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**From Complexity to Clarity:  
The Evolution of Language and Populism in  
Swedish Parliamentary Debates Through the Four  
Phases of Mediatization**

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# Abstract

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## From Complexity to Clarity:

### The Evolution of Language and Populism in Swedish Parliamentary Debates Through the Four Phases of Mediatization

This paper investigates the intricacies of language complexity in political discourse within the Swedish parliament, with a focus on understanding the impact of mediatization. Drawing on Strömbäck's four-phase framework of mediatization, the study examines whether the internalization of media logic has led to a simplification of language in parliamentary debates. Using a quantitative approach, the study analyzes linguistic features and readability indices in parliamentary statements spanning a 30-year period. Contrary to expectations, the results reveal a statistically significant increase in language complexity over time, challenging the notion of a linear trend towards simplification. Furthermore, the study examines the relationship between populism and language complexity, finding no significant difference in language complexity between parties with populist features and others in the sample. These findings suggest a nuanced understanding of mediatization dynamics in political communication and highlight the need for further research to explore alternative dimensions of mediatization and its implications for political discourse.

**Keywords:** language simplification, LIX readability test, political communication, four phases of mediatization framework

**Word count:**16728

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# 1. Introduction

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Throughout history the great political philosophers all contemplated the issue of representation and the political elite. Whether the issue of the effectiveness of democracy or the people's ability to understand what's best for them, the question of how a state is best run and the relationship between the power and people has been debated among scholars within various fields. (Schumpeter, 1942; Machiavelli, 1513; Locke, 1690). Today the issue is more relevant than ever, one of the central issues in any modern democracy is how the political decision makers link themselves and their preferences to the people. Political leaders use a variety of tools to measure, predict and understand what issues are important to the electoral college and which persuasion tactics give the best results. Previously, the focus of these strategies was primarily on election campaigns but lately scholars have found that a state of “permanent campaigning” is becoming more common in western democracies thus creating a political climate where political actors are constantly fighting for attention (Strömbäck, 2016). One crucial tactic that is increasingly influencing political discourse is the simplification of language and messages. This strategy has been linked to different processes in society such as populism, mediatization and polarization.

In 2017 Center for Community change released a communication handbook aimed towards the progressive left. The handbook was developed by the American scholar Anat Shenker Osario and outlined communication strategies and messages that would successfully reframe progressive politics and persuade voters in the same way that the populist right have gained popularity over the last 10-20 years.

One of the messaging strategies was to *Focus on outcomes, not process* or as Anat herself cleverly words it “*sell the cake, not the recipe*”. The key to this strategy is to focus less on policy, and more on values and outcomes. In other words, don't talk about *how* you want to create change but on *what* the citizens will get once it's achieved. In essence, the emphasis should be placed not on the process of effecting change, but rather on the anticipated outcomes for citizens. By subtracting the policy from politics, it becomes easier for political actors to connect to voters and using shared values has proven to create a sense of togetherness between politicians and citizens. This is achieved by simplifying both policy and the language used to describe it.

This raises a concern recognizable for most politically interested citizens and is echoed by scholars across research fields: is politics getting dumber?

Building on studies that have found that this is the case in America, Austria and Germany among others.

Some scholars have suggested having citizens go through a test on political knowledge before voting (Graber, 1994,) and others have suggested that the media holds an important responsibility in educating the public on political issues (Blumler, 1999; Shanto, 1991).

In political communication this issue is a constant in relation to creating communication depending on the target group. The view of the public affects the way politicians choose to formulate and frame political standpoints and societal problems. Depending on how you view the audience the language and abstraction level of the political communication changes. This might seem like a natural progression of stakeholder communication; you have to adapt the content depending on context. Historically politicians and statesmen have been critiqued for using complicated words and a bureaucratic language that was too hard for regular voters to understand. This created a rift between the people and the political elite. Overly technical, in depth analysis of economic reforms or philosophical discussions on how the state is organized did not help the people understand the policy decisions made by the leaders and did not serve as a means to make citizens actively participate in politics. On the contrary, it made it harder for voters to get insight into the democratic system. By actively shutting the public out of political decision making one manages to weaken democracy and create a system closer to the authoritarian system.

Since there's been a discrepancy between the public and decision makers, the media has filled the role of translator between the two. using their platform to explain and question politicians and political decisions in order to create a bridge between the public and decision makers. Over the years the media has become an increasingly important part of the public's lives and has become the premier source for information about politics. The nature of media has also changed, evolving from simply reporting on the news and providing a platform for political actors to say their piece, the media has become their own political actors with their own agenda and set of opinions. This change has also resulted in the media using their influence to question and review politicians and poly-decisions. The commercialization of the media has also led to a new set of values and strategies to capture the attention of the public. Political coverage has to become more interesting and exciting in order to attract readers. As Jesper Strömbäck (2008) puts it :

*“the important question no longer is related to the independence of the media from politics and society. The important question becomes the independence of politics and society from the media”*

## 1.1 Problem Formulation

The notion that political messaging is becoming progressively more simple and is losing its complexity is not new in the field of political communication (Strömbäck, 2008; Weintraub & Pinkleton 2011; Blumer & Gurevitch, 1995; Blumler, 1999; Shanto, 1991). In contemporary political discourse, the manner in which language is used in parliamentary debates serves as a critical dimension reflecting both the development of democratic communication and the impact of media logic. This has previously mainly been researched from the perspective of the public using speeches, public debates and press material as data [Insert sources]. This has filled the purpose of investigating how political parties communicate when they know that the media and the public is listening. Looking at the Swedish context the previous research follows the same pattern, mainly focusing on the media or people's perception of political language and understanding of politics (Schmuck et al., 2022; Kjeldsen et al., 2021; Mustafa, 2023; Galston, 2001). Using non-public focusing material to research whether the media logic has started influencing political communication even when the material is not directly meant for the media has by my account not been researched yet. I argue that this would be an effective way to research if media logic has become internalized within Swedish politics, effectively serving as a sign of the fourth phase of mediatization. This gap in previous research marks the point of departure for this paper.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to investigate the extent to which the overall complexity of language employed in Swedish parliamentary debates has undergone transformation over the past 30 years.

Furthermore, the study aims to explore the concurrent influence of two interconnected phenomena: mediatization and simplification of political messaging. The mediatization process may contribute to language simplification for mass accessibility and media logic may introduce new linguistic patterns influenced by brevity, immediacy, and engagement.

Assessing the linguistic accessibility of parliamentary discourse is crucial for understanding the inclusivity and transparency of democratic processes. Language that is more accessible to the general public potentially enhances civic engagement and understanding, contributing to a more robust democratic discourse and too simplified language might have the opposite effect. Connected to this issue is the topic of populism and how populist parties use the tension between the perceived political elite and the people to gain trust and votes. The rise of populism in Europe and Sweden is a popular field of study and most relevant in the discussion of simplification of political messages. Therefore, this study will also look to literature and research on populism in order to analyze whether the political language has undergone a significant change in the last 30 years.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to investigate the intricate interplay between language complexity, mediatization and the democratic structure in Swedish parliamentary debates. By understanding how language has evolved over the specified time period and the underlying factors driving these changes, this research seeks to offer insights into the dynamics of contemporary political communication and its implications for democratic participation.

Furthermore, the study has an exploratory approach, seeking to find a pattern of simplification within the political language in the Swedish parliament over time across party lines. The exploratory approach allows for the data to be analyzed in multiple different ways in order to look for interesting results. As previously stated, the choice focus is built on the idea that if the media logic has truly infiltrated the political logic the evidence of this shift will not primarily be seen in the public-facing materials but behind the scenes. Therefore, this study has a most unlikely approach, looking for signs of media logic where they would show up last and therefore constitute some proof of internalized media logic in political institutions. The choice of data is the protocols from the daily debates in the Swedish parliament chamber.

## 1.2 Research questions

**RQ 1:** To what extent has the complexity of language used in Swedish parliamentary debates changed over the past 30 years, as measured by readability indices and linguistic features associated with simplification?

H1: there is a significant negative change in LIX scores over time

H0: there is no significant change in LIX scores over time

**RQ 2:** Does the presence of populist features within political parties correspond to significantly lower LIX scores compared to parties without such features?

H1: SD, V and NYD will have significantly lower LIX scores than the rest of the parties in the sample

H0: there is no significant difference in LIX score between parties with populist features and the rest of the parties in the sample.

## 2. Literature review

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The literature review will focus on the themes of mediatization and simplification of politics in an international and Swedish context. Since a majority of the research in the field of political communication comes from American scholars and is focused on the political arena in the US, the literature used in this paper will reflect that. The lack of extensive sources outside of the USA can pose an issue when attempting to research the Swedish political climate and simultaneously create a need for more research on simplification and mediatization in the Swedish context.

The interplay between mediatization, the perceived simplification of politics, and linguistic analysis forms a dynamic and multifaceted field of research. Scholars from diverse backgrounds and fields have contributed valuable insights into the intricate relationship between media, language, and political communication. This literature review synthesizes key findings from seminal works, providing a deeper understanding of this complex intersection in both Swedish and international contexts. Although this study has a quantitative focus and method, this review will include studies using qualitative methods since this broadens the scope of knowledge and can supply valuable information about the field.

First, the general research field will be presented along with some central works and findings on the topic of political rhetoric, simplification and political communication strategy.

In the subsequent part the main theory of mediatization and the four phase framework will be presented. This framework is the foundation of the study and will therefore be discussed more in depth.

Similarly, the following section thoroughly presents the research field on language simplification and populism and how it relates to the topic of mediatization. The cross section between populism and mediatization also represents a central part of the research aim and second research question.

Finally, the general language development in Sweden will be shortly addressed and put into the perspective of the study.



## 2.1 The field of political communication and language

One central line of research in the field is concerned with how different types of political communication are received and understood by citizens. Fundamentally, this is the core concern for much of the research on political communication and even in political science. Policy decisions and how they are communicated are only as good as how well the electorate understands it and how well it motivates them to vote in certain ways (Lacatus & Meibauer, 2022; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Iyengar, 1990). Since communication is generally concerned with a sender and a receiver of messages, this research is interested in the former part.

Using a two-wave panel survey with adolescents and young adults Schmuck et al (2022) investigated how the participants perceived political information conveyed by influencers on social media. This study introduces the concept of perceived simplification of politics (PSP), examining how influencers' communication impacts political outcomes. It also explores the effects of PSP on political cynicism and interest, while investigating the conditions influencing this relationship through surveys of adolescents and young adults. The aim of the study was twofold: understanding the reasons behind the perceived simplification of politics and how this affects cynicism and political interest among a young demographic. The key term “perceived simplification of politics” is defined as “the followers’ perceptions of the presentation of politics in a clear and comprehensible manner that is easy to interpret and process” (Schmuck et al. 2022, p.1). The study found that perceived simplification of politics (PSP) can lead to increasing cynicism but that it can also increase political interest within certain groups. These findings are echoed by Wintraub and Pinkleton (1999) who found that political simplification was linked to greater negativism towards politics but also to greater involvement. This dual conclusion was achieved through a survey conducted with 592 respondents where questions regarding perceptions of political media coverage, political involvement, and political dissatisfaction. Besides the findings regarding simplification, the study also found that perceptions of unrepresentativeness were correlated to amplified feelings of cynicism and disaffection. Finally, the study concluded that perceived simplification contributed less to negative views on politics than the perception of unrepresentativeness (Wintraub and Pinkleton, 1999).

These two studies concluded that perceived simplification leads to positive and negative effects on political involvement and interest. The studies were conducted 20 years apart, with different demographics and political contexts but both found very similar results, cementing an answer to numerous previous studies that assumed perceived simplification to be inherently negative. A more in-depth discussion on the normative nature of the subject of political simplification and mediatization will follow in the latter part of this chapter.

Similarly, a study researched the effects of different levels of complexity in political texts using an experimental quantitative method (“Keep it simple, stupid”, 2017). By exposing the participants to the same text with varying levels of complexity the researchers evaluated how

the participants reacted to the texts depending on difficulty. The complexity level in this study was based on the concept of differentiation and integration. The lower complexity text only used one main argument for the position it advocated for, without distinguishing different aspects of the topic or integrating multiple perspectives. The moderate condition on the other hand acknowledged that the counterargument was presented but rejected for the main position. In the high complexity condition, the text recognized two legitimate dimensions of the issue and integrated both of them into a joint framework, emphasizing the existence of a trade-off between perspectives and the importance of balancing both viewpoints. In this study the complexity was measured as a variable defined by messages and meaning behind the words, the political rhetoric and argument building. The key was the use and legitimization of counterarguments when advocating for an issue. In addition, the researchers used the Flesch readability index to ensure a level of text complexity across these different conditions (“Keep it simple, stupid”, 2017). This study uses a complexity measure present in a large body of literature concerning political language. This measure is called “integrative complexity” and measures the use of multiple arguments and counterarguments when arguing for a political position. Other scholars have used this measure to research the effect of opposition vs government parties on rhetorical complexity, the effect of populism and differences between countries during crises. Others have used this framework to investigate whether conservatism or liberalism affects rhetoric with results showing a strong correlation between conservatism and less complex political discourse. Similar studies have found the same relationship when looking at far left and far right rhetoric, finding that more extreme political stances are related to a less complex argumentation (Fryklund, 2013; Lacatus & Meibauer, 2022). This measure is one that could be applied to this study in order to make the instrument more robust and open up the possibility to research different forms of language complexity in the parliament. However, it does demand a more hands on approach when detecting arguments and counter arguments and would therefore take more time and resources than this study has available.

Another approach widely used to analyze political language is discourse analysis. Scholars such as Fairclough (1992 and 1995) have paved the way for linguistic analysis within the context of mediatization, employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) to uncover power relations and framing in political discourse. The emphasis is on understanding how language is linked to wider social processes and how individual meanings and communications relate to conflict and divisions within society. This field of research focuses on society as a whole and searches to explain how society affects and is affected by language. Fairclough (1995) developed a three-dimensional model for analyzing CDA. The steps follow an ascending direction starting with smaller and more general analysis and working its way up to larger units of analysis that require more in-depth analysis and interpretation. The first step is concerned with describing the linguistic features and structure of the text, this involves identifying patterns of language use, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse strategies as well as identifying the context and potential power dynamics affecting the participants' language. The second the researcher interprets the meanings embedded within the discourse. This involves analyzing how language is used to construct social identities, relationships, and ideologies. The final step seeks to explain the broader social and political implications of the discourse. This

involves connecting the linguistic analysis to larger socio-cultural processes and power dynamics. The researcher examines how the discursive representations contribute to the reproduction or transformation of social relations, ideologies, and institutions (Fairclough, 1995). Mustafa (2023) used this framework to examine the difference in political discourse between Joe Biden's inaugural address in 2021 and Donald Trump's in 2019. In their study they look at key differences in the persuasive tactics used with a focus on repetition, creativity and intertextuality. The study applied both a quantitative and qualitative method in order to analyze the speeches from different angles. The results showed that Trump applied different rhetorical strategies that made him appear more as one of the people and less as one of the politicians, this aligns with the populist rhetoric and previous findings on populist strategies (Fryklund, 2013; Lacatus & Meibauer, 2022). The study also found that Trump had a larger focus on negative words and metaphors when describing the state of the nation and further describing himself as the savior, another tactic related to populism. The research structure of CDA works well in the topic of political communication and could be used to analyze the different dimensions of media logic and mediatization. However, the textual analysis would be complicated to achieve in the scope of this paper, specifically since one of the aims is to look for change over time. If this paper was only concerned with the effect of populism or ideology on rhetorical tactics, CDA could have been a beneficial framework to use (Mustafa, 2023).

## **2.2 Mediatization of politics and the four phase framework**

Mediatization refers to the process by which various aspects of society, including politics, culture, and interpersonal communication, become increasingly influenced, shaped, and transformed by media. This concept highlights the growing impact of media in shaping the structures, practices, and perceptions within a given society (Hjarvard, 2013; Strömbäck, 2008; Strömbäck and Esser, 2014). Mediatization is not limited to the media industry itself but extends to how media influences and permeates various social institutions and activities.

The concept of media in some form affecting policy or state power dynamics is far from a modern idea, some scholars have even found sources dating back to Napoleon using the mediatization concept although with vastly different meaning than today's definitions.

Research on mediatization in the field of political communication seemingly started occurring in the late 1980's with seminal works by Asp (1996), Asp, Kent and Esaiasson (1996) and Mazzoleni and Shulz (1999).

Strömbäck (2008) extends the research on mediatization by defining four phases of media influence on political institutions. The first phase of mediatization is defined by how central media is as a transmitter of information and communication between citizens and political

institutions. That is, when the primary source for political content for citizens is the media and most communication between political parties, representatives, institutions and the public are via the media. This phase relates closely with the concept of mediated politics which can roughly be explained in the same way; the media takes center stage in the relationship between political institutions and the people. In other words, can mediated politics be seen as the point of departure or prerequisite for mediatization of politics. Unless the media is the main arena for political communication the other phases of mediatization cannot take place.

In order to understand the following phases of mediatization the concept of media logic and political logic needs to be addressed. The idea that the media and politics are driven by different incentives and strategies are far from new and is becoming increasingly important when discussing political communication (Altheide & Snow, 1979). Media logic can be defined by the storytelling tools used to engage the public, or more increasingly audience, in order to stay relevant in the more competitive modern media climate. The strategies used are familiar to most of us following contemporary political news coverage, the gamification and polarization politics has made elections and debates into entertainment rather than news reporting. Some scholars have labeled this the “americanization” of political reporting, blaming the commercialization of the media for the degradation of political discourse (Blumler, 1992; Blumer & Gurevitch, 1995). Media logic is governed by ways of making issues interesting and catching the attention of the border public some of these strategies include: personalization, polarization (Temple, 2006; Bischof & Senninger, 2018) intensification (Strömbäck, 2008; Hernes 1978), depoliticization (Blumler, 1992; Blumer & Gurevitch, 1995), focusing on negative narratives (Blumler, 1992; Blumer & Gurevitch, 1995; Weintraub & Pinkleton 2011) and simplification (Strömbäck, 2008; Weintraub & Pinkleton 2011).

Political logic, in contrast to media logic, does not have the consumer as top priority when crafting communication, instead the primary focus is on societal issues and the distribution of political power (Strömbäck, 2008). The concept of political logic is less developed than media logic, but the general distinction lies in the focus on who sets the agenda for the media discourse, in a system where political logic is dominant the media is viewed as a continuation of the state in some sense and is regarded as a democratic institution with responsibilities to ensure that the democracy is protected. In this sense the media is mainly a communication channel for political institutions where the political logic decides what is important for the people to know, the focus is on information and democracy rather than entertainment or critical questioning of political decisions (Strömbäck and Esser, 2014; Hjarvald, 2013).

Continuing to the second phase of mediatization, the media is increasingly governed by media logic rather than political logic and is consequently more independent from political institutions. Driving factors for this process might include commercialization, more journalistic professionalization and a more pragmatic view on politics (Strömbäck and Esser, 2014). This phase is also characterized by the different media institutions having their own point of view,

norms and perspectives on society, making their priorities differ even more from the political logic. This creates a new dynamic between political actors and the media where political institutions need to alter their way of communicating in order to get coverage in the media (Strömbäck, 2008). The need for public relations efforts and relationship building with the media becomes increasingly important to stay relevant and political actors can't rely strictly on political messages in order to get attention in the public space.

The independence of the media institutions is further extended in the third phase. Political actors can no longer count on the media to accommodate their needs and narratives but instead need to adapt their behavior to the media logic. In practice this means that the behaviors and narratives valued by the media are seeping into the political discourse in different ways. The tools used by the media to convey newsworthiness and spike public interest are now utilized by political parties and institutions in order to land higher on the media agenda (Strömbäck, 2008). In other words, the dynamic between the media and politics is no longer one of two-way negotiation but rather of adaptation and in some cases collaboration, but generally the media is calling the shots in the third phase in contrast to the first and second phase where the political actors held more power over the agenda. This increasing power of the media is key when analyzing why political institutions chose to adopt rather than rebel against this new political format that generally does not serve the interests of political logic. This power shift leads to a change in behavior of the political actors, focus on personality, conflict and "soundbite" messages becomes more frequent since it makes it more likely to serve the media logic and therefore be rewarded with more space in the media (Strömbäck, 2008). The resistance between media logic and political logic is still present in the third phase. Political institutions can view the adaptation to media logic as a strategic tool and therefore invoke a false sense of control. The institutions themselves are still governed by political logic and wish to invoke as much of that as possible when interacting with the media. As noted in the introduction of this paper, politics is an inherently complicated process and political logic will aim to not shy away from technical descriptions of policy implementation, therefore political institutions will aim to add as much of the political logic as possible without losing the media perspective.

In the fourth and final phase this resistance is shrinking due to the dominance of media logic causing political actors and institutions to internalize the media strategies. Where there is a conscious choice to cater to the media logic in the third phase, the fourth phase is recognized by political actors using media logic naturally in this political decision making and strategy. In previous phases political institutions would cater to the media logic predominantly when engaging with the media and would do so knowingly, in the fourth phase this strategy becomes more subconscious. This internalization of media logic can be furthered or expedited by a greater use of communication professionals in the political arena (Strömbäck 2008). This creates a climate in political institutions where the focus of output is always on the attention and reception of the media. This form of "sound bite politics" have been researched by Figenschou, Fredriksson, Pallas and Salomonsen (2020) and they found that due to the degree

of freedom granted to government agencies and the number of PR staff employed within these agencies lead to a higher risk of Swedish institutions becoming influenced by media logic.

Many studies have researched how the media covers politics and how politics is affected by the media by analyzing the output (Esser & Umbricht 2013; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014; Cushion and Lewis, 2009), Mauer and Pfetsch (2014) instead puts their focus on the relation between journalist and politicians' perception of mediatization. Deriving from Strömbäcks (2008) four phases of mediatization, the study focuses on how politicians and journalists from eight European countries perceive the influence of media logic over political logic and internalization of media logic among political institutions. The decision to only look at the last two of Strömbäcks four dimensions is derived from the authors view that the first two phases of mediatization are largely implemented in most Western European democracies. The study uses interviews with 660 politicians and 1080 journalists and focuses on the two mediatization dimensions and the conflict that can occur between journalist and politicians as a consequence of mediatization. Sweden had comparably low perception of mediatization and conflict level across journalists and politicians, that being said the perception of mediatization among journalists was 2.98 (on a five-point scale where 1=weak perception of mediatization of political content and 5= strong perception) and politicians perception was 3.47. Ultimately, Swedish politicians displayed a stronger perception of media logic influencing political content than Swedish journalists shedding some light on the different views on mediatization between professionals on either side of the media. This informs this study mainly by legitimizing the standpoint that the process of mediatization is well under way in Sweden and should be visible in this study as well.

Similarly, building on the four phases of mediatization, Seethaler and Melischek (2014) researched the evolution of media logic and agenda setting in Austria over 40 years. Their findings indicate that Austrian development follows the four phases that Strömbäck defined. By operationalizing mediatization as the shift of agenda setting power the study could conclude that the media has gotten an increasingly stronger position in Austrian politics and that the political actors no longer have the strongest influence on the agenda setting.

These studies show that the power dynamic between the media and political institutions is shifting, and that media logic is becoming increasingly powerful within politics. In terms of the four phase framework, the internalization process has not been researched in depth on a large scale. One study looked specifically at the fourth phase of mediatization in Canada with a focus on dramatic political events, or “jumping the shark”, as a sign of internalization of media logic. The study found support for a shift from political logic to media logic as an organizing principle for political communications (Sampert et. al, 2014). The study looked at new coverage, opinion writing, and combative language and the data consisted of media articles. Similarly to this study, Sampert et al (2014) looked at change over time in order to pinpoint a change in mediatization. The operationalization, however, differs from the focus of this study

which seeks to pinpoint internalization of media logic within the political sphere rather than the media sphere and therefore the choice of data and method will differ substantially.

The general research on mediatization shows a trend of mediatization as well as declining language complexity in western democracies. These results are achieved using different methods and measurements, but the results are very similar. The general decline of language complexity is related to the first research question and the consensus of the academic field makes the first hypothesis as follows:

H1: there is a significant negative change in LIX scores over time

H0: there is no significant change in LIX scores over time

*“A public sphere focused on the rational and ‘high-minded’ coverage of politics is an inadequate representation of how most people receive political knowledge and make judgements about important issues.”*

Temple, 2006, p.1

## **2.3 Simplification of politics and modern populism**

Populism is a political approach characterized by a focus on the concerns and grievances of ordinary people, often framed as "the people" versus "the elite" or "establishment." Populist leaders and movements typically claim to represent the will of the common people against perceived elites or out-of-touch institutions (Bergh, & Kärnä, 2022). The rhetoric often emphasizes simple solutions to complex problems, appeals to emotions and identity, and a rejection of traditional political norms and institutions. Populism can manifest in various forms and contexts, but it often involves elements such as anti-elitism, nationalism or nativism, authoritarian tendencies, and a distrust of political and media establishments (Dalbo et al, 2023). Populism is not its own political ideology but is present in different political traditions and ideologies.

Studies have found that right-wing populism strongly correlates with several of the tactics related to mediatization of politics such as gamification, simplification and polarization (A Bergh & Kärnä, 2022; Dalbo et al, 2023; Hallin, 2019).

Lim (2008) redefined the simplification of politics as anti-intellectualism arguing that it is more than the language itself that is being simplified and that the phenomena itself has sprung from politicians striving to be more like the people and less like the elite. One consequence of this shift was the linguistic simplification of the political output, specifically presidential speeches. By reviewing presidential addresses to the nation between 1789 and 2006 using the Flesch readability score finding that the speeches had reduced sentence length and shorter words on average. In the same fashion Bischof and Senninger found that the change occurs not only over time but between parties in a multiparty system as well. By looking at how the scores differ between political parties in Austria and Germany they found that populist parties used a simplified language to a larger extent than the others in an effort to speak directly to the people and not be viewed as a part of the elite. The researchers also found that simple messages directly affect citizens' ability to identify the ideological positioning of the parties.

Both these studies used reading tests, LIX and Flesch as tools for measuring language complexity but combined this with other measures and methodologies in order to draw significant conclusions according to their research problems.

Other scholars have questioned the use of readability tests such as Flesch and LIX due to the original purpose of the tests is measuring textual complexity for educational research and applied psychology. Benoit et al. argues that using these types of measures can prove problematic when researching the level of sophistication of political texts and speeches (Benoit, Munger & Spirling, 2019).

Further, the direction of political simplification needs to be addressed when researching the issue. This is by no means a normative paper, but the different normative perspectives need to be addressed in order to fully understand the basis of the issue. A recurring factor in previous research is the view that political simplification is inherently bad and this “dumbing down” is a symptom of larger issues within society and politics. Scholars like Lim (2008) use descriptives such as “anti-intellectual”, “dumbing down” and “populist” to describe the evolving political discourse. Contrary to this view is the research focusing on the reception of the public to a simpler political rhetoric. These scholars instead use words such as “clear”, “effective” and “understanding” when describing the same phenomena. Benoit et al argues that it becomes problematic when the same measure is used to describe the phenomena from different normative assumptions. Consequently, they developed a new method for testing language sophistication of political material which takes more factors into account when scoring such as the use of uncommon words and the use of sentences with a complex syntactic and grammatical structure. Their method also opens up for the use of more statistical tools and therefore also a deeper understanding of the political language.



Some studies use textual complexity as a dependent or independent variable while researching other political phenomena such as populism (Bischof & Senninger, 2018), voter understanding (Schmuck et al, 2022) or how interest groups use simplified language in order to influence the public. One study examined the language of six Italian politicians— Berlusconi, Bossi, and D’Alema (1994-1998), and Alfano, Renzi, and Salvini (2014-2016)— across speeches, Facebook posts, and tweets. It analyzed lexical richness, density, basic vocabulary, and readability to assess the commonly held beliefs that political language has become simpler over time and that populists use simpler language than mainstream politicians. The findings partially confirm the hypotheses based on readability but contradict them based on other measures. The study suggests reconsidering the role of automatic text analysis and the concept of "simple language" in political discourse.

With this background the hypothesis related to populism is as follows:

H1: parties with populist features will have significantly lower LIX scores than the rest of the parties in the sample

H0: there is no significant difference in LIX score between parties with populist features and the rest of the party in the sample.

*“For example, there is little doubt that tabloid journalism, by ignoring ‘serious politics’ in favour of scandal and superficiality, is perceived by critics as constituting a threat to democracy. An alternative perspective is that a less elite-driven news agenda — one driven by the interests of the audience rather than by a small core of political journalists — offers the opportunity for engagement with political issues by those (the vast majority) uninterested in the minutiae of policy or the internal differences of the Conservative party. Those of us who are interested in deep debate about political issues will always find a forum, but in the age of television politics, insisting that our perceptions of politics should largely constitute the mainstream public sphere is an elitist and essentially futile exercise.”*

Temple, 2006, p2

## **2.4 Addressing general language simplification in society**

Using the LIX or any other linguistic measure has proven to be effective when investigating language change over time. One issue that can occur when analyzing large quantities of data spanning over a long time period is the possibility of confounding variables such as language

evolution (Lim, 2008). Therefore, understanding how the Swedish language overall has changed over the last 20 years will prove helpful when analyzing potential results and ruling out other factors that can affect simplification of political messaging.

Björnsson (1983) looked at how Swedish newspapers changed their language between 1880-1979 and found that during that 100-year period the language had become significantly more simple, the mean lix score plummeted from 61 in 1880 to 47 in 1979. This was a part of a deliberate change made by the large newspapers in Sweden to make their content more approachable by the general public. This can easily be connected to the rise of media logic and mediatization. Björnsson points at two specific linguistic drivers of this change; punctuation has replaced the use of commas and semicolons making sentences shorter and a low average word length due to abbreviations

The choice of time period for this study was made in consideration of the general language development in society. The modern Swedish language has undergone a few major changes since the 19th century, most of the changes are different forms of informalization of the written and spoken language. Most notable is the so-called “du-reformen” or “the you-reform” that took place in the late 1960s. This reform marked a major change not only in the language but reflected a larger societal change towards the more relaxed, individualized and youthful ideas of the time. Löfgren (1988) concludes that the informalization of the Swedish language and society reached its peak around 1965-1980, after this time period there have been negligible changes in language structure and complexity (Löfgren, 1988, Björnsson 1983).

Against this backdrop is it my belief that general language changes should not affect possible results in this study.

## **2.5 Politics and media landscape in Sweden**

In order to further the discussion on methodology and theoretical implications this chapter will provide a contextual overview of the Swedish political and media landscape. and to further understand the logic behind the choice of data and theoretical framework.

The Scandinavian countries political rhetoric is characterized by an informal tone that reflects values of egalitarianism and authenticity. Unlike the ideological fervor and frequent hostility observed in some countries, such as the US, Scandinavian politicians tend to employ pragmatic, straightforward language that fosters inclusivity rather than division. This can be attributed to cultural norms and the democratic systems in place. Whether conveyed through traditional

formats like debates and speeches or via visual and online platforms, the overarching emphasis remains on practicality and inclusivity (Kjeldsen, 2021).

## **2.6 Political system and landscape**

Sweden is a parliamentary democracy with 349 members of parliament representing 8 political parties. To gain parliamentary representation, a party has to win at least 4 percent of the votes. Voter turnout is high: in the 2002, 2006, and 2010 elections, 80, 82, and 85 percent turned out to vote (Kjeldsen, 2021).

The first democratic election was held in 1921 in which five parties were elected into the parliament: the Left Party (V), the Social Democratic Party (SAP), the Center Party (C), the Liberal Party (L), and the Moderate Party (M). These parties remained the same until the election in 1988 when the Green Party (MP) gained enough votes to be represented in the parliament. In 1991 however they lost their parliament seats and the Christian Democrats (KD) and New Democrats (NyD) entered instead. The New Democrats only held seats in the parliament for one mandate period, losing their parliament position in the following election in 1994 while the Green Party regained their seats. In the election 2010, the Sweden Democrats (SD) entered the parliament and have held seats since solidifying the current eight parties in the Swedish parliament.

Sweden's contemporary political landscape is characterized by a multi-party system with a strong tradition of social democracy and coalition governments. At the forefront is the Social Democratic Party, the oldest and largest party in Sweden. SAP advocates for social democracy, workers' rights, and a welfare state, historically dominating Swedish politics but facing challenges from other parties in recent years. The Moderate Party stands as its main competitor, representing center-right ideologies such as market liberalism, free-market capitalism, and fiscal conservatism. The political scene has also seen the rise of the Sweden Democrats, a right-wing populist and nationalist party known for its tough stance on immigration and Eurosceptic views. Despite its controversial positions, SD has become the third-largest party in Sweden.

Complementing these major players are several smaller parties, each with its own distinct platform and constituency. The Centre Party began as an agrarian party but now focuses on centrist policies, especially regarding rural and environmental issues. The Left Party champions socialist and feminist ideals, aligning closely with the Social Democrats but maintaining its separate identity. The Christian Democrats represent conservative values, particularly on matters of faith and family. The Liberal Party promotes individual freedoms, free-market principles, and social liberalism.

Meanwhile, the Green Party advocates for environmental sustainability and social justice, often partnering with left-leaning parties in coalitions. Coalition governments are common in Swedish politics due to the multi-party system, with either the Social Democrats or the Moderate Party typically leading them. The balance of power between left-wing and right-wing blocs often determines the government's composition and policy direction (Oja & Mral, 2013).

The political landscape is influenced by several key issues, including immigration policies and integration, climate change and environmental sustainability, healthcare reform, housing affordability, and education reform. Additionally, recent international events have brought national security and international relations to the forefront. The conflict in Ukraine and diplomatic tensions with Turkey, particularly amid negotiations to join NATO, have heightened these concerns. Criticism from Muslim countries, with Turkey leading the charge, over Sweden's public burning of the Quran has further fueled these discussions.

In terms of populism two parties stand out, the Sweden Democrats and the New Democrats. The parties have several similarities including a critical view on immigration, skepticism of the establishment and a nationalistic foundation. There are also some key differences between the two parties, mainly the focus on immigration where the new Democrats prioritized economic policies, welfare reform, and government transparency instead of the more cultural issues driving the Sweden Democrats such as national identity and critique of the idea of multiculturalism. The Sweden Democrats are generally a more purely national conservative party in terms of ideology and the new Democrats would be placed in a more center-right position having somewhat more liberal views (Kjeldsen, 2021). Both parties have policies that actively attracted support from segments of the population who feel marginalized or dissatisfied with the status quo. This includes individuals who feel left behind by globalization or who perceive themselves as not being adequately represented by mainstream parties. This in combination with a rhetoric of not being part of the political elite and therefore representing the people makes both the Sweden Democrats and the New Democrats fit in the operationalization of populist parties.

On the left side of politics, the left party would be the populist counterpart on the other side of the political spectrum. The Left Party (Vänsterpartiet) in Sweden is generally not considered a populist party in the same vein as some other political parties in Europe or around the world. While the Left Party does advocate for leftist and socialist policies, it tends to focus on issues such as social justice, workers' rights, and welfare state expansion, rather than employing the populist rhetoric or anti-establishment sentiment often associated with populist parties.

Populism typically involves a strong focus on positioning "the people" against "the elite" and can often involve simplistic or divisive rhetoric. While the Left Party may criticize the political establishment and advocate for progressive change, it tends to do so within the framework of traditional leftist ideology rather than through populist appeals (Fryklund, 2013).

The multi-party system also creates a political climate where aggression, polarization, and conflict between parties are rather ineffective due to the risk of losing voters both as the attacker and as the attacked. In a two-party system, the voters don't have much of a choice as long as they agree with the ideological and political standpoints of the party, even if they disagree with the communication strategy used. The presence of other parties with similar core values and ideologies makes these forms of strategies risky (Kjeldsen, 2021).

Generally politicians interact more directly with the public and participate in interviews, debates and news reporting more frequently than in other countries such as the us. The culture in Scandinavian countries has also led to the view of political leaders as one of the people and it is of utmost importance for politicians to seem as ordinary and folksy as possible (Kjeldsen, 2021).

## **2.7 Media system and landscape**

The media landscape is an important factor when understanding how a society influences and is influenced by media. When it comes to mediatization of politics the structure and nature of the media is even more crucial since it largely affects the relationship between media and political actors. If political actors have a greater influence over newspapers and television the need to adapt to their media logic decreases while if the media is highly commercialized and independent the need for political institutions to fight for their attention increases.

Historically media institutions have filled different functions in society. Up until the 1920s, the media was mainly used by different institutions with special interests such as art, religion, or political parties. Between the 1920s and 1980s, the media acted as cultural institutions, often state-run media, with the purpose of presenting the common interests of society as a whole. In terms of mediatization, one driving factor is the commercial interests and competitive nature of independent media actors. In the 1980s this development of media into the commercialized, competitive institutions we recognize today began. Hjarvard (2013) describes this as a symptom or consequence of the neo-liberal wave that took over most Western democracies during the 80s and 90s.

Hjarvard (2013) categorizes the Swedish media landscape as semi-independent with the aim to translate and conceptualize news rather than simply reporting them. This makes the media a part of the political conversation with their own point of view which translates into political power. The daily newspapers as well as various tabloids have their politically driven opinion

pages with their party/ or ideological affiliation clearly stated in order to remain transparent and objective.

The media system is a core piece in the process of mediatization, commercialization has been pinpointed as a driving factor for the gamification and simplification of political news reporting. When newspapers start competing for revenue the format and framing changes in order to persuade the public to choose the new source with the most intriguing headlines and hot takes. readers turn into customers and therefore hold more power forcing newspapers to pay attention to the readers point of view and interests.

The Swedish media landscape is shaped by both strong public media and established commercial news sources. This makes the system vulnerable to mediatization of politics and becomes a good growing ground for simplification of political news coverage. Both the state media and commercial media are heavily involved not only in reporting on politics but in the gamification especially around elections. Several programs and radio shows seek to explain politics in ways of humor, debates and soundbites, often prompting political leaders to describe their policy decisions in as few words as possible and rarely interview other political actors than the leaders driving the personalization of politics (Hjarvald, 2013).

## **2.8 Central takeaways**

The general consensus among research on language simplification and political communication, as presented in the previous chapter, is that over time the complexity of language (as measured by LIX, Flech, integrative complexity, and other similar measurements) is decreasing in the political debate over time. This decline has been explained by a variety of different factors including the rise of populism and mediatization. Most studies have looked at public material such as political manifests, tv-debates, and press material and have found significant results of decreasing language complexity. These findings contribute to the conclusion that most of the Western democracies are experiencing a rise of media logic in politics and a general mediatization of political institutions. Since the studies largely look at public-facing communication, the only conclusions that can be drawn are regarding the first three phases of mediatization, that is political parties and institutions are affected by and use media logic as a means to gain exposure to the public. The studies have not researched signs of the fourth phase of mediatization where the media logic affects the non-public facing communication in a way that might not be a conscious decision.

## 3. Methodology

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This quantitative study employs a descriptive and exploratory approach to investigate the potential trend of simplification in the language used by politicians in the Swedish Parliament over the past 30 years. The data used are protocols from parliamentary sessions. The study is conducted by employing readability indices and analyzing linguistic features associated with simplification using the LIX counter.

### 3.1 Operationalizations

In this section, I will describe how I operationalize the concepts of the fourth phase of mediatization and connect it to political language simplification in order to explain how the chosen method will aim to investigate whether the Swedish political climate corresponds with the fourth phase of mediatization.

Since media logic is a fundamental concept in the final phase of mediatization as defined by Strömbäck (2008, 2014) it is necessary to investigate the different concepts in media logic when attempting to build a measurable definition. Media logic as a concept has been widely researched and discussed both in the field of political science and political communication. As mentioned in the literature review, the phenomena that the media influence politics is far from new and has been framed as a positive and negative development. Different studies have therefore defined the concept in different ways depending on the normative foundation the study is built on. For this thesis, I aim to keep my operationalization as close as possible to Strömbäck's description of media logic since the definition is being used as a building block to explain mediatization. Strömbäck also echoes Blumlers (1999), Benoit et al (2014) and Hjavards (2004) point of view that it is of importance to carefully define these concepts in a nonnormative way.

Strömbäck defines some central techniques related to mediatization as “*storytelling techniques include simplification, polarization, intensification, personalization, visualization and stereotypization and the framing of politics as a strategic game or “horse race”*”(Strömbäck, 2008, p. 233)

Hence the concept of media logic consists of several different factors that could be measured independently from each other. As discussed in the previous chapter researchers have looked into factors such as agenda setting power, personification and polarization as well as

simplification in order to research the prevalence of media logic in political news coverage but so far no one has found a measure that covers the whole concept of media logic.

Connecting media logic to the fourth phase of mediatization, however, involves more than just the dominance of media logic in the media, it mainly concerns how media logic seeps into the context of political decision-making and behavior. Therefore, I argue that the most purposeful choice of data to investigate how the media logic is influencing politics isn't media coverage or press material published by political institutions but rather material exposing the inner workings of the political context. By looking at how political actors behave and communicate outside of the media or public eye one can get a better understanding of whether the media logic has become internalized within political organizations. This can be measured and conceptualized in a number of ways, for example interviewing key individuals working with communication in political parties or politicians themselves could shed light on how political logic vs media logic is perceived from an inside perspective. This however could prove problematic since a part of Strömbäcks description of the fourth phase of meditation includes the possibility that political actors no longer recognize the difference between media logic and political logic, hence the *internalization* of media logic. Therefore, their own perceptions might not give an accurate description of reality. following the positivist nature of the research aim and questions of this paper clear definitions are key to ensure that the data accurately portrays the phenomena.

To conclude this discussion, it is important to note that my definition and choice of data does not measure the whole concept of the fourth phase of mediatization or media logic but the combination of data and operationalization (language simplification and parliament protocols) can give good insight and a strong indicator on how media logic are becoming increasingly internalized in Swedish politics.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm and research design**

This study relies on a view of knowledge as objective rather than subjective or socially constructed. In line with the positivist tradition, this study aims to uncover a phenomena present in society and accurately describe it, this is done without too much interference of the researcher in forms of interpretation or interaction with the material (Jensen, 2012). The structure and approach of the study emphasizes the importance of empirical evidence and scientific methods in understanding the phenomena of language simplification in the political arena. The quantitative method utilizes statistical tools and analyzes the results from a rather strict set of widely recognized thresholds for statistical significance, the data is in other words not analyzed or translated into meaning by the researcher to the same extent as in interpretive or social-constructivist traditions (Jensen, 2012).



The research design of this study relies heavily on recognized and tested tools and utilizes a standard method of data interpretation and analysis. This contributes to a small risk of researcher bias or subjective opinions affecting the data analysis and interpretation process. Critics of the positivist tradition and research design argue that it has limited knowledge production and understanding of why the observed phenomena exists and why it is behaving in a specific way. Critique of the positivist tradition, including lack of nuance in its view of science, had led to a development of the tradition called post-positivism (Jensen, 2012). While post-positivism agrees with positivism in valuing empirical evidence and scientific methods, it also acknowledges that scientific knowledge is inherently subjective and influenced by various factors such as cultural context, personal biases, and theoretical frameworks.

### **3.3 Sample selection and data collection**

The study's data collection is based on a systematic and partially randomized sampling strategy. Protocols from the Swedish Parliament are sampled at a ten-year interval, covering a span of 30 years. The choice of randomized start dates ensures that the study captures a representative snapshot of parliamentary discourse over the designated time period. The randomization is intended to minimize bias and enhance the generalizability of the findings (Jensen, 2012). Since the discussions in the chamber covers a wide spectrum of topics with different levels of public interest and different levels of technical language, this selection method helps cancel out potential recurring topics. The random dates set out the starting date for the protocols and from the random date the following five protocols were selected and analyzed. The selection process involved initiating the study in 1991 and then proceeding with intervals of ten years except for the last year. For each designated year, a random date was chosen as the starting point. The random date marks the inception point for the protocols, from which five subsequent protocols were randomly selected and subjected to analysis.

The choice of the time period (1991-2023) for the study is informed by several factors related to the rise of populism, the general simplification of language, and the mediatization of parliamentary debates. The selected time period encompasses significant global and regional shifts in political landscapes, including the rise of populism as a prominent political phenomenon. Beginning in the 1990s and continuing into the 21st century, many Western democracies experienced the emergence and growth of populist movements and parties, with varying degrees of influence on political discourse and governance (Bergh & Kärnä, 2022). Spanning from 1991 to 2023, the study can capture the evolution and impact of populism within the Swedish political context over the past three decades. The same time period marks the emergence of the mediatization process in the Nordic countries as well (Hjarvald, 2013)

By focusing on the period from the early 1990s onwards, the study aims to minimize the influence of general simplification of language as a confounding variable. Sweden has a strong tradition of education and literacy, and while language simplification may occur over time in various contexts, the risk of significant simplification in parliamentary language during this period is relatively low (Löfgren,1988). This allows for a more focused examination of the specific impact of populism on language complexity within parliamentary debates.

The latter part of the selected time period coincides with the increasing interest of parliamentary debates, particularly through the proliferation of visual streaming and digital media platforms. In 2002 the debates in the Swedish chamber became increasingly more accessible to the public by being archived on the official parliament website. By including this period, the study can explore how the mediatization of parliamentary debates may have influenced communication strategies and language use by political actors, including potential interactions with populist rhetoric.

The data will consist of protocols from the parliament chamber. Each protocol consists of everything said during the daily discussions and debates in the chamber broken up into data units representing each statement as one unit. The data will only consist of the daily protocols and will therefore not include any of the other activities that take place in the chamber such as party-leader debates, special debates (usually on topics of public interest such as economic crisis, big international events such as wars or important national topics), the weekly Q&A sessions or ceremonial activities. The reason for the limitation is twofold: firstly some of the other activities in the chamber such as the party-leader debates are more covered by the media and are therefore prepared differently by the parties in regard to media and public interest. Additionally, by keeping the data restricted to the everyday work in the chamber, I can keep some internal consistency of the data and ensure that the format stays the same and won't be too affected by special circumstances that might skew the political language due to a higher public and media interest.

The data will be collected, cleaned and divided into units for analysis. The initial step will be conducted using a randomizer that will provide me with the starting date for each year that will be analyzed. From that starting date, I will collect the following 4 daily protocols for analysis. Protocols that don't include all parties or are shorter than 5 pages will be excluded since they contain too small staples of data and don't represent all of the parties. In the second step the protocols will be cleaned from all text that isn't strictly the political speeches, since the protocols are formalities-heavy this step is necessary in order to ensure a correct LIX analysis. Consequently, everything said by the speaker will be taken out as well as the list of speakers, issues, and date stamps. Lastly the cleaned protocols will be analyzed using LIX both as a whole but also divided into statement units and analyzed separately. This will provide the possibility to analyze the language- development of each party or block of parties over time as well as looking for potential outliers within the data.

The LIX scores were calculated using a Python script created for this study by me, with the LIX-formula as well as plugins ensuring that the data was divided into the correct units. This was done since each protocol includes between 100-200 statements and therefore individual analysis of each statement by hand would be too time consuming and risk errors related to the human factor. The script ensured that each cleaned protocol was divided into units of analysis, so each statement was analyzed as one unit and the output provided individual lix scores for each statement. Each unit was given an ID that correlates to the date, protocol and statement number (that is included in each protocol from the parliament) which ensures that it would be easy to check the exact statement in the original protocol if there should occur inconsistencies in the lix scores. This also made it possible to check extreme outliers later in the data analysis and compare the scores to the original transcript. These measures were done to further ensure internal consistency and reliability of the research tools (Jensen, 2012). The script that was created for this study and is attached in Appendix 1.

### **3.4 Sample Selection**

The protocols selected for analysis are extracted from parliamentary sessions held at the specified intervals. The inclusion criteria encompass protocols that are publicly available and represent a diverse range of topics and discussions. To maintain consistency, the same number of protocols per year is included in the analysis.

Initially, three parties were singled out for individual analysis, the Sweden Democrats, New Democracy and the Left party due to their populist approach to representation and communication. Since these parties have been smaller parties during periods of time they have not always been included in the protocols since no statements were made by them. Therefore, the sample selection did take into consideration that the protocols selected needed to include at least two statements by these parties during the years they had seats in parliament.

### **3.5 Language Complexity Instrument**

Drawing from the previous research in the field and the problem formulation, this thesis will use the readability index LIX developed by Björnsson (1968) to measure the language complexity of debates in the chamber of the Swedish parliament. The measure is built to assess language complexity for educational purposes and follows a similar formula to other linguistics tests such as the Flesh measure. Previous studies have also shown a high correlation between the Flesh index and LIX.

Björnsson defined complexity by three language components: sentence length, number of words per sentence, and average number of letters in the words used. These components are used in a formula to calculate a score between 1-100 where 0-30 is very easy to read, 30 - 40 easy reading, 40 - 50 medium difficulty, 50 - 60 difficult, normal value for official texts, and numbers over 60 equals very difficult, bureaucratic language (Björnsson, 1968).

The test works best with texts over around 100 words, therefore previous studies have as a rule divided their material into sections of 100 words before entering the data into the lix calculator (Björnsson, 1983) The test was originally created and tested for the Swedish language but has since been tested and evaluated for a number of other languages.

The Language Inclusiveness Index (LIX) is employed as the primary metric to quantify the language simplicity of the parliamentary protocols. LIX is a well-established readability formula that considers the average sentence length and the percentage of long words in a text. A higher LIX score indicates greater language complexity, while a lower score suggests simpler language.

## **3.6 Method discussion**

### ***3.6.1 Limitations***

Limitations of the study include potential variations in protocol length and topic specificity, which may influence LIX scores. As mentioned earlier some topics of debate might include a more bureaucratic or technical language than others which could affect the LIX score and skew the data. Additionally, the analysis assumes that language simplicity is a unidimensional aspect and may not capture nuanced variations in political communication such as complicated rhetorical strategies or uncommon or overly academic words.

The data is naturally diverse in length, complexity and frequency. Some statements are a couple of hundred words long and some just a couple of sentences, this could affect the data if these factors prove to be systematic e.g. one certain party systematically holds shoulder addresses and statements. One can argue that this is another dimension of language simplification, making shorter statements, and therefore it should not misrepresent the data in a way that takes away from the aim of the study (Pallant, 2010; Jensen, 2012).

## 4. Results

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This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis made in IBM SPSS Statistics (SPSS). The study aims to find out whether there is a significant change in language complexity in the Swedish parliament debates over the last 30 years. The study is also concerned with whether the language complexity is generally lower for parties classified as populist or have populist tendencies. Further, the research approach is partly exploratory in nature, and therefore the data analysis was conducted using broadest tests in order to look for inconsistencies in the data and outliers that could provide further information.

For the analysis, I created dummy variables for each party to test the effect of the dependent variable (LIX score) on each party independently.

Mean LIX scores for each five-year interval are calculated to identify trends in language complexity. Standard deviation values are reported to gauge the variability in language simplicity across different protocols and years.

Additionally, data analysis techniques, such as graphical representations (e.g., line graphs or bar charts), regression analysis and ANOVA analysis are employed to visually inspect potential patterns or anomalies in the language complexity trends. This analysis will also reveal any differences between parties over the study period.

### 4.1 Data analysis

Each data point is one address to the parliament made by a politician, each data point is given an ID corresponding to the date of the debate and number in the protocol. Additionally, each data point is defined by party, date and LIX- score.

#### 4.1.1 Initial data inspection

Before performing the statistical analysis, it is crucial to make sure that the data does not contain any errors, missing values or out-of-range values. This was done using the frequencies table in SPSS for each variable. By checking the minimum and maximum values for number that are either outside the possible values for that variable (for example values except for 0 and 1 in dummy variables) or considerable too high or low for what seems reasonable ( for example values below 10 or above 80 in lix score) one can get an overview of the data and possible

errors either in data collection or coding (Pallant, 2010). The initial inspection also looks for an abundance of missing values for each variable. For the continuous variables an inspection of the mean values can also give indications of errors in the data. Means that appear too high or low for what is reasonable for the values in that variable could indicate these outliers in the data that skew the mean value.

Outliers are also checked for using a scatter plot for each variable or by simply ranking the data in SPSS and looking at the highest and lowest values (Appendix 2). The scatter plot showed a few outliers both in the top and bottom of the range, these values were inspected by checking in the protocols that the data was analyzed correctly and double checking the lix score for those individual addresses. The inspection concluded that none of the outliers were incorrectly analyzed or coded. As a researcher one can choose to include or discard values that SPSS identifies as outliers (Pallant, 2010) in this study the outliers can provide important information and taking them out could result in data that misrepresents the sample. The high and low values are also interesting since an abundance of low resp high values within a specific party or year could prove important to the overall aim of the study (Pallant, 2010).

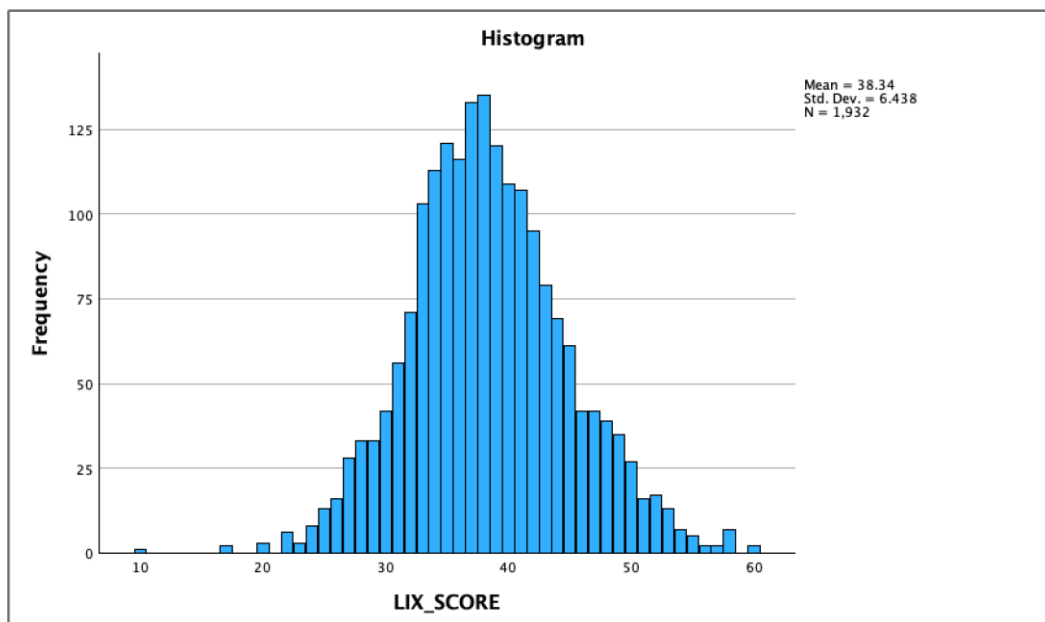
This initial analysis is important in order to detect and correct errors that could otherwise distort and skew the statistical analysis in later steps.

Another important step in data inspection is to ensure that the data lives up to the assumptions that need to be met for the results to be valid and reliable. The assumptions are:

- **Level of measurement:** The variables included in the analysis should be measured on an appropriate scale (e.g., interval, ratio, ordinal). Using variables measured on an inappropriate scale can lead to misleading conclusions
- **Normality:** Many statistical tests (e.g. ANOVA and linear regression) assume that the data follows a normal distribution. Therefore, the data cannot significantly deviate from normality.
- **Linearity:** Linear regression assumes that there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.
- **Homoscedasticity:** The variables included in the analysis should have equal or similar variances
- **Related pairs:** each observation needs to have values present at each variable.
- **Independence of observations:** Observations in the dataset should be independent of each other. This means that the value of one observation should not be influenced by the value of another observation.

Normality, linearity and homoscedasticity can be tested for in SPSS and relatively easily be proven. The tests for the data showed that neither of these assumptions were violated. The test for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic shows that all of the variables have a Sig. value of  $<0.001$  indicating that the assumption has been violated (Appendix 3). This is rather common with larger samples and Pallant therefore recommends using the Histogram and Normal Q-Q Plot to assess normality. In table 1 and 2 the histogram and Normal Q-Q Plot for LIX score is presented, and in table 3 and 4 for the Party-variable. The histogram shows a reasonable normal distribution of scores with a slight skewness. The values in the Normal Q-Q Plot follow the line which marks expected values, this is also a sign of normal distribution.

**Table 1**



**Table 2**

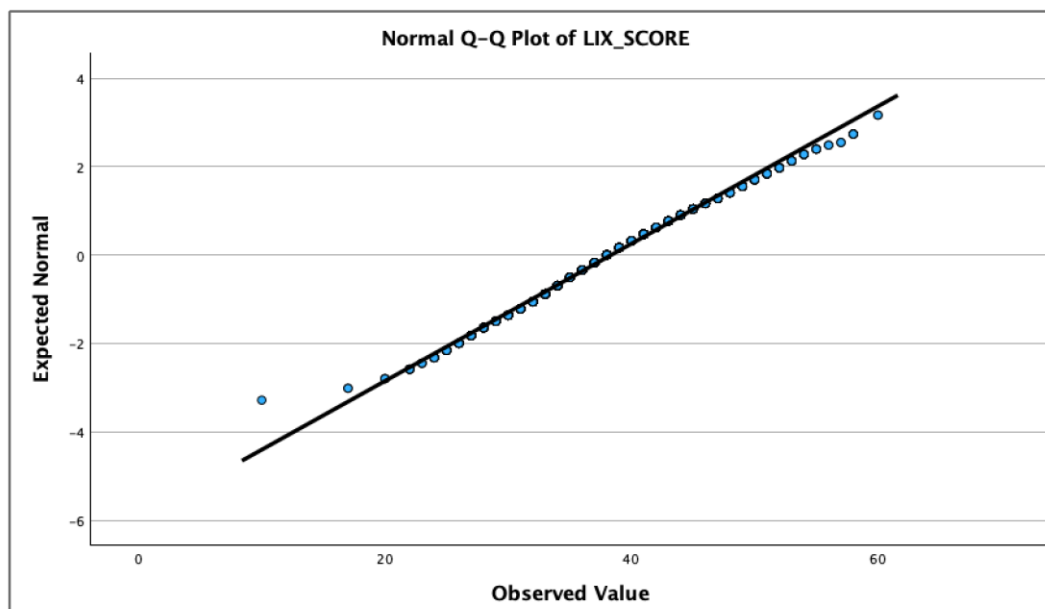


Table 3

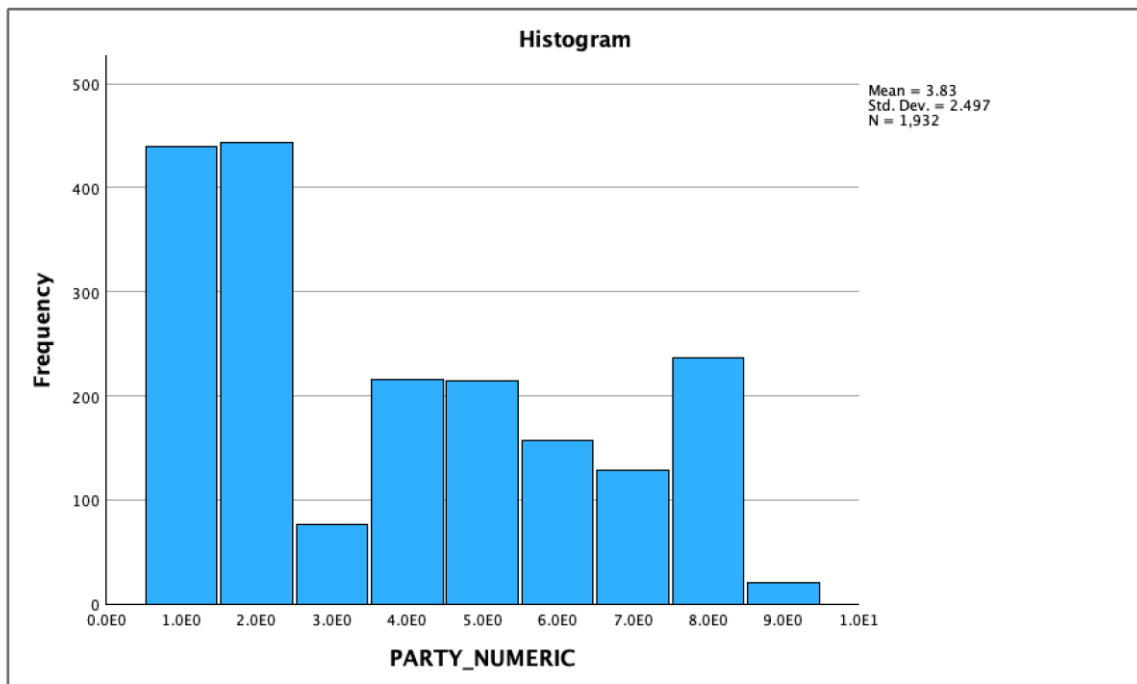
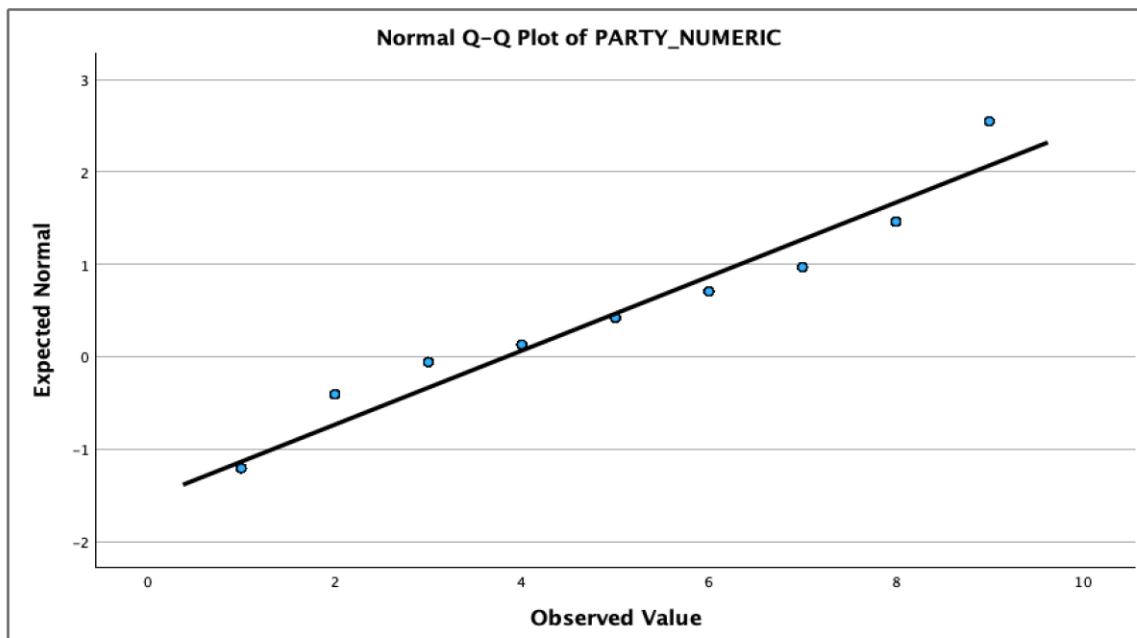


Table 4





In Appendix 4 and 5 the Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots for LIX score and Party are presented, both show the same result with values that don't cluster in certain parts.

Homoscedasticity is evaluated by looking at the Scatterplot of the standardized residuals obtained by performing a scatter plot or in the output for the regression analysis. The scatter plot is presented in Appendix 2 and shows a relatively rectangular-shaped result with some outliers present. The shape in insects with no apparent skewness or other patterns that disturb the assumption of Homoscedasticity.

The assumptions of level of measurement and related pairs can be met by inspecting the data, making sure that the variables have the correct scale and checking the raw data for cases with missing values on any of the variables.

The independence of observation is concerned with how the observations or data points relate to each other in the collection phase of the study. The assumption is concerned with how the participants in the study affect each other, in this case, it would be how the politicians in the parliament affect each other's statements. The aim is to ensure that observations are independent of each other in order for probability calculations to be made accurately to determine whether the results obtained are significantly different from chance. Pallant argues that data collected in a group setting or where the same participant is included more than one time can violate this assumption since this is not compatible with the definition of independence. The risk is that the results are skewed as a result of the data points are not guaranteed to be influenced by each other. Since this study is concerned with debates this issue is hard to get around, the nature of a debate is that speakers are affected by and answer each other. It is also common for politicians to make more than one statement per debate and often occur in more than one debate over the years in the study.

#### ***4.1.2 Descriptives***

Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to summarize and characterize the LIX scores over the study period, Table 5. The descriptive analysis showed that of the 1932 data points the two largest parties, the Social Democrats (S) and the Moderate Party (M) stood for approximately half of the data points (439 and 444 respectively). The Sweden Democrats (SD) and New Democracy (NyD) had the lowest number of data points with 76 and 20 observations respectively. These numbers can be explained by the size and number of years in parliament. M and S were represented in parliament all of the years included in the study and had the highest number of members of parliament resulting in more frequent addresses in parliament. Both parties have also been in government or the main opposition during these years which

also results in a higher frequency of addresses. SD and NyD on the other hand, is not represented in all protocols since they entered the parliament later, SD in 2010 and NyD in 1991. NyD also left parliament after only one mandate period which heavily influenced the number of data points and the accuracy of their results.

The mean distribution shows that most of the parties have scores between 37 and 41 with NyD as an outlier with a score of 34.15. SD had the highest mean with 41.17 and lowest except for NyD was C. However, the standard deviation for the mean is relatively high, between 5.9 and 8 with sd receiving the highest standard deviation of all parties. The high standard deviations suggests that the scores are more spread out or variable which result in a more cautious view of the means.

**Table 5**

<b>Descriptives</b>								
LIX_SCORE								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
S	439	37.80	5.925	.283	37.24	38.36	22	58
M	444	38.83	6.365	.302	38.24	39.42	20	58
SD	76	41.17	8.004	.918	39.34	43.00	22	58
V	216	38.33	5.845	.398	37.55	39.12	17	58
C	215	37.35	6.723	.459	36.45	38.26	10	55
KD	157	38.06	6.624	.529	37.02	39.11	20	57
MP	128	38.46	7.226	.639	37.20	39.72	17	60
L	237	38.91	6.338	.412	38.10	39.72	22	60
NyD	20	34.15	4.848	1.084	31.88	36.42	25	41
Total	1932	38.34	6.438	.146	38.06	38.63	10	60

Looking at the 5% trimmed mean (Table 6) gives us a new mean value where the top and bottom 5% of cases are excluded, this gives us the possibility to compare the new mean with the old mean and assess how much the highest and lowest scores affect the mean. In this case the 5% trimmed mean is 38.27 and the mean is 38.34, the difference between the means is 0.07 which can be considered a small difference and therefore one can assume that extreme values are not affecting the mean (Pallant, 2010).

**Table 6.**

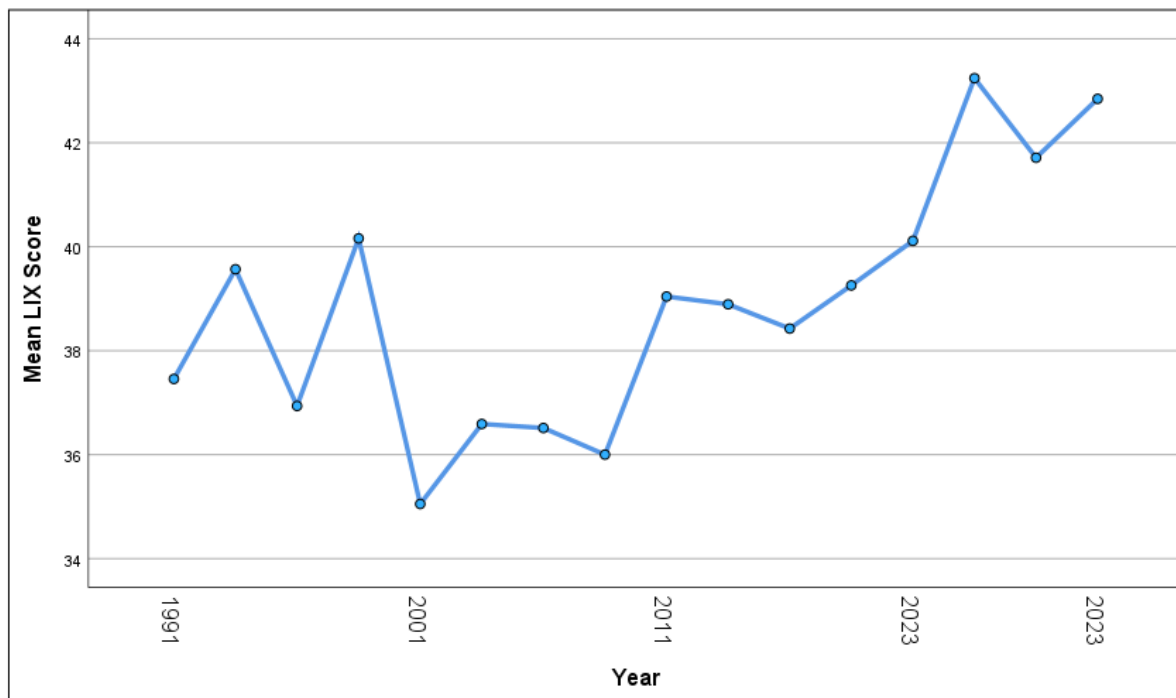
		Statistic	Std. Error	
LIX_SCORE	Mean	38.34	.146	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	38.06	
		Upper Bound	38.63	
	5% Trimmed Mean	38.27		
	Median	38.00		
	Variance	41.453		
	Std. Deviation	6.438		
	Minimum	10		
	Maximum	60		
	Range	50		
	Interquartile Range	8		
	Skewness	.182	.056	
	Kurtosis	.346	.111	

This places SD slightly under the desired amount of observations in order to have sufficient sample size to minimize risk for type 1 and 2 errors (Pallant, 2003). NyD falls far below the desired number of 100 observations and therefore the risk of errors are higher and the results less reliable.

Looking at the descriptives for the years, the same issue with relatively high standard deviations are present. The protocol with the lowest mean LIX- score is 2001-04-26 and has a mean value of 36.0 and the highest LIX score is from the protocol from 2023-10-20 with a score of 43.34 Appendix 1.

Further the trend shows a higher complexity in relation to average LIX- score per year (Table 7).

**Table 7.**



### **4.1.3 Correlations**

Conducting a correlation analysis and interpreting the Pearson correlation coefficient enables the investigation of the magnitude and direction of a linear relationship between two variables. For this study the initial correlations analysis sought to investigate the correlation between lix score and political party. The analysis was conducted with the lix score variable as the dependent and individual dummy-variables for each political party. This means that the correlation was conducted between a continuous variable and a dichotomous variable which according to Pallant (2010) is a combination where the Paerson's correlation coefficient is more suitable than the spearman rho even though the latter is often used when the variables are not dichotomous.

The correlations table (Appendix 6) shows that there's no strong correlation between any of the parties or between the individual parties and the lix score. Most of the correlations are significant at the 0.01 level except for some of the values for NyD which can be explained by the low sample size. The correlation between NyD and Lix score is significant at the 0.001 level and is the second to strongest correlation out of all of the parties in the study. NyD has a correlation with Lix score of -0.067 which represents a very weak negative correlation. The highest correlation score belongs to SD who have a very weak positive correlation of 0.077 with the lix variable. This correlation is also significant at the 0.001 level. Although the scores are significant they are far from strong or even moderate in strength.

Correlations between date and LIX score show that there's a weak positive relation between the variables of 0.223 on the 0.001 significance level.

#### ***4.1.4 Regression and ANOVA***

The ANOVA is conducted to compare the means of more than two groups, when a t-test is not preferable. Given the research questions and aim of the study a one-way, or between groups, ANOVA is conducted instead of a repeated measure ANOVA (Pallant, 2010). One could argue that since the same parties are present in each sample but at different points in time and since some politicians even occur in protocols from different years, this could be viewed as a repeated measure. Since the study is technically looking at the same groups at different points in time this could be argued as a case of time being a testing variable that could affect the groups. If the aim of the study was to examine changes in LIX scores over time within each party and test for interactions between time and party the repeated measures ANOVA would have been a more efficient way to go. Since this study is concerned with comparing the mean LIX scores between different parties and over time the between groups ANOVA is more suitable.

The ANOVA for time-variable shows that the homogeneity of variances assumption has potentially been violated, Laverne's statistic of 0.003 which is higher than the 0.001 sig level but lower than 0.005 therefore I looked at the Welch and Brown-Forsythe statistics and found both to be  $<0.001$  which confirms that the assumption was actually met for this test. The ANOVA also shows that there's a statistically significant difference between some of the mean scores of the time-variable and the LIX score since the p-value  $<0.001$  which is less than the significance level of 0.005. In the multiple comparisons table, the details of which means that have a statistically proven difference is displayed. The larger difference between years that are far apart with some exceptions probably because of smaller sample size (Pallant, 2010).

The ANOVA for the party variable and LIX score shows a statistically significant difference between means and the dependent variable. Here the Sweden Democrats stand out in the multiple comparisons having the most significant results out of all the parties signaling that they are significantly different in mean LIX score than the others. Looking at the means plot it becomes clear that SD has a higher mean than the other parties. Eta squared: 0.019= Low effect size.

A regression analysis for the dependent variable LIX and independent variables Time and Party was conducted by recoding the original Party variable to a numeric variable (Appendix 10).

The coefficients table (Appendix 8) shows statistics related to multicollinearity, both the tolerance and the VIF have the value of 1.0, indicating low risk of multicollinearity. This result

can also be achieved by looking at the correlations table and investigating if there's any high (above 0.7) correlations between independent variables in the study.

The correlations table, table 8, also show if there's any relation between the dependent (LIX) and independent (time, party) variables. As shown in table X there's a very weak negative correlation between LIX score and the Party variable at -0.002 and a moderate positive correlation between date and LIX score at 0.223.

**Table 8.**

		<b>Correlations</b>		
		LIX_SCORE	DATE	PARTY_NUME RIC
Pearson Correlation	LIX_SCORE	1.000	.223	-.002
	DATE	.223	1.000	-.014
	PARTY_NUMERIC	-.002	-.014	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	LIX_SCORE	.	<.001	.459
	DATE	.000	.	.262
	PARTY_NUMERIC	.459	.262	.
N	LIX_SCORE	1932	1932	1932
	DATE	1932	1932	1932
	PARTY_NUMERIC	1932	1932	1932

The regression analysis also provides an estimate for how much of the change in the dependent variable is caused by the dependent variables, this can be found in the model summary table (Table 9). Looking at the value for R Squared the estimated effect of time and party on LIX score is 0.05 which adds up to 5%. This means that 5% of the change in lix score can be explained by time and party.

**Table 9.**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.223 <sup>a</sup>	.050	.049	6.280

a. Predictors: (Constant), PARTY\_NUMERIC, DATE

b. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE

Looking at the Coefficients table 10, the differences in effect of the individual independent variables are shown. In this case the time variable has a significantly higher effect on the dependent variable than the party variable. Important to note is that the date variable is significant at the 0.001 level, but the party variable is not. This indicates that the time variable has a significant unique contribution to the change in LIX score but the party variable does not, this could be an effect of lower sample size.

**Table 10.**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	-17.450	5.564		-3.136	.002	-28.363	-6.538						
	DATE	4.177E-9	.000	.223	10.042	<.001	.000	.000	.223	.223	.223	1.000	1.000	
	PARTY_NUMERIC	.002	.057	.001	.041	.968	-.110	.115	-.002	.001	.001	1.000	1.000	

a. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE

## 5. Discussion

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The results presented in the previous chapter reveals a rather different reality than the previous literature and research problem predicted. The expected negative trend in LIX score over time was not found in the data analysis, nor did a clear difference between populist parties occur in the expected direction. Before delving into the final discussion and potential explanations behind the results, it is beneficial to revisit the research questions and hypotheses that are the foundation of this study.

The main theory driving this paper is Strömbäcks four phase framework and the idea that mediatization of politics is seeping into other parts of political communication that the strictly external outlets. This leads to an internalization of media logic among political institutions that aren't necessarily conscious. This trend has already been observed by some scholars pointing out the increasing size and power of the political communication departments. Figenschou et al (2020) found that the number of PR-professionals (press secretaries specifically) employed within political institutions and organizations in Sweden is larger than even the other Nordic countries which heightens the risk of political decisions being made by communication logic (Figenschou et al. 2020). In order to find evidence of internalization of media logic, I chose to use the debates in the Swedish parliament following the argument that the parliament should be an arena dominated by political logic rather than media logic given the nature of the arena. The prediction was that the data analysis would show a decrease in language complexity in the parliament statements due to the politicians' urge to simplify their messages for the public. This simplification that has been observed in other, more public, contexts would be a sign of the fourth phase of mediatization. The hypothesis posed was as follows: a negative change in LIX scores over time.

Building on the theory of mediatization, the second research question is concerned with the rise of populism and its connection to media logic. The simplistic communication style and polarization strategies defining modern populism can be seen both as a symptom and a driver of mediatization. The rising popularity of populism and their style of argumentation could be a sign that the people have become increasingly accustomed to parties talking directly to them in a manner that strategically appeals to them. by complying to the media logic, populist parties might have an easier time getting media coverage and reaching voters. Some scholars have theorized that populist parties seem to affect the general political rhetoric by changing the debate climate. A consensus of researchers find that populist politicians and parties utilize more of the strategies connected to media logic and have a generally less complex language, therefore the second hypothesis is as follows: a significantly lower general lix scores for SD,



NyD and V. Important to note is that SD and NyD represent the parties with the strongest populist features whereas V only displays a few signs related to populism, language simplification being one key feature V exhibits.

The research questions and hypothesis were defined as follows:

**RQ 1:** To what extent has the complexity of language used in Swedish parliamentary debates changed over the past 30 years, as measured by readability indices and linguistic features associated with simplification?

H1: there is a significant negative change in LIX scores over time

H0: there is no significant change in LIX scores over time

**RQ 2:** Does the presence of populist features within political parties correspond to significantly lower LIX scores compared to parties without such features?

H1: Parties with populist features will have significantly lower LIX scores than the rest of the parties in the sample

H0: there is no significant difference in LIX score between parties with populist features and the rest of the parties in the sample.

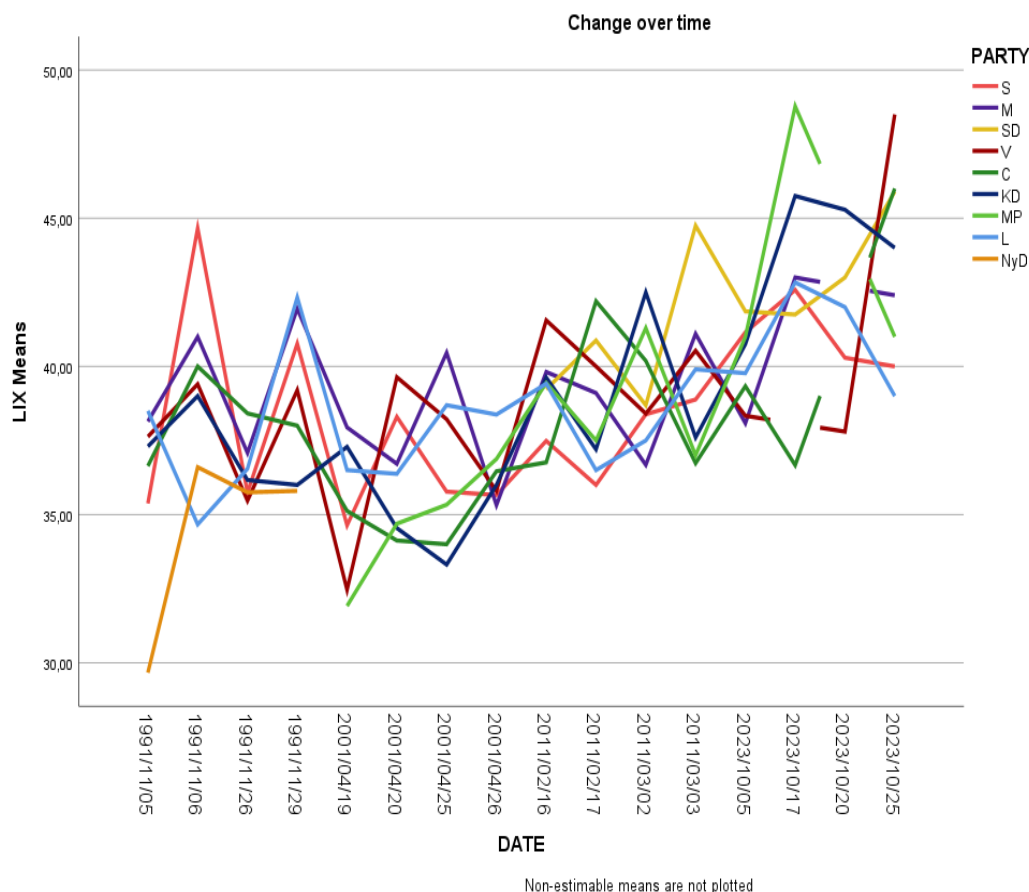
The regression analysis showed that there's a small effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, 5% of the change in LIX score could be explained by Time and Party. The main effect was explained by the Time variable. This is a relatively small effect and could be a symptom of the small overall change in LIX score over time. It is important to note that even if the effect is small the results show a trend that is opposite to the ones found in previous research. The trend over time is statistically significant and shows an increase of LIX score instead of a decline. This negates the first hypothesis. The change over time with the opposite direction of the hypothesis, the language complexity over time is stagnant if only slightly more complicated in later observations, in table 11 the change in complexity over time for all of the parties is visualized. The increase in language complexity also doesn't appear to be despite lower scores for the parties with populist features, but possible because of them.

The result exhibited significant results suggesting the opposite relation between populism and language complexity, the left party had no significant difference in mean scores from the other parties while SD had higher scores, small difference though, than the rest. This suggests that

in the Swedish parliament the party with strongest populist attributes also represents the most complex language.

The results connected to the first research question show an opposite trend in language complexity. This can be a sign that the process of mediatization has not reached the fourth phase in terms of internalization and simplification yet. This can be explained by the choice of data, politicians and their staff might not see the parliament floor as a public facing activity leading to using political logic rather than media logic when debating in the chamber. This would disprove the idea of internalization of media logic since it wouldn't be a conscious choice to debate differently in the chamber compared to in the media. This was part of the initial assumptions of the study and creates a more stable ground for assumptions regarding the internalization of media logic. Given that the assumption that the debates are not seen as public one could argue that the language used in the parliament should reflect political logic rather than media logic. Since the language does not show signs of becoming increasingly simple, while the Swedish media and political climate as a whole has gone through a mediatization process since the 80s this does provide some insight to the fourth phase of mediatization in Sweden (Hjarvard 2013; Strömbäck, 2014; Hallin, 2022).

**Table 11**



Regarding the second research question, the data analysis shows that neither the Left party or the Sweden Democrats have a significantly less complex language than the other parties in the sample. This disproved the hypothesis and raises questions about how populist parties use media logic in different arenas. Research has found that right-wing populist, such as SD, tend to create and utilize their own media channels when communicating with their voters. This could be a reason that SD don't feel the need to utilize these strategies in the parliament since they don't rely as heavily on traditional media coverage to get their politics out to their target groups. Generally this phenomena should be researched further with a larger sample size.

The weak model summary does raise some questions relating to the possible causes of the increasing language complexity in the Swedish parliament. it does not seem to be a symptom of time and party-affiliation, but it rather seems like there could be another driving factor beyond this change. This is something that should be further explored in future research.

## **5.1 Further research**

Further research could explore several different topics to enhance our understanding of language complexity in political discourse and the dynamics of mediatization.

Mainly other sources of data could be collected and compared to the data in this study. Investigating additional sources of political communication, such as media coverage or public statements, to compare language complexity across different platforms could give valuable insight into the process of mediatization and whether the language complexity in the Swedish parliament is significantly more difficult or simple compared to the media. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language is utilized in various contexts and its relationship to mediatization.

Another interesting comparing measure would be to compare different activities in the parliament, namely the party leader debates. This could assess how language complexity varies in different types of discourse. Since the debates are more heavily covered by the media this could prove to be a good source for comparable data without using media material. Understanding the communication strategies employed in high-profile debates can offer insights into the broader trends in political communication.

Similarly, exploring other aspects of mediatization would give a more complex understanding of the concept. Investigating other dimensions of mediatization beyond language complexity, such as polarization, alternative forms of simplification, and gamification would provide a

fuller description of the concept of media logic. By examining these aspects, researchers can gain a more nuanced understanding of how media logic influences political communication. This could be combined with qualitative interviews or quantitative surveys with politicians and political communications in order to gain understanding on why political communication looks the way it does and whether mediatization is something that political institutions are aware of or not. This could provide insights into their communication strategies and decision-making processes. Access to internal communication documents and policy documents reflecting political logic to understand how language complexity is shaped within political organizations could also be useful data for further research.

By pursuing these alternative routes of further research, scholars can advance our understanding of the complex interplay between language, politics, and media in contemporary society.

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## 7. Appendix

---

## 1. Python script

```
#define lix-method
def calculate_lix(text):
    # Tokenize the text into sections based on "anf"
    sections = text.split("Anf")
    sections = list(filter(None, sections))

    lix_scores = []
    for section in sections:
        # Tokenize the section into sentences and words
        sentences = sent_tokenize(section)
        words = [word_tokenize(sentence) for sentence in sentences]

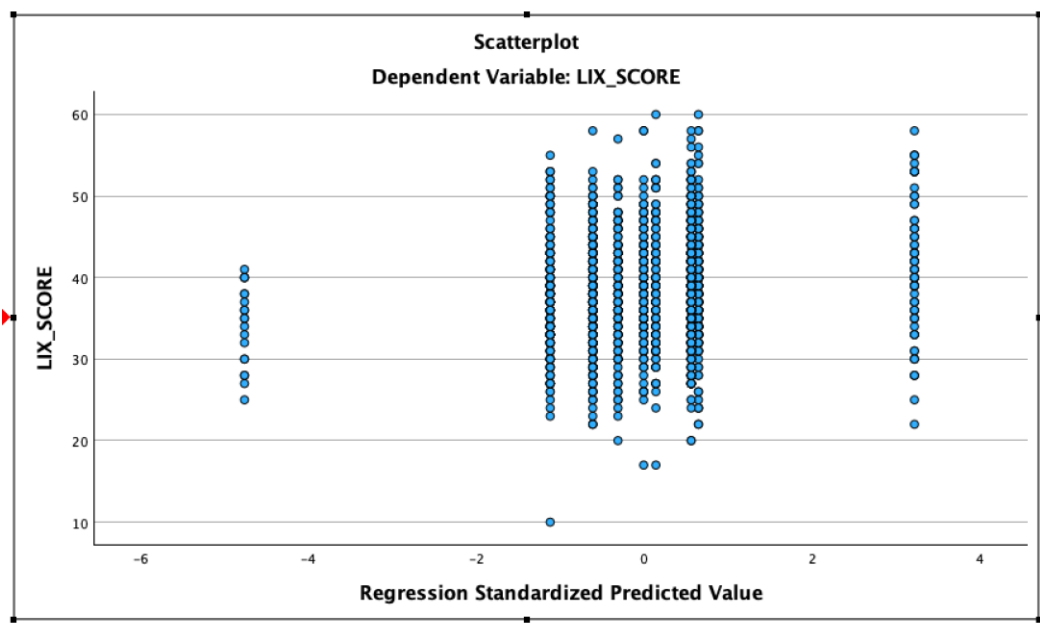
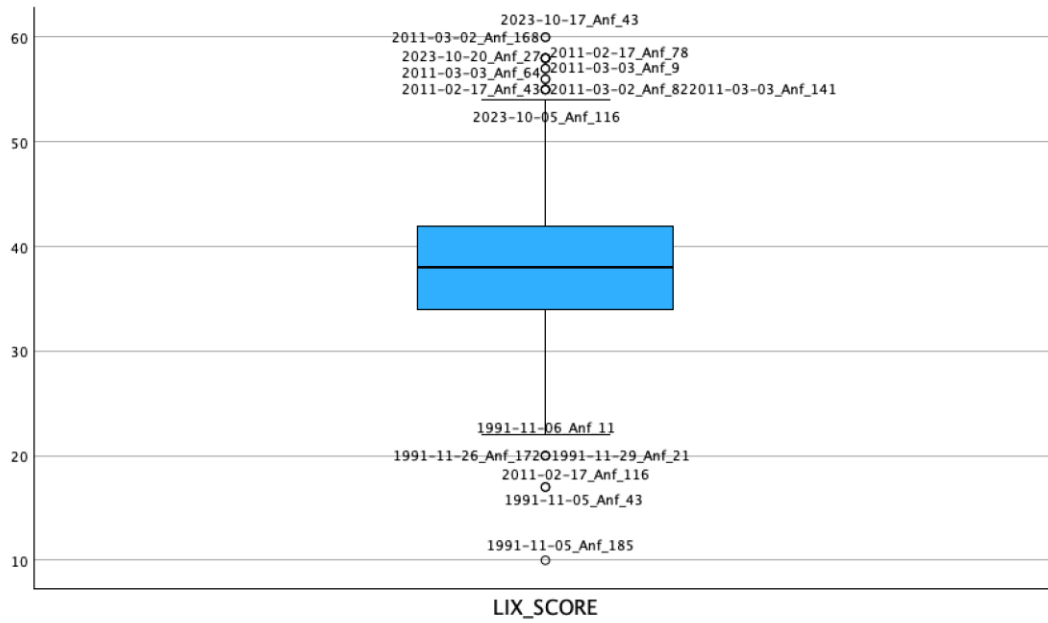
        # Count the number of words and sentences
        num_words = sum(len(sentence) for sentence in words)
        num_sentences = len(sentences)

        # Count the number of words longer than six letters
        num_long_words = sum(1 for sentence in words for word in sentence if len(word) > 6)

        # Calculate LIX score
        if num_sentences > 0:
            lix = (num_words / num_sentences) + (100 * num_long_words / num_words)
            lix = round(lix)
            lix_scores.append(lix)
        else:
            lix_scores.append(0) # Avoid division by zero if section is empty

    return lix_scores
```

## 2. Outliers



**Extreme Values**

		Case Number	ID	Value
LIX_SCORE	Highest	1	2023-10-17_Anf_43	60
		2	2011-03-02_Anf_168	60
		3	2011-02-16_Anf_99	58
		4	2023-10-05_Anf_27	58
		5	2011-03-03_Anf_67	58 <sup>a</sup>
	Lowest	1	1991-11-05_Anf_185	10
		2	1991-11-05_Anf_43	17
		3	2011-02-17_Anf_116	17
		4	1991-11-26_Anf_172	20
		5	1991-11-06_Anf_11	20 <sup>b</sup>

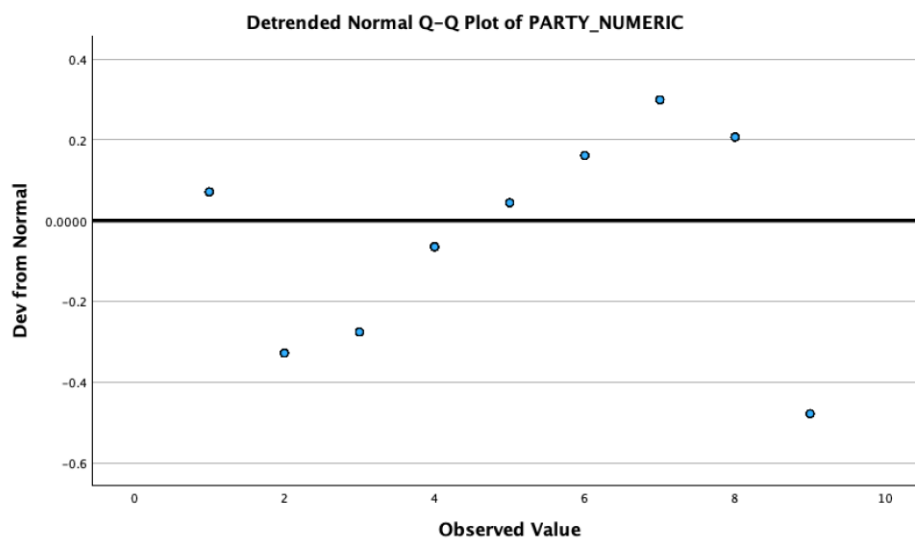
### 3. Normality

#### Tests of Normality

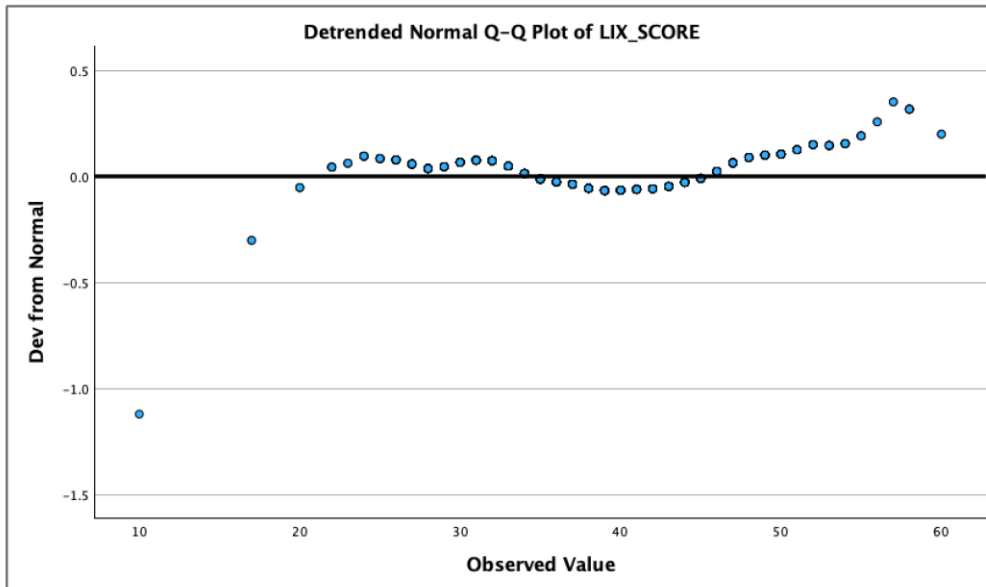
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
LIX_SCORE	.058	1932	<.001	.993	1932	<.001
DATE	.190	1932	<.001	.867	1932	<.001
PARTY_NUMERIC	.226	1932	<.001	.879	1932	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

### 4. Detrended Q-Q plots



### 5. Detrended Q-Q plot



## 6. Correlations

		Correlations										
		LIX_SCORE	S	M	SD	V	C	KD	MP	L	NyD	TALMAN
LIX_SCORE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.046*	.041	.088**	-.001	-.054*	-.013	.005	.032	-.066**	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043	.072	<.001	.973	.017	.566	.837	.155	.003	.521
	N	1946	1937	1937	1937	1937	1937	1937	1937	1937	1937	1937
S	Pearson Correlation	-.046*	1	-.295**	-.109**	-.191**	-.191**	-.160**	-.144**	-.202**	-.055*	-.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.015	.125
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
M	Pearson Correlation	.041	-.295**	1	-.110**	-.193**	-.192**	-.162**	-.145**	-.203**	-.056*	-.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.014	.123
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
SD	Pearson Correlation	.088**	-.109**	-.110**	1	-.071**	-.071**	-.060**	-.054*	-.075**	-.021	-.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		.002	.002	.008	.018	<.001	.364	.567
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
V	Pearson Correlation	-.001	-.191**	-.193**	-.071**	1	-.125**	-.105**	-.094**	-.132**	-.036	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.973	<.001	<.001	.002		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.112	.316
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
C	Pearson Correlation	-.054*	-.191**	-.192**	-.071**	-.125**	1	-.105**	-.094**	-.132**	-.036	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	<.001	<.001	.002	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	.113	.317
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
KD	Pearson Correlation	-.013	-.160**	-.162**	-.060**	-.105**	-.105**	1	-.079**	-.111**	-.030	-.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.566	<.001	<.001	.008	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	.182	.401
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
MP	Pearson Correlation	.005	-.144**	-.145**	-.054*	-.094**	-.094**	-.079**	1	-.099**	-.027	-.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.837	<.001	<.001	.018	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	.232	.452
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
L	Pearson Correlation	.032	-.202**	-.203**	-.075**	-.132**	-.132**	-.111**	-.099**	1	-.038	-.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.155	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		.094	.291
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
NyD	Pearson Correlation	-.066**	-.055*	-.056*	-.021	-.036	-.036	-.030	-.027	-.038	1	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.015	.014	.364	.112	.113	.182	.232	.094		.773
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940
TALMAN	Pearson Correlation	.015	-.035	-.035	-.013	-.023	-.023	-.019	-.017	-.024	-.007	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.521	.125	.123	.567	.316	.317	.401	.452	.291	.773	
	N	1937	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940	1940

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

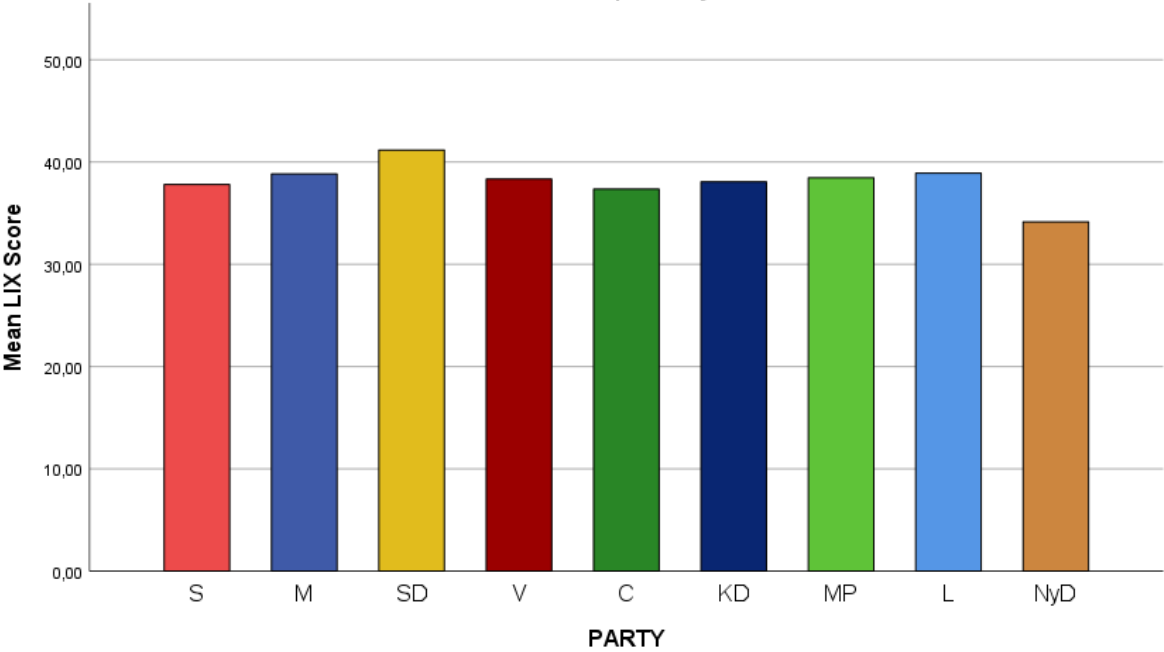
## 7. Descriptives

### Descriptives

LIX\_SCORE

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
S	439	37,80	5,925	,283	37,24	38,36	22	58
M	444	38,83	6,365	,302	38,24	39,42	20	58
SD	76	41,17	8,004	,918	39,34	43,00	22	58
V	216	38,33	5,845	,398	37,55	39,12	17	58
C	215	37,35	6,723	,459	36,45	38,26	10	55
KD	157	38,06	6,624	,529	37,02	39,11	20	57
MP	128	38,46	7,226	,639	37,20	39,72	17	60
L	237	38,91	6,338	,412	38,10	39,72	22	60
NyD	20	34,15	4,848	1,084	31,88	36,42	25	41
TALMAN	5	40,20	13,864	6,200	22,99	57,41	26	60
Total	1937	38,35	6,462	,147	38,06	38,64	10	60

Mean LIX Score per Party



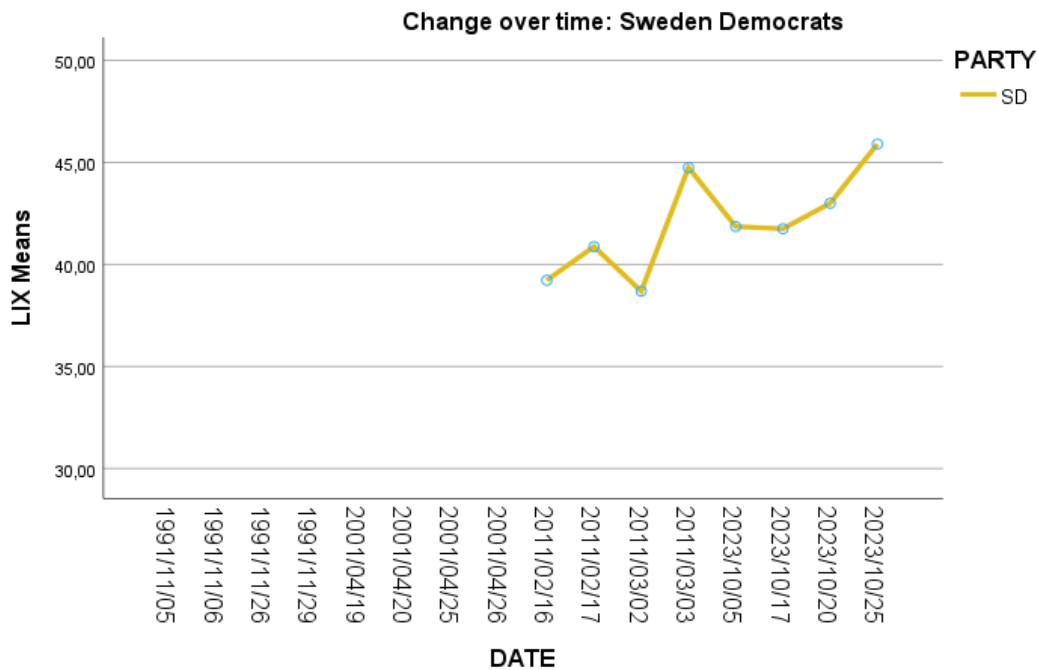


### Descriptives

LIX\_SCORE

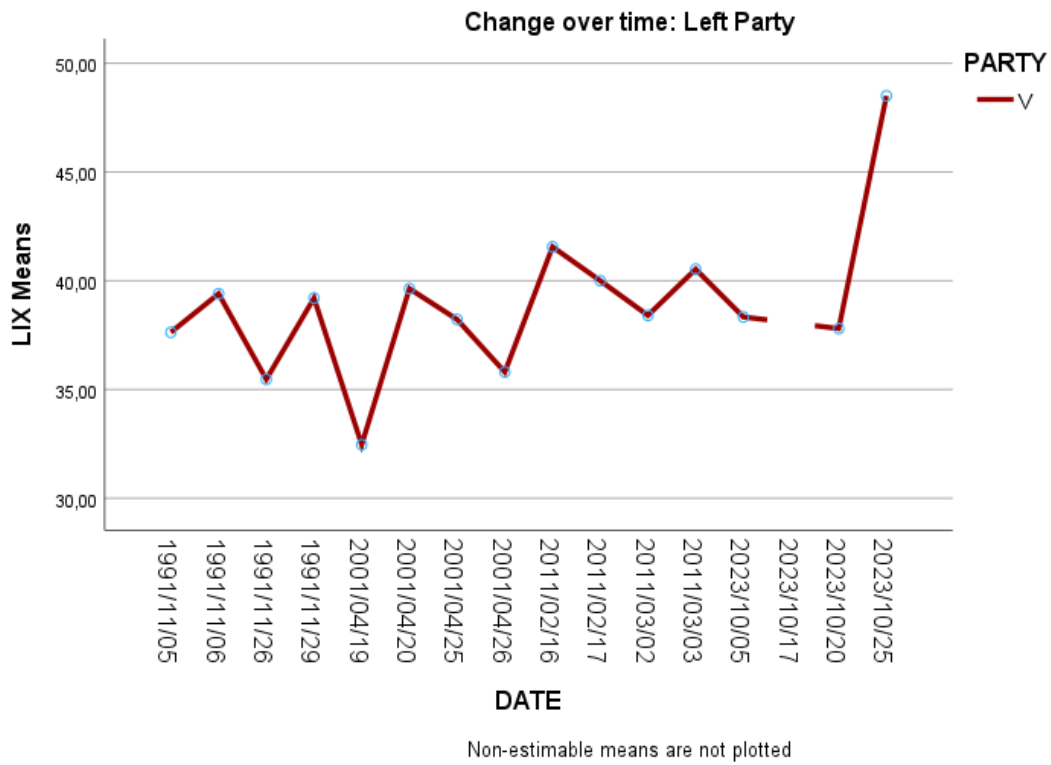
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1991/11/06	30	39,57	6,806	1,243	37,03	42,11	20	50
1991/11/26	173	36,94	7,096	,539	35,87	38,00	20	55
1991/11/29	69	40,16	5,972	,719	38,72	41,59	20	54
1991/11/05	239	37,46	6,814	,441	36,59	38,32	10	53
2001/04/19	137	35,05	5,140	,439	34,18	35,92	25	51
2001/04/20	78	36,59	5,000	,566	35,46	37,72	26	48
2001/04/25	117	36,51	5,481	,507	35,51	37,52	23	47
2001/04/26	120	36,00	5,361	,489	35,03	36,97	22	48
2011/02/16	191	39,04	6,505	,471	38,11	39,97	22	58
2011/02/17	130	38,89	6,091	,534	37,84	39,95	17	58
2011/03/02	200	38,42	6,430	,455	37,53	39,32	23	60
2011/03/03	141	39,26	6,588	,555	38,16	40,35	27	60
2023/10/05	133	40,11	5,341	,463	39,20	41,03	24	58
2023/10/17	91	43,24	5,930	,622	42,01	44,48	30	60
2023/10/20	52	41,71	5,651	,784	40,14	43,28	29	57
2023/10/25	45	42,84	6,385	,952	40,93	44,76	29	53
Total	1946	38,36	6,466	,147	38,07	38,65	10	60

### 8. Change over time The Sweden Democrats



Non-estimable means are not plotted

## 9. Change over time The Left Party



## 10. Regression

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,698 <sup>a</sup>	,488	,487	1,44557

a. Predictors: (Constant), DATE

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	-16,331	1,274		-12,820	<,001
	DATE	4,096×10 <sup>-9</sup>	,000	,698	42,949	<,001

a. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE\_mean

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3854,626	1	3854,626	1844,605	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	4051,882	1939	2,090		
	Total	7906,508	1940			

a. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE\_mean

b. Predictors: (Constant), DATE

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-17.450	5.564		-3.136	.002	-28.363	-6.538					
	DATE	4.177E-9	.000	.223	10.042	<.001	.000	.000	.223	.223	.223	1.000	1.000
	PARTY_NUMERIC	.002	.057	.001	.041	.968	-.110	.115	-.002	.001	.001	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE

### ANOVA Effect Sizes<sup>a</sup>

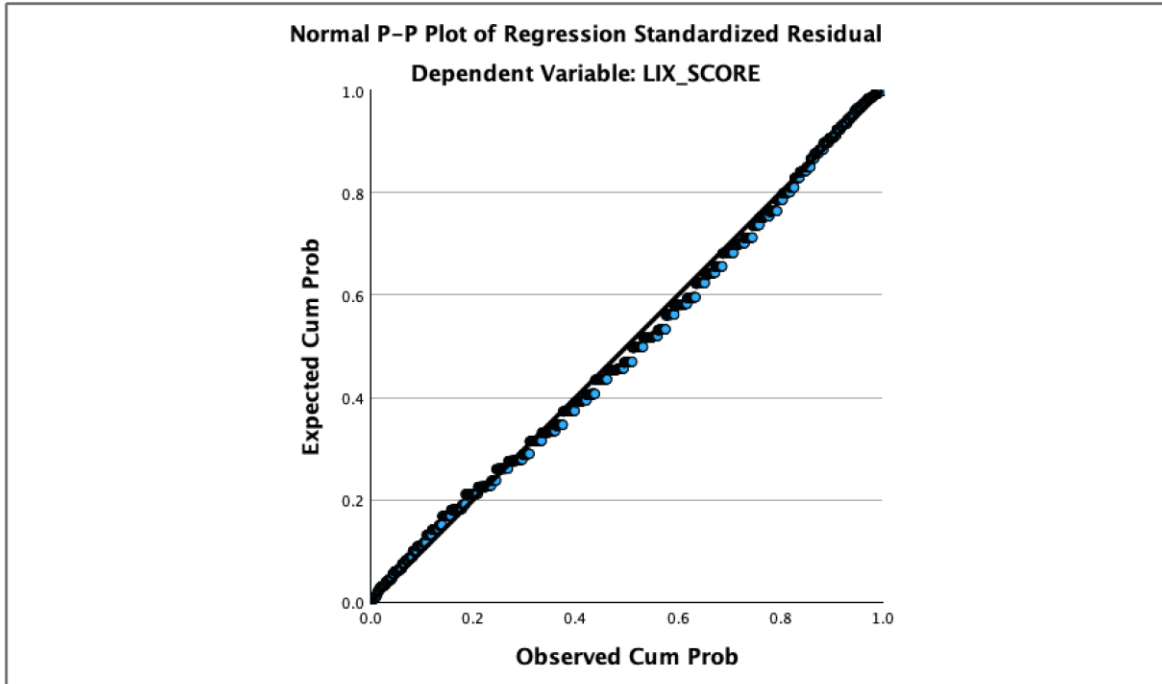
LIX_SCORE		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
	Eta-squared	.100	.069	.118
	Epsilon-squared	.092	.062	.112
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	.092	.062	.111
	Omega-squared Random-effect	.007	.004	.008

a. Eta-squared and Epsilon-squared are estimated based on the fixed-effect model.

### ANOVA Effect Sizes<sup>a</sup>

LIX_SCORE		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
	Eta-squared	.019	.006	.028
	Epsilon-squared	.015	.001	.024
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	.015	.001	.024
	Omega-squared Random-effect	.002	.000	.003

a. Eta-squared and Epsilon-squared are estimated based on the fixed-effect model.



### Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.223 <sup>a</sup>	.050	.049	6.280

a. Predictors: (Constant), PARTY\_NUMERIC, DATE

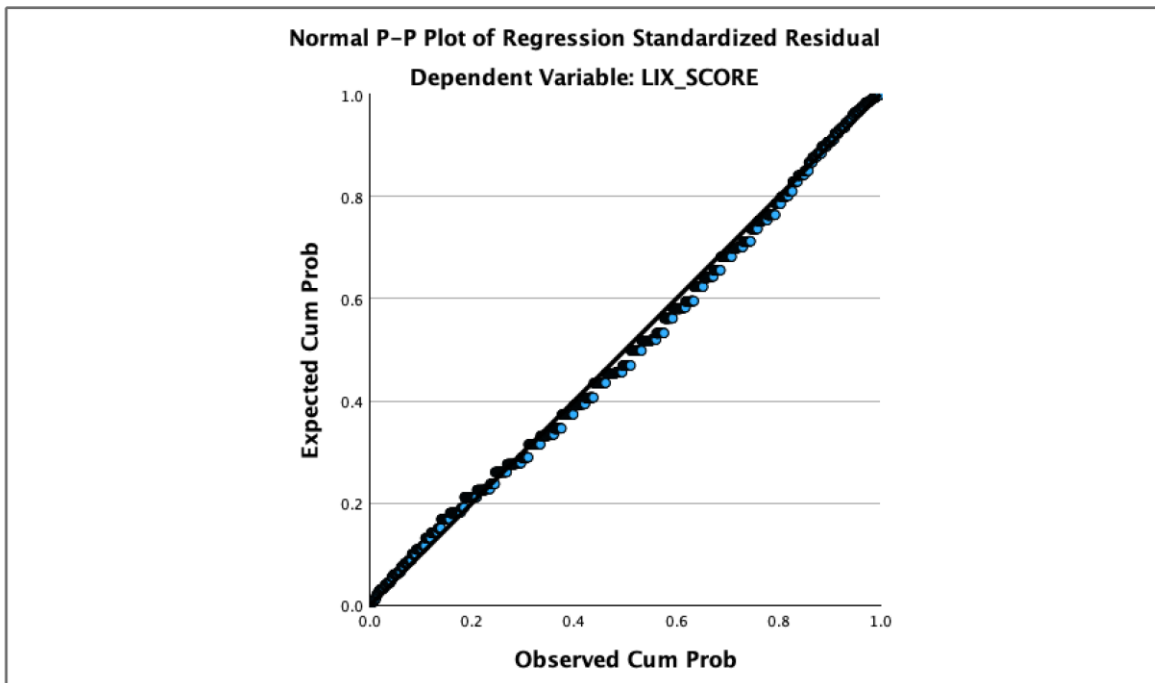
b. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE

## Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
LIX_SCORE	38.34	6.438	1932
DATE	2005/12/15	3976 14:51...	1932
PARTY_NUMERIC	3.83	2.497	1932

## Correlations

		LIX_SCORE	DATE	PARTY_NUMERIC
Pearson Correlation	LIX_SCORE	1.000	.223	-.002
	DATE	.223	1.000	-.014
	PARTY_NUMERIC	-.002	-.014	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	LIX_SCORE	.	<.001	.459
	DATE	.000	.	.262
	PARTY_NUMERIC	.459	.262	.
N	LIX_SCORE	1932	1932	1932
	DATE	1932	1932	1932
	PARTY_NUMERIC	1932	1932	1932



### Collinearity Diagnostics<sup>a</sup>

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions	
				(Constant)	DATE
1	1	2.000	1.000	.00	.00
	2	.000	77.768	1.00	1.00

a. Dependent Variable: LIX\_SCORE

Descriptives				
		Statistic	Std. Error	
LIX_SCORE	Mean	38.34	.146	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	38.06	
		Upper Bound	38.63	
	5% Trimmed Mean	38.27		
	Median	38.00		
	Variance	41.453		
	Std. Deviation	6.438		
	Minimum	10		
	Maximum	60		
	Range	50		
	Interquartile Range	8		
	Skewness	.182	.056	
Kurtosis	.346	.111		

## Correlations

		LIX_SCORE	DATE	PARTY_NUMERIC
Pearson Correlation	LIX_SCORE	1.000	.223	-.002
	DATE	.223	1.000	-.014
	PARTY_NUMERIC	-.002	-.014	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	LIX_SCORE	.	<.001	.459
	DATE	.000	.	.262
	PARTY_NUMERIC	.459	.262	.
N	LIX_SCORE	1932	1932	1932
	DATE	1932	1932	1932
	PARTY_NUMERIC	1932	1932	1932

