jean-Marie Le Pen in France and Jörg Haider in Austria both promised to dramatically reduce the levels of immigration to their respective countries, to strengthen law and order and to combat what they regarded a corrupt establishment (Eatwell & Goodwin 2018, p. 16).

According to Eatwell & Goodwin (2018, p. 2-3), "national populism" prioritizes the culture and interests of a nation and promises an outlet for voters who feel neglected by an insulated and corrupted elite. This movement has increasingly challenged the liberal democracies of Western countries. Two of the more obvious examples of this opposition took place in 2016, and both were at the time regarded as unexpected. The first was when the Leave-side won the Brexit-referendum, resulting in a British withdrawal from the European Union (EU). The second when Donald Trump won the US presidential election.

One simple definition of populism, as presented by Acemoglu et al. (2012, p. 771), is "as the implementation of policies receiving support from a significant fraction of the populations, but ultimately hurting the economic interest of the majority." This definition, one could argue, would be fitting when explaining the outcome of the Brexit-referendum. However, this does not always hold true. Is Donald Trump argued to be a populist because of his economic policies, or due to something else?

This thesis borrow a definition of populism from Stanley (2008) and van Kessel (2015), the latter of whom expanded on the aforementioned Stanley's conceptualization. First, while any politican can adopt an opportunistic strategy or political style, this thesis assumes that populism can be a defining attribute of certain political parties. These parties are at the core in resistance with the political establishment, "the elite", to the benefit of "the people". One would not be able to

characterise them without their anti-establishment sentiments. van Kessel describes populism as a "thin ideology", meaning that while populist parties share these attributes, they do not necessarily take the same policy positions (van Kessel 2015, p. 11). Populism and nationalism alike focus on the 'who' of politics, as it identifies the people as the privileged subject. Stanley explains that it consists of four separate but interdependent properties:

- "The existence of two homogenous units of analysis: 'the people' and 'the elite'.
- The antagonistic relationship between 'the people' and 'the elite'.
- The idea of popular sovereignty.
- The positive valorisation of 'the people' and denigration of 'the elite'" (Stanley 2008, p. 102).

This definition is supported by, among others, Heinisch (2010, p. 92) who agree that while populism cannot be regarded as a traditional ideology, it is certainly possible to detect an ideological essence. The common people are indeed in opposition to a vicious and dangerous elite. In contrast to how the common people are defined as the working class within the Marxist ideology, the populist parties leave the definition intentionally vague in an effort to attract voters from the entire political spectrum that hold strong beliefs for the populist cause.

Finally, as anti-establishment sentiments will be discussed further within this thesis, a discussion on its relationship to populism is necessary. The terms 'populism' and 'anti-establishment' are often used interchangeably. Nevertheless, they are necessarily not the same thing. In terms of the aforementioned political style or strategy that in certain situations can be adopted by any politician, regardless of their ideological domicile, this must not be equivalent to anti-establishment (van Kessel 2015, p. 11). However, when adopting the term to a populist party, in the context of Stanley's "thin-ideology", the two terms are more intertwined. While anti-establishment is a phrase borrowed from the media's semantics of politics, it is rarely supplied with more than an ad-hoc definition in scientific papers.

The conceptualization used within this thesis is borrowed from Droste (2021, p. 289), who view anti-establishment sentiments as a populist attitude, in reference to the political elite; anti-establishment attitudes are unfavorable evaluations of political representation. They represent perceptions of being marginalized relative to the political power, where the morally corrupt political elite fail to listen to their constituents and subsequently does not represent them. In other words, populism is not necessarily equivalent to anti-establishment. Nevertheless, given the adopted definition of populism of this thesis, Droste's conceptualization is incorporated.

The SD's categorization as a right-wing populist and anti-establishment party will be further presented in chapter 2.2.

1.2.2 Unelected officials

Similar to the "the people", "the elites" are often left vague in the rhetoric of populist parties. Depending on the context and the populist party in question, the vessel that is "the elite" can be filled with the appropriate adversaries. The main antagonists are usually the mainstream and established parties. Other "elites" can include wealthy corporations, the media, or the intellectual – often liberal – academics (van Kessel 2015, p. 13). Furthermore, populist rhetoric generally includes a criticism of the public administration, or the bureaucracy, as they are deemed a central role in enabling the mainstream and morally corrupt parties' policy aims (Sasso & Morelli 2021, p. 1). Bureaucrats are viewed as being part of the established, political leadership. One classic quote in this context is by the then presidential candidate for the American Independent Party in 1968, George Wallace (Peters & Pierre 2019, p. 1522 & 1526). He expressed a desire to throw the "pointy-headed" intellectuals and "bearded beatnik bureaucrats" of Washington into the Potomac river (Eatwell & Goodwin 2018, p. 45).

Brehm & Gates (1999, pp. 1-2) conclude that bureaucrats are among the least popular parts of the American government. One explanation could be their extensive discretion in their professional roles, in combination with what is generally percieved as an immunity to being held accountable, as they are not subject to elections.

The discussion in the two paragraphs above are centered around bureaucrats within the American context. So is the discussion in Peters and Pierre's (2019) theory – which will be further explored in chapter 3.2.1 – where the focus is on the public administration around the president's office. However, one could argue that the same discussion could be had regarding all officials within a public administration. Max Weber argued that the bureaucracy constitutes the most rational and effective – and consequently most economical – system of administration. That is, the most rational and effective manner in which to organize, coordinate, and control the governments' operations. The ideal Weberian bureaucrat was someone who embodied the principle of *sine ira ac studio* – to make decisions "without anger or passion." In other words, a dehumainzed individual who completed their tasks without personal sentiments. In total, Weber described four characteristics of the burecaucrat. One was the aforementioned ability to complete tasks without including their own personal opinions. He argued that this rule-following should be written into law, specifying what would constitute a misconduct. The bureaucrats would regardless not be held accountable for possible negative consequences of the work that they completed according to their positions (Waters & Waters 2015, pp. 97-98).

The second characteristic stated that the bureaucrat should operate within a hierachical system where their position was well defined. The third that the bureaucrat was an expert in the field of the administration in which they were operating. The fourth and final stated that the bureaucrat held a position that was beneficial and secure enough to reamin independent from third party interests. Ultimately, Weber argued for a seperation of the public administration and the

politicians to keep the powerful officials away from the politics (Hysing & Olsson 2012, pp. 28 & 39-44).

Given the context of this thesis, a discussion on the prevalence of bureaucrats within the Swedish system becomes highly relevant. Patrik Hall (2012, p. 14) describes how Sweden relatively early featured bureaucrats to create a public administration based on loyalty. Over time, the concept of bureaucrats in Sweden came to include individuals who worked with systematic planing, leading and controlling activities. Peter Ehn (Ehn 2016, pp. 332 & 344) agrees that the public servant of the Swedish system previously could be described as a bureaucrat. Nevertheless, he argues that the Swedish public servant is no longer a traditional bureaucrat, but rather a "private servant", given the influences from New Public Management reforms.

A bureaucrat is one type of official within the public administration, albeit not the only one. Another type of public official in a Swedish context is the politicized offical who have political loyalties. One such example could be political secretaries. Other examples of different types of officials are the street-level bureaucrats; the director, who has close contacts with the political level, but also directs the work of the other officials; the entrepreneur, who tries to achieve change by promoting certain policies for the political level; and finally the activist who let their personal perceptions guide their work (Hysing & Olsson 2012, pp. 36-37).

James H. Svara (2006) is an authority on the subject of the relationship between the political level and the officials in public administrations. Svara constructed a typology in which different types of officials were graded in terms of being controlled by the political level, and the degree of distance and differentation between elected officials and administrators. For example, the bureaucrat could be placed in a position of being highly controlled by the political level, and having a different role than the elected officials. The activist could be found on the other side of the spectrum, with low levels of being controlled by the political level and blurring the line between the political and administrative work (Hysing & Olsson 2012, p. 36).

To conclude the conceptual discussion, there are a number of different categorizations for public administrators – one being the bureaucrat. However, a public administrator can act as a bureaucrat in one of their tasks, but not in another (Hysing & Olsson 2012, p. 45). Consequently, all bureaucrats are public administrators, but all public administrators are not bureaucrats. The term public administrator encompasses both traditional bureaucrats, as well as officials that follow their own moral compass rather than the Weberian ideal. Public administrator and (unelected) official will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. Furthermore, when referring to the bureaucracy through the model presented in 3.2.1, the term is viewed as a synonym to the public administration.

1.3 Relevance

One of the interviewees summarized the responsibilities of, and the cooperation between, the political leadership and the bureaucracy with the following quote: "[…] the political level says what, and the public administration says how" (Erixon 2022). In examining whether the relationship between the political leadership and the bureaucracy is affected when a populist, anti-establishment party forms a municipal government, one dissects the municipal production of welfare services through a macro-perspective. If there is substantial friction between the two levels of local administration – if the 'what' is not interpreted correctly, or the 'how' is not conducted as intended – one could argue that this might also affect the welfare services.

The study of populist parties in government in general, and of the SD in Sweden in particular, is arguably of both intra-disciplinary and extra-disciplinary relevance. First and foremost, the ambition of the thesis is to contribute with cumulative knowledge to the field of political science. As has been previously established, the main objective is to advance the study of populist parties by both testing what could be regarded an outline of a theory on the options of a populist government, while concurrently expand and develop it into a full theory. Teorell & Svensson (2007, p. 52) argue that the distinction between theory testing and theory developing studies are of less importance than has traditionally been suggested. Studies conducted without having a perception of the empirics before constructing a number of hypotheses, or studies where the empirics are explored without any inclination of theoretical foundations, are both rare. Instead, a study is usually a combination of the two types. Which will feature more prominently is usually not apparent until after the study has been conducted. Therefore, the main intra-disciplinary relevance of the thesis is to both test and develop a theory.

A further argument for the intra-disciplinary relevance of the study is the focus on the SD. Making their way into the national Swedish parliament, the Riksdag, in 2010, the SD criticized the establishment for the decline of "Swedish Exceptionalism", which they blamed on an irresponsible immigration policy. Compared to the rest of the Scandinavian countries, Sweden was the last to see a right-wing anti-immigration party enter parliament, as both the Danish People's Party in Denmark and the Progress Party in Norway entered their respective parliaments before the turn of the millenium. Another difference to its neighbours was that immigration as a topic of political debate was taboo for a long time. The SD was, upon it gaining seats in the Riksdag, regarded as a rascist party by the other seven parties represented. Consequently, it was treated as a pariah. Since gaining representation in the Riksdag, the SD's electoral support increased from 5.7 % of the votes in 2010 to 17.5 % in 2018 (Pierre 2016, pp. 7-8). As a result, the party gained substantially more influence, both at the national political level, and at the local level. After the election of 2018, the party for the first time formed municipal governments (Ewald 2021). Examning how these governments have managed, especially in their cooperation with the bureaucracy, is of interest to the study of

political science. Not only because depicts a new party in government, but also because of the anti-establishment nature of the party.

With its growth, a number of the other parties have stopped referring to the SD as a rascist party. Some have even decided to collaborate with the SD to pursue a new government after the election of 2022. This has garnered substantial media attention with discussions regarding whether the party would be included in a new government, and how such a government would conduct itself (Rosén et al., 2021). This leads to the extra-disciplinary relevance of the thesis. As the SD are, for the first time, faced with potentially being able to directly influence a government's policies after the election of 2022, it is in the interest of the voters to examine local governments where the SD have held the highest local political office.

The thesis is also relevant for the study of welfare policies and management. Municipalities and county councils are acting based on the Local Government Act (*kommunallagen*). The law concludes that municipalities are to practice autonomy from to the national government, in terms of providing certain instances of the welfare regimen; this includes administering pre-school, school, social services and elderly care. Based on this autonomy – the capability to collect taxes, and its responsibility to provide certain welfare services – a study of the relationship between the political leadership and the public administration is also of intra-disciplinary relevance. A comparison between municipalities is aided by the election of municipal representatives coinciding across the country (SFS 2017:725).

1.4   Disposition

In this first chapter, the purpose of the thesis has been presented together with a research question. Furthermore, it includes definitions of the thesis' most central concepts, as well as the above presented discussion of the relevance of the study conducted through and presented in the thesis. Chapter 2 gives a background to first the intricacies of the considerable degree of autonomy of the Swedish municipalities, and second, the historical background of the political party the SD. The third chapter features a discussion on previous research on the subject. Additionally, it goes through the relevant theories of the thesis and presents Peters and Pierre's (2019) different scenarios, which are at the very foundation of the study. Chapter 4 presents the cases, methodological considerations and how the thesis has been delimited to offer the most comprehensive answer to the research question. It also presents the conducted interviews and the online survey, and how both of their results are to be analyzed. The interviews and the online survey can both be found in the appendix. Further, chapter 4 argue for the validity and reliability of the thesis, as well as the limitations of the study. The fifth chapter both presents the results of the thesis – gathered through the interviews and the survey – and applies the theory on the data for analysis. The sixth and final chapter presents the conclusion of the thesis.

2   Background

This chapter will feature relatively short historical and conceptual backgrounds to the most central aspects of this thesis. The first being the Swedish municipal system, its foundational autonomy, and its unelected officials. The second being the Sweden Democrats. The party's roots, its more modern origin, and its entry to the Swedish Riksdag will be presented to examine its somewhat uniquely stigmatized status within the Swedish party system.

2.1   Municipal autonomy and officials

Sweden consists of 290 municipalities, governed by relatively strong local governments (Backlund 2020, p. 26). Concurrently, Sweden is characterized by a centralized and unitary state. This undoubtably implies a paradox. At the national level, the power is centered to the parliament – the Riksdag. The welfare model is of a social democratic nature (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 53) and emphasize uniformity, equality, and mainly public provision of services. The local governments are also strong and influential in terms of functionality, resources, personnel, and fiscal responsibility. They employ 23 percent of the country's work force and are almost exclusively in charge of the public welfare services. Furthermore, they can themselves decide on the rate of the local income tax, and have, with the exception of Denmark, more resources per inhabitant than any other country (Lidström 2016, p. 355).

The term 'local government' includes both that of the municipalities, and the county councils. While their territories overlap, they hold different responsibilities. Municipalities have authority over a great number of areas – everything from school to elderly care. The county councils on the other hand hold responsibility over medical and health care (Montin 2016, p. 370). In terms of the political system of the local level, Swedish municipalities use a system of assembly government. The composition of the executive committee (*kommunstyrelsen*) is based on proportional representation (Backlund 2020, p. 70). Consequently, every party that controls enough seats are represented in the assembly government. In contrast to the national government, the executive committee does not depend on the confidence of the majority of the municipal council (*kommunfullmäktige*). The chair of the executive committee could be described as an informal mayor (Montin 2016, p. 371).

The duty of the executive committee is to coordinate the activities of the local government, as well as to supervise the activities of other committees and the municipal enterprises. The executive committee further performs the objectives that

it has been directed by the council, which include preparing and subsequently pronounce business of transaction, handle the financial administration, and execute decisions. The standing committees are autonomous from the council and the executive council to some extent. They are responsible for implementing national laws. Depending on the size of the municipality there can be one or a number of part- and full-time employed politicians (Montin 2016, pp. 371 & 374).

The organization of municipalities and county councils differ between them. There are five different models of organization. Most municipalities organize their committees and administration according to *the sectors model*, which entails that each committee is responsible for one or more sectors – such as social services, culture, or education. Previously, some municipalities used *the territorial model*, where they divided their territories into sub-units which in turn were governed by sub-councils. As of 2022, only the three largest cities in Sweden retain this model. *The functional model* is another where the committees instead are divided into one part that is responsible for purchasing and financing, while another focus on the production of services. A fourth model is *the centralized model*, which is mostly used in smaller municipalities. Here the standing committees are abolished and the authority is instead moved to the executive board. The fifth and last model is *the joint committee's model*, which features intermunicipal cooperation and collaboration. In this model, two or more municipalities have joint committees for certain responsibilities. The municipalities that feature throughout this thesis use different models. Despite that the organizational structure can differ between municipalities, the party-based representative democracy remains the same (Montin 2016, pp. 370-372).

Sweden is characterized by negative parliamentarism at the national level. Negative parliamentarism entail that a government must be tolerated by an absolute majority of the parliament. The conceptual equivalent of where a government instead must be actively supported by an absolute majority of the government is called positive parliamentarism. Despite the prominent role of negative parliamentarism at the national level, Swedish municipalities have, over time, become more quasi-parliamentary in regard to positive parliamentarism. Beginning in the 1960's, Swedish municipalities increasingly began adopting informal systems of limited majority rule. All committee leaders, including the chair of the executive committee, were appointed by a majority of the council. The term "quasi-parliamentary" entails that a relative majority of the votes are required to both appoint committee leaders and to pass the budget of the municipality. However, there is no formal vote of investiture (Backlund 2020, pp. 70-71).

Beyond politicians, another prominent role in local administration is that of the public official. Formally, politicians and officials have different functions and responsibilites in the political system. In an hierachical sense, the politicians are the authority. This division is at the core of the Swedish democratic system. However, the seperation of the politics and the public administration are occainally blurred (Hysing & Olsson 2012, pp. 27-28). This is another aspect that the aforementioned Svara (1985, pp. 223 & 228) has studied, which is further discussed in chapter 3.1.

There are two contradictory images surrounding the relationship between politicans and public administrators. One being that the officials are powerful and

pursue policies that the politicians then react to and follow. The second being that it is instead the politicans who hold the ultimate power. Comparative case studies on the planning process, which could be interpretted as being controlled by the unelected officials, instead suggest that "politicians influence professional administrators, who in their turn influence politicans." A rule of thumb is that the political role of unelected officials is greater in smaller municipalities. Other aspects that contribute to a higher degree of influence from the officials are whether the municipality in question have low degrees of political disputes, and whether a certain policy issue brings extensive public attention (Montin 2016, p. 373).

In the Local Government Act, unelected officials are rarely mentioned. As a result, their roles and positions can vary from municipality to municipality. However, in direct position to the executive board, two types of roles can be distinguished – those performing strategic tasks, such as preparing plans and budgets; and those that can be labelled managers, either chief administrative officers or middle managers. The municipal officer (*kommundirektören*) is the highest ranking official. The relationship between the municipal officer and the chair of the executive committee has increasingly been of interest for political scientist as they are the apex of the political and administrative parts of the municipality respectively. As municipalities have become more professionalized, both roles have gradually become more influential (Montin 2016, p. 373-375).

2.2   The Sweden Democrats

After entering the Swedish parliament in 2010, the Sweden Democrats spent several tenures more or less regarded as a pariah party by the other seven parties. Occasionally, representatives of a number of parties at the local level found themselves in difficult parliamentary constellations and therefore argued that they were forced to seek support from the SD. This was consistently denounced by their respective national party organizations (Aylott 2016, p. 165). The parties' anti-pacts have applied on all political levels, resulting in local representatives being hierarchically constrained from engaging in any cooperative engagements with the SD. This cordon sanitaire have begun to dissolve since the election of 2018 (Backlund 2020, p. 27).

This antipathy poses questions of why the other parties keep safe distance to the SD. In the general literature on the subject, radical right-wing populist parties have been treated as pariahs due to their "anti-democratic" tendencies. The case of the SD is no different (Bäck & Bergman 2016, p. 221). Backlund (2020) argue that the most prominent reason is the SD's lack of a reputational shield, which is due to its right-wing extremist roots. The party was founded in 1988, succeeding the Sweden Party (*Sverigepartiet*). In turn, the Sweden Party had formed through a merge of the Progress Party (*Framstegspartiet*) and the organization Keep Sweden Swedish (*Bevara Sverige Svenskt*). The Progress Party was a populist party with anti-immigration sentiments, while Keep Sweden Swedish was an all-out racist, nationalistic, and right-wing-extremist organization (Backlund 2020, p. 26).

Initially, the more prominent roles of the SD were held by convicted criminals and individuals with ties to the extreme right. The party's first spokesperson had been one of the founders of the aforementioned Keep Sweden Swedish. The chairman of the party's founding meeting was at a later point convicted of assaulting a 14-year-old of an immigrant background. Furthermore, the party leader between 1989-1995, Anders Klarström, had previously been active in the neo-Nazi Nordic Realm Party (*Nordiska rikspartiet*). In its first program, the party advocated for an ethnically and homogenous Sweden, as well as for restricting the abortion laws and the enactment of the death penalty (Backlund 2020, p. 66).

In 1989, the party participated in its first election, but only received around 1 000 votes. A new party leader, without an incriminating past, was elected in 1995 after which the party attempted to improve its public image. During the following years, individuals with extremist ties were expelled, political uniforms were banned from public meetings, and a new party program was adopted. This lead to the party splitting in two, where the individuals that disapproved of the changes formed a new party (Backlund 2020, p. 67).

Jimmie Åkesson, who was elected as the new leader of the SD a decade later, continued the pursuit of making the party more mainstream. As of 2022, Åkesson remains the person at the helm. Under his tenure, the party chose to replace the previous symbol of a fist and a flame, with the new anemone flower. Concurrently, a press release stated that the new changes were sensible as the party no longer was what it once had been (Backlund 2020, p. 67-68). In 2006, the SD doubled its voter share and was consequently eligible for the public party subsidies. Despite not gaining representation in the Swedish Riksdag, the party entered the legislature of half of Sweden's 290 municipalities. In the election of 2010, the party doubled its support again and won representation in the national parliament (Pierre 2016, pp. 7-8). However, the leaders of both the Social Democrats and the Moderates vowed to never grant the SD political influence. The following year, the party adopted a new program that focused less on ethnicity and more on traditional social conservatism. In line with this shift, a zero-tolerance policy toward racism was adopted which lead to the expulsion of more than 100 members between 2012 and 2015. They remained highly critical of the Swedish immigration policies. The problems of the country were blamed on these policies, and the other political parties that had enabled them (Backlund 2020, p. 67-68).

In the national election of 2014, the party yet again doubled its support to 12.9 percent (Pierre 2016, p. 7). To combat the growing influence of the party, the remaining seven parties of the Riksdag formulated the so called December Agreement, which proposed that a minority cabinet would be able to form and pass its budget, as the opposition abstained from voting on their own candidate and budget. In theory, this would enable the larger of the two traditional blocs to form minority governments, without the influence of the SD (Persson 2016, pp. 644-645). However, less than a year later, the agreement was abandoned (Backlund 2020, p. 68-69).

To conclude, the SD are generally viewed as a right-wing populist party. Through Stanley's (2008) and van Kessel's (2015) definition, this is confirmed as the SD view the political elite as being in an antagonistic relationship with the

people. The problems that Swedish citizens encounter are generally blamed on immigration, which has been enabled by the political establishment. Furthermore, both the party leader and its representatives agree that the party has anti-establishment sentiments (Lönegård 2016).

3 Previous research & theory

Chapter 3.1 delves on the inherent challenge of populist parties that enter government – while they earned their electoral success through an anti-establishment rhetoric, they are effectively becoming the establishment. Choosing to abstain from leading the government could result in accusations of not being willing to combat the issues that they have campaigned on. Choosing to govern instead involves risks of losing their voter base after being presented with the struggles of governing, or by internal conflicts regarding the subsequent strategy. Some scholars presupposed that these would be insurmountable problems for populist parties. However, examples from Italy before 2010 proved that, under certain circumstances, populist parties could govern with some success without abandoning their origins (Heinisch 2010, pp. 91 & 125).

If an anti-establishment party chooses to pursue the formation of a government without substantial backlash from within the party, they are generally faced with yet another challenge. As the populist parties' rhetoric of the former political leadership often includes either a direct or indirect critique of the public administration – or the "pointy-headed" intellectuals (Eatwell & Goodwin 2018, p. 45) – they must decide how to operate toward the public administration, which to a large extent remains the same before and after an election (Sasso & Morelli 2021, p.1). This adoption of a certain approach toward the public administration will be explored in chapter 3.2.

3.1 Previous research

Populism has been one of the most popular explanations for challenges facing contemporary governments across the world in recent years. On the left side of the traditional left-right political spectrum, the support for its radical European parties has slowly recovered from its historically low levels during the 1990's. The communist parties of France, the Finnish Left Alliance and the Icelandic Left-Green Movement have all been included in coalition governments (Fagerholm 2019, pp. 260-261).

Although the populist parties on the left have made modest advancements, the corresponding parties – if one can use that term in the given context – on the other side of the political spectrum have achieved more emphatic strides. While there are great differences between parties such as the Sweden Democrats, the Danish People's Party, and the Finns Party; the Leave-campaign in the Brexit-referendum; and the ascensions of Donald Trump as president of the United States of America

and of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, they are all generally categorized as right-wing populists (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1522-1523).

The literature on right-wing populism, given the upsurge in electoral support and the subsequent increased focus in media, is quite extensive. Not least is the focus on the explanation to their growth in electoral support the subject of many studies. One particularly influential book on the subject is Bonnie M. Meguid's *Party Competition Between Unequals*. Meguid's focus of study is on niche parties in general, including green, radical right, and ethnoterritorial parties. Her book examines the role of other political actors than the representatives of the niche parties, and specifically at the strategic behavior of mainstream parties. Meguid argues that it is these mainstream parties' choices of response towards the niche parties that affect these "unequal competitors" electoral advances rather than the electoral institutions or the socioeconomic context, as has previously been extensively studied (Meguid 2008, p. 14-16).

Eatwell and Goodwin (2018) explore the longer-term trends of the populist movement regarding how and why right-wing populism has grown into its omnipresent role in contemporary western democracies. They argue that four deep-rooted "historical shifts", or "the four Ds", caused a growing concern among substantial portions of citizens in the West. The first "D" is *distrust*, which represents how the elitist nature of liberal democracies have created a lack of confidence in politicians and in governmental institutions from citizens who instead perceive themselves as being excluded from national, political discussions. *Destruction* is the second "D", which stands for the perception of the national historical and cultural identity being undermined and eroded due to immigration and hyper ethnic change. This fear grows as any opposition to mass immigration is believed to be shut down by "politically correct" sentiments. The third "D" originates from rising economic inequality, where individuals with average incomes believe that they are left behind relative to others and is called *deprivation*. Finally, the fourth "D" is *de-alignment*. This refers to how the relationship between voters and mainstream parties have changed. Where there previously were loyal voters to strong mainstream parties, the contemporary voters are not as party aligned. This has weakened the positions of the mainstream parties. These four "Ds" together have created a vacuum in which populist parties have been provided a room to grow (Eatwell & Goodwin 2018, p. 8).

Another branch of the literature on populist parties is concentrated on coalitions with other – often mainstream – parties when forming governments. Some trends of de-radicalization of populist parties that have entered national parliaments are often presented (Ceron, et al. 2021). Generally, however, right-wing populists generally continue to voice opposition to the prevailing political order and the legitimacy of ruling parties. Due to this antipathy, coalition theories argue that they logically should be excluded from coalition governments. Nevertheless, a comparative analysis of 37 populist parties in 207 instances of coalition formation in 22 European countries between the years of 1990-2017 suggested that inclusion only require two variables – electoral success of the populist party, and a weak government-forming party that is ideologically close to the populist party (Fagerholm 2019, p. 261).

Similar to this thesis, Pappas (2019) focus on populist right-wing parties that have the leading role in government. He examines the democratic backsliding that has commenced in certain countries under national governments headed by populists. He argues that once in power, modern populists seek to establish an order that is democratic, but not liberal. They rely on four "interrelated – and mutually reinforcing characteristics". These are: 1) a reliance on leadership that is extraordinarily charismatic; 2) a strategic and on-going goal to achieve national political polarization; 3) a strive to attain control of the state, while concurrently dismantling liberal institutions and establish an illiberal constitution; 4) a creation of a system of patronage of its supporters (Pappas 2019).

When examining populist parties in national governments, Heinisch (2010) draw upon the inherent paradox of populist parties. As the populist right-wing parties grow from a anti-system movement, one could assume that they are destined to remain in opposition mode. However, that has in many instances in Europe proven to not be the case. Heinisch explores whether a party that has achieved its political following by being anti-establishment can be successful when it becomes the establishment. While he presents several instances of populist parties in European governments where these problems have proven to be too substantial, Heinisch argues that populist right-wing parties might overcome this ultimate weakness by finding a balance between governability and their anti-establishment essence (Heinisch 2010, pp. 91 & 125).

Despite the above stated literature on populist parties, the literature on the cooperation – or coexistence, if one would prefer – between the governing populist party and the officials is quite limited. The relatively extensive volume of *the Oxford Handbook of Populism* includes no chapters on populism and public administration, for example (Peters & Pierre 2019, p. 1524). This is not to claim that the literature on new parties in government is similarly non-existent. Deschouwer (2008), together with a number of other writers, devotes a volume to parties that for the first time experience "the pleasure and pressure" of being in government, whether as the sole party or in a coalition. Common patterns for new governing parties are: that the party organizations change as new roles are needed; that they experience a tug between on the one hand being "true" to their roots, and on the other to adapt to their new situation; that governing will result in former voters being likely to punish them in the next election; among others (Deschouwer 2008, pp. 1 & 10-14).

Given the purpose of this thesis, previous studies of the relationship between politicians and officials are of interest. One of the more prominent researchers on the subject is James H. Svara. In the 1980's, he assessed the existing models on the relationship between elected officials and administrators in the governmental process. He identified the problems and inconsistencies surrounding each, before constructing a new model. In Svara's model, the legislative body dominates the mission fomulation, even though the manager – or administrator, or bureaucrat – has an advisory role in producing proposals and analyzing circumstances. When it comes to policy-making, the manager's role grows bigger than the legislatives body as it is the bureaucracy that offer policy advice and policy setting. However, the council – the political leadership – is still responsible for the policies. In

administration and management, the bureaucracy has a substantially larger role than the council. In these two spheres, the political leadership is limited to suggestions and assessments of different natures. In other words, Svara argued that the duality between the politics and the bureaucracy is far more prominent than what had been presented in previous models where the divide between the responsibilities of the two levels of public administration were more incisive (Svara 1985, pp. 223 & 227). Hansen and Ejersbo (2002, p. 738) elaborate on Svara's model with a contribution they call *the logic of disharmony*. The relationship between the elected and unelected officials feature a discrepancy in terms of politicians having a inductive logic of action, while public administrators have a deductive logic of action, which occasionally could lead to friction.

As has been established, the literature on populist, right-wing parties; on new parties in government; and on the relationship between the political leadership and the public administration is fairly comprehensive. Nevertheless, a combination of these three strands of political science is conspicuous by its absence. One could assume that there ought to be both an academical and public interest of what trans folds when an anti-establishment party becomes the establishment, and concurrently, finds itself in a position where it must fraternize with what could be argued to be a part of what that their rhetoric has pointed out as being the problem.

3.2   Theory

Despite the general lack of comprehensive theories on the relationship between public administration officials, or the bureaucracy, and populist politicians in a governmental role**,** some studies have been conducted on the subject. The first sentence of Sasso and Morelli's (2021 pp. 1 & 9) study on the incentives of officials working in a populist context is: "Populists' rhetoric often includes criticism of the bureaucracy." They continue by establishing that policymaking and policy implementation are processes surrounded by complexities that often require the use of the bureaucracy. They conclude that populism can lower the expertise of the bureaucracy, with the reasoning that while non-populist politicians prefer bureaucrats with a high competence that are allowed a high degree of discretion to implement policies, populist politicians instead prefer loyal bureaucrats that implement the politician's policy commitments, regardless of their competence. Therefore, the opportunity cost of employing a loyal bureaucrat with less competence is lower in terms of them implementing the policy in the manner it was intended by the populist politician.

Elected officials at the local level, compared to that of the national, are more operational and hence more able to confront what they would view as inferior public administration processes. Nevertheless, the local level might impose unique and unpredictable constraints that could vary between regions. Compared to the national level, politics and public administration are more intertwined at the local level. The local populist politicians cannot produce outcomes without the public administration and are hence forced to tread lightly in their critique of the elite and

the former establishment. However, the populists can discipline the bureaucracy through different methods of distributing funds and resources to departments they deem more relevant and, or, that are more compliable, as well as through the strategic discharging of personell and patronage hiring of new bureaucrats (Drápalová 2021, pp. 129-133 & 144-149).

Based on national, populist governments in the world, one can expect four impacts of a populist government. First – as stated previously by Sasso and Morelli – a loss of expertise in the governing. Not only in regards to the bureaucracy, but also in terms of the governing party. This can be explained with the party – generally – being in government for the first time. The second aspect to expect is a more extensive politicization of the governing. While not being exclusive to populist governments, this development has been argued to have been accelerated by the increased influence of populist parties across the world. One should thirdly expect greater levels of patronage within the government itself, where loyalist to the party and the leader will be of importance to assure the dedication to the populist programs. This could, as has previously been explored, lead to an inadequate number of potential appointees with the required level of expertise or previous knowledge of government. While this holds true for populist and national governments across the world, one could assume that it would be further exemplified in local governments. The fourth and final aspect to expect is a centralization of the government. At the national level, this would be to the benefit of the president or prime-minister (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1527-1528).

3.2.1 Options of a populist government

While the aforementioned theories on populist parties in 3.2 feature in the analysis of the results, the three options of "governing in the face of populism" – as developed by Peters and Pierre – is at the foundation of the theory testing and theory developing ambitions of this thesis. These options, feature scenarios of how elected populist officials can act toward the public administrators – or, as Peters and Pierre's refer to them in an American context: bureaucrats. The authors assert that the scenarios, or options, are to a degree stylized and not a fully developed theory (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1528-1529). Regardless, one could argue that by adapting and testing them, this study contributes to developing these theoretical building blocks toward a more traditional theory.

The first scenario, or option, that a populist government can seek is called *sidelining the bureaucracy.* When dealing with the bureaucracy, the political leadership can opt to sideline portions of the bureaucracy, oust individual bureaucrats, or ignore their policy input. While the government might need the expertise of certain parts of the bureaucracy in order to achieve the goals of certain party programs, other parts could be deemed redundant. If the local government would pursue this option, its unwillingness to use the bureaucracy would be in accordance with the general skepticism of the establishment, which the unelected administrators that have worked under previous local governments could be argued

to be a part of. One such strategy would be to construct alternative structures within the government that would either substitute or complement parts of the bureaucracy deemed as being ineffective, or disloyal (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1529-1530). The patronage that has been previously explored in this chapter could be another method to sideline the – current – bureaucracy. Individuals deemed unable or unwilling to implement policies suggested by the political leadership would be replaced by more loyal, or politicized, personnel. Panizza, Ramos, and Peters (2019) developed a typology for political patronage that was originally applied in a Latin American context. However, the typology has been proven to be applicable on also other governmental circumstances. The following table is borrowed from their paper. Each cell represents the interaction of the qualifications of potential new officials and the extent to which the appointing political leadership has trust for the new potential official. While the traditional discourse of political patronage displays it as being a step in the direction of securing electoral gains for the political leadership, this typology presents it as being a substantially more multi-faceted concept. Simply, political patronage can also be used to achieve more effective governance (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1529-1530).

Table 1.

		TYPE OF COMPETENCE	
		Professional	**Political**
TYPE OF LOYALTY	**Partisan**	Party professionals	Apparatchiks: - Commissars - Brokers - Activists
	Personal	Programmatic technocrats	Political agents: - Minders - Fixers

Source: Panizza, et al. 2019.

The second option, or scenario, which a new populist government might pursue of indirectly embark upon is to strengthen the public administration. This could appear contrary to what has previously been declared regarding the shared characteristics of populism and anti-establishment. This paradoxical option is called *Empowering the Bureaucracy.* The logical basis of this option is that while a populist party may have made the critique of the government or the establishment one of its more prominent points in its political program, the party confronts another reality once in government. To achieve their policy goals, the new political leadership judge that the bureaucracy offers the most effective means. The work description of the bureaucrat declares that he or she shall follow the instructions of the political leadership. If he or she is unable or unwilling to fulfill this, the only logical solution would be to resign (Peters & Pierre 2019, p. 1531). This empowerment could also be used in the short term to enable a reduction of the size of the government in the

long term. As certain procedures that are used to expand or maintain an administrative government are needed to dismantle it, one paradoxical initial step would be to increase its capacity (Peters & Pierre 2019, p. 1532).

Similar to the first option, *Sidelining the Bureaucracy,* a new populist government could be of the perception that the bureaucracy, the former establishment, is in opposition to them. To counter this, the new leadership might redirect through which departments certain procedures are being handled to better correspond with parts of the bureaucracy that are deemed more loyal or less oppositional. These parts could as a result be expanded. This could lead to the government, to some degree, being split in two. The less oppositional part would focus on the policies most important to the political leadership, while the other part would be left with administrating the rest (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1532).

The third and final option, Peters and Pierre call *Using the Bureaucracy.* While the two authors argue that this option is more focused on nationally authoritarian versions of populism that would wish to exert greater influence on society as a whole, it could in a less extensive form be adoptable to the more contemporary and democratic versions of political populism. This third option could arguably be viewed as a combination of the previous two. Governance is a complex process, especially for an actor – be it a party or a politician – that has not previously held public office. Therefore, in this third option, and in contrast to the first, the political leadership chooses to lean on the current bureaucracy rather than sideline it. They neither *sideline* nor *empower* – they *use* in the similar manner as the previous leadership (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1533). As was presented of the literature by Heinisch (2010, p. 91) in chapter 3.1, this option highlights the paradox and challenge of anti-system parties that become the governing actor – they search for a balance between their anti-establishment rhetoric and their effectiveness in delivering policy promises.

Despite these options being presented as three different strategic choices at the hands of the political leadership, reality involves more dimensions. The bureaucracy can through their actions pivot the circumstances in one direction or another. In terms of the first option, *Sidelining the Bureaucracy*, the administrative parts of the government could engage in "guerilla government." While some public servants may resign when an anti-establishment party comes to power, others may stay to resist and undermine the new leadership. One such act would be to fast-track certain policies – that are deemed would be cancelled by the new political leadership – into law before the new government ascend. This, one could argue, would depend on whether the individual public administrator follow the Weberian ideal of making decisions "without anger and passion", or whether they bring their personal values into their work (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1533-1534).

The aforementioned potential split of the bureaucracy as a result of *Empowering the Bureaucracy*, where the redirecting of influence from certain departments to others, could lead to the political leadership finding itself in less control of certain domains of the government. Consequently, street-level bureaucrats would be left to make decisions on their discretion. Contrary, if the political leadership would resort to *Using the Bureaucracy*, this could instead bestow a dilemma upon the bureaucracy, regarding their involvement in possibly dismantling parts of the

government. If they would not accept this, they could resign. Alternatively, they could be willing to accommodate such a program so long as they remain in control of other parts of the government. They may also follow the previously mentioned work ethic of *sine ira ac studio* (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1532-1534).

The choices of the bureaucracy can be summarized through Brehm and Gates' (1999) "working, shirking and sabotage." The individual bureaucrat will have to make a choice. They might share the ideas of the new populist government and therefore strive to implement as much of their policy program as possible. Or the institution through which they work may have a strong and imbedded ideal of impartiality. A bureaucrat acting based on these two preconditions would choose the policy output decision "working." Other bureaucrats may devote just as much effort to instead undermine their political counterpart's policy goals – "sabotage". Yet another group of bureaucrats would devote their efforts toward non-policy goals, i.e., "shirking" (Brehm & Gates 1999, p. 21). The behavior of bureaucrats and the expectation of the political leaderships on the bureaucrats is illustrated by Table 2.

Table 2.

		POLITICIANS EXPECTATIONS	
		Loyalty	**Disloyalty**
BUREAUCRATIC BEHAVIOR	**Loyal**	(A) Smooth transition	(B) Waste
	Disloyal	(C) Sabotage shirking	(D) Alternative administration

Source: Peters & Pierre 2019, p 1535.

When a new government is formed, regardless of it being populist or not, it is faced with an established bureaucracy. The new leadership must therefore decide of what nature their relationship with the permanent professionals will be. If the political parties, or coalitions of parties, are mainstream and the bureaucracy follows the aforementioned *sine ira ac studio* the transition from one government to the next will be of a seamless character. While some officials will resign or be removed and new ones take their former positions, the governments work will continue in a similar manner. In Table 2, this scenario would be represented by cell (A) (Peters & Pierre 2019, 1535).

If instead a party that has either never before been in government, or that has been out of the government position for an extended period of time, cell (B) could be the outcome. The new, or new-old, party does not trust the bureaucracy, which not only results in a less seamless transition from the previous government, but also a possible disruption in the governance. While the bureaucracy would have been loyal to the new government, the new leadership expects it to conduct in the

opposite manner. This results in a "waste" of competent and professional officials who are sidelined. Contrarily, if the new political leadership would assume that the bureaucracy would act professional and "without anger and passion", when it in reality does not, this would lead to the sabotage shirking of the (C) cell (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1535-1536).

Finally, the (D) cell represent a scenario when the new government correctly assumes that the established bureaucracy will not pursue their policy aims, but instead might opt for undermining them. To be able to enact what they have campaigned for, the new political leadership will have to either replace substantial parts of the bureaucracy or redirect the influence from disloyal parts of the administration to more loyal units. This scenario assumes that the new political leadership is focused on the task of governing and seeking their policy aims, rather than prioritizing to keep spreading populist discontent with the establishment. As has been previously established, this assumption is based on the desire of the new political leadership to be able to display what they have achieved once in government to convince the voters to reelect them (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1536).

4 Method

One common view of social science is that it can be divided into two broad approaches. The first is for studies that are variable-oriented, which can be ascribed to statistical analysis. The second includes studies that are case-oriented (Ryan 2018, pp. 280-281). The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research has been contested for quite some time. Recently, however, the multi-, or mixed methods have gained momentum. The argument for the merge is to combine the generating of generalizable results from a sample on a population from large-n studies and revealing the underlying cross-case effects of small-n studies, while concurrently limiting the weaknesses of the respective approaches (Backlund 2020, p. 72). This thesis adopt such a mixed-method, combining data gathering through both interviews – which are primarily used in qualitative studies – and surveys – which are primarily used in quantitative studies. Nevertheless, the thesis is most accurately categorized as being case-oriented, rather than variable-oriented.

   This chapter begins by presenting the cases – the five municipalities. This is followed by the methodological considerations of the thesis. Chapter 4.2 includes a discussion on the delimitations of the study, while the following 4.3 presents the data collection methods of conducting interviews and an online survey. A discussion on the validity and reliability of the study follows, which includes a discussion on the use of content analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the thesis' limitations and how they are combated.

4.1 Case study

Since the election of 2018, the Sweden Democrats are currently, or have been, included in local governments in seven municipalities. Out of these seven municipalities, the party have held the highest local political office, the chair of the executive committee, in five: Bjuv, Bromölla, Hörby, Svalöv and Sölvesborg. Sölvesborg is located in the county of Bleking, while the remaining four municipalities can be found in Skåne. However, as of 2022, only three of the four governments headed by the SD in Skåne are still operational, as the one in Bromölla fell during the fall of 2020 (Ewald 2021).

4.1.1 Cases

After the election of 2018, the new political leadership in Hörby encountered a number of controversies. The SD in Hörby's candidate for chair of the executive

committee resigned due to right-wing extremist and homophobic social media posts; a number of drunk chief officials went "skinny-dipping" in front of their employees after a conference; and the municipal officer was forced to resign after being accused of having enabled a reign of terror and engrossed the public administration in a conspiracy of silence (Grosshög & Hansson 2020). Within two years after the new political leadership had formed, 25 leading bureaucrats either had resigned or been dismissed from their positions (Ewald 2021).

The SD in both Bjuv (Eriksson & Hansson 2020) and Svalöv (Rosén & Jakobsson, 2019) formed their governments only after the previous had fallen. In Bjuv, the SD and the Social Democrats received almost equal support in the election of 2018. With the exception of the years between 1991-1994, Bjuv has been governed by the Social Democrats. After the previous election, the Social Democrats, the Center Party, the Christian Democrats, and the Liberals formed government, but this coalition fell in 2020 after their budget failed to receive enough support in the municipal council. The SD formed the new government with support from the Moderates and two members of the Liberal party (Eriksson & Hansson 2020). In Svalöv a new government of the SD, the Moderates and the Christian Democrats formed with the passive support of the Liberals, after a government consisting of the so called Alliance fell during the summer of 2019 (Rosén & Jakobsson, 2019).

In Sölvesborg, the SD have governed the municipality together with the Moderates, the Christian Democrats, and the local SoL-party since the election of 2018. Internally, the SD regard its local government in Sölvesborg as a success. In a poll conducted by the SD themselves in the municipality, the support as of January of 2022 had reached 37 % (Habul 2022). That is almost ten percentage points higher than that of the party at the national level (Novus 2022).

Neighboring to Sölvesborg is the municipality of Bromölla. Similar to in Sölvesborg, the SD formed a government in Bromölla after the election of 2018. Dissimilar to its neighbor, the party formed a minority government on its own. This was enabled through an electoral cooperation with the Moderates and the Christian Democrats. However, in August of 2020, the SD in Bromölla announced that as their budget had not passed the municipal council, they no longer intended to remain in government. Shortly after, the SD's chair of the municipal office announced that he was to resign from all of his political commitments. Three other leading party members soon followed him (Grosshög & Hansson 2020). After two months without a local government, a coalition consisting of the Social Democrats, the Left Party, the Christian Democrats, the Centre Party, and the Liberals formed a new political leadership (Jönsson 2020).

4.1.2 Methodological considerations

Case studies are generally criticized for their inability to provide a strong basis for generalizations, which leave them insufficient in developing theories. While this argument is true for statistical studies conducted through carefully selected samples of a population, analytical generalizations are certainly possible. Knowledge

generated through one case might not be directly adoptable to another. However, the data can be relevant when the cases' unique characteristics are examined through the lens of a theory to identify similar trends (Becker 2021, p. 25). As all municipalities where the SD are active are examined in this thesis, the context could be argued to be the same. Consequently, this is a comparative case study rather than a plain comparative study (Esaiasson, et al. 2017, p. 109).

As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, the thesis hold theory developing ambitions. There are two types of theory developing activities. The first one involves locating different potential explanations, either that complement the traditional model, or that compete with the traditional notions. The second is to develop causal mechanisms (Esaiasson, et al. 2017, p. 112). In this thesis, the first type will be pursued in order to complement potentially weaker aspects of the theory when applying it to real-world-cases. However, when altering a theory, one should only make it less restrictive; make it encompass a broader range of phenomena. Developing it more restrictively without collecting new data to test the newer version will compromise its validity (King et al. 1994, p. 22).

This subchapter on methodological considerations concludes with a discussion on the related ontological and epistemological considerations of this thesis – to ensure transparency of the foundations of its assumptions. The thesis follows an ontological approach of anti-foundationalism, where the world is viewed as being socially constructed. This has been deemed the most reasonable outlook as governments are an apt example of something that is socially constructed – that exist only so long as other actors attach meanings to their existence and actions (Marsh, et al. 2018). From the anti-foundationalist stem of this ontological tree, the more specific branch that this thesis will originate from is a constructivist ontology. One benefit with a constructivist ontology is that it encompasses structuralist ontologies, as it accounts for social and material structures, together with both the intended and unintended consequences of social interaction. That is, constructivism acknowledges that social and material circumstances both socialize and constrain individuals as well as enables them to commit to actions that are comprehensible to others. This includes actions that intentionally changes social norms and material circumstances (George & Bennets 2005, p. 171) – all of which could be argued to be of relevance when examining local governments and public administration, and the relationship between two structures that ultimately consists of individuals.

Anti-foundationalism – which, as the name suggestes, is the polar opposite of the foundationalist position of philosophical theories of knowledge – is more complex to classify compared to its counterpart. Nevertheless, there is a consensus on three broad features. The first claim that realities are local and specific, why they vary between different groups. The second argue that reality is not discovered, but rather actively and socially constructed. Therefore, the line between ontology and epistemology is blurred, when the individual actor decides what is rational. The third feature conclude that while realities are constructed by individuals, the individuals are in turn shaped by cultural, social and political processes (Marsh, et al. 2018, pp. 182-183). All three features are directly relevant for what is examined within this thesis. The assumption is that the realities of each municipality varies,

and that the variations orignate – at least to some extent – from social, political, and cultural contexts.

In terms of epistemology, a hermeneutic, or interpretivist, position is taken in this research. As has been argued for in the discussion on the ontological position, the center of the study is the social, and the meaning of behavior. To establish a casual relationship that holds true across time and space is, correspondingly, unthinkable within the constrains of this position. The casuality that may be apparent in one municipality must not necessarily exist in another. At the core of this thesis is the socially constructed contexts within which different individuals from the political leadership and the public administration act and interact. How these act can vary based on a wide range of variables. The interpretivist position consider this, in arguing that a social phenomena cannot be understood independently of our interpretation of it (Marsh, et al. 2018, pp. 184-190).

4.2   Delimitations

For the scope of a master's thesis, a number of delimiting choices have to be made. For this thesis, one such was to only interview one representative of the SD in each municipality. The reasoning behind this was that the party's collective view of the first years in local government is of interest for the study. As leading representatives from each municipality were interviewed, these were deemed to represent the views and ideas of their local party organization. Regardless of this, personal experiences may vary between different representatives. For a more extensive study, a number of representatives of the SD could be interviewed in each municipality to gather more personal experiences and anecdotes.

Party representatives of other political parties – more specifically representatives of previous local governments – in the respective municipalities were not interviewed. As the representatives of other parties would be inclined to answer in a manner that would cast their opposing side in a bad light, one apprehension was that they would gain from answering that the cooperation with the public administration during their tenure worked seamlessly, while their experience during the current government is of the opposite. Such an answer could very well be true. However, as an outsider to the respective local circumstances, it would be difficult and time-consuming to separate the wheat from the chaff.

A third delimitation was to not interview public administrators. In an early stage of this study, a choice had to be made between on the one hand identifying a reasonable number of public administrators in each municipality that would be willing to answer questions about the current or former leadership and who's answers could be deemed representing the experiences of their colleagues. Or on the other, sending an anonymous online survey to all public administrators in each municipality that worked in the municipal management's office – or in an equivalent position vis-à-vis the political leadership. The choice fell on the latter of the two, as it was deemed to most readily capture the true personal experiences of the public administrators.

4.3 Data collection

The data gathering method for this thesis is to conduct interviews and to distribute an online survey. As aforementioned, interviews are generally one of the preferred methods to gather material in qualitative studies and surveys the preferred for quantitative studies. Therefore, this thesis sides with many of the contemporary mixed-methods studies.

4.3.1 Interviews

As primary research for this thesis, semi-structured interviews are conducted with one representative of the SD in Bjuv, Bromölla, Hörby, Svalöv and Sölvesborg respectively. The main questions feature in Appendix 1. However, as the interviews were semi-structured, follow-up questions as well as questions building on unique circumstances for each municipality are not included. Mikael Henrysson has been the chair of the executive committee in Bjuv since the SD formed a new government in January of 2020 after the previous political leadership fell. Magnus Persson, currently active as both a member of the local municipal council in Bromölla as well as a Member of Parliament for the SD, was interviewed as a representative of the party in Bromölla. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to reach the current chair of the executive committee in Hörby, as well as the individual who has been reported in media as being the original choice for the position before having to withdraw his candidacy after a scandal, the chair of the municipal council (*kommunfullmäktiges talman*), Johan Ohlin, accepted to be interviewed on behalf of Hörby. In Svalöv, Ingrid Ekström, who similar to Ohlin is the chair of the municipal council, agreed to be interviewed as the chair of the executive committee, as she described it, was "very busy" and did not respond to the repeated interview requests. Finally, in Sölvesborg, Louise Erixon – who has been the municipalities' chair of the executive committee and consequently headed the coalition government of the SD, the Moderates, the Christian Democrats, and the local SoL-party, since the election of 2018 – was interviewed.

Henrysson, Persson and Erixon were all interviewed via video call. Ekström was interviewed over telephone, and Ohlin in person. Regardless of how the interview was conducted, all featured a similar format and supplementary questions. The interviewees were informed about the purpose of the interviews and of the thesis. They were all presented with the opportunity to remain anonymous when their answers are presented in the thesis, but all five declined.

In an academic context where there are two types of interviews – one that focus on gathering information about external facts, and the other that instead strives to collect the interviewee's subjective values or perceptions – this thesis has adopted a combination of the two. As is common in similar studies, questions have been formulated regarding the interviewees' personal impressions of the relationship between the political leadership and the public administration in a given municipality, as well as regarding how certain events have unfolded. These answers

can then be compared to the answers in the questionnaire (Teorell & Svensson 2007, pp. 89-91). The interview questions that were used to guide all interviews can be found in the appendix.

The interviewees cannot be regarded as reliable witnesses to an objective truth. Instead, their answers should be and are regarded as their depictions of reality and of what has unfolded in their respective municipalities. They are representatives of a party, and it is therefore in their interest to provide answers that present themselves, their political endeavors, and their party in what they would deem be the best light (Esaiasson, et al. 2017, pp. 267-268). Furthermore, as they are among the more prominent representatives of their party in the respective municipalities, the interviews can be deemed to fulfill the characteristics of 'elite' interviews (Vromen 2018, pp. 246-247). Finally, as is elaborated in chapter 4.4.1, the answers were analyzed through a content analysis. As both the questions from the interview and the survey were constructed to provide answers to the options of the theory, the respective answers from both the interviews and the surveys could be categorized as leaning toward the different scenarios.

4.3.2 Online survey

The purpose of the study is, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, to examine the relationship between the political leadership and the public administration in the municipalities where the SD are currently, or have previously, held the chair of the executive committee. Therefore, to use the perceptions of merely the political representatives would present only one side of the relationship. To account for the officials' perceptions, a survey was conducted. A survey can, to some degree, be regarded as a type of interview. Similar to the interviews, the purpose of the survey is to gather the personal experiences and perceptions of the unelected officials, but also of their recollection of certain events (Esaiasson, et al. 2017, p. 235-236). A number of the questions were phrased to blur the line between the personal and professional perception in regard to the political leadership. This was intentional to gather data that could be analyzed through Table 1. The survey questions can be found in Appendix 2.

There are a number of advantages to conduct a survey, compared to interviews. They are not as time-consuming, and it is consequently easier to reach more respondents. This is further helped by the respondent being able to answer the survey at their convenience. The answers are simpler to quantify as the respondent is asked the same questions at the same mark in the survey. The survey also enables a deeper level of anonymity compared to in interviews, as the respondent is not monitored during their answering (Teorell & Svensson 2007, pp. 90-91).

Regardless of the many benefits, conducting interviews does include some disadvantages. One of the more prominent is to get individuals who have received the survey to answer it. Surveys are usually characterized by a low frequency of answering. One advantage to interviews is that the interviewer can explain or correct misunderstandings of the respondents in connection to their answers. That is not possible with anonymous surveys. Furthermore, once the survey is distributed

and answered by respondents, questions cannot be rephrased or altered as that could have an implication on the result and the subsequent analysis. Finally, despite having a strict list of who to distribute the survey to, one can never be certain who answered the survey (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 91).

The survey for this study was of a digital and online nature – developed through Google Forms. It was then distributed via a list of e-mail addresses to employees working for the municipal management office – or the equivalent – as these employees were deemed to have the most contact with the political leadership. The list included a total of 185 e-mail addresses. In total, 52 individuals from the five municipalities answered the survey, resulting in a response rate of approximately 28 %. Given the delicate nature of the questions – where the respondents were asked about their relationship to and perception of the political leadership in their municipality, which to some extent is their employer – 28 % could be argued to be a satisfactory response rate.

4.4 Validity & reliability

Case studies offer a high potential to achieve conceptual validity and to feature strong foundations for fostering new hypotheses. Furthermore, they enable close examinations of causal mechanisms despite the potentially high level of causal complexity (George & Bennet 2005, p. 40). As has been previously discussed, Peters and Pierre's (2019) options, that are at the core of the analysis of the material presented in this thesis, are not formulated as being a matured theory. However, the lack of a theory on populist governments have prompted the testing and development of their scenarios. Therefore, it will be referenced as a theory in this thesis.

The very idea of connecting one's material to a theory is to broaden the research. Nevertheless, to ensure that what is intended to be measured also is measured expands to being consistent with the applicability of the theory. This is pursued through the definitions of populism and unelected officials respectively in chapter 1.2. Furthermore, as the nature of the relationship between the elected and unelected officials is what is being examined through the interviews and the survey, what constitutes a well-functioning or dysfunctional relationship is central to the study. This is achieved through the categorizations of the theory – its options – that all encompass certain characteristics (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 37-39 & 44).

Finally, in the survey as well as in the interviews, it is of great importance that the questions are formulated so that the respondents understand them and answer what is intended. In the interviews, this could be ensured through follow-up questions. In the questionnaires, the respondents were given the opportunity to expand on their multiple-answers-questions in their own words, to confirm that their answers were interpreted as they were intended.

4.4.1 Content analysis and categorization

Content analysis has historically been widely used on interview transcripts. It fills the same function on the transcripts of the conducted interviews of this thesis, where the answers of the interviewees are analyzed through the theoretical framework and subsequently categorized to one of the options. However, while coding is a procedural component of the method, it holds a unique role in content analysis – where it requires particularly extensive and reliable instructions. A further coding of this material beyond the theoretical framework that is used could therefore potentially do the study a disservice of obscuring its method (Krippendorff 2004, pp. 11 & 125-127). Consequently, in this thesis, rather than coding the interview answers, the theoretical framework will constitute a preset categorization. The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) arguably includes a pre-established coding of the answers, as the respondents can grade their personal perceptions within most of the questions. The answers will then indicate toward which option one municipal leadership leans. As the questions from the interviews are of a similar nature to those of the questionnaire, the interview answers are compared to the scheme of the questionnaire to identify trends. In other words, while the transcripts are examined through a content analysis, the data is then compared to the answers gathered through the questionnaires to deduce the nature of the relationship between the elected and unelected officials. Consequently, the coding of the survey will benefit also the answers of the interview.

The reasoning regarding the answers in the questionnaire and the interview for a given municipality will then be presented in the results and analysis chapter. While this does not guarantee scientific objectivity, it will contribute to the ambition of ensuring intersubjectivity – that the words have a general meaning and that the observations can be repeated (Teorell & Svensson 2007, p. 280).

4.5 Limitations

While the municipalities examined in this thesis all feature a Sweden Democrat at the highest local political office, they are all located in the southern parts of Sweden. Nevertheless, they are administered differently and have, despite them being similar, different political history. These challenges are issues that cannot be overcome and could potentially have an impact on the results of any study of a similar nature in terms of identifying casual mechanism that led them to one option rather than another (Levy 2008, p. 10). Furthermore, when faced with different sets of circumstances and factors that could lead to the same outcome, the certainty of a causal relationship is compromised. One example could be in explaining why the local government headed by the SD in Bromölla fell. While one explanation could be the inexperience of governing of the party, other factors such as oppositional sabotage or a dysfunctional relationship between the political leadership and the bureaucracy could have been equally culpable. All are difficult to quantify (Levy 2008, pp. 10-11). This challenge is combated in this thesis in two ways. First by the

thesis not searching for simple or single answers but striving to offer a spectrum of potential answers to the research question. Second, by both interviewing a local politician and distributing an online survey to a number of officials within the municipalities, different perspectives are provided to offer a more accurate and nuanced answer.

In terms of the theory, given that it is mainly applied in an American context in Peters and Pierre's (2019) article, the unelected officials are referenced as bureaucrats in a bureaucratic context. However, this scope is widened in this thesis to include all of a public administration. This, one could argue, could influence the applicability of the theory. Nevertheless, as is argued for in chapter 4.1.2, while a theory should rarely be narrowed without substantial testing, it can generally be developed to include more variables, which is the case here. This argument for the applicability of the theory to this case is also relevant in terms of the options being constructed for national populist governments. Here, it also includes local governments.

Another limitation is that while there have been a significant number of public administrators that have left their positions since the SD formed government, not the least in Hörby, only officials that have remained have been interviewed. If the survey was distributed to the individuals that decided to leave their positions, one could assume that the answers would have been of another nature. However, as it would be a too complex and time-consuming process to identify these individuals given the scope of this thesis, such a distribution has not been made.

Furthermore, as both the interviews and the survey were constructed and conducted in Swedish, the translation to English will be problematic in terms of including both the intended spirit of the answer, as well as the specific wording. This issue is countered by only including direct quotes from the interviewees where the specific wording is less important than the essence of the answer. The same is true for the combined results from the survey.

5   Results and analysis

As its title suggests, this chapter is a combined results and analysis of the gathered material from the interviews and the questionnaires. Given that testing and developing of the options of a populist government – *Sidelining, Empowering and Using*, as they are presented in chapter 3.2.1 – lay at the foundation of this study, to separate the results and the analysis would be counterintuitive. The chapter is divided into parts where each of the municipalities are analyzed through the options separately. As the results from each municipality have been presented and analyzed, a final subchapter will focus on the gathered material and its findings from all five of the municipalities collectively.

5.1   Bjuv

Bjuv and Sölvesborg share the most questionnaire respondents – fourteen each. As a representative of the Sweden Democrats in Bjuv, Mikael Henrysson, the chair of the executive committee since January of 2020, was interviewed. The results presented here are based on these fifteen individuals' answers.

Of the asked public officials, 46 % claimed that the perception that they had of the SD changed after the party formed government – and none of these 46 % argued that the perception had changed for the worse. Therefore, one could assume that there were some skepticisms within the public administration as the new political leadership was formed. This was known by the SD in Bjuv. A rumor that had reached the new chair of the executive committee claimed that a substantial number of public officials would resign once the new local government began governing (Henrysson 2022). Ultimately, however, only one chief official left their position, which is quite insignificant compared to in the other municipalities.

This rumor regarding that the public officials would work against the new political leadership, could have led to box B in Table 2, which is presented in chapter 3.2.1 – a waste. That is, that the fear would have compelled the new political leadership to sideline individual officials or entire units of the public administration to combat a potential sabotage, despite that this would not have occurred (Peters & Pierre 2019, p 1535). One conclusion by the new leadership could have been that as Bjuv had been under a decades long Social Democratic dominance, the public administration would be reluctant to work with a party such as the SD. The new leadership could have imagined having to face similar issues as the party had in Hörby after 2018, and therefore opted to sideline certain parts of the public administration.

The new government encountered another reality, however. According to Henrysson (2022), the public administration operated in a politically neutral manner. Similar to in Sölvesborg, the Social Democratic heritage mattered less than the new political leadership had feared. One explanation to what would become a rather smooth transition – box A in table 2 – could be that the previous administration fell. Therefore, one could assume that regardless of who would form the next government, the public administration would be relieved, in terms of having clearer respective work-tasks, once the new political leadership took charge.

Figure 1.
"*How would you describe that the cooperation between the political leadership and the public administration is functioning today?*"
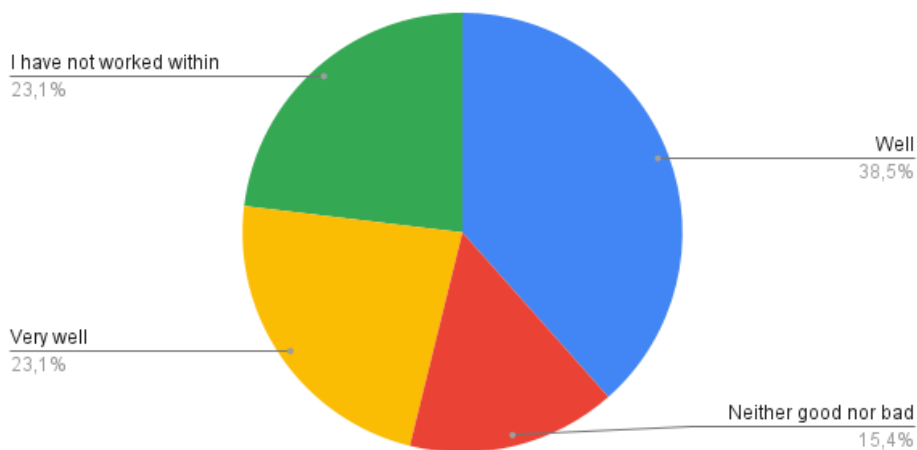
As Figure 1 suggests, more than 60 % of the responding public officials respond that they believe the cooperation between the political leadership and the public administration is either going well or very well. This is despite that approximately 66 % stated that there was a perceivable lack of experience in governing within the new local government. The contentment with the cooperation should be presented in contrast to that more than half of the respondents stated that they thought that the public administration featured a certain set of values – which many attributed to being more leaning to the Social Democrats. A number of the respondents claimed that a number of the unelected officials were active in the Social Democratic party, and that some colleagues openly criticized the SD in the hallways and in meetings. Despite this, the relationship has indeed been described as functional, or even good.

One could interpret the numbers as representing that while both the public administration and the new political leadership had reservations in January of 2020, they both carried on as was expected of them. The result being that the public administration proved to be willing to continue in the same manner as previously. This despite that four out of ten of the respondents claimed that they perceived that both the public administration treats the SD in a different manner than they had

treated previous local governments, and vice versa. Consequently, the new political leadership headed by the SD did not perceive it as necessary to pursue another strategy than to *use* the current administration.

5.2   Bromölla

Bromölla municipality stood out from the other four in terms of its organizational model. As discussed in chapter 2.1, the centralized model is mostly used in smaller municipalities. It entails that the standing committees have been abolished in favor of one large committee that has a combined responsibility for the municipal services. In the case of Bromölla, however, they also share a high-school-association (*gymnasieförbund*) with Sölvesborg, as Bromölla does not have a high-school of its own. Worth noting is that the move to the centralized model was made quite recently. However, while the change was welcomed by the SD, it was decided prior to the election of 2018 – under Social Democratic rule (Persson 2022).

The SD in Bromölla, Hörby and Sölvesborg all began governing in their respective municipalities just after the election of 2018. In Bromölla, the SD minority leadership was accepted by the Moderates, the Christian Democrats, and the local party the Alternative (Persson 2022). 60 % of the respondents claimed that the relationship between the new political leadership and the public administration was either poor or neither good nor bad in the months after the election. Nevertheless, both Persson and the respondents agreed that no leading officials left their positions. A number of less prominent public administrators were, however, transparent with that they were going to leave the municipality. But, according to Persson, this was perceived as quite natural as Bromölla had been governed by Social Democrats "since the early days of universal suffrage". Instead, one explanation to why the relationship was suboptimal could be that certain officials took issue with preparing decisions for controversial issues, such as the banning of praying during work hours, and a ban on begging in the municipality (Persson 2022).

Another possible reason to the poor relationship could be the SD's lack of experience. Persson (2022) claim that at the time, the local party organization viewed the inexperience of being in government as an advantage. The public administration disagrees. 80 % of the respondents claimed that the new leadership lacked experience in an apparent way, and that they kept behaving as if they were still in opposition. A number of the respondents claimed that the leadership lacked insightfulness on what could be pursued locally, and often tended to rather focus on national issues. They also lacked experience in the formalities surrounding committee sessions.

During the fall of 2020, after around two years of governing in Bromölla, the SD's leadership resigned. While someone inclined to conspiracy theories could search for answers to this in box C in Table 2 – that the public administration sabotaged the SD's governing – neither the respondents of the questionnaire nor Persson agrees. "I never had any issues [with the public administration], I got the

help that I was supposed to get" (Persson 2022). Consequently, the SD in Bromölla, similar to in Bjuv, chose the option of *using* the public administration. If they would have perceived the public administration as sabotaging their governing, one could assume that they instead would have opted for *sidelining* and patronage appointings. Both Persson and the respondents instead point to political reasons as to why the SD's municipal government fell. And these were quite apparent from as early as when the government initially formed. It had a weak minority mandate, and after receiving the votes to appoint a chair of the executive committee from the SD, the local party switched sides. All the vice-positions were consequently held by Social Democrats. This issue with having a majority against the leadership followed during its tenure. However, "the straw that broke the camels back", as Persson (2022) put it, was when the SD's budget did not receive enough votes. It was at this point that the political leadership decided to resign.

A posteriori, if the SD had been more adamant on achieving a majority, as well as if they would have received more support from the party at the national level, perhaps the local SD government in Bromölla had not resigned. However, it did not fall as a result of sabotage from the public administration.

5.3 Hörby

"One could say that we knew that there was going to be a lot of struggles given that the public administration in Hörby had been without adequate political steering during several tenures." This is a quote from Johan Ohlin (2022), where he described the SD's fears when forming the local government in Hörby – that the cooperation with the public administration would be suboptimal during the initial stages of the tenure. This fear was, according to Ohlin, confirmed when a number of officials either openly declared their willingness to, or actively engaged in, resistance to the new leadership. This behavior was occasionally motivated with that the politics of the SD went against the individual offical's own core values. One of the chief officials arrived at work in a jacket from the Social Democrats to signal their active opposition (Ohlin, 2022). Through Table 1, in chapter 3.2.1, this could be labelled a political type of competence, as well as a partisan type of loyalty. Consequently, the public administrator would, rather than an unanligned and neutral offical, be labelled an apparatchiks – an activist – of the former municipal government (Panizza, et al. 2019).

Given the new political leadership's fear of "sabotage" from within the public administration, they adopted the option of *sidelining*. From the perspective of the SD, the line of responsibilites between politicans and the public administration had been blurred. Public administrators saw it fit that they had influence over and could steer different processes that, according to Ohlin (2022), should be at the very least controlled through a dialogue with the political level. Furthermore, in the role as opposition, prior to the election of 2018, the SD perceived the public administration as working ineffectivly, and that different sectors counteracted each other. Therefore, one election promise of the SD was to committ to extensive

organizational reform, something that they also pursued once in local government. The respondents of the questionnaire agree that the organizational change has been quite extensive. Despite it not being welcomed by all within the public administration, it has been implemented. Dramatic organizational change is one characteristics of sidelining, where one oppositional sector of the public administration is made to retract to the advantage of one more accomodating. The politicians expectations was disloyalty, and the bureaucratic behavior was disloyal. Subsequently, an alternate administration was pursued – box D in Table 2 (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1530 & 1535).

Some of the respondents of the questionnaire agree with Ohlin (2022) that a number of the officials actively opposed the new leadership. However, a number of the respondents also point out a number of similar characteristics of the SD in Hörby. One such is that their leadership style is more authoritative, or more authoritarian. This has occasionally led to conflicts with the public administration that could have otherwise been avoided. One way in which this has been apparent is the political leaderships' inclination to micro-manage to a greater extent than previous municipal governments. This, one could assume, could be a question of personal perceptions regarding a phenomenon that also Ohlin (2022) referenced – namely what he described as a previously too influential public administration. A second characteristic that a number of respondents described – and that also could be viewed as a by-product of the diverting views on the public administrations sphere of influence – was the apparent inexperience of the leadership. Specifically in terms of what is and is not an issue that can be addressed at the municipal level.

A number of the respondents claim that the ideal public administrator for the SD would be one that follows the Weberian ideal of *sine ira ac studio*. The SD leadership in Hörby agree that activism by public administrators is undesireable and that they instead should work free from personal political perceptions (Ohlin, 2022). A number of the respondents described it as if their colleagues motivated their opposition with them working for the citizens rather than for the politicians. In a representative democracy as Sweden, one could object that working for the politicians is working for the citizens.

Figure 2.
"How well does the following claim hold true: the change in who holds leadership positions in the public administration has been greater during this tenure than during previous ones?"
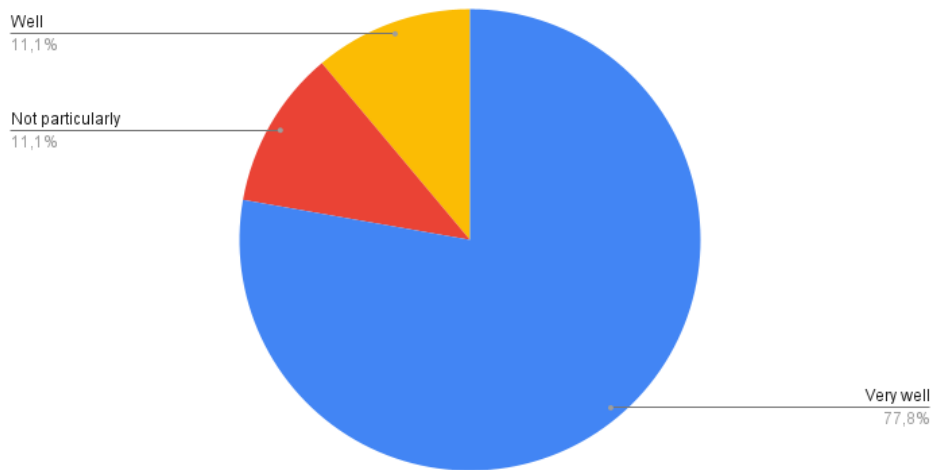
As was described in chapter 4.1.1, a substantial number of chief public administrators have left their positions in Hörby since the election of 2018. This was apparent in the responses to the questionnaire, as 44.4 % had not been employed by the municipality prior to the fall of 2018. As Figure 2 displays, just below 90 % of the respondents agreed that the turnover in the unelected leadership had been substantial. In line with the option of *sidelining*, one could suspect that the political leadership would favor patronage appointments (Peters & Pierre 2019, p. 1530). While one could assume that individuals who hold a strong antipathy toward the SD would not apply for a position in a municipality where the party governs and that this consequently would lead to either indirect patronage or at the least that the percentage of Weberian administrators would increase, the influence of the political leadership in the employment process of the public administration is quite limited in a Swedish context (Ehn 2016, pp. 340-341).

5.4 Svalöv

In Svalöv, similar to in Bjuv, the new SD leadership was formed after another local government had fallen. This could have had potential implications on the perception of the public administration on the new political leadership. As was discussed in the sub-chapter for Bjuv, since the formation of the new government was preceded by political turmoil, one could assume that the public administration was less antagonistic about the prospect of a local government lead by the SD. According to the recollection of Ingrid Ekström (2022), the chair of Svalöv's municipal council, no leading officials left their positions as a direct result of the formation of the SD government. Therefore, both Bjuv and Svalöv faced the least apparent fallouts with the public administration of the five municipalities. In Svalöv, 77 % of the

responding public administrators said that the change in leadership had not been more substantial since 2018 compared to earlier tenures. Furthermore, both Bjuv (Henrysson 2022) and Svalöv (Ekström 2022) claimed that the cooperation with the other municipalities where SD had formed government, as well as with the central party, worked well. This can be contrasted to what Bromölla (Persson 2022) and Hörby (Ohlin 2022) claimed. Consequently, one conclusion could be that the latter governments that formed had an advantage as they could rely more on the accumulated knowledge from the earlier local governments.

Similar to Bjuv, the leadership in Svalöv chose the option of *using* the public administration. According to Ekström (2022), the new political leadership saw no reason to expect anything other than that the public administration would behave loyally to them – which the public administration also did. As a result, the relationship between the two was box A in Table 2 (Peters & Pierre 2019, p. 1535). However, a number of the respondents of the questionnaire claimed that the political leadership in Svalöv focused on local pragmatism, rather than on pursuing the more controversial policies at the national level. One could argue that this has contributed to the relatively low levels of controversies. Of the ten responding public administrators from Svalöv, none described the cooperation with the political leadership as dysfunctional. The same is true in terms of how SD in Svalöv is treated by the public administration. As can be seen in Figure 3, none of the respondents argued that the political leadership was treated differently compared to previous ones.

Figure 3.
" How well does the following claim hold true: the SD's local government is being treated in the same manner as previous local governments in your municipality?"

Well
20,0%

Very well
50,0%

I have not worked within the
30,0%
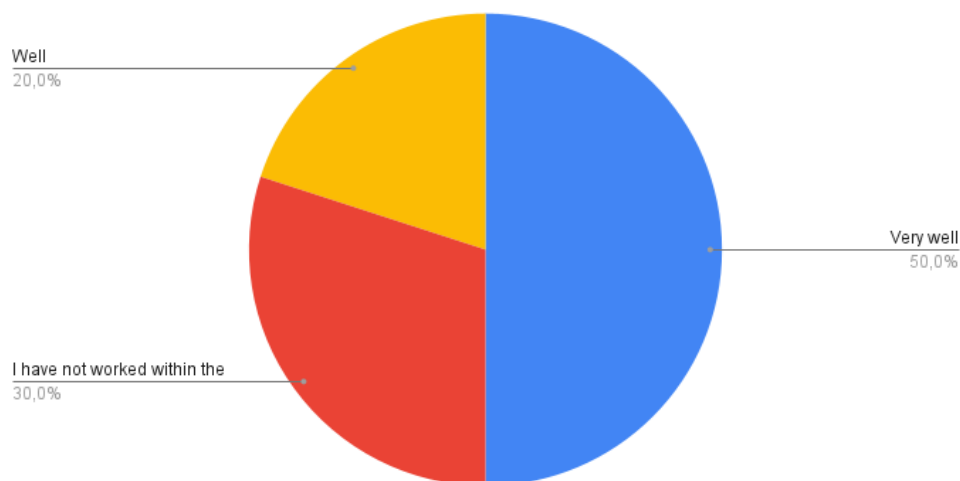
5.5   Sölvesborg

The first sentence of this thesis is a quote by the chair of the executive committee in Sölvesborg, Louise Erixon (2022), about her apprehensions before entering the political leadership that her and her party would be counteracted from the public administration. Similar to many of the other municipalities featured in this study, Sölvesborg had been under Social Democratic rule for several decades. Consequently, Erixon described the apprehensions that she felt as natural. However, she was "incredibly, positively surprised" by the reception by the officials in the municipal building. When asked to describe the relationship between her party, the SD, and the public administration prior to the election of 2018, she explained that their paths had rarely crossed. As the SD did not have an office in the municipal building prior to gaining the role of chair of the executive committee, the party only engaged with public officials during committee meetings. This rare interaction with the unelected officials could potentially have contributed to the SD being skeptical of what to expect.

Similar to in a number of the previously discussed municipalities, this fear by the leading Sweden Democrat in Sölvesborg could have led them to adopt a *sidelining* strategy toward the public administration. Furthermore, it could have resulted in a waste – box B in Table 2 – where the politicians would expect the public administrators to behave disloyally, whilst they instead would conduct their work as previously. In the case of Sölvesborg, one could argue that what steered the SD away from pursuing that strategy was a meeting between Louise Erixon and the municipal officer. When a new political leadership is formed, it occasionally decides to hire a new municipal officer, rather than to work with the one that was employed during the previous political administration. However, during that first meeting between Erixon and the municipal officer, they – the highest-ranking elected official and the highest-ranking unelected official – agreed to trust each other and to act towards each other on similar terms. According to Erixon, this reassured her that the public administration would not counteract the new political leadership (Erixon 2022).

68 % of the respondents of the questionnaire agree with Erixon – the cooperation between the public administration and the political leadership has been of a positive nature. Approximately 60 % claim that SD are treated as previous political leaderships, and 85 % say that the same thing holds true for how SD treats the political administration. A number of the respondents describe how, while the relationship is beneficial, the political leadership tends to micro-manage and attempted to steer the details of certain processes. Nevertheless, given these insights, the relationship has been of the *smooth transition-* type – box A in Table 2.

Given the options of the political leadership, another detail that would indicate that *sidelining* would be an unfitting description of the circumstances in Sölvesborg is that 100 % of the questionnaire respondents claim that there has not been an exodus, or abnormal, turnover in the public administration leadership. While a number of lower-ranking officials have resigned – and privately described one

reason being their personal political differences with the SD leadership – no chief public officials have left. Rather, one could argue for an *empowering* strategy of the SD in Sölvesborg. A number of the respondents have described how the municipal administration is, as of writing, experiencing organizational change. This is not a direct consequence of the current political leadership. However, the public administration has indirectly been given more responsibilities and consequently influence, as the SD has been an active force in reclaiming the function of a municipal association – which incidentally was shared with the municipality of Bromölla (Sölvesborgs kommun 2020) – and incorporated this in the current administration. Furthermore, a new municipal administration has been assembled. These indications would together suggest that the responsibilities of the public administration have increased since 2018, why an *empowering* strategy would be the most fitting classification for Sölvesborg.

5.6 Collective findings

Henrysson (2022), Persson (2022), Ohlin (2022), Ekström (2022), and Erixon (2022) all agree that the SD originates from an anti-establishment foundation. However, a number of the interviewees argued that the party could not be considered to still be that in 2022, pointing to the party being the third largest in the election for the Riksdag in 2018, as well as being part of the local governments in a number of municipalities. Another point that all interviewees describe similarly is how they viewed it as being a strength to ascend the political leadership as a new party, without any previous experience. While some provide nuances to how the preconditions were both strengths and weaknesses (Erixon 2022), or that what was initially seen as a strength later materialized in issues that could be attributed to inexperience (Persson 2022), all still agreed that the lack of experience provided them with new perspectives on the respective municipalities.

Questionnaire respondents from all five of the municipalities concluded that the individuals at the top levels of the local government are of a greater importance to the relationship with the public administration, rather than which party the individuals represent. In other words, that personal relationships between the elected and unelected levels mattered most to the cooperation. One could, as Hellström, et al. (2013, pp. 7-8) does in their report on the relationship between politicians and public administrators, argue that putting more emphasis on personal relationships rather than on fixed roles could lead to fragile structures that are sensitive to personnel changes.

A number of the respondents explained that one reason to why the relationship with the SD-leadership in some municipalities had proved more fruitful than they had initially feared was that SD locally did not pursue as controversial issues as at the national level. Furthermore, in the case of Bromölla, Persson (2022) claimed that the SD leadership there did not encounter substantial conflicts with the public administration. Instead, the issues that, from his perspective, led to the resignation

of that local government was rather because of political reasons and deadlocks. A number of the respondents gave answers that supported this statement. Similar trends and answers could be found in the interviews and questionnaire answers of the other municipalities as well regarding their potential conflicts.

Other similarities could be noted from the first three local SD governments to form. Both Bromölla (Persson 2022) and Hörby (Ohlin 2022) described how they would have preferred more guidance and assistance from the national party organization of the SD, which was described as quite unprepared for the scenario of leading a number of municipalities. As the predecessors on the different positions were from other parties, they rarely offered any instructions or advise. Consequently, the new political leadership in especially Hörby and Bromölla had to learn by doing. They both agreed that the situation was another for Sölvesborg, which Persson (2022) described as "the storefront" of the party. As a result, Sölvesborg received the most substantial support from the central party organization, while Bromölla was left to "cope the best they could." This unproportionality of support from the central party organization is arguably interesting given that out of the first three formed local governments, Bromölla's resigned within two years, Hörby's faced substantial conflicts with the public administration while dealing with a number of scandals, and Sölvesborg's – the local government that supposedly received the most support – managed relatively well.

Furthermore, Bjuv and Svalöv – who both formed their governments a number of years later – described how they received support both from the central party organization, that by that point had appointed a political official with extra focus on the municipalities, as well as from the local governments that had formed previously. Neither Henrysson (2022) nor Ekström (2022) described substantial conflicts with their respective public administrations. Given the information provided by all five interviewees, one could argue that while the national party organization was rather unprepared to assist in governing a number of municipalities prior to the election of 2018, by the time of the formation of the SD leaderships in Bjuv and Svalöv, they had more experience.

One could argue that no conclusive strategy as to how to engage with the public administration had been formulated by the national party organization initally, why the local governments in Bromölla, Hörby and Sölvesborg all chose different options. Once Bjuv and Svalöv had formed, the party had decided to follow the example of Sölvesborg. Despite rumours of counteracting in Bjuv, so long as no destructive conflicts with the public administration arose, they would pursue the option of *using*. Furthermore, this later forming could have influenced both the publics and the public administration's perceptions of the SD, after witnessing them govern a number of other municipalities since the election. After a tumultuous period where the local government fell, some might have felt relieved that a new political leadership was put in place – regardless of which party held which positions. This, one could argue, could have influenced the public administration's willingness to provide the new leadership with a smooth transition.

Chapter 3.2 presents Sasso and Morelli's (2021 pp. 1 & 9) observation on how the populist's critique of the establishment often is directed also at the bureaucracy.

One could argue that as the SD in Hörby had formulated an election promise of organizational reform due to, from their perception, an ineffective public administration, this was viewed by the public administration as a critique of them. This could potentially have contributed to the friction between the political leadership and the public administration. However, as Drápalová (2021, pp. 132-133) concludes that the political leadership in a local setting is more intertwined and dependent on the public administration than at the national level, this could potentially be an explanation as to why the other four cases opted to either *use* or *empower* the current public administration.

The discussions in the paragraphs above assume that Peters and Pierre's (2019, pp. 1529-1534) options are a functioning theory and that it is applicable both to the SD, and on a municipal context. And while they are seemlingly fitting in the analysis, they are not perfect. Three out of the five municipalities have been deemed to have chosen an option of *using* the public administration. As was discussed in chapter 3.2.1, while Peters and Pierre describe this third option as being especially applicable on authoritarian regimes where the aim of the new leadership is to deconstruct parts of the democracy through the help of the public administration, in this thesis it is modified to instead being considered the traditional manner in which a political leadership uses the public administration. As not all populist parties are anti-democratic, this alternative view on *using* the public administration is suggested.

As has been addressed, a number of the questionnaire respondents from all of the five municipalities suggested that the individuals on the leading elected positions are of greater importance to the relationship between the politicians and the public administration, rather than what party they represent. Furthermore, a similar number of respendents from the municipalities suggested that the relationship was made easier as the SD was not pursuing as many of the parties more controversial policy proposals at the municipal level as at the national level – either because of choice, or because the municipality does not have jursidiction over those responsibilities. This was reitterated by Henrysson (Henrysson 2022). One could argue that these two factors in combination would present a fourth option for the populist leadership, namely to abandon a number of its suggested policies in an effort to facilitate meaningful cooperation with the public administration. One could argue that the voters would punish the elected officials who did not live up to their promises. However, as local politics are rarely covered in media as frequently as national politics, carefully choosing which controversial policies to not pursue would hypothetically not render this option unrealistic. While it would be similar to the modified *using*-option of this thesis, this *backtracking*-option would be broader in the sense that it would be the political leadership who would succumb to the influence of the public administration.

6 Conclusions

The nature of the relationship between the Sweden Democrats and the public administration officials in the respective municipalities where the party holds the position of chair of the executive committee is what this thesis has sought to explore. Data has been collected through interviews with representatives from the SD in the respective municipalities, and through a survey that was sent to 185 public officials in the five municipalities. To guide the material toward an answer, Peters and Pierre's (2019) theory on the options of populist right-wing governments have been used, with an ambition to both test and develop the theory. The findings have rendered a number of conclusions.

In chapter 3.2, four points that one could expect from a populist right-wing government are presented: a loss of expertise in the government, a more extensive politicization of the governing, greater levels of patronage within the government, and a centralization of the government (Peters & Pierre 2019, pp. 1527-1528). Of these four points, only one can be confirmed through the gathered material to be accurate on the case of SD, namely a greater politicization of the governing. However, both the interviewees and the respondents of the questionnaire agreed that this was not only because of the SD-leadership, but also due to undermining from the public administration – in mainly Hörby – as well as how the political opposition attempted to counteract the new leadership. One could argue that as a result of the many officials that left their positions in Hörby, this would have an effect on the expertise as well as the individual public administrators view of the political leadership. However, this would require further research into comparing former and current individual official's personal perceptions.

The options pursued by the political leadership in the different municipalities varied. Given the gathered material, Bjuv, Bromölla, and Svalöv adopted the strategy of *using*, while Sölvesborg chose *empowering*, and Hörby *sidelining*. Especially noteworthy was that the three municipalities that formed just after the election of 2018 – Bromölla, Hörby and Svalöv – all chose different options. This, one could argue, would indicate that the central party organization of the SD did not have a coherent strategy regarding how to manage the relationship with the public administrators. Bromölla and Hörby received limited support from the central party organization. The local government in Bromölla resigned within two years of formation, while the SD in Hörby faced substantial conflicts with the public administration. The findings would suggest that the lessons learnt from the difficulties in Bromölla and Hörby led the national party organization to form structures with responsibilities of assisting the municipalities. When the local governments in Bjuv and Svalöv formed, both received support from the central party organization and from the party colleagues in the other municipalities. Both

also adopted the option of *using* the public administration, something that may have been decided given the experiences from the previous three municipalities.

Whether the pursuit of a certain option was an active choice by the local party officials is a valid objection to the presented results. However, one could argue that whether or not it was an active choice would not affect the results, as the leaderships conduct under certain circumstances could, as proved by this thesis, regardless be categorized into the different options. An aspect that evidently affects the choice of option for a municipal leadership is the personal relationship between the leading party officials and the public officials. This is a recurring answer in the questionnaire. Given that the Swedish political system is of a representative model, this emphasis on personal relationships for the cooperation between elected and unelected officials is noteworthy.

While Peters and Pierre's (2019) options when tested proved applicable, certain conclusions can be drawn which potentially could strengthen and develop the theory. As the theory, and specifically the third option, is most applicable to authoritarian versions of populism, one could assume that it would be less applicable to a party such as the SD. It once featured a substantial critique of the liberal democracy – which is elaborated in chapter 2.2. However, today the SD is substantially less critical than comparable movements in other countries. When modified, however, the *using*-option could be regarded as a status-quo option, where the new political leaderships attempt to achieve a more traditional relationship with the public administration. Instead of an option where the current public administration is used to dismantle democratic structures, it is instead used as it had been previously. In this modification, the applicability of the options-theory would be expanded, which would be in line with the discussion in chapter 4.1.2 of only widening theories when developing them. This would also be the case when broadening the view of the unelected officials from merely bureaucratic instances to all of the public administration.

Finally, while the original two options together with the third modified option were sufficient to categorize the five municipalities featured in this thesis, one could argue for a potential fourth scenario. All three scenarios assume that the political leadership have the discretion of handling the public administration. While the democratic system is constructed in a manner where the political level "says what, and the public administration says how", the findings of chapter 3 would suggest that the public administration can have a substantial influence. Both the interviewee and the respondents from Hörby claimed that the public administration was used to having a strong influence over the policies, something that the political leadership made an election promise of changing to the benefit of the political level, despite knowing that such a change of responsibilities would lead to conflicts with the public administration. One alternative approach could have been to, once having formed the government, withdraw from such a restructuring; to rather pursue a conflict-free relationship with the public administration. This fourth option of *backtracking* would be the result of the political leadership succumbing to the influence of a strong public administration.

One ambition of this thesis was to contribute to the literature – and to a theory – on populist governments. To expand on this endeavor, further research could

include applications of Peters and Pierre's options or scenarios in other contexts than that of the Sweden Democrats in a municipal government. Potentially, the suggested widening of the theory that is presented here could enable an expanded area of applicability. For example, one could use the findings of this thesis to test the theory's usefulness on populist parties in other countries, where the parties hold other characteristics than the SD. One could also test the theory on a left-wing populist party.

7   References

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Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

1. Vad fick dig att ge dig in i lokalpolitiken?

2. Skulle du beskriva ditt parti som anti-etablissemang?

3. Skulle du beskriva det som en styrka eller svaghet att kliva in som ett nytt parti i kommunstyret?

4. Hur ofta har du i din roll direktkontakt med tjänstepersonerna?

5. Upplever du att den kommunala tjänstemannakåren i din kommun är präglad av en viss typ av politik och en viss typ av värderingar?

6. Har du och ditt parti samma bild av tjänstemannakåren i kommunen när ni nu styr som ni hade i rollen som opposition?

7. Hur skulle du beskriva relationen och samarbetet mellan det politiska styret och tjänstemannakåren efter att ni tillträdde?

8. Har relationen mellan ditt parti och de kommunala tjänstemännen ändrats något eller förhållit sig likadan sedan partiet först kom in i kommunfullmäktige?
   a. Hur upplevde du och ditt parti att kontakten med tjänstepersonerna fungerade då?
   b. Har du exempel på interaktioner/situationer som varit särskilt bra? Har du exempel på interaktioner/situationer av det motsatta? Vari grundade sig i så fall dessa enligt dig?

9. Upplever du att tjänstemän i större utsträckning förhåller sig annorlunda till dig som företrädare för Sverigedemokraterna, jämfört med hur de förhåller sig till företrädare av andra partier? Har det i så fall ändrats med er roll som oppositionsparti och styre?

10. Ändrades, såvitt du vet, ansvars- och verksamhetsområdena för olika förvaltningar och avdelningar i den kommunala verksamheten efter att ni tillträdde?
    a. Var ni exempelvis med och omprioriterade vilka förvaltningar och enheter som fick mer eller mindre ansvar? Om inte, välkomnade ni sådana eventuella förändringarna?
    b. Prioriterar ni som sverigedemokrater någon särskild nämnd?

11. Hur fungerar relationen mellan ditt parti och övriga partier i styret (om det finns några sådana)?

12. Hur ser samverkan ut mellan styret i din kommun och med de övriga kommunerna där SD är med och styr? Hur ser kontakten ut med partiet centralt? Har ni fått råd och direktiv om hur ni ska agera i olika situationer?

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

- I vilken kommun är du verksam?
    Short answer text ...

- Verkar du som politiker eller tjänsteperson?
    - *Politiker*
    - *Tjänsteperson*

1.
    a. Beroende på om du svarade 'Politiker' eller 'Tjänsteperson' ovan: har din bild av Sverigedemokraterna/de kommunala tjänstepersonerna förändrats sedan det nya styret med Sverigedemokraterna tillträdde efter valet 2018?
    - *Ja*
    - *Nej*

    b. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva din bild av de sverigedemokratiska politikerna/de kommunala tjänstepersonerna? Och om du svarade 'Ja' på fråga 1a, på vilket sätt har din bild förändrats?
    Long answer text ...

2. Hur skulle du beskriva att samarbetet mellan det politiska styret och tjänstepersonerna fungerade innan valet 2018?
    - *Mycket bra*
    - *Bra*
    - *Varken bra eller dåligt*
    - *Dåligt*
    - *Mycket dåligt*
    - *Jag var inte verksam inom kommunen innan valet 2018*

3. Hur skulle du beskriva att samarbetet mellan det politiska styret och tjänstepersonerna fungerade månaderna efter att det nya styret med Sverigedemokraterna tillträdde?
    - *Mycket bra*
    - *Bra*
    - *Varken bra eller dåligt*
    - *Dåligt*
    - *Mycket dåligt*
    - *Jag var inte verksam inom kommunen strax efter att det nya styret tillträdde*

4.

    a. Hur skulle du beskriva att samarbetet mellan det politiska styret och tjänstepersonerna fungerar idag?
- *Mycket bra*
- *Bra*
- *Varken bra eller dåligt*
- *Dåligt*
- *Mycket dåligt*
- *Jag har inte varit verksam inom kommunen under tidigare styren*
- *Sverigedemokraterna styr inte längre i min kommun*

    b. Om du vill motivera eller utveckla dina svar på frågorna 2, 3 och 4a kan du göra det här.
    Long answer text ...

5. Hur väl stämmer följande påstående: det sverigedemokratiska styret i kommunen bemöts (eller bemöttes) av tjänstepersonerna på samma vis som tidigare styren bemötts?
- *Mycket väl*
- *Väl*
- *Inte särskilt*
- *Inte alls*
- *Jag har inte varit verksam inom kommunen under tidigare styren*

6.

    a. Hur väl stämmer följande påstående: det sverigedemokratiska styret i kommunen bemöter (eller bemötte) tjänstepersonerna på samma vis som företrädare för tidigare styren gjort?
- *Mycket väl*
- *Väl*
- *Inte särskilt*
- *Inte alls*
- *Jag har inte varit verksam inom kommunen under tidigare styren*

    b. Om du vill motivera eller utveckla dina svar på frågorna 5 och 6a kan du göra det här.
    Long answer text ...

7.

    a. Hur väl stämmer följande påstående: den kommunala förvaltningen är präglad av en viss typ av värderingar?
- *Mycket väl*
- *Väl*
- *Inte särskilt*
- *Inte alls*

b. Om du svarade 'Inte särskilt' eller 'Inte alls' på fråga 7a kan du fortsätta till fråga 8a. Om du istället svarade 'Mycket väl' eller 'Väl': hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva den typen av värderingar?
Long answer text ...

8.

a. Sverigedemokraterna hade innan valet 2018 aldrig tidigare styrt en kommun. Anser du att avsaknaden av erfarenhet på en liknande position gått att notera under mandatperioden?
- *Ja*
- *Till viss del*
- *Nej*

b. Om du svarade 'Ja' eller 'Till viss del' på fråga 8a: på vilket sätt har denna avsaknad av erfarenhet gått att notera?
Long answer text ...

9. Hur väl stämmer följande påstående: förändringar av vilka som innehar chefspositioner inom förvaltningen har varit omfattande sedan valet 2018?
- *Mycket väl*
- *Väl*
- *Inte särskilt*
- *Inte alls*

10. Hur väl stämmer följande påstående: förvaltningarnas ansvarsområden har förändrats i större omfattning under nuvarande mandatperiod jämfört med under tidigare?
- *Mycket väl*
- *Väl*
- *Inte särskilt*
- *Inte alls*
- *Jag har inte varit verksam inom kommunen under tidigare mandatperioder*
- *Jag vet inte*

- Övriga kommentarer, anekdoter, motiveringar eller annat som du vill utveckla:
Long answer text ...