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Collaboration, from Thought to Modeled Subjects

- Government Analytics of Inter-Organizational Collaboration in Swedish Labor Market Policy

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Abstract

This thesis aimed to examine how government accomplishes governance of collaborative constellations of municipalities and the Public Employment Services in Swedish labor market policy following the reformation in 2022, coinciding with new guidelines for collaboration between the parties. This objective was approached with a theoretical framework based on Foucault's theorization on governance. It has utilized a qualitative content analysis method to analyze empirical material consisting of parliamentary records, reports from the advisory committee Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete, and agreements on collaboration between municipalities and PES from the timeframe 2020-01-01 to 2023-12-31. Collaboration was found to be legitimized by a conception of collaboration between Public Employment Services and municipalities as a means to ensure the provision of adequate and equivalent services throughout the country following the labor market policy reform. It was argued that the introduced collaboration model was purposefully assembled to adapt collaboration to changed conditions following the policy reform and align the scales of government by introducing uniformity and consensus. Standardized agreements were found to be devised to subvert the subjectivities of the organizations through delimitation of responsibility and uniformity. Public Employment Services commonly assume a subjectivity corresponding to their statutory obligations, whereas municipalities assume varied subjectivities but commonly assume responsibilities for interpersonal and complementary services. Ultimately, it was argued that the introduced approach to collaboration aligns municipalities with the state's desires. The introduced model for collaboration is a mode of governance of collaborative constellations.

Keywords: Labor Market Policy, Inter-Organizational Collaboration, Municipality, Public Employment Services, Power.

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List of Abbreviations

C – Centre Party – Sw. Centerpartiet.

DUA - the Delegation for Young People and Newly Arrived Immigrants to Work -
Sw. Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete.

L – Liberals – Sw. Liberalerna.

MP – Members of Parliament – Riksdagsledamot

PES – Public Employment Services – Sw. Arbetsförmedlingen.

S – Swedish Social Democratic Party – Sw. Socialdemokraterna.

SKR - The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions - Sw. Sveriges
kommuner och regioner.

1. Introduction

Following the 2018 parliamentary elections, a coalition of the Social Democratic Party and the Swedish Green Party, supported by the Liberals and the Center Party, formed a government. This coalition's platform, commonly referred to as the January Agreement (Sw. Januariavtalet), published in 2019, summarized 73 points of coalitional commitments. One of these commitments foreboded substantive reforms of the Swedish Public Employment Services (PES).

The reform entailed changes in the operations and the role of the PES. From 2022 and onwards, the provision of matching and capacity-enhancing labor market services should be accomplished through market procurements, with the PES assuming a coordinating and strategic role in ensuring the functioning of labor market policy (Ds. 2021:27; Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022). This realignment of services entails a potential reshaping of one of the central pillars of the Swedish welfare state.

1.1 Background

Boasted as a reform that would reshape the foundations of the PES (Januariavtalet, 2022, p.4), one can argue that it simultaneously constitutes a reshaping of the Swedish welfare state. In addition to policy arrangements allowing for high degrees of de-commodification and low levels of stratification, the full-employment imperative is a central attribute of the Swedish welfare state regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p.28). The Swedish state has traditionally assumed an active role in moderating the domestic labor market (Stråth, 1995, p.95). The nationally governed PES has, therefore, been an indispensable instrument. Given the administrative structure of the Swedish government, the reform has implications beyond just reshaping the PES.

Portraying the national state as the sole actor in the Swedish labor market policy warrants some caveats. Labor market policy has been under the prerogative of the national state since 1918 and fully maturing as a policy area in 1945, overriding the legitimacy of municipal labor market policy (Brauer, 2022a, pp.43, 47). Although the national state has been responsible for labor market policy since the 1940s, the importance of municipalities for de-facto labor market policy has increased.

Municipalities have emerged as labor market policy actors. In 2020, municipalities' net expenditure on labor market measures was estimated at approximately 5 billion SEK (SKR, 2020a, p.5). This expenditure pertained to providing services to 100,000 individuals, corresponding to approximately one-fifth of Sweden's unemployed population (c.f. SKR, 2020b, p.16; SCB 2021, p.10). The expansion of the municipalities' prominence in labor market policy can be traced to the 1990s economic downturn, which fostered municipalities' need to engage in labor market policy due to strains on the PES (Ulmestig, 2007, pp.199, 208). It should be noted that this development was not preceded by national directives or legislation (Johansson, 2001, p.117, 150); instead, it was spurred by self-determined pragmatism on the part of municipalities (Salonen, 2001, p.153). The prominent role of municipalities in labor market policy has consequences for the policy area.

Consequentially, Swedish labor market policy diverges along multiple dimensions. The PES primarily caters to the unemployed with social insurance benefits (Thegerström & Ulmestig, 2021, p. 25, 27). The municipalities are, on the other hand, geared at providing labor market measures to individuals with means-tested social assistance (Salonen, 2000, p. 153). Swedish labor market policy thus reflects the duality of the Swedish income protection schemes (Johansson & Hviden 2007, p.338;344). Furthermore, territorial and economic differences between localities exacerbate local differences in labor market policy (Johansson, 2022, p.421; Brauer, 2021, pp.12). Given how municipalities have adapted their operations in response to the national policy, one can theorize that reforms pledging to reform the foundations of the PES inevitably affect municipalities.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sw. Sveriges kommuner och regioner (SKR)), a municipal interest organization, has voiced concerns about the reform. Aside from apprehensions about the reform possibly imparting labor market policy expenses onto municipalities, the association raised the possibility of the reform impinging collaboration between municipalities and the PES (SKR, 2020b, p.5, 11, 14; 2022b, p.6, 9;). The national state acknowledged the latter of these concerns. It issued multiple directives to the PES and the advisory committee *the Delegation for Young People and Newly Arrived Immigrants to Work* (Sw. Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete (DUA)) to bolster collaboration (Dir. 2020:95, Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022). This ultimately resulted in adapted guidelines

for collaboration between municipalities and the PES. Amongst other things, this manifested in the utilization of standardized agreements on collaboration throughout the country (SOU 2023:7, p.18, 57).

1.2 Research Problem

Inter-organizational collaboration is highly relevant to understanding and discussing Swedish labor market policy. Given the policy area's duality, narratives that do not account for the interaction between municipalities and the PES neglect significant complexities of Swedish labor market policy (Johansson & Hvinden, 2007, pp.335, 344). Thus, one could argue that literature on inter-organizational collaboration is essential to understanding contemporary Swedish labor market policy operations.

Substantial attention has been paid to the drivers, contingencies, and effects of inter-organizational collaboration in Swedish and international contexts. Research applying a structural perspective has found that fragmentation and the complexities of governance are associated with the cause and necessity of inter-organizational collaboration (Hulst et al., 2011, p.138; Champion & Bonoli, 2011, p.328; Minas, 2014, p.50; Andersson, 2022, p.103). Insights from sociological institutionalism and public choice theoretical perspectives have complemented this.

Rational choice perspectives argue that collaboration improves policy implementation, provided that the complexity of the task warrants it (Lundin, 2007b, p.647) and is influenced by goal congruence and levels of trust (Lundin, 2007a, p.670). Socio-cultural inquiries have argued that inter-organizational collaborations are moderated by organizational values and inherent logic (Fuertes et al., 2021, p.103; Ulmestig & Panican, 2018, p.481; 2021, pp.159). Furthermore, reciprocity expectations influence how collaboration manifests in practice (Jacobsson et al., 2017, p. 98). In deciphering institutional power relations in the dualized Swedish labor market policy, scholars have approached questions of power leveraging theorization derived from political sociology, resulting in conflicting conclusions (c.f. Ulmestig, 2007, p.212; Brauer 2022b, p.13). This has resulted in a comprehensive understanding of inter-organizational collaboration in Swedish labor market policy.

In light of this knowledge, Swedish scholars have argued for increased directions in collaboration between municipalities and the PES (Ulmestig & Panican, 2021, p.162). With the new all-encompassing guidelines on collaboration between the scales of government, one could argue that this has come to fruition. However, research on inter-organizational collaboration in Swedish labor market policy is void of one perspective: post-structuralist inquiries into how governance accomplishes collaboration between the Swedish PES and municipalities.

A post-structural approach, more precisely, analytics of government, does not entail a complete rupture from argumentation developed by strains of institutionalism (Lim, 2011, p.15). However, in contrast to existing research on inter-organizational collaboration in Swedish labor market policy, the perspective allows one to emphasize questions on how mechanisms of power have come to be privileged (ibid.) and *how* they seek to accomplish governance (Dean, 2010, p.44). Hence, it simultaneously constitutes an alternative approach to subject-subjugator-focused perspectives that risk yielding reductionist accounts (Beronius, 1986, p.47), such as commonly proposed by political sociology theory.

A post-structural approach to inter-organizational collaboration is academically motivated by the lack of critical inquiries *on collaboration* in Swedish labor market policy. It is further motivated by its implications for understanding how government of contemporary Swedish labor market policy is accomplished. Given the duality of Swedish labor market policy (Salonen, 2000, p.171; Johansson & Hviden, 2007, p.344) and its traditionally central role in the Swedish welfare state regime (see e.g., Esping-Andersen, 1990, pp. 28, 168), a focus on inter-organizational collaboration ultimately addresses the conduct of a core component of the Swedish welfare state.

1.2.1 Research Scope and Questions

With the above in mind, this thesis leverages a scope and research questions derived from Foucauldian theorization of government. This thesis aims to examine how government accomplishes governance of collaborative constellations of municipalities and the PES in Swedish labor market policy following the reformation in 2022. It addresses this scope by posing the question below.

- How is the contemporary political rationality of collaboration between the Swedish PES and municipalities constructed?
- How is contemporary collaboration between the Swedish PES and municipalities constructed as a system of techniques of power?
- How are standardized agreements on collaboration, proposed by DUA, constructed to function as a technique of power?
- How are the PES and Swedish municipalities subjectified by the standardized agreements on collaboration proposed by DUA?

1.2.2 Clarifications and Disposition

In the context of this thesis, inter-organizational collaboration pertains to the collaborative interaction between Swedish municipalities and the PES. Unless otherwise specified, *collaboration* hereinafter refers to this phenomenon to spare the reader constant reiteration. Furthermore, collaboration is not associated with any a priori conceptual operationalizations.

Literature on inter-organizational collaboration has proposed several operationalizations of collaborative undertakings to capture the degree of collaborative efforts (see Champion & Bonoli, 2011, p.325; Costumato, 2021, p.250). These are forgone as the object of inquiry is, in part, how collaboration has been attributed with meaning. Thus, a priori operationalizations are not methodologically compatible.

Literature on labor market policy has similarly proposed several concepts when discussing policy, such as activation or active labor market measures. Labor market policy should here be understood broadly as, per Clegg's (2015, p.183) definition, "a set of instruments through which governments assist individuals facing difficulties in the labor market, especially but not exclusively unemployed people."

This introductory chapter concludes with a brief account of the organizational context of Swedish labor market policy to further familiarize the reader with the structure of Swedish governance. It then presents and discusses the state of the art, followed by a chapter on the applied theoretical framework. The third chapter presents and justifies the research approach. This is followed by a chapter analyzing and discussing the

empirical findings. The thesis concludes with a summative discussion of findings and limitations.

1.3 Policy Context

The following intends to provide the reader with a foundational familiarity with how Swedish polity is structured and governed. Subsequently, a brief concretization of Swedish labor market policy's legal and practical contexts follows.

1.3.1 Government Structure

Sweden has three administrative scales of government: municipal, regional, and national. The municipal and national levels are most relevant to understanding Swedish labor market policy. The scales of government are imbued with different responsibilities and capabilities, as well as organizational differences.

The national government is the principal of national agencies. The National Assembly holds no direct positions in these agencies. Governance is instead accomplished through statutory means or ministerial appointments to departments that govern through the issuance of directives. These directives commonly outline how the agency is to achieve its objectives in various degrees of detail and typically include prescriptions on how agencies are to devote their allocated budget. The 290 Swedish municipalities have relative discretion regarding their administrative organization and can leverage and regulate taxation from their inhabitants. Thus, localities can differ in terms of administrative institutions and taxation levels.

1.3.2 Policy Structure

According to the ordinance Regulation (2022:811) with instructions for the Public Employment Service [Sw. Förordning med instruktion för Arbetsförmedlingen], the PES is responsible for Swedish labor market policy. This entails a multifaceted set of responsibilities. These can be broadly summarized as responsibilities to ensure the efficiency of the Swedish labor market, the supply of a competent labor force, and a

socially just labor market in addition to providing a database of labor market information.

The labor market measures of the PES are typically categorized into three groups: internships and subsidized employment, counseling and job mediation, and vocational education (Lundin, 2011, p.8). Following the reformation of PES in 2022, the majority of these are offered through private actors. However, PES retains the administrative capabilities and responsibility of referral to these measures (Ds. 2022:27, p.27).

The second actor relevant to this thesis is the municipalities. As stated above, the municipalities enjoy significant autonomy in their political administration and have come to wield it in relation to labor market policy. No national ordinance stipulates that municipalities must engage in labor market policy, how such initiatives should be structured, or what they should contain. They are, however, obligated to have a board responsible for preventative measures against unemployment (SFS 1944:475).

Three legal provisions relevant to municipalities pertaining to labor market policy follow from the Education Act (SFS, 2010:800). Municipalities are responsible for activating youths who neither study nor possess a high-school diploma, providing adult education, providing societal introductory courses to newly arrived immigrants, and providing education to newly arrived immigrants deemed by the PES as in need of education (SFS 2010:800). In addition, municipalities are responsible for activating particular disabled individuals (SFS 1993:387).

Despite the lack of any direct obligations for labor market policy, many municipalities engage in the policy sphere. Most municipalities have instituted their own local labor office and offer various measures. In 2021, the three most common services provided by municipalities were job counseling, job training, and supported employment¹ (SKR, 2022a, p.14).

¹. Supported employment should be understood as municipalities providing individuals with in-house employment opportunities. The national state subsidizes the employment to various degrees through the PES. Hence attributing the provision solely to municipalities is perhaps a bit misleading.

2. Literature Review

The social sciences have produced a vast literature on labor market policy. The following chapter presents a subset of this literature. It does, therefore, not claim to be exhaustive or all-encompassing. It first presents literature on Swedish contemporary labor market policy. Subsequently, it complements this with a review of literary works on inter-organizational collaboration. Given that this thesis situates itself amongst poststructuralist research, this review concludes with a presentation of research of this strain of research.

The literature was sourced from LUBsearch and from Google Scholar. Appendix 1 exemplifies search equations and terms used to compile the review. In a few instances, literature was garnered from reverse-searching reference material.

2.1 Landscape of Policy

Labor market policy has garnered substantive attention over the years. The following presents a subset of Swedish labor market policy literature to situate the thesis in its context. Two notions are constant throughout this collection: policy has undergone a normative and organizational shift.

In reviews of policy developments, Salonen (2000, pp.167, 171; 2001, p.154) notes that national labor market policy in Sweden, following the economic crisis of the 1990s, has reoriented itself towards inexpensive labor market measures, abandoning its ambition of upskilling the labor force. While capacity enhancement resurfaced at the national agenda in Sweden at the turn of the millennium, Bengtsson and Berglund (2012, p.31) show that subsequent reforms have yet again reoriented labor policy to inexpensive measures, mainly financial incentives.

An additional aspect of note in the Swedish context is the growing importance of municipalities in labor market policy. In conjunction with a realignment of services provided by the national PES in the 90s, Ulmestig (2007, pp.148) shows in a review of policy arrangements that this corresponded with an increased municipal

engagement in labor market policy. This development was not spurred directly by formal directives or labor market policy reforms but instead brought about by rising rates of unemployment and the perception of the PES as inadequate to cater to the needs of the unemployed (Ulmestig, 2007, pp.150, 199; Salonen, 2001, p.153). This has resulted in a heterogeneous labor market policy landscape in Sweden.

Three positions can be discerned among municipalities: those that orient their services towards either hardline work requirements or capacity-building approaches (Johansson, 2001, p.178; Nybom, 2012, p.64; Fuertes et al., 2021, p.103) or a combination of both (Jacobsson et al., 2017, p.94). Based on a comparative case study of two municipalities, Johansson (2001, pp.175) argues that local institutional legacies spur variation in policy implementation. Comparative observational studies also suggest that differences in unemployment rates, geography and demography, and economic resources influence how municipalities implement labor market policy (Brauer, 2021, pp.12; Johansson, 2022, p.425).

This has led authors to question the social equality of Swedish labor market policy in Sweden. Salonen (2000, p.171) notes that the increased importance of municipalities in the policy sphere entails a duality in labor market policy: labor market outsiders who rely on municipal social assistance for sustenance face municipal activation measures with higher degrees of workfare attributes. This notion has been found to have substantial support in other literature. Given the discretion municipalities are afforded regarding local labor policy and social assistance, research has noted that the conditionality of social assistance benefits has increased to a higher degree than that of social insurance-based unemployment benefits (Johansson & Hvinden, 2007, p.344; Thorén, 2008, p.149; Minas, 2011, p.210).

2.2 Organization of Policy

With the above stated in mind, one can argue that understanding Swedish labor policy warrants acknowledgment of research examining the institutional logic of municipalities and the PES. Furthermore, one needs to acknowledge literature that has sought to examine and explain collaboration between public agencies. The following sections first present literature on the logic of service provision, and the subsequent sections present the research findings focused on inter-organizational collaboration.

2.2.3 Institutional Logics

Research suggests municipalities and the PES have divergent logic when providing labor market measures. The national state's rationale for providing active labor market measures through the PES is based on the need to ensure a supply of labor force and safeguard labor market participation (Ulmestig, 2007, pp.137, 211). On the other hand, municipalities justify their engagement in labor policy as a cost-containment measure due to their financial responsibility for social assistance (Johansson, 2001, p.156; Ulmestig, 2007, p.200). Municipal labor market measures also leverage normative justifications to engage in labor market policy (Thorén, 2008, pp.73, 74). These logics influence to whom and how the agencies prioritize their activities.

Swedish labor market policy corresponds to the duality of income protection schemes. Ulmestig (2007, p.223) argues, based on a historical policy review, that the PES primarily targets groups of unemployed deemed readily employable due to their interest in maintaining overall labor market participation. In contrast, individuals with weak labor market affiliation due to social or psycho-physical circumstances fall under the municipalities' responsibility, granted that they are social assistance recipients (Ulmestig, 2007, p.223; Johansson & Hvinden, 2007, p.341). Findings from an experimental vignette study concur with these claims: social assistance beneficiaries are less likely to receive support from PES case managers than social insurance recipients. However, having a migrant background increases the probability of receiving support from the PES (Thegerström & Ulmestig, 2021, p.25).

This mismatch of organizational logic creates a contentious environment between the organizations. Focus groups with senior-level management informants reveal that both organizations engage in cost considerations, actively seeking to maintain institutional boundaries to avoid incurring costs and safeguard available intervention spots for their constituencies (Ulmestig & Panican, 2018, p.481). The organizations are simultaneously seeking to access their counterpart's resources. Navigating these tensions is subject to local negotiations, subsequently influencing how labor policy is implemented locally (ibid.). As far as this author knows, this relationship has given rise to three literary accounts of power between municipalities and the PES in local labor market policy.

Research has yielded conflicting accounts regarding which actor has the upper hand in this relationship. Ulmestig (2007, pp.141, 213) argues, based on theorization from Perrow, that the state is in power given its possibility of retrenching its operation, thus impelling municipalities to act in labor market policy. In passing, Ulmestig and Panican (2021, p.159) argue that the PES is the privileged actor in local labor market policy, given the organization's economic and administrative capabilities. Leveraging a conceptualization of power derived from Steven Lukes, i.e., accounting for actors' manifest and latent interests, Brauer (2022b, pp.8, 13) contends that municipalities are privileged given their discretion in local labor policy. This contradiction is perhaps a result of how the authors conceptualize power. In discussing *who* is in power, the authors' claims lose transferability beyond their studied contexts (see e.g. Beronius, 1986, p.47), opening up contradicting accounts. Nonetheless, the above is indicative that the interaction between the scales of governance is essential to understanding local labor policy in Sweden. This is the topic of the coming section.

2.2.2 Collaboration in Policy

Inter-organizational collaboration in the public sector has become commonplace due to increasing complexities of governance (O'Toole, 1997, p.47) and service fragmentation induced by New Public Management reforms (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007). This has spurred extensive policy research on collaboration between public agencies (O'Toole, 2015; Costumato, 2021). One can broadly discern three types of inquiries in studies focusing on collaboration in labor market policy.

Research focusing on collaboration from a structural perspective approaches the subject matter with a focus on formal institutions. These inquiries examine how national and local government frames influence and determine collaboration patterns. Based on an exploratory cross-national case study of collaborative arrangements, Champion and Bonoli's (2011, p.328) theorization suggests that the implementation of collaboration-bolstering policies is contingent on countries first implementing active labor market policy and secondly implementing fragmentation of said policy. Minas's (2014, p.51) findings further nuance how labor market policy legacies shape collaboration. Countries with workfare predispositions, such as the United Kingdom (UK), tend to implement narrow collaboration initiatives focusing on disciplinary

employment measures. In contrast, countries with a capacity-enhancing predisposition, such as the Nordic countries, implement inter-policy collaborative initiatives (ibid.). Examining collaboration in labor market services targeting youths in the UK and Sweden, Anderson (2022, p.103) finds similar collaboration characteristics. Both countries exhibit intra-policy coordination, but Sweden exhibits higher degrees of inter-policy collaboration concurrent with high levels of decentralization. The author, therefore, attributes differences in collaboration patterns to levels of discretion of policy authority.

Public choice theorization has attempted to predict collaboration patterns and outcomes based on cost-benefit hypothecation. A cross-sectional analysis of collaboration between municipalities and the PES in Sweden highlights the importance of collaboration for policy delivery. Regression and logistics analyses with enrollment quantities from policies of various complexity as dependent variables - differing in the unemployment duration of their clientele - indicate that collaboration positively influences policy implementation in circumstances of high task complexity. It is argued that this is due to the relative increases in qualitative benefits from collaboration (Lundin, 2007a, pp.634, 643, 645). It should, however, be noted that the causal direction postulated in the above is somewhat contradicted. In another study of the same sample utilizing the same operationalization of collaboration, Lundin (2007b, pp.665, 669) finds that goal-congruence contingent on trust and resource interdependencies positively influence collaboration. Resource interdependency is here also operationalized with a variable pertaining to unemployment duration. One must, therefore, question whether collaboration engenders the implementation of complex policy or whether it is the reverse. Nonetheless, the moderating effects of mutual trust highlight the importance of organizational values.

Cultural-institutionalist inclined scholars have approached the subject matter by focusing on how the norms and values of labor market policy organizations shape collaboration. A cross-national comparative case study (Fuentes et al., 2021, p.104) of collaboration in employment services in the UK, Germany, and Sweden suggests that within-country variation results from discrepancies in how the actors attach values to service delivery. Hence, national governance frames *and* local institutional values are essential to understanding tensions in collaborative service delivery (ibid., p.105). Similar arguments in relation to the importance of local context are raised by cross-

municipal comparative research that shows how differences in perceived institutional boundaries and activation approaches cause variation in collaborative orientation in Swedish local labor policy (Jacobsson et al., 2017, pp.94, 97; Ulmestig & Panican, 2021, pp.156, 162). Additionally, expectations of reciprocity and past experiences influence collaborative climates (Jacobsson et al., 2017, p.98).

One study, approaching inter-organizational collaboration in welfare policy with a Foucauldian perspective, stands out from the above. Examining how the UK government and its voluntary sector have come to develop formal agreements on how their relationship should function, Morison (2000, p.119;125) argues that one can discern a governmental ambition seeking to increase dialogue between sectors to fold the operations of the voluntary organizations into its control through responsabilized autonomy. The agreements realign the voluntary sector - while simultaneously emphasizing the sector's independence – with the government's interests (ibid.). This brings us to literature based on critical Swedish labor market policy perspectives.

2.3 Critical Inquires in Policy

A vast amount of literature examines how unemployment is constructed and its implications in the Swedish context, leveraging critical theoretical perspectives. One strand of literature has engaged with constructions in labor market policy as a whole, whereas another has approached labor market policy focusing on categorical distinctions.

Studies examining the Swedish unemployment discourse conclude that unemployment has become constructed as an individualized circumstance. Through a genealogical approach, Davidsson (2015, p.388) exhibits that 21st-century discourse on benefit subsidies shares similarities with the discourse on poor laws and boards in the 19th century. The author postulates that discourse in both periods' attributes benefit recipience with negative connotations, such as inactivity, inadequacy in self-care, criminality, welfare abuse, and risk of intergenerational transmission of dependency. Government has, in both periods, approached the problem by increasing eligibility thresholds and the conditionality of recipience. Additionally, the government has sought to foster the work ethic through labor market policy and benefit levels (ibid., pp.360). The individualized character of unemployment is supported in a study

interviewing long-term unemployed individuals. Intrapersonal attributes of unemployed individuals are central to their construction, which is often centered around a perception of unemployment as a result of passivity; this results in various coping approaches, either rejection, distancing, or conformity (Hobbins, 2016, pp.49, 51).

Individualization of unemployment is also discursively constructed around ethnic dimensions. Several studies note that the clientele's ethnicity is central to their construction. Constructions with colonial legacy exaggerate the individualization of unemployment. Non-westerners' unemployment is often explained away by job counselors referencing their cultural background (Moulettes, 2021, pp.585, 588). The centrality of ethnicity is substantiated in a study examining project documents of collaborative labor market measures. It is argued that collaborative labor market projects leverage implicit assimilation agendas, as learning Swedishness is a common focal point (Vesterberg, 2015, p.311).

Furthermore, migrants are in labor market policy coerced to satisfy labor demand in care services and public employment to maintain the operations of the public sector as a cheap workforce (Mulinari, 2018, p.44). This is especially pertinent for foreign-born women and thus exacerbates labor market segmentation (Mulinari, 2018; Lill, 2020, p.273). As a result, they are subjected to activation measures leveraging justifying constructions of them being oppressed and work reluctant (Mulinari, 2018, p.42, 45). In an interview study adopting an intersectional approach to municipal activation, Parsland & Ulmestig (2022, pp.291) find support for the above: women are frequently referred to employment in the care services, and migrant women are singled out as problematic while also repressed.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

The underlying ambition of the above section was to provide the reader with context and situate this thesis in relation to existing research. While numerous critical perspective inquiries are devoted to examining how the clientele of labor market policy is constructed and its implications, one can note the disparity of such perspectives on collaboration in Swedish labor market policy. Arguably, the most relevant research has approached inter-organizational collaboration in Swedish labor market policy from a

structural or socio-cultural perspective. While these perspectives elucidate how institutional logic and values interplay in collaborative labor market policy implementation, they neglect to question the power structures of collaboration practices.

Existing accounts of institutional power relations in Swedish labor market policy have yielded conflicting narratives. Of note is that those inquiries have leveraged subject-focused conceptualizations of power. They have tried classifying actors as subjugated or in power based on preconceived yardsticks (see Ulmestig, 2007; Brauer, 2022b). As explained in the forthcoming chapter, such approaches attempt to petrify power relations, resulting in valid but reductionist accounts (Beronius, 1986, p.47). Seizing the opportunity created by the 2022 reform of the PES and its coincidental introduction of a new approach to collaboration, it is argued that one can address one foundational question that has yet to be addressed conclusively: *how* government accomplishes collaboration. It is in this niche that the novelty of this thesis resides.

3. Theoretical Framework

A strain of governance literature has turned to Foucault's work to analyze governance, namely his thoughts on governmentality. These frameworks of socio-political inquiry are commonly denoted as *analytics of government* (Dean, 2010; Rose, 1999) or as *studies in governmentality* (Gordon, 1991; Walters, 2012). This thesis develops its arguments and methodology based on this approach to studying governance. This approach is here denoted as analytics of government as it is deemed more suitable for reasons explained in Section 3.1.

Analytics of government is closely aligned with the methodological family of discourse analysis. In discourse analyses, there is an overlap between theoretical assumptions and methodological considerations (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.4). This chapter should, therefore, be read as the intellectual foundations that guide the methodological considerations

This chapter is structured as follows. First, Foucault's concept of governmentality is presented. This is followed by a foundational presentation of how power is conceptualized. The third section then presents the conceptual battery that has informed the analysis. The concluding section broaches the methodological section with a specification of how the concepts are understood in this thesis.

3.1 Governmentality

Foucault never settled on a specific usage of governmentality (Dean, 2010, p.28). Governmentality can be understood as referring to a historically distinct mode of governance. It can also be understood as a distinct conceptual concept and as an analysis strategy (Walters, 2012, p.38). However, one can argue that the constant between these conceptualizations is Foucault's (1991, pp.89, 91) definition of governmentality as an art of government, meaning a distinct way of thinking of the act of governing. It distinguishes itself from past forms of governance by its multiplicity and orientation. As the author explains, the state has lost its unity in the form of a

sovereign and is less concerned with governing territory; instead, it favors governing and fostering the population (Foucault, 1991, pp. 100, 103). Freedom from despots – liberalism - does not entail less governance.

Liberalism, in Foucault's terminology, does not refer to freedom from authority; instead, it refers to a mode of governance. Dean (1994, p. 189) explains liberalism as a political philosophy that rests on two principles: limited government and paradoxically government through freedom and choice of the governed. As Gordon (1991, p. 43) explains, liberalism entailed the reinvention of homo economicus as a manipulatable subject. Manipulatable subject in the sense that government presumed self-oriented calculating individuals responsive to their environment.

Environments can be modified. The field of possible action is shapeable through the deployment of frameworks of mechanisms not necessarily contingent on the presence of overt government nor impinging on the freedom of the individual (Dean, 2010, pp. 21). It is through this *modus operandi* that ever-free subjects are governed. This opens up critical inquiries that are argued to be suitable for understanding liberal society. This conceptualization of governance allows for critical reflection on governance by questioning what authority seeks to realize, with reference to how it identifies problems in relation to how it deploys technologies and techniques (Rose, 1999, p. 20).

The theoretical approach of this thesis denotes itself as analytics of government. This is to *not* overstate governmentality's role in the analysis, understood as governance through freedom. Governmentality influences this thesis in two ways but features explicitly to a lesser degree. First, the governmentality perspective draws attention to the fact that state retrenchment is not necessarily a zero-sum game regarding the transfer of power between actors (Sending & Neumann, 2006, p. 652), as explained below. Second, governmentality is understood here as an analysis strategy that focuses on the knowledge and techniques that underpin government activities, as Walters (2012, p. 38) explains, is one way of seeing it. In short, examining inter-organizational collaboration from this perspective allows one to posit how the relationship between the agencies comes to fruition and, by extension, how labor market policy is accomplished following the 2022 reforms of the PES.

For Foucault, no methodological discrepancy exists between the study of power at the macro-level, state governance, and the study of power at the micro-level, as addressed to individuals in specific contexts (Gordon, 1991, p.4). The following section is, therefore, a primer on Foucauldian conceptualizations of power and its related concepts.

3.2 Power, Knowledge, and Discourse

Foucault's theorization of power is essential to understand analytics of government. This section introduces how power should be understood and how it relates to knowledge, discourse, and government. In contrast to theories developed by traditional political sociology, Foucault abstained from operationalizing power as a set of universally attributable characteristics that one could set about classifying constellations of actors; one should instead focus on how these constellations are maintained and whether this could be conceived as power (Beronius, 1986, p.47). Foucault (1980, p.198; 2000, p.324) conceives power not as substance or property. Power is merely relational in that some can cause others to behave as they desire. Power exists only in practice. As Beronius (1986, p.22 [author's translation]) succinctly posits, "power *is* not, so one could summarize Foucault's thought, *power is exercised*." Power should thus be understood as an act, not a position or entity. Therefore, one should study how power is exercised.

Power, in a Foucauldian sense, is not necessarily repressive. Instead, it presupposes an intrinsically free subject to be aligned with its intents (Foucault, 1982, p.790). The individual - the subject - is understood in a dual sense as both subjected to others by structures of thought and subjected to themselves through reflexivity (ibid., p.781). Power is, therefore, productive because it produces distinct subjectivities for its ends (Foucault, 1991, p.170). Concretely, Foucault views power as working through humans' experience of social structures and norms and, in turn, humans' understanding of themselves.

Power is, therefore, closely related to knowledge and discourse. Knowledge is intimately bound to power because it makes objects intelligible and simultaneously makes the subject understand itself in relation to these objects. It therethrough makes the subject understand itself in desired ways and allows for power to be exerted onto

a substance (Mader, 2015, pp.227, 233). Discourse is, in turn, related to knowledge as it can be defined as the socially and historically contingent structure of thought that conditions what is said, how subjects perceive themselves, and the social world. These structures of thought manifest themselves in linguistic regularities (Nilsson, 2008, p.53).

A much-quoted maxim lost in the translation of the source, which links Foucault's theorization on power and the subject to the activities of the state, is the conceptualization of government as the conduct of conduct (Foucault, 1982, p.789). As Dean (2010, p.17) explains, *conduct* can, as a verb, be understood as the act of leading. As a noun, *conduct* also means behavior and actions. Lastly, when coupled with the reflexive pronoun *oneself*, it means considering the appropriateness of one's action. This way of conceptualizing government allows one to approach government in a dual sense.

This maxim establishes two things. It entails that to govern is to consider an action's appropriateness in guiding others' actions. It also implies that to act is to consider the appropriateness of an action in relation to established norms of conduct. Therefore, government sees this way as encompassing both the exercise of authority and the exercise of oneself (Dean, 2010, pp.17, 19). Exercise of oneself here means actions. This relates to the concept of problematizations of government, denoted as the time-specific events when government considers the appropriateness of its action (ibid., p.38). Understanding Swedish labor market policy from this perspective allows one to conceptualize the agencies as not merely exercising authority over the unemployed but also exercising authority over themselves. Hence, one can posit that their actions reflect conduct considered appropriate by themselves and reflect actions deemed appropriate in establishing desired conduct.

3.3 Analytical Concepts

As stated above, analytics of government approaches can be understood as analysis strategies that focus on the governance of and by states, exploring the conditions of the modern state (Walters, 2012, pp.12, 38). It examines *how* a particular way of organizing societal activities depends on and utilizes discursive formations. In addition, it ultimately examines *how* a specific regime achieves its objectives and

shapes subjectivities (Dean, 2010, p.31). Dean (2010, p.27) explains that this entails posing questions along three elements of government. These are the *episteme*, the *techne*, and the *ethos* of government².

To understand how these dimensions correlate and inform government analytics inquiries, we must understand Foucault's theorization of *rationality*, *technology*, *techniques* of power, and *subjectification*. The following sections will define these concepts. It should be acknowledged that the presentation and schematization are best understood as a rough adaptation of Foucault's reasoning for this thesis. The author's theorization is far too intricate to be presented comprehensively here.

3.3.1 The Episteme – Political Rationality

Leveraging Foucault's maxim presented above, Dean (2010, p.18) proposes that modern government can be conceived as a rational and calculated attempt to influence subjects' actions to achieve circumscribed objectives by shaping said subjects' aspirations, interests, and beliefs. To govern then is not just ordering; as noted by the author, the rational term in *rationality* implies the application of systematic thought to government. Governmentality, as the term suggests, entails mentality. Mentality is commonly denoted as rationality in English literature. This concept connects Foucault's conceptualization of discourse to government activities.

Rose and Miller (1992, p.178) define rationalities as regularities in political discourse that justify and formulate the idealized programs of government. Rationalities are constituted by conceptions of what is good, what is a problem, and how authorities should address it. In addition, they make use of language to mobilize action. These elements allow for a collective understanding of the tasks and objectives of authority. In other words, these elements form a coherent logic for government activity (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.179). Studying the rationality of government is to examine the patterns of discourse that make actions and practices of authority appear *rational*.

² Dean (2010, pp.40) later relates these elements to four analytical dimensions of inquiry. This thesis refrains from doing so explicitly, due to the interconnectedness of the intellectual foundations from which the author derives these dimensions. It is argued, perhaps too boldly, that Dean's (2010, pp.40) way of analytical schematization unnecessarily detracts from theoretical cohesion. Consider the almost oxymoronic nature of his statement "we are able to analyse these regimes of practices along four different, reciprocally conditioning, yet relatively autonomous dimensions" (Dean, 2010, p.41).

For instance, one could argue that the linkage of discursive elements such as unemployment, inactivity, and welfare-to-work policies constructs one common rationality in the contemporary welfare state. In this example, one can posit that a presumption of individual inactivity legitimizes active labor market measures. Inactivity is, in the example, conceived as a cause of unemployment. This presumption is a condition for welfare-to-work policies to appear as rational. In short, examining the thoughts – rationality - that underpin a given practice explains how a practice is legitimized, its conditions, and what it presupposes (Rose, 1999, p.24). For thought to realize its objectives, it needs to be materialized. The following subsection explores how rationalities translate themselves to practice.

3.3.2 The Techne – Technology and Techniques

Foucault (2000, p.34) defines the techne as practical rationality governed by a conscious goal. In other words, rationality materialized in purposeful regimes of practice. As Dean (2010, p.40) explains, regimes of practices denote the contingent ways society organizes its activities, such as care, education, poverty relief, etcetera. The analytical ambition in this dimension is to question rationalities' material conditions of possibility. More precisely, it is to question how thought is accomplished and how it mobilizes mechanisms for governance (Walters, 2012, p.61). The overarching concept of techne can be divided into two constitutive concepts: technologies and techniques of power.

Foucault frequently used the concepts of technology and techniques of power interchangeably; however, one can discern that technology referred to systems of coordinated techniques for attaining specific goals (Patton, 2015, p.504). Government engages in technological considerations when it delimitates techniques for the conduct of conduct, i.e., methods of regulating and directing behavior, such as training programs, or methods of control, such as systems of records-keeping (Dean, 1996, p.64; 2010, p.33, 42). Knowledge is central to the arrangement of practices, and some scholars strongly link these concepts. For instance, Nilsson (2008, p.81) states that technology refers to knowledge about a given technique. This thesis combines these understandings.

Technology of power is conceived as a *system of coordinated techniques by knowledge*, establishing causalities between practices and actions in the pursuit of particular goals. It is argued that if one examines how technology is constructed, one can, as Walters (2012, p.64) explains, discern how specific actions are promoted - promoted not necessarily by ideological persuasion but by the arrangement of circumstances.

Techniques of power refer to specific practices (Nilsson, 2008, p.81) that make a particular form of power possible, like economic administration, i.e. financial governance, made possible by accounting sheets, etc. (Dean, 1994, p.187). Techniques of power are deployed to work upon the governed substance; they are exercises that coerce the subject to align with the desires of power (Foucault, 1974, pp.129, 174). Techniques of power are inconspicuous and can assume both physical and conceptual forms (ibid., p.174). For instance, as Rose and Miller (1992, pp.187, 200) explain, urging someone to write something down and outline its contents urges the individual to contemplate certain aspects in relation to certain norms. The individual has therethrough become governable and self-governing irrespective of the individual's proximity to authority.

Techniques of power lend themselves to study through their mundane artifacts, such as notations and schematics (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.183). It is argued that examining how a technique of power has made the subject governable and self-governing is indicative of how a practice has worked upon the subject and relations of power. As Rose and Miller (1992, p.183) posit "a powerful actor [...] in the particular circumstances obtaining at a given moment, is able to successfully mobilise persons, procedures and artefacts in the pursuit of its goals". This mobilization ultimately brings us to the last dimension, ethos, based on Foucauldian understanding of ethics as the relation of self to itself and others (Huffner, 2015, p.444).

3.3.3 The Ethos – Subjectification

As outlined above, government delimits a political rationale to justify a regime of practices; it further depends on knowledge to invoke a motive and coordinate said systems of practice. This is ultimately translated to specific techniques that work upon the subject. As Dean (2010, p.43) explains, examining the above allows one to

establish how regimes of practices presuppose and reform identities. The third dimension, *the ethos*, examines which subjects regimes of practices aim to foster *and* which identities they presuppose.

Power is the alignment of subjects brought about by structures of actions upon actions. In other words, to exercise power is to guide the conduct of others through structuring the possible outcomes of subjects' actions (Foucault, 1982, pp.788). Power targets individuals as objects, forming them into tangible subjects to be shaped, and recruits them for its purposes through their self-understanding based on the power's truths (Foucault, 1991, p.194). This process is in Foucauldian terminology denoted as subjectification. This concept allows us, in conjunction with acknowledgment of power as an exercise, to understand how practices make subjects identify themselves (May, 2015, p.496;501). Subjectivity refers to the given self-identity of a subject; in other words, the identity an individual is made to experience themselves as (Foucault, 1982, pp.781). In analytics of government studies, two levels of analysis of the ethos can be of relevance and approached in the same manner.

Of interest to analytics of government are those targeted by the exercise of power and those who partake in its exercise (Dean, 2010, p.43). The former group can be exemplified as the unemployed. The latter of the groups, those who partake in the exercise of power, are the identities necessary for the operations of power, such as social workers. Rose and Miller (1992, p.188) explain that government presupposes a diverse cast of experts who link government and individual subjects. Experts facilitate the dissemination and practice of techniques of power by translating individuals' concerns into the vocabulary of power, imbuing them with the desired self-reflexivity, and therethrough conduct. The identities presupposed by the government, the experts, are nonetheless not autonomous to power; they need to be reined in for government to function (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.188;194).

Numerous studies postulate that citizens are made to identify themselves as active self-entrepreneurs by the deployment of particular rationalities, technologies, and techniques (see, e.g., Davidsson, 2015). One can similarly note how government shapes the identities of non-governmental actors in specific ways to facilitate network governance (see, e.g., Morison, 2000). It is argued for the purposes of this thesis that leveraging an appropriately angled understanding garnered by the episteme and

technique, allows one to posit what forms of identities government seeks to establish, hence how power is exercised and how it seeks to accomplish governance.

3.4 Application

The ambition of the above sections has been to provide an account of this thesis's theoretical foundation. As has been implied, the concepts constitute a framework that allows one to examine *how* government is conceptually conceived, *how* government is facilitated, and *how* government shapes subjects through actions upon actions. The following section of this chapter draws this framework together and provides an overview of how the concepts will be understood in this thesis.

Power is here understood as relational, meaning that neither the PES nor municipalities inhabit an ever-fixed relative position of power. Power is only practiced; thus, how power is exercised - in governance contexts, the conduct of conduct - is the object of inquiry. Table 3.1, below, provides the theoretical definitions of the main analytical concepts and outlines the analytical agenda that is supposed to be read in a downward progressive fashion.

Table 3.1 - Analytical Concepts & Agenda

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Analytical Agenda</i>
<i>Episteme</i>	Rationalities	Historically contingent structure of thought manifested in regularities in political discourse. Enables regimes of practices.	Examine how discourse conditions and justifies a regime of practices.
	Technologies	Systems of purposefully coordinated techniques. Assembled by knowledge and rationality.	Examine how knowledge ascribes a regime of practices with a purpose by establishing causality between phenomena.
<i>Techne</i>	Techniques	The specific practices that constitute a technology of power. Enable and condition exertion of power.	Examine how thought has materialized in a specific practice, specifically how it is geared at working upon the governed substance.
	Subjectification	The process through which the necessary and desired identities emerge. Connects practices to identities.	Theorize how a practice recruits and intends to reform subjects.
<i>Ethos</i>	Subject/Subjectivity	The governed and governing substance. Subject to others through reliance. Subject to one's self-knowledge.	Theorize how a subject is made to identify itself.

Source: Schematization is derived from the literature presented above

Government, in the forthcoming case, the conduct of labor market policy, is here understood as a calculated means of guiding subjects, the organizations and unemployed individuals, towards the attainment of circumscribed goals. *Political Rationality* is understood as regularities in political thought, justifying the pursuit of collaboration between municipalities and the PES. In other words, political discourse about collaboration. Collaboration, as a system of practices, is seen as a *technology of power*; it is conditioned by knowledge that coordinates and instills collaboration practices with a purpose and relates it to problems and objectives. Collaboration practices are seen as a *technique of government* conditioned by rationality and technology that shape and necessitate distinctive identities. The PES and municipalities, the organizational actors, are understood as *subjects* governing and governed. *Subjectification* is how the process, here techniques of collaboration, instills the *subject*, here the scales of the Swedish state, with an identity for them to relate themselves to.

While not inherently denying traditional conceptualizations of the state, analytics of government argue for and prioritize the study of these microphysics of government (Walters, 2012, p.51). In other words, how power is exercised over the population in its institutions and the actions therein. In doing so, one ultimately learns *how* power is exercised and, thus, how a relationship of power is constructed. It is important to stress that this theoretical framework does not attempt to explain *why* power is exercised in the presented manner. Readers interested in such inquiries are referred to rational choice-influenced studies (see, e.g., Lundin, 2007a;b). Neither does it try to portray how collaboration is practiced in reality or whether the presented collaboration corresponds to any best practice. Readers interested in such inquiries are referred to studies influenced by sociological institutionalism (see e.g., Ulmestig & Panican 2018;2021).

4. Research Procedures

This chapter presents the methodological considerations that underlie the analysis. It introduces and justifies this thesis's approach to research, then introduces the methodical and analytical approach. Subsequently, it presents the considerations of scientific quality and benefit. It concludes with a presentation of ethical considerations.

4.1 Research Approach

The following subsections present the considerations and justifications of this thesis's metatheoretical approach. They first delimitate the assumptions made based on philosophy of science and subsequently discuss the underlying logic of methodical considerations. This ambition is to provide the reader with a brief account of the scientific tradition from which this thesis develops its arguments.

4.1.2 Philosophical Assumptions

Ontological positions distinguish themselves by their position regarding the world's existence and how it interplays and relates to the human mind (Pernecky, 2017, p.23). Materialistic ontologies assert that an external world shapes one's understanding of reality. Immaterialist positions, on the other hand, argue for the reverse causality; mind-dependent perception shapes the social world. Lastly, solipsistic ontologies dispute that an external world exists outside of subjective cognition (Pernecky, 2017, pp. 24, 26). Ultimately, ascribing to one of these propositions yields an answer to which study object is of interest (della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.21).

This thesis aligns itself with an immaterialist ontology, namely social constructionism. This should not be conflated with a denial of the existence of a physical world. The physical world is, however, perceived as only accessible through the meaning it is ascribed by humans in social processes (Pernecky, 2017, pp.104, 105). As Pernecky (2017, p.161) reasons, the social world lacks an inherent essence; the rational

explanation is, therefore, that it is socially constructed. Following this argumentation, the most logical entity to study is thus the meaning of objects.

Epistemological positioning pertains to the attributes of knowledge, its limitations, and justifications (Pernecky, 2017, p.35; della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.22). Constructionism asserts that one can only have knowledge of ideas of objects. Knowledge is solely attainable by examining the meaning ascribed to objects through dynamic intersubjective processes (Pernecky, 2017, p.160). Given this focus, constructionists distinctly structure their research.

Pernecky (2017, pp.79, 161) explains that constructionism leverages a Kantian understanding of knowledge. Constructionist endeavors fuse rationalism and empiricism to address research questions because rationality is impeded in generating original ideas, and experience is impeded in ensuring the certainty of the idea. Together, they complement each other. (Pernecky, 2017, p.79). For the researcher, this entails arranging structures of shared meaning and rationalizing these structures (della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.22). Concretely, it involves the researcher developing logically sound claims of knowledge based on appropriate and sufficient empirical material on human meaning.

4.1.3 Methodological Considerations

Methodology, the logic guiding research strategies, precedes considerations of research methods and analytical claims (Pernecky, 2016, p.13). Oversimplification aside, one can heuristically conceive ontological and epistemological positions as divided into two methodological strains (della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.26). One can discern between positivistic and qualitative approaches.

Qualitative methodology emphasizes and acknowledges the central role of human meaning in shaping social reality. Anchored in immaterialist perceptions, The ambition is to generate a contextually in-depth account of the meaning humans attribute to phenomena in the social world. Human reasoning and behavioral justifications are hence the sources from which one derives explanations of the social world (della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.27). Conversely, positivist approaches, leveraging materialistic perceptions of the world, aim to postulate generalizable laws by disconnecting observations from context (Pernecky, 2016, p.56). Accounts of the social world are

hence derived externally from mass observations of relationships or patterns (della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.26).

In this thesis, the research questions do not seek to assess causal effects, so a positivistic approach is waived. A qualitative methodology is appropriate given that the research scope focuses on understanding how labor market policy is purposefully coordinated to accomplish government. Furthermore, based on this scope, one can discern the favorability of one qualitative methodology over others in the qualitative family.

The research questions do not examine experience or interpretations, typically the ambition of phenomenological and hermeneutic methodologies (Pernecky, 2017, p.9, 96, 99). Instead, the post-structuralist approach, which focuses on how power conditions the social world through discourse (Hekman, 2010, p.63), is considered most appropriate, given the research objectives. The ambition is to examine how contingent structures of power submit subjectivity to a particular social reality (ibid., pp.58, 62). Concretely, in the context of this thesis, this is accomplished by applying the analytics of government framework.

From the above, one can garner the outlines of the forthcoming research. Positioning this thesis ontologically, one concludes to study meanings attributed to phenomena. Positioning this thesis epistemologically, one can conclude that this should be accomplished by rational organization of empirical material. Opting for a qualitative approach, more precisely one anchored in post-structuralist theorization, one concludes that the study prioritizes a contextually anchored understanding of power. This is discussed in detail below.

4.2 Methodical Considerations

Methodological considerations forego methodical considerations. The choice of methods is still fraught with considerations of their suitability in addressing the research questions, analytical compatibility, and data availability and appropriateness (Mason, 2002, p.27). The following sections present these considerations and justify the selection of methods.

4.2.1 Sample Framework

Neumann (2003, p.51) quotes Foucault as suggesting that one should read and study everything. However, the former author contends that practicality makes such ambitions impossible. Instead, one should be able to confidently state that one has read sufficiently. Qualitative research commonly considers the empirical attributes of material due to the ambition of conducting contextually thorough examinations of the object in question (della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.29). Empirical selection based on such considerations is commonly denoted as purposive. Given this inquiry's qualitative nature, this approach has been employed in this context.

This thesis has utilized a sample framework best described as generic purposive sampling, that has combined a fixed and sequential approach to empirical inclusion. Bryman (2012, pp.418, 422) explains that a fixed sample approach entails formulating inclusion criteria before collecting empirical material. These are derived from the analytical objectives of the research. A sequential sampling approach involves an expansion of the sample as the research progresses (*ibid.*). Additional considerations were afforded to the accessibility of material, as Mason (2018, pp.57, 80) recommends. This has allowed the thesis to have a focused approach while accounting for the possibility of expanding or narrowing the sample if necessary.

The research objectives in section 1.2.1 and theoretical operationalization in section 3.4 have guided the formulations of the fixed sample criteria. Four criteria were established; Table 4.1 on the following page presents the criteria and how they relate to analytical dimensions.

Table 4.1 - Fixed Sample Criteria

<i>DIMENSIONS</i>	<i>SAMPLE CRITERIA</i>
Episteme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Material portrays political discourse on collaboration in Sweden. 2. Material details the justification for collaboration between PES and municipalities in labor market policy.
Techne	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Material relates to knowledge of how collaboration between PES and municipalities in labor market policy is to function. 4. Material portrays how the idealized government programs have been translated into practice.
Timeframe	01-01-2020 to 31-12-2023

The dimension ethos of government did not inform empirical selection. This dimension is addressed by rational reasoning based on the findings from its counterparts. As stated, additional material was included sequentially. Neumann (2003, p.49) explains that researchers must be attentive to how the content of studied material references other material. These reference points are denoted as monuments, central to organizing a discourse. While processing the material, two monuments were identified and included in the sample. These are presented in Section 4.2.1.1.

According to Neumann’s (2003, p.54) recommendations, attention was also paid to the sample's temporal demarcation. The author proposes that one can approach such delimitations pragmatically by choosing the time of an event as a reference point. Of particular interest are events demarking problematizations of government (Dean, 2010, p.38). This thesis has sourced material from the time range 01-01-2020 to 31-12-2023. It is argued that this is an appropriate demarcation because the PES received clear and specified instructions to enhance and develop collaboration with municipalities at the onset of 2022 (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet 2022; SOU 2023:7, p.47). The timeframe, therefore, allows for examining material leading up to and following these instructions.

4.2.1.1 Operationalization and Empirical Material

The first criterion resulted in the decision to source documents from the national government. Sourcing material from the national government is justified, as it is the

nexus of PES governance, as explained in section 1.3.1. This decision entails potential bias toward generating an understanding of the political rationale solely from the national state's perspective. The inaccessibility of municipal documents, however, justifies it. There is no central archive of municipal documents.

The second criterion resulted in the decision to source material containing deliberations on collaboration between municipalities and PES. Keyword searches in the national state's document repository accomplished this. The search equation: "kommun* Arbetsförmedling* samverkan" ~25 [Eng. "Municipal* Public Employment Service* Collaboration"] was used to retrieve documents from the digital archive of parliamentary documents. The tilde limits the results to documents containing the keywords within 25-word proximity of each other. This is considered an appropriate range because these words have to appear closely if one wants to address collaboration between the agencies of interest. This search equation retrieved 192 results for the time range 01-01-2020 to 31-12-2023. Qualitative assessment guided by the second inclusion criteria, whether the retrieved record pertained to labor market policy, further excluded a subset of documents.

Furthermore, state-commissioned inquiries were excluded from the sample. While Members of the Parliament (MP) can use the findings and suggestions of inquiries as justifications for government programs in political debate, it is argued that these contribute to the justification in as much as they are leveraged in political reasoning and discussion. Thus, the other records already account for the justifications presented there. Ultimately, this resulted in a sample of 108 documents presented in Appendix 2.

The third criterion resulted in the decision to source reports from DUA and the reports on collaboration retrieved from the state's repository. The commission has produced four documents reporting on its progress to bolster and adapt collaboration in conjunction with the PES reform in 2022. The documents portray how collaboration was thought to function, what it sought to address, what it intended to foster, and how. It is argued that these documents portray the knowledge about collaboration as a system of techniques. It was hence decided to include all of these documents for analysis purposes. These are presented in Appendix 3.

The fourth criterion resulted in the decision to include agreements on collaboration between the agencies. It is argued that the agreements portray how collaboration as a

government program was translated into practice. Their contents indicate how collaboration as a practice works upon the organizations by directing their operations in collaboration. When applying for the release of documents in January 2024, a period between 2022 and December 2023 was specified. It was furthermore specified that the release should include all attachments that pertained to the agreements.

This resulted in a total release of 466 documents. Of these, 24 documents were duplicates, general information pamphlets, or documents with statistical visualizations. In total, 262 out of the 290 Swedish municipalities were represented. Some of the localities have opted to stipulate collaboration in clusters of municipalities. An agreement can, therefore, pertain to one or more municipalities. Agreements pertaining to clusters of municipalities were not included more than once unless they had formulated locality-specific delimitations in the cluster's appendix. Ultimately, this resulted in a sample of 207 agreements; the sample and localities these pertain to are presented in Appendix 4.

This thesis has ultimately utilized 319 documents and records to address the scope. In conjunction with familiarization with the sample, it became apparent that two documents needed to be included. The documents garnered from the sample frame frequently referred to these sources, which suggests that they are discursive monuments. These sources were the coalition agreement *Januariavtalet (2019)* and the memorandum *Vissa lagförslag med anledning av en reformerad arbetsmarknadspolitisk verksamhet (Ds. 2021:27)*. These were used to contextualize findings and not analytically processed in the same manner as the remaining documents.

4.2.2 Analytical Approach

The discourse pertaining to collaboration between municipalities and the PES has been examined per Neumann's (2003, pp.56, 59) recommendations for discourse analysis. Attention was paid to how collaboration as a phenomenon is represented and how the representation was maintained and developed throughout the empirical material. A representation of a phenomenon, here collaboration, is defined as a configuration of linguistic elements that constitute the phenomenon (Neuman, 2003, p.34). In this thesis, linguistic elements are understood, borrowing from discourse-theoretic

conceptualizations, as descriptors, i.e., words and categories, that through their linkage to a linguistic moment, in this case, collaboration, give it meaning (Horwath, 2007, pp.27, 118).

To address the research questions and to ensure theoretical integration, the identification of representations was guided by analytical questions derived from the analytical dimension of episteme and techne. These are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 - Analytical Questions

<i>DIMENSIONS</i>	<i>DEFINITIONS</i>	<i>ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS</i>
Episteme	Historically contingent structure of thought manifested in regularities in political discourse. Enables regimes of practices.	1. How is collaboration as a phenomenon linked to other elements to enshrine it with meaning and thereby a justification in political discourse?
Techne	Systems of purposefully coordinated techniques, assembled by knowledge and rationality, that enable and condition the exertion of power through practice.	2. How does purported knowledge construct collaboration, as a system of techniques, to address circumstances and through which means? 3. How are the agreements on collaboration constructed to work upon their ratifying parties?
Ethos	The governed and governing substance. Subject to others through reliance. Subject to one's self-knowledge.	4. How does collaboration direct the actions of the agencies by delimitation of responsibility?

The first analytical question was posed to the parliamentary records, presented in Appendix 2. In Sweden, political debate can be elicited in various ways. Most commonly, an MP submits a written interpellation or question, which is then addressed by the concerned party either verbally or in writing. Retrieved written questions,

interpellations, and responses thereto were analyzed as one combined document to account for their textual context. The second and third analytical questions were posed when analyzing DUA's reports in Appendix 3. The fourth question was posed to the agreements on collaboration presented in Appendix 4. The formulation of the fourth question was derived sequentially based on the findings in the preceding dimensions. This is further argued in the analysis.

A conscious effort was afforded to abstain from bestowing the text segments with a meaning beyond the material when interpreting the material. Text segments were interpreted closely without ascribing them to an intent beyond the material, ideology, or hidden agenda. Foucault (1996, p.149) denounced such Freudian-inspired readings. The author maintained that statements of and by power, by their pedigree, do not need to obscure their intents. Instead, the material was understood intertextually, meaning that a given component of the discourse, in this case, textual statements, was understood in relation to its contextual counterparts (Neumann, 2003, pp.39, 54).

This thesis does not distinguish between document types for analytical purposes. Certain schools of discourse analysis, e.g., critical discourse analysis, afford great attention to the origin, purpose, and production of documents. Tracing document circumstances of conception and reception can be methodologically relevant for inquiries interested in researching the ideological effects of discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 63;68). However, this approach is forgone, given that this thesis does not seek to address research questions of an ideological nature.

4.2.3 Analytical Methods

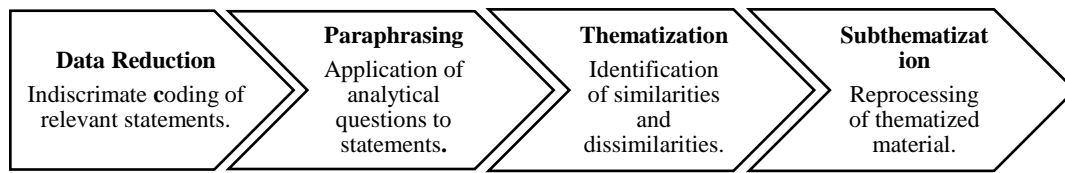
Neumann (2003, p.54) explains that fruitful discourse analyses should empirically demonstrate similarities and dissimilarities between representations of phenomena. As stated above, a discursive representation is a configuration of linguistic elements that constitute the phenomenon of interest (*ibid.*, p.34); the analytical scope is, therefore, qualitative. Furthermore, the empirical sample of this thesis is vast. Tight (2019, p.161) explains that qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a method that allows for systematic analysis of expansive qualitative material without sustaining the reductionist disadvantages of quantitative approaches. It is therefore argued that the method QCA is suitable.

Drisko and Maschi (2015, p.88) explain that the goal of QCA is to identify themes that summarize and identify content of central importance. The analytical method achieves this through an initial descriptive coding of text material. The coded material is then organized into main themes and reorganized into sub-categories to allow for detailed analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p.103). This approach was conducted in the software program MAXQDA to expedite the processing.

The sample was first reduced through indiscriminate tentative coding of relevant text segments using MAXQDA's code function. The second criterion presented in Table 4.1 determined the relevance of a particular text segment in a document. The retained text segments were subsequently annotated using the paraphrase function. The analytical questions presented in Section 4.2.2 guided the paraphrasing. Paraphrasing was utilized to screen the material through the theoretical framework and as a means of initial descriptive annotation, as explained above. The method allowed for succinct summarization of text segments while also being sensitive to their contexts. This also resulted in an overview of the material before further organization. Delimitations of responsibility in the agreements were not paraphrased, as these commonly were concise. After paraphrasing the text segments, the data was organized into main themes.

Themes are theoretical conceptualizations of the object of interest (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p.87). As outlined in Section 3.4, of interest are the various representations of collaboration as a legitimate government program., how collaboration as a system of techniques was organized, and how the agreements as techniques geared the agencies' undertakings in collaboration. The constant comparison approach established the main themes. This approach entails the identification of similarities and dissimilarities between analysis units and has the additional benefit of being easily leveraged (ibid., p.91). The units of analysis were here the paraphrased segments. After establishing the main themes, their contents were reread and reorganized in subthemes if deemed appropriate. This, or splitting as Ryan and Bernard (2003, p.95) denote, allows for fine-grained analysis. Figure 4.1 illustrates the analytical process.

Figure 4.1 - Analytical Process



Some documents are extensive and cover multiple subject areas, e.g., prop 2020/2021:1. Extensive documents were not entirely read. Instead, keyword searches on “samverkan” and “kommun” within the documents were employed to decrease the workload. The surrounding context was further read if a text segment was deemed relevant to the research question.

The results of this method are presented in narrative format. The narrative presentation intends to summarize identified themes, clarify how they were identified, and how they relate to the overall research question (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p.110). In conjunction with this, quotations are used as empirical evidence. The exemplifying quotations were chosen because they exhibit representative traits of the theme.

Additionally, this thesis made use of comparison tables for analytical purposes. MAXQDA allows for the construction of matrices that detail how the themes occurred throughout the sample. This allowed for examining how a given understanding had developed throughout the time frame under examination and how the various sources correspond. This is visualized in one instance. The unit of analysis utilized for the values is documents, meaning that occurring codes are counted once per document, irrespective of their frequency. Counting code frequencies in documents is less compatible with discourse analytical assumptions as the meaning of a phenomenon is arguably not contingent on the number of times it is uttered in the same context.

4.3 Assessment Criteria

This thesis has forgone the traditional assessment criteria validity and reliability in favor of the criteria’s trustworthiness and authenticity. When first outlining these criteria, Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp.290) grappled with how qualitatively inclined research should persuade its audiences that its claims are of interest. Bryman (2012, p.390) aptly summarizes the underlying reasoning upon which the former authors developed their arguments, which is why his explanation guides the following

sections. Trustworthiness is initially presented, followed by a concluding section on authenticity.

4.3.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an assessment benchmark consisting of criteria largely paralleling quantitative science criteria. These are, however, modified to align with the methodology of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p.390). Assessing the trustworthiness of knowledge claims requires audiences to consider whether the research methods employed and circumstances in their application are suitable for garnering credible results. In addressing the dependability of results, auditing ensures that the realized research complies with the purported methodical proceedings outlined by the researcher. An additional detail to assess is whether the descriptive quality of the analysis allows for transferability between contexts (ibid.).

The thesis has, therefore, been written to provide readers with sufficient insight into the considerations that underlie the postulated conclusions. In presenting the findings, conscious care has been devoted to sufficiently narrating contextual aspects to yield the reader grounds to evaluate whether the findings are transferable to contexts of their interest. Data material for audit purposes can be requested.

Another consideration is whether the conclusions are coherent based on the material and applied theoretical perspective and not unjustly influenced by personal values (Bryman, 2012, p.390). The latter part of this criterion is essential to discuss in the context of constructionist endeavors. As indicated in Section 4.1.2, social constructionism holds that research is never separable from the researcher (Pernecky, 2017, p.154). While a revolting notion to realists, for constructionists, who challenge the possibility of objective research (Burr, 2015, p.3), the acknowledgment thereof allows for continuous reflexivity in research hence also examining presupposed conceptions (Börjesson, 2003, p.185, 187), concretely when analyzing and presenting claims, conscious effort has been devoted to questioning how and why aspects of this thesis were pursued or claimed.

4.3.2 Authenticity

Authenticity as a benchmark for qualitative research pertains to the research's contribution to the studied communities and the common good of society (Bryman, 2012, p.393). Bryman (2012, p.393) explains that this benchmark can be summarized in the prescriptions that the research should include heterogeneous perspectives, facilitate understanding of the studied context, and enable and drive action. Scholars engaging in post-structuralist study of government activities disagree on the degree to which research should directly propose change.

Some authors argue that the analyst should propose reformative endeavors by outlining alternative policies based on the theorized effects of identified constructions (see e.g. Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, pp.24). Others contest such prescriptions, arguing that this implies raising above the same epistemological impossibilities that it denies other sciences (Dean, 1994, p.118).

This thesis ascribes to the latter of these positions. Analytics of government facilitates grounds for thinking differently based on how regimes of practices operate (Dean, 2010, p.49). The transformative value of this thesis resides in its contribution to enhancing reflective capabilities about how contemporary collaboration is structured in labor market policy. Hence, it enables action but does not attempt to delimit the field of possible actions.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

The Swedish Research Council (Sw. Vetenskapsrådet, 2002) has outlined four guidelines for the Swedish social sciences and humanities. These guidelines mandate seeking informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, attaining active consent, and appropriately using collected data. The research conducted in conjunction with this thesis has sought to adhere to these prescriptions. The following section aims to discuss the ethical considerations undertaken.

The principles of maintaining confidentiality and seeking active and informed consent are problematized in the context of the research undertaken. The analyzed material is publicly available documents authored by public officials regarding public governance. Parts of the scientific community have reasoned that the principle of

seeking active and informed consent can be loosened when utilizing public material and material on public officials (Israel, 2014, pp.95, 101). Nonetheless, one should still be wary of the ethical implications the research might entail.

The Swedish Research Council (2002, p.8) instructs that one considers the consequences of the research when using material garnered without the active participation of the study subjects. Using the material mentioned above in the context of this research can entail inconveniences for the individuals named in the material as it scrutinizes their work. While anonymization of quoted material reduces the chance of inconveniencing the individuals, it does not do away with it; as Israel (2014, p.109) informs, reverse searching quotations from public material is always possible. In resolving this dilemma, one can argue that acknowledgment of the trade-off between the public good and the good of the officials is appropriate.

As outlined in Section 1.2.1, this thesis aims to improve the understanding of one aspect of contemporary labor market policy. This ambition is arguably aligned with principles of transparency in public government. Anonymization does little to minimize identification possibilities and would influence readers' evaluation of claims. Hence, the ethical dilemma is tensioned between the public good and undue scrutiny of individuals. With the above in mind, it was decided to forgo the anonymization of quoted material. However, this does not imply that the material was processed without consideration.

To offset the ethical tension, thought was afforded to maintain intellectual integrity. Ensuring the just presentation of direct citations, being sensitive to their in-text context, and practicing good faith in claims-making minimize the risk of individuals incurring undue inconveniences. In addition to resolving the ethical dilemma, this ensures compliance with the integrity principle of research (Israel, 2014, p.147). Notably, as stated in Section 4.3.2, one can here reiterate that the exemplifying quotations are merely examples of the identified themes, not indicative of one specific actor's uniqueness.

5. Results & Analysis

The following chapter integrates the empirical results and theoretical analysis of the material. It opens with a brief account of the new collaboration guidelines and what they entail. The analysis subsequently commences and is structured as follows: The empirical and analytical results of the inquiry regarding the episteme dimension are presented. A similar analysis of the *Techné* is presented below. The chapter concludes with an analytical discussion of the *ethos* dimension.

All of the forthcoming analysis parts are structured in the same manner. A summative overview is presented, followed by sections presenting the characteristics of identified themes. The parts conclude with discussions of how they can be interpreted theoretically.

5.1 Instructions on Collaboration

In 2020, the national state extended the advisory committee DUA's tenure. The committee had previously been issued to bolster collaboration in labor market policy pertaining to youths and newly arrived immigrants. In a directive (Dir. 2020:95), the state acknowledged that the ongoing pandemic and upcoming reform might entail uncertainties in collaboration between municipalities and the PES. The directive commissioned DUA to keep itself informed and continuously adapt PES's operations to maintain collaboration (*ibid.*). This directive was further specified in subsequent years through the PES's letter of appropriation.

The national state issued DUA with more precise instructions for 2022 on further development and bolstering collaboration between PES and municipalities. The purpose was to ensure that individuals receive appropriate support irrespective of the responsible actor and to stimulate transitions from unemployment to adult education under municipal patronage (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022, p.7). The committee went on to specify a range of models in response to this directive.

DUA denoted the constitutive parts of their proposed system for collaboration as the collaboration, resource estimation, and prioritization model. The committee additionally published material intended to serve as guidance for collaboration within

the framework of the establishment program (Mellberg, 2023, p.10;15). As DUA proclaims (Mellberg, 2023, pp.14), these models were devised for specific purposes. Briefly devolving the model for collaboration agreements in greater detail is beneficial for understanding the forthcoming analysis.

As DUA explains, formal agreements on collaboration between the actors are conceived as the primary strategic instrument to foster long-term collaboration (SOU, 2023:7, p.51). DUA has previously introduced similar initiatives in 2015 and 2017 in response to directives from the national state (Dir. 2015:68, p.3; Dir. 2017:20, p.4). However, these efforts were limited to youth and newly arrived immigrants. In contrast to the agreements developed in 2015 and 2017, those proposed in 2022 are decoupled from predetermined target groups and policy spheres (SOU 2023:7, pp.55).

The new agreement model has a broadened scope in two regards. The committee stipulated that the agreements should specify collaboration regarding every individual needing support from the municipality and the PES to establish themselves in the labor market (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2022).³ This all-encompassing scope was purposefully devised to ensure applicability and sensitivity to variations in localities (Larsson et al., 2022a, p.13). The model for devising agreements also incorporates employers as a group for whom the agencies should expand their collaborative efforts (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2022).

The PES and municipalities are given freedom on content but are to follow a template and predetermined process in drafting the agreements (Larsson et al., 2022a, p.13). The template specifies that the agreements should consist of eight substantive parts: specification of parties, statement of purpose, delimitation of target groups, statement of objectives, as well as organizational, operative, evaluative, and time frame specifications (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2024). The contents of said elements should be based on mutual deliberations and jointly identified exigencies through local surveys (SOU, 2023:7, p.51).

³ The term individual should be understood as a catch-all, not specific individuals.

5.2 The Episteme of Collaboration

The following sections address the episteme dimension of collaboration. More precisely, they examine how the political rationale of collaboration is constructed. When reading the results, it is equally essential to pay attention to the quotations and the summarization of the context from which they were derived.

5.2.1 Overview of Episteme

Political rationale is defined as regularities in political discourse that imbue a government with an inherent logic (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.178). As stated in Section 4.2.2, in examining the political discourse on collaboration, attention was afforded to how statements in the documents linked collaboration as a phenomenon to other phenomena to ascribe it with meaning and purpose and, thus, legitimacy. Three main themes were identified in the 108 records examined for the period and dimension. These were qualitative services, operations, and presence. Six sub-themes constituted these themes. Table 5.1 illustrates how the main themes and sub-themes relate.

Table 5.1 - Episteme – Overview of Identified Themes

<i>MAIN THEMES</i>	<i>SUB-THEMES</i>
Qualitative Services	Appropriate Services
	Decreased Unemployment
Operations	Multiplicity
	Coverage
Presence	Presence/Collaboration
	Collaboration/Presence

5.2.2 Quality and Collaboration

Qualitative services was identified as a main theme due to frequently reoccurring statements that ascribed collaboration with an instrumental meaning of improving service output and quality. This theme is, in turn, constituted by two sub-themes: appropriate services and decreased unemployment.

Statements in the material frequently articulated collaboration with a justification through its linkage to *appropriate services*, constituting a sub-theme. This representation of collaboration is featured throughout the material in disparate

contexts, particularly when discussing groups of individuals deemed to have weak labor market affiliation. These statements attributed collaboration with meaning as a means to coordinate and provide appropriate services to resolve complexities and promote labor market integration of individuals deemed in need of additional support. The quotation below exemplifies how such statements were commonly constructed.

The assignment includes further developing forms of collaboration with the Employment Service, municipalities, and regions around the target group. The individuals who apply for activity compensation due to incapacity for work are young and often have, in addition to mental illness, some type of disability. This is thus a particularly vulnerable group in need of support from various authorities and actors [...]. (Skr. 2020/21:51, p.173-174)

Note that in this exemplifying quotation, collaboration is linked to vulnerable groups, equating it to a need to coordinate multiple actors. The statement articulates collaboration as a phenomenon that resolves the governance complexities of coordinating multiple actors and addresses the complexities of individual cases. This showcases how collaboration is understood as a solution to service complexities in labor market policy, in congruence with previous research (Minas, 2014, p.50).

A second recurring sub-theme in the representation of collaboration - *decreased unemployment* - was collaboration as a means to decrease unemployment. Statements in the material frequently linked collaboration to increasing employment or the individual's prerequisites to attaining employment. The following quote exemplifies how these statements were constructed in the material.

With strengthened capacity and a better collaboration with municipalities and the idea-driven sector, the Employment Service must ensure that more people move on to work and self-sufficiency. (Eva Nordmark [S], Svar på skriftlig fråga 2021/22:1215, p.2)

As the quotation exemplifies, collaboration as a government program is articulated with meaning and justification through its connection to the imperative of fostering employment and self-sufficiency. Previous research suggests that inter-organizational collaboration in the public sector has become commonplace to achieve shared organizational aspirations (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2007, p.1060). This rationalization

of collaboration makes it a pursuable government program from the PES and municipalities' perspective, as both strive to increase employment - albeit through disparate means and for disparate purposes (Ulmestig & Panican, 2018, p.476; Brauer 2022b, p.12). It further exemplifies how collaboration can be fielded to achieve employment impetuses. Minas (2014, p.52) has attributed these modes of collaboration to countries with work-first approaches to welfare, such as the UK. The above indicates, however, that this notion also figures in social democratic welfare regimes.

5.2.3 Operations and Collaboration

Although less frequent than its counterpart theme, *qualitative services*, one can discern a distinctive group of statements that articulate collaboration with a meaning less concerned with the quality of interventions. These statements have been thematized under the main theme of *operations*. Numerous statements linked collaboration as imperative to the functioning of labor market policy. They ascribed collaboration with operative attributes in labor market policy regarding providing interventions and competencies. This theme is, in turn, composed of two sub-themes: multiplicity and coverage.

The sub-theme *multiplicity* encompasses statements that articulate collaboration with meaning and justification through its linkage to the availability of diverse interventions. These statements are featured in contexts of contestation about PES's ability to cater to individuals in need of more support than those offered through private actor procurement and in discussions about municipalities' role in labor market policy. The quotations below exemplify how such a representation of collaboration was commonly constructed.

There must continue to be a wide range of labor market policy initiatives and it is the responsibility of the Employment Service that they are available, through procurement, cooperation, agreements or by carrying them out under its own auspices. (Prop. 2021/22:1, utg. omr. 14, p.42)

The employment service must strive to take advantage of the qualities that a diversity of performers can bring to labor market policy activities. It is stated in the Employment Service's instructions that the agency must cooperate with municipalities. (Johan Pehrson [L], Prot. 2023/24:28, p.11)

Note that collaboration in the above statements is equated with access to labor market interventions and municipalities' competencies. The first quotation, derived from the budgetary proposition for the year 2022 (prop. 2021/2022:1, utg. omr. 14), expresses an articulation that many subsequent statements almost verbatim echoed in various documents and contexts. The national state's primacy in labor market policy is maintained by asserting the PES's responsibility of delivering services. However, this responsibility is not solely hinged on their capacity to do so directly. Collaboration is given meaning as instrumental in facilitating an array of available interventions. This corresponds to previous research that has argued that collaboration can be conceived through negotiated access to the counterpart's resources (Ulmestig & Panican, 2018, p.481). Aside from justifying collaboration as a means to increase the range of interventions, collaboration is made rational to increase labor market policy's reach.

The sub-theme *coverage* comprises statements that articulate collaboration with meaning and justification through the linkage of collaboration to spatiality and service capacity. These statements are commonly present in discussions on the marketization of labor market policy following the 2022 reform and, similarly as above, in contexts of discussing the PES's position in labor market policy. The quotation below exemplifies how such a justification of collaboration was constructed.

We must have an active state labor market policy throughout the country. Regardless of where in the country you live, you should be able to quickly get help and support to get a job. An important prerequisite for this is that cooperation between employment agencies, municipalities and employers works in each municipality. (Serkan Köse [S], Prot. 2023/24:29, p.20)

Note that collaboration in the statement is made equivalent to the ability to provide support throughout the country. It acknowledges that labor market policy needs to function regardless of locality. To facilitate this collaboration is given an imperative role in ensuring that this ambition is achieved. Other statements commonly equate collaboration with impact (Sw. *genomslag*) of labor market policy at the local level. An initial hesitance arose when assigning these statements to a theme. This was resolved by referencing how the sign *impact* was first used in labor market policy.

To the best of available knowledge, impact was first employed in a committee directive (Dir. 2014:157, p.4) that tasked DUA to bolster municipalities' and the PES

collaboration around the target group youths. The objective, as stated in the directive, was to, through collaboration, induce municipalities to utilize subsidized employment schemes in their work with youths and ensure that more youths were participating in interventions, such as internships. It is argued that collaboration is here equated with disseminating labor policy through municipalities. Previous research supports the claims above. Lundin's (2007a, p.667) findings that collaboration influences policy implementation supports the interpretation that collaboration is also made rational by understanding it to ensure the reach of labor market policy. These ways of understanding collaboration are related to the last theme identified in the material.

5.2.4 Presence and Collaboration

Lastly, a main theme, denoted as *Presence*, was identified in the material. This theme is the least present throughout the documents. However, it is argued that it is an essential element in constituting the political rationality of collaboration. This theme is comprised of statements linking collaboration and the presence of the PESs in localities. One can discern two subthemes: presence/collaboration and collaboration/presence. As will become evident, it is argued that this representation of collaboration is bidirectional.

Presence/collaboration denotes statements that articulate presence with collaboration with causality in the direction of collaboration. This means they presume that a PES presence in localities is a condition for collaboration with municipalities. These statements are often featured in discussions of the PES's ability to govern and equivalently support individuals in labor market policy. The quotation below exemplifies how these statements were commonly constructed.

The presence is a prerequisite for the maintenance of appropriate employer contacts and cooperation with the municipalities. We therefore believe that the government should ensure that the Employment Service is given the conditions to have a good physical presence throughout the country.
(Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande, 2022/23:AU9, p.64)

The statement establishes that the PES's presence is vital to maintaining collaboration. It explicitly denotes presence as a requirement for collaboration with municipalities. Similar sentiments are echoed in numerous other documents, as shown in the following

section. The societal context could explain why PES presence in localities was recurrently discussed during the examined period. Brauer (2022a, p.147) notes that the reduction of PES offices was an aspect of the PES reformation. A severe budget cut to the PES's administrative grant in 2019 resulted in staff and office retrenchment. In 2021, increased funds and targeted instructions from the national state resulted in re-establishing presence by reopening some offices and other means of presence (Lindgren et al. 2022, p.10;15). This simultaneously explains why some statements are articulated in the other direction.

Collaboration/presence denotes the second sub-theme identified in the main theme. These statements articulate collaboration with a causal direction toward presence. This means, in contrast to the above, that collaboration begets presence. These statements are likewise featured in discussions of the PES's legitimacy and equivalence of services. They are, however, less common than their counterparts. The quotations below exemplify how such a representation of collaboration was commonly constructed.

The employment service must have an appropriate local presence. The presence can take place under own auspices, through service offices or through collaboration with the municipalities. (Johan Pehrson [L], Svar på Skriftlig fråga 2023/24:185, p.1)

We have said that you must have a presence in all municipalities—either in the government service offices in the municipalities' locales or, and this is in a sense new, by reopening the offices. (Martin Ådahl [C], Prot. 2019/20:69, p.47)

One can discern the aforementioned direction of articulation in these statements. The first statement attributes collaboration as a possible solution to maintaining PES presence. It is argued that the second statement indicates what collaboration for presence perhaps entails in practice. Collaboration is manifested by municipalities providing PES access to their offices. In the national state's letter of appropriation for 2022 to the PES, the state commissioned an inquiry into how the agency had worked to improve local presence (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022, p.3). The inquiry reported that the organization had increased its local presence compared to previous

years. Notably, 48 percent of what the inquiry counts as physical presence is achieved through collaborative solutions (Lindgren et al. 2022, p.15).

5.2.5 Comprehending the Rationality

It is important to note that these themes are not mutually exclusive. Neumann (2003, p.158) explains that a representation can be considered hegemonic when it is uncontested. The material indicated no contestation between these themes; the presented understandings were not contrasted with each other in a conflicting manner. The themes should, therefore, be understood as consensual constitutive parts of the discursive representation of collaboration as an idealized government program.

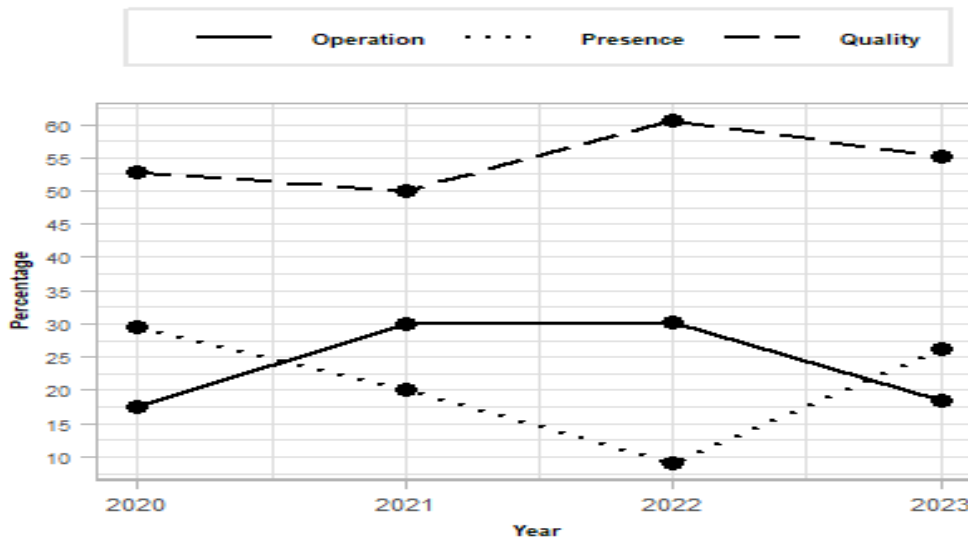
As suggested by the multiple identified themes, collaboration has been linked to several phenomena to be rationally pursuable. As the conduct of conduct, government presupposes an action is deemed appropriate (Dean, 2010, p.19). From the perspective of those governing, an action has to be perceived as just. As regularities in political discourse, political rationality forms a comprehensible logic and justification for government activity. They are based on ethical elements and conceptions of what is bad or good and muster corresponding responses (Rose & Miller, 1992, pp.178). It is therefore argued that differences in how one emphasizes a particular discursive representation of a phenomenon allow for a specific action and mobilization of resources to appear as appropriate.

In the above presentation of themes, one can discern that collaboration has been rationalized as a solution to three ethically undesired circumstances for the period. One can perceive each main theme as an answer to a problematization of government, i.e., the question: How do we best govern given the circumstances? Problematizations of government have a specific time and place (Dean, 2010, p.38). In our case, the latter is the Swedish national state, the former being the temporally perceived circumstances that need addressing.

The in-text context from which these themes emerged indicates that government was preoccupied with three circumstances during the studied time frame; How to ensure that individuals with weak labor market affiliation receive appropriate support. How to ensure that labor policy is implemented, and a range of interventions are available, even though PES realigns its service delivery through market mechanisms. In addition,

how to ensure an equivalent presence throughout the country despite administrative cutbacks. Figure 5.1 illustrates how the material's themes have changed over the examined years.

Figure 5.1 - Distribution of Representations over Time



The percentage of documents containing identified representations per year is calculated by counting the frequency of occurrence at the document level. This means code occurrence is counted only once per document, irrespective of its frequency in the documents.

It is argued that collaboration in its various iterations was a perceived solution to the circumstances above. Even though each theme is represented throughout the examined period, one can discern differences in the emphasis of the political rationality ascribed to collaboration. Unsurprisingly, the representation of collaboration as something that improves service quality is persistent throughout the examined period. However, collaboration as a solution to maintaining presence received the most attention in 2020. Remember that the PES had undergone administrative cutbacks one year prior.

The representation of collaboration as operatively instrumental is most emphasized in 2021 and 2022. These years correspond to the full-scale realignment of PES operations towards providing services through private actors (see Ds. 2021:27). Therefore, it is argued that government considerations of how to bolster collaboration between municipalities and the PES were made rational by a higher emphatic leverage of collaboration as a means to ensure that services were available and utilized throughout the country. In the following sections, we shall examine how these thoughts of government were translated into practice.

5.3 The Techne of Collaboration

The following addresses the techne of collaboration. The aim is to investigate how the government translated its idealized schemata on collaboration into practice, as presented in the above sections. It presents the analytical results derived from DUA’s reports on its undertakings. The analysis of techne of collaboration consists of two parts. The first focuses on how DUA constructed its proposed contemporary system of collaboration. The second part focuses on how the committee devised the conceptual underpinning of the collaboration agreements.

5.3.1 Overview of Technology

Technology of power is defined as a system of techniques coordinated and imbued with purpose through knowledge for shaping conduct (Dean, 1996, p.64; Patton, 2015, p.504). As stated in Section 5.1, DUA devised several models in the approach that they developed in 2022. The following examines the conceptual thought underpinning DUA’s undertakings rather than the specifics of the tools developed—in other words, the committee’s reasoning behind their proposed collaboration techniques. As stated in Sections 3.2.2 and 4.2.2, attention was paid to how causalities were established between states understood as problematic and desirable in examining collaboration as a technology.

Two main themes were identified in the four documents analyzed for this dimension, which were related to four sub-themes. Table 5.2 illustrates how the main themes and sub-themes relate.

Table 5.1 - Techne – Technology - Overview of Identified Themes

<i>CONCEPT</i>	<i>MAIN-THEMES</i>	<i>SUB-THEMES</i>
Technology	Antecedents	Reform Actors
	Interventive Reasoning	Uniformity Consensus

5.3.2 Antecedents of Collaboration

Antecedents serve here as a main theme to encompass statements that identify labor market policy characteristics made intelligible by DUA as circumstances that needed to be accounted for in achieving bolstered collaboration. It is argued that this indicates how knowledge made certain aspects of labor market policy intelligible. In other words, situations that knowledge - more concretely, DUA in its capacity of advisory expert committee - identified as needing addressing by assembling a system of techniques to accomplish its delegated objective. This theme is, in turn, constituted by two sub-themes: reform and actors.

Statements in the material frequently identified the then-ongoing reform as complicating collaboration between the PES and municipalities. These statements were thematized under the sub-theme *reform*. The reformation of PES, more precisely, the reduction of PES offices in localities and the agency's realignment in favor of digital means of communication, was attributed as complicating collaboration between PES and municipalities. In addition, several statements include the PES's change towards providing services through private actors as complicating collaboration. The latter is often attributed to uncertainties regarding when PES could depart from public procurement frameworks and how the private actor should be included in collaboration. The quotations below exemplify how the reform was linked to collaboration as an impediment.

Timewise, in connection with the reduction in the number of local offices, [...] The government's steering towards increased volumes in services that were offered by independent providers, as well as the Employment Agency's interpretation of the legal situation when it came to efforts alongside these, is deemed to have contributed to uncertainty within the Employment Agency regarding the possibilities of collaborating with the municipalities regarding individuals (SOU, 2023:7, p.64)

The quote above aptly summarizes many of the circumstantial concerns DUA saw as negatively influencing the conditions for collaboration at the start of their commission. At the same time, the procurement of services through independent actors was a key component of how the national state had envisioned the operations of the reformed

labor market policy (Januariavtalet, 2019, p.4, Ds. 2021:27, p.27). Champion and Bonoli (2011, p.328) hypothesize that perceived fragmentation of welfare state services, emphasis on activation, and high unemployment rates induce efforts to foster coordination. This corresponds to the antecedents DUA identified as impinging on collaboration. In addition, the reform occurred under increasing unemployment rates due to the pandemic (SCB, 2021, pp.2, 10, 13) and introduced new actors in labor market policy while the PES retrenched its local presence.

One can argue that labor market policy was fragmented even before the reform, as the PES and municipalities had come to cleave the clientele between themselves (Salonen, 2000, p.171; Ulmestig, 2007, p.223; Johansson & Hvinden, 2007, p.341). DUA likewise considered the organizations' relationship and inherent incentives to engage in labor market policy as factors complicating collaboration. The sub-theme *actors* is comprised of statements that detail problems related to the interplay between the PES and municipalities, as identified by DUA. The quotation below exemplifies statements that comprise this sub-theme.

For Dua [sic], there has been another challenge in relation to the municipalities. [...]. Municipal autonomy is a given condition. [...] In the beginning of Dua's [sic] work, in this perspective, it was not a matter of course for some municipalities to bind themselves to cooperate with the Employment Agency in precisely the way and in the respects that Dua [sic], in accordance with its directives, worked for. (SOU, 2023:7, p.31)

It is worth noting that the material characterized both agencies as unruly. The Committee decried the PES for previously not prioritizing collaboration with municipalities in their daily operations. It is, however, worth acknowledging that DUA granted that the agency had improved in this aspect after being instructed by the national state to bolster collaboration (see, e.g., Mellberg, 2023, p.22). On the other hand, DUA decried that some municipalities, due to their self-determination in labor market policy, were uninterested in devoting resources to strengthening collaboration with the PES, as is evident above.

Previous literature similarly acknowledges how contention of interest might complicate collaboration. Municipalities and the PES have competing logic and priorities in local labor market policy (Ulmestig & Panican 2018;2021; Brauer, 2022b,

p.9). Municipalities strive to legitimize their operations to their local constituency through decreased expenditure on social assistance. PES, on the other hand, has a national and employer perspective, the latter through its objective of fostering the availability of a competent labor force (Ulmestig & Panican, 2021, p.153. Resolving this contention and bringing municipalities into the fold was one of the circumstances that was accounted for in arranging a system and techniques for collaboration.

5.3.3 Interventions in Collaboration

Interventive Reasoning serves here as a main theme encompassing statements expressing how bolstered collaboration should be accomplished. In other words, the effects DUA sought to introduce by their proposed model for collaboration. This theme is, in turn, constituted by two sub-themes: uniformity and consensus.

Although less frequently explicitly expressed than its thematic counterpart, a notion that arguably underpins DUA's reasoning throughout the material is that addressing the national states' directives entails fostering uniformity in collaboration. These were organized in the sub-theme *uniformity*. These statements often feature in contexts summing DUA's endeavors. The quotation below exemplifies how this reasoning was frequently constructed.

An important conclusion that was drawn in conjunction with appropriation letter assignment 16 for 2021 was that there is a need for national uniformity in collaboration processes. This is so that the Employment Service can meet the needs of all customers who require support and efforts from several social actors (Mellberg, 2023, p.2)

The statement expresses an explicit causality. For context, one can note that assignment number 16 in the appropriation letter refers to the directive of bolstering collaboration (Arbetsmarknadsdepartamentet, 2021, p.11). Note that national uniformity in the statements is attributed with meaning as a phenomenon that allows the PES to cater to clients needing support and coordinated efforts from multiple actors. It is further argued that one can discern the relationship between the episteme and techne of government here.

In addition to justifying a technology of power, political rationality conditions it, prescribing its application and possibilities (Rose, 1999, p.24). In section 5.2.2, it was shown that political rationality leveraged discursive representations of collaboration as a means to address case and governance complexities. In the quotation above, one can discern how this representation was transposed to the coordination of systems for collaboration. Similarly, other statements in this subtheme utilized other political representations of collaboration. The quotation below exemplifies how the discursive representation of collaboration as a way of ensuring equivalent services, as shown in section 5.2.3, was incorporated into the reasoning of DUA.

Since 2021, the Employment Service has strived towards more general and nationally uniform collaboration processes, with the aim of achieving equivalent service for customers throughout the country. With the authority's regulation letter for budget year 2022, this has continued to be a priority in 2022 (Mellberg, 2023, p.1)

The above quote portrays that DUA reasoned that the accomplishment of its state mandates was to be accomplished through uniformity. A related reasoning that underpins the models DUA conceived as bolstering collaboration was thematized as the subtheme *consensus*. Statements identified as indicative of this subtheme frequently occur in contexts introducing and delimitating how the models that DUA developed bolstered collaboration. It is argued that a central element in how the models were to accomplish their intended purpose was establishing a mutual understanding of operations and transparency between the parties in collaboration. The quotation below exemplifies how this was frequently expressed.

Collaboration is only a means, and not an end in itself, but in order to achieve the goal with the help of collaboration, collaborating parties must see the (own and client) benefit of collaborating. By first creating an understanding of each other's overall mission and organization, it is possible to find common denominators in the missions or understanding of how one's own operations are part of the whole. (Larsson et al., 2022a, p.15)

It is argued that the quotation indicates one causality of central importance in how DUA organized a system of collaboration techniques in response to the national state's

directives. In the quotation, mutual understanding is explicitly understood as a causal prerequisite for bolstered collaboration. The construction of mutual understanding as a prerequisite for collaboration should not be interpreted as a novel invention by DUA. Previous research has long acknowledged that perceived precocity (Jacobsson et al., 2017, p.98) levels of trust and mutual priorities between collaborating agencies positively affect collaboration (Lundin, 2007b, p.669). Aside from leveraging consensus as a phenomenon that induces increased collaboration, the quotation attributes mutual understanding with an additional beneficial effect.

In the quote above, DUA posits that understanding each other's missions also causes the respective agency to understand its operations and responsibilities. Although the quotation is one of the few instances where this causality is explicated, it is arguably nonetheless indicative of a central reasoning in how the techniques developed by DUA are thought to function as a system.

5.3.4 Comprehending the System

The above sections presented how DUA conceptually approached the mandate to bolster collaboration. In coordinating a system of techniques, DUA grappled with aspects identified by scholars, ascribing to the Foucault school of thought, as central to modern governance. One can notice how the committee, through its proposed technology of collaboration, sought to establish what Rose (1999, pp.9, 14) denotes as modes of governing at a distance. The author argue that modern government needs to utilize mechanisms that shape social conduct without impinging on the formal autonomy of subjects due to the intricacies of contemporary governance (ibid.). The above shows how many of the same challenges were considered in addressing collaboration between the PES and municipalities.

The intricacy of Swedish labor market policy was one aspect of consideration. One can note that one of the aspects the material highlights is the changes in PES operations as envisioned by the national state. The committee illuminated that the changed conditions the reform of the PES entailed warranted a rethinking of collaboration between scales of government. One can argue that the realignment of PES operations introduced new independencies in labor market policy. New service delivery modes entailed coordinating a more complex set of actors, be it contracted third parties or

municipalities. Thus, the government necessitated a new technology for the conduct of labor market policy in relation to municipalities.

The independence of the constituency was another aspect of consideration. The technology proposed by DUA afforded great attention to the autonomy of the actors, especially municipalities. Again, modern government is formally caveated with respect to subjects' freedom (Rose, 1999, p.14). Liberal government presumes, partly, government through freedom of choice (Dean, 1994, p.189). Although legal frameworks circumscribe Swedish municipalities to some extent, they enjoy relative autonomy in relation to the national state, especially in labor market policy. In conceiving a system of techniques for bolstering collaboration, the committee highlighted autonomy as a circumstance that must be accounted for.

One can discern two overarching causalities DUA sought to leverage in their proposed collaboration system. Underpinning these models were notions that uniform collaboration between localities results in equivalent service delivery throughout the country. A second essential notion in conceptually developing techniques for bolstering collaboration was consensus. One can here discern how DUA leveraged an almost Foucauldian understanding of knowledge in shaping the agencies' actions

Knowledge is intimately bound to power as it makes the world intelligible and simultaneously coerces the subject to understand itself in a specific way (Mader, 2015, pp.227, 233). Mutual understanding is theorized by DUA as beneficial as it makes each actor understand their counterpart's role in labor market policy. In addition, the committee argued that it makes each actor simultaneously understand their own operations. This reflexive understanding of one's role in labor market policy entails a devotion to it. Having established how the committee established causalities between phenomena, one can posit the conceptual purpose of the technology. As a technology of power, DUA's proposed approach sought to bolster collaboration complicated by the reform's new conditions and the autonomy of actors through their willing alignment.

5.3.5 Overview of Technique

The following sections discuss one of the techniques developed by DUA, the collaboration model, hereinafter collaboration agreements. Examining how DUA

constructed the collaboration agreements by stipulating their contents through guidance material and reports establishes how they are supposed to work on the subject. As stated in sections 3.2.2 and 4.2.2, attention was afforded to how collaboration agreements were conceived as working upon the parties and what they were thought to accomplish.

This approach resulted in the identification of themes presented in Table 5.3. One main theme was initially identified. This theme is comprised of statements on collaboration agreements. Subsequently, this theme was found to be comprised of two sub-themes, detailing how the agreements are intended to shape collaboration. The following section presents these themes.

Table 5.3 - Techne - Technique - Overview of Identified Themes

<i>CONCEPT</i>	<i>MAIN-THEMES</i>	<i>SUB-THEMES</i>
Technique	Agreements	The Governed Process The Governed Responsibility

5.3.6 Shaping of Collaboration

The technique of power is defined as a specific means of working on the subject (Nilsson, 2008, p.81). It is argued that the subjects relevant to the research questions are the municipalities and the PES. For analysis purposes, text segments pertaining to collaboration agreements in DUA's reports were thematized in one main theme, *agreements*. From this collection of text segments, two themes emerged: the governed process and the governed responsibility.

The template for collaboration agreements does not specify in detail what the agreements should contain (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2024). In Section 5.3.4, it was established that the relative autonomy of municipalities was one circumstance that should be considered in bolstering collaboration. As argued above, statements in the material frequently allude to this autonomy as something that should be respected and, at times, as something that posed obstacles for the committee to accomplish its

directive. One can note how DUA approached this dilemma in devising the collaboration agreements.

In the committee's progress reports, DUA devoted significant effort to constructing the suggested draft process of the agreements to yield agreements on collaboration corresponding to the government's needs. These statements were thematized under the sub-theme of *the governed process*. The quotation below exemplifies how one of these considerations was constructed.

A local and regional mandate in the design itself also ensures that the agreements are appropriate and adapted to the client's needs, which is a prerequisite for being able to provide an equivalent service. The basic purpose of the collaboration model is thus to balance strengthened uniformity with room for adaptation. The focus is on the frames. (Larsson et al. 2022a, p.13)

In the quotation, one can note how DUA explicitly devised the framework for formulating agreements as a trade-off between the local actor's freedom and uniformity. One can further note how agreements as techniques are conditioned by political rationality and knowledge. In the quotation, agreements are a technique unambiguously linked with uniformity, as was one of the causalities DUA sought to leverage in coordinating the system of techniques geared at bolstering collaboration, as argued in Section 5.3.3. It further leverages one of the elements of political rationality, described in Section 5.2.3, collaboration, to ensure equivalent services. The quotation shows that the parties were given authorial freedom to stipulate the agreements as long as they were ascribed to the framework developed by DUA.

Other statements describing the drafting process indicate the committee's editorial oversight of the agreement's contents. For context, in 2015, DUA was bestowed with the possibility of allocating municipalities a state grant to accomplish the committee's state directives (Dir. 2015:68, p.1). This possibility was utilized throughout the committee's tenure. In 2022, the committee could grant a municipality 100,000 SEK to draft an agreement with PES (SOU, 2023, p.58). DUA acknowledges that this possibility was beneficial in both incentivizing municipalities and coercing the contents of agreements to its aspirations. The quotation below showcases this consideration.

The state grants have primarily been a means of stimulation and to create some financial space for the municipalities to prioritize the development of cooperation structures in relation to the Employment Service (cf. chapter 6). But they have also meant an opportunity for Dua [sic] to actually make relatively specific demands on municipalities that applied for and received state grants regarding the goals for, focus on and content of the collaboration with the Employment Agency (SOU, 2023:7, p.31)

The agreements and subsequent collaborative practice are hence conditioned from the onset. Morison (2000, pp.128, 129) similarly argues that this was the case in the development agreements between the national state and NGOs in the UK. The author reasons that the guidelines fielded in the UK, while simultaneously boasting the autonomy of the third sector, in practice entailed realigning the organizations to suit the government's interests by implementing best practice frameworks.

In the empirical material, one can also discern that DUA strived to make agreements accomplish their intended purpose, as issued by the state (Dir. 2020:95; Arbetsmarknadsdepartamentet, 2022, p.7) by having them focus on the subjects in question. One frequently occurring sentiment regarding how the agreements should function as tools was the notion that they should detail the parties' duties. These statements comprise the second sub-theme, *the governed responsibility*. It is argued that this sub-theme explicitly divulges how the agreements are to work upon the subject in practice through their contents. The quotation below exemplifies one of these instances.

The purpose of written agreements is to create clarity at a strategic level and a long-term sustainability in cooperation based on the prevailing local conditions. Establishing local agreements is also about clarifying the division of responsibilities and drawing boundaries based on the competence of the actors in order to create the best possible social benefit (DUA Slutredovisning, 2022, p.4).

Delamination of the parties' responsibility is the central component of the agreement. The quotation expounds that the agreements accomplish the task of bolstering collaboration through the demarcation of responsibility. In DUA's reports, delimitation of responsibility – or, as sometimes put, clarification of expectations – is the most

frequently raised argument when discussing how the contents of agreements benefit collaboration. Based on the themes discussed above; one can draw insights from the analytics of the government framework. The following section does so more explicitly.

5.3.7 Comprehending the Practice

The above shows that DUA committed itself to constructing a specific drafting process to shape the agreements according to particular desires. It further shows that a central element of the agreements was the delimitation of responsibility. Below, we will see how one can relate these considerations to the analytics of government framework.

Of central concern was establishing an appropriate degree of uniformity between localities through a nationally prescribed process of drafting frameworks. Spatial organization, whether through physical or conceptual means, allows the properties of the governed substance to be categorized and characterized. It enables power to harness and organize the subject to its liking (Foucault, 1974, p.175). One could argue that the framework propagated by the guidelines for drafting agreements accomplishes a spatial organization of localities through uniformity.

Uniformity highlights irregularities by nature. Having each locality draft agreements in the same manner facilitates cross-sectional comparisons between the subjects themselves and those governing, in this case, the national state through DUA. It also allows for adjustments to be made when deemed necessary. The committee acknowledges this property explicitly in the quotation below.

The agreements are also a way for the employment services to internally manage and follow up the cooperation. The employment services will be able to follow a minimum level in collaborative work based on the collaborative model. (Larsson et al., 2022a, p.13)

In short, uniformity allows power to be exerted on the subject. As argued in section 5.3.2, the committee's reports frequently reference municipal autonomy and their freedom in choosing whether and how to collaborate with the PES. Against this backdrop, it is interesting to note how the drafting process for collaboration agreements was purposefully constructed to align the subjects in desired ways.

The committee implicitly reasons that the state grant was essential to subverting and guiding autonomous actors. One could hence argue that the drafting process devised by DUA rests on an inherent duality. As indicated by the reasoning presented under the governed process, the agreements allow the actors to stipulate collaboration how they see fit based on the given local circumstances. However, the process sets a specific framework and incentives in place to structure the possible actions of the subjects. Hence, it gears intrinsically free subjects to align itself in a predetermined manner.

Lastly, one can note that delimitations of responsibilities were central to the functioning of the agreements as techniques. Municipalities' formal responsibility in *general* labor market policy is limited, as no statutory mandates prescribe it. As DUA does explicitly (see, e.g., Larsson et al., 2022a, p.15; Larsson et al., 2022b, p.6), one could argue that specifying each actor's responsibility is setting expectations. Collaboration between municipalities and the PES could be perceived as local-specific negotiations of local labor market policy (Ulmestig & Panican, 2021, pp.159, 162). The agreements formalize these negotiations and set the expectations against which the subject should evaluate itself. Thus, it shapes the subject's actions.

This relates to a notion proposed by the Foucauldian school of thought. The contents and manner in which something is written down exert power over a subject, as it establishes how the subject should evaluate itself and, thus, how it should conduct itself (Rose & Miller, 1992, pp.187, 200). One can discern that the committee leveraged this notion in fielding collaboration agreements in response to the instruction to bolster collaboration. The above argued that DUA devised a specific process to stipulate the agreements that subverted the actors' desires and strived to shape actions by formalizing responsibilities. In other words, the agreements' drafting process and contents were devised as a subjectification measure. This ultimately brings us to how the agreements made the actors identify and understand each other and themselves. This is the topic of the forthcoming sections.

5.4 The Ethos in Collaboration

The following sections address the ethos dimension established by the collaboration agreements. They aim to examine how the parties to the agreements come to understand themselves and each other.

5.4.1 Overview of Ethos

In Foucauldian terminology, subjectivity is the identity a subject is made to experience themselves (Foucault, 1982, pp.781). The ambition is to examine which subjectivities a practice—here collaboration agreements—presupposes and promotes (Dean, 2010, p.43). As argued in section 5.3.7, DUA conceptualized the agreements to manage and fixate the parties' responsibilities for local labor market policy in part through the prescribed drafting process and DUA's editorial capabilities.

Government necessitates certain identities for it to function; these need to be fostered similarly to the governed population (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.188). Hence, it is argued that how the ratifying parties delimitate their responsibilities indicates the identities the government sought to promote through the new collaboration model. The way this was accomplished differed between localities. Some chose to present the parties' responsibilities in tables or other means of systematization, whereas others opted for specifications in running text.

There are three main themes in the 207 agreements analyzed for this dimension: Diffuse Responsibility, the PES's responsibility, and Municipal Responsibility. These themes are, in turn, related to four subthemes. Table 5.4 illustrates how the main themes and subthemes relate.

Table 5.4 - Ethos - Overview of Identified Themes

MAIN THEMES	SUB-THEMES
The Diffuse	NA
	NA
The PES's	Administrative
	Staffing
The Municipality's	Interpersonal
	Supplementary

5.4.2 The Diffuse Responsibility

The Diffuse is a main theme comprised of statements that share a commonality in expressing a shared responsibility between the municipality and the PES. As shown in section 5.2.6, agreements were intended to clarify each party's obligations. However, many statements frequently refer to shared responsibilities.

The agreements frequently feature statements proclaiming the parties' responsibility to commit to collaboration in local labor market policy. These statements are commonly pledges to collectively devote efforts to forums and routines for collaboration and efficient use of organizational resources. The quotations below exemplify how these statements were conveyed.

That we take responsibility for our joint assignments and processes by actively participating in the governance, management and follow-up of the collaboration (Tidaholm & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2022, p.9)

- Strive for our respective resources to be used effectively based on the respective organization's conditions and mission with both individuals' and employers' needs and expectations at the center. (Arvidsjur & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2023, p.3)

Collaboration is, in itself, a matter of responsibility. In both quotations, one can note how collaboration, in general, is something that both organizations should take responsibility for. One can note how collaboration agreements are not purely a means of demarcating boundaries but also a means of eliciting commitment to collaboration. Jacobsson et al. (2017, pp.97) note that localities differ in how they use collaboration forums. The authors found that some localities employ collaboration to elicit resources guarding their respective boundaries, whereas others field it to implement collaborative measures otherwise unfeasible. Provisions on mutual commitment to collaboration can be perceived as an effort to evoke a baseline of collaborative orientation.

5.4.3 The PES's Responsibility

The PES's is a main theme comprised of statements pertaining to the PES's responsibility in collaboration with the municipalities. As mentioned in Section 5.1, the agreements' delimitation of responsibility was a substantive element. How it was approached differed between localities; some chose schematization, while others opted for in-text delimitations. It is argued that one can broadly discern two sub-themes regarding the PES's responsibility: administrative and staffing.

The sub-theme *administrative* pertains to PES's responsibility to administer and approve referrals to labor market policy measures for individuals. The administration of subsidized employment and referrals to vocational training or integration measures were frequently reoccurring policy measures referenced in this regard. The quoted bullet list below aptly summarizes how the responsibilities of the PES were commonly devolved.

The role of the employment services

- Inform about opportunities for employment subsidies, labor market policy initiatives, and labor market training.
- Match relevant candidates against available places within the labor market unit [4] and follow-up progression/joint planning for the individual
- Collaborate around individuals, training initiatives, and matching.
- Prepare individuals for labor market interventions.
- Assess education obligation [5] in a special document that the individual brings to the municipality/adult education
- Follow up on education efforts for job seekers who are covered by Education obligation within the Establishment Program [6] and SFI

⁴ (Sw. Arbetsmarknadsnadsenhetet). Arbetsmarknadsnadsenhet is a common denotation for the municipalities' local labor offices.

⁵ (Sw. Utbildningsplikt). Utbildningsplikt is a labor market program for newly arrived immigrants with short educational backgrounds who are unlikely to attain employment within the timeframe of the Establishment program (SFS 2017:820). Municipalities are responsible for providing the educational content (SFS: 2010:800).

⁶ (Sw. Etableringsprogrammet). Etableringsprogrammet is a labor market program for newly arrived immigrants (SFS 2010:197).

[Swedish for Immigrants] level for job seekers who have an ongoing SFI study. (Pajala & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2022, p.3)

The bullet list corresponds to the PES statutory obligations. In Sweden, the PES is the only agency with legal discretion to administer wage subsidies (SFS 2018:43). The responsibility to support individuals through labor market measures and to engage in matchmaking between unemployed individuals and employers similarly follows from ordinance applicable to the agency (SFS 2022:811). Out of interest in this specific agreement is that PES here accomplishes this through the municipality's local labor office. The PES is equally responsible for the labor market integration of newly arrived immigrants (SFS 2017:584). One can, therefore, argue that many of the responsibilities of the PES devolved at the local level in the agreements are derived from national statutes.

However, some responsibilities' delimitations pertain to local circumstances. These demarcations share a commonality in that they pertain to the presence of the PES in the given locality. These were thematized in the sub-theme *staffing*. Per the agreements, this was typically resolved through the appointment of contact case managers or having PES case managers visit municipalities on predetermined dates. This is exemplified in the below.

In practice, this means that the employment representative is available at the Kalmar municipality's labor market unit half a day a week to attend to the cases that are relevant for cooperation, in addition to other cooperation that is required. (Kalmar & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2023, p.3)

This corresponds to one of the main apprehensions raised with the PES reform. In sections 5.1.5 and 5.2.2, it was argued that one of the questions and concerns that preoccupied the government and DUA in conjunction with the then-ongoing reform of the PES was how the reduction of PES offices would affect collaboration. Municipalities raised similar concerns and argued for corrective measures to reestablish and clearly define how the PES should be represented throughout the country (SKR, 2020, p.5; 2021, p.6). One could argue that including these provisions in the agreements could be interpreted as an attempt to appease such demands and elicit presence.

5.4.4 The Municipality's Responsibility

The main theme *the municipality's* comprises statements about municipalities' responsibility in collaboration with the PES. One has to remember that municipal labor market policy engagement differs due to disparities in their economic situation (Brauer, 2021, p.17; Johansson, 2022, p.425) and differences in their ideological approach to activation (Johansson, 2001, p.172; Fuertes et al., 2021, p.104). One can presume that this similarly influences how the municipalities delimit their responsibilities in the agreements on labor market collaboration. In contrast to the PES's standardized way of delimiting responsibility, there appears to be a more significant variation in the services and responsibilities municipalities assume.

The agreements differ in the extent to which the municipalities offer services and the degree to which responsibilities are specified. Some agreements contain lengthy deliberations concerning the municipal responsibility in local labor policy, whereas others are brief. A few agreements can be interpreted as renouncing any responsibility for collaboration in local labor policy. However, one can discern one commonality in how the municipalities assume a role in local labor policy when they delimit their responsibilities.

Municipalities' responsibility commonly pertains to delivering and administering services of a particular attribute. Statements concerning municipalities regularly reference the responsibility of providing services of interpersonal character; these were assigned to the sub-theme *interpersonal*. The quoted bullet list below aptly summarizes how the municipalities' responsibilities were commonly devolved.

Pajala Municipality's role:

- Clarify the role as an employer.
- Prepare individuals for labor market interventions through motivational and expectation-clarifying interpersonal interviews.
- Collaborate around individuals, training efforts, and matching.
- Provide places for citizens to develop. (Pajala & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2023, p.3)

Note that Pajala municipality's contribution to collaboration is facilitating interventions that engender development and motivation. The list overlaps with how PES delimited its responsibilities in the previous section, section 5.4.3. The bullet

list above is derived from the same agreement as the bullet list presented in section 5.4.3, the PES's responsibilities. However, it differs in two ways, aside from the differences that follow from legislation.

Note that "preparing individuals for labor market interventions" (Pajala & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2023, p.3) is the responsibility of both actors. However, the municipality's duty in this regard is coupled with motivational measures and clarification of expectations. What this entails in practice is unspecified; however, it can be indicative of the greater workfare emphasis municipal measures are characterized by, according to previous research (Salonen, 2000, p.172; Thorén, 2008, p.149; Minas, 2011, p.210). Another difference is the municipality's responsibility to facilitate the development of citizens. It suggests that Pajala and other municipalities assuming similar responsibilities are given - and, per the agreements, expected to have - a local labor market policy responsibility. This brings us to the second sub-theme, *supplementary*.

A reoccurring notion regarding municipalities' responsibility was the duty they assumed in charting or activating individuals in a complementary fashion to the services offered by the PES. The quotation below exemplifies that municipalities assume significant responsibility for providing labor market measures on behalf of the PES.

The employment services refer clients to Hallstahammar municipality when the needs of the individual cannot be met by the employment services procured services, in cases where it is possible decisions on job training are used for this. The municipality of Hallstahammar is responsible for surveying clients (three months) and inventorying whether municipal efforts can meet the client's needs. (Hallstahammar & Arbetsförmedlingen, 2023, p.6)

The quotation above illustrates how the municipality is responsible for enhancing the capabilities of individuals – through job training - otherwise not catered to by the PES. For context, in the specific agreement from which this quotation is derived, the PES assumes a passive role, featuring as an actor who refers individuals to municipal interventions or screens clients. It is argued that this showcases how municipalities assume a supplementary role in relation to the PES for cases whose needs cannot be

satisfied by the PES services. Previous research has long suggested that PES is incentivized to engage in cream-skimming, primarily catering to unemployed labor market insiders (Salonen, 2000, p.171; Ulmestig, 2007, p.223; Johansson & Hvinden, 2007, p.341; Thegerström & Ulmestig, 2021, p.27). Lastly, one can theorize which subjectivities are promoted by the agreements as a technique of power based on the above sections.

5.4.5 Comprehending the Identities

It is essential to acknowledge one characteristic of the agreements. The legal enforceability of the responsibilities delimited therein is dubious. One has to remember that Swedish legislation explicitly proclaims that the PES is principally responsible for labor market policy (SFS 2022:811). However, the enforceability of the agreements is from a Foucauldian perspective of lesser relevance, as the absence of overt means of subjugation does not equate with the lack of subjection (Dean, 1994, p.189; 2010, pp.21).

One could argue that the agreements' enforcement stems from a subtler means of control. Subjectivity refers to the identity a subject is made to experience itself as (Foucault, 1982, pp.781). Delimitation of responsibility promotes subjectivities that assume liability for the specified conduct or object. Irrespective of legal sanctions, municipalities and the PES are made to understand themselves as either responsible or irresponsible based on how their actions correspond to responsibilities devolved in the agreements. Attributing responsibilities or, as writing does, explicating them is an efficient way of structuring how a subject evaluates itself and, thus, how it should conduct itself (Rose & Miller, 1992, pp.187, 200). Based on how the agreements delimited responsibilities, one can argue that the collaboration agreements promote subjectivities that shape the actors in distinct ways.

Collaboration is bolstered through mutual commitment. Based on the diffuse responsibility section, one can reason that the agreements gear both municipalities and the PES to collaborate. In other words, they promote subjectivities bound to collaboration. Establishing this subjectivity accomplishes one of the tasks the national state issued to DUA, namely, to bolster collaboration (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2022, p.7). The agreements additionally shape how collaboration is practiced.

DUA sought to ingrain uniformity in collaboration across localities, as shown in section 5.3.3. It is here argued that the agreements exhibit only minor differences in how the PES assumes responsibility between localities. The PES assumes an identity that closely corresponds to the agency's nationally mandated obligations, mainly accountable for administrative referrals and labor market measures applications. Another identity the PES assumes in the agreements is one of local presence.

It should, however, be noted that the committee also sought to imbue the agreements with adaptability to local circumstances (Larsson et al., 2022a, p.13). One could argue that this was mainly achieved through how the municipalities were made to identify themselves. The responsibilities municipalities assumed exhibited more variation than their collaborative counterparts. Nonetheless, providing complementary services was one commonality in how municipalities delimited their responsibilities when they did so. Municipalities are made to identify themselves as complements in labor market policy.

Therefore, one can argue that the agreements promote subjectivities presupposed by the political rationality of collaboration. In section 5.2.5, it was argued that representations of collaboration justified collaboration as a means to increase service quality, improve the availability of interventions, and ensure local presence. The subjectivities identified above correspond to the political rationality of collaboration.

6. Discussion

The reformation of the Swedish PES has caused commentators to question the national state's position in labor market policy. The sections above have attempted to contribute to this discussion. The following chapter ties these contributions together by summarizing the analytical conclusions and addressing the research questions. This is followed by a discussion of methodological limitations and the implications of the findings.

6.1 Summative Discussion

Foucault argues that there is no discrepancy between the study of power over individuals in a particular context and the power wielded by government over a population (Gordon, 1991, p.4). This thesis has leveraged this reasoning to examine power in the relationship between municipalities and the PES following the latter's reformation. It was argued, given that power in Foucauldian theory is not a property or assumable position (Beronius, 1986, p.24), that one should address this scope by scrutinizing how power is exercised.

The above examines how a specific regime of practices achieves government's objectives by conditioning practice and shaping subjectivities. It has entailed a qualitative content analysis examination of collaboration as a regime of practice between the Swedish government's scales along three dimensions pertaining to four research questions. The answers ultimately allow one to derive how relations of power are characterized through its exercise. The following does so explicitly.

How is the contemporary political rationality of collaboration between the Swedish PES and municipalities constructed?

In examining the episteme of collaboration in labor market policy, it was found that collaboration was legitimized as a pursuable program by six discursive representations. In political debate, collaboration was recurrently attributed to the justification of increasing service quality, ensuring satisfaction, and promoting labor market integration. Collaboration was further attributed to an operational purpose of providing the delivery and availability of a range of labor market measures. Lastly, collaboration was represented as both conditioned by the local presence of PES offices and a prerequisite for the same presence.

It was shown that the emphasis on collaboration's discursive representations differed over the examined period. The variation in emphasis was argued to coincide with the government's temporally specific concerns. Notably, collaboration as a means of ensuring the operational functioning of labor market policy increased in saliency in 2021 and 2022.

How is contemporary collaboration between the Swedish PES and municipalities constructed as a system of techniques of power?

In examining how DUA envisioned collaboration in practice, attention was paid to how the committee established causes and effects in response to its instructions to bolster and safeguard collaboration. It was shown that the committee approached the task of preserving and bolstering collaboration by acknowledging that the PES's reform entailed changed conditions for collaboration, as it reduced the PES's local presence and introduced new modes of operations that entailed independencies in labor market policy.

In response to these perceived antecedents impinging on collaboration, DUA constructed a system that would accomplish its delegated task by introducing two effects through its proposed collaboration model. The committee argued that introducing uniformity would benefit service delivery throughout the country. It was argued that this exemplified how political rationality conditions practices. Secondly, it was noted that establishing consensus between the collaborating parties was a central concern of the committee, as DUA sought to leverage the actors' understanding of each other and themselves to bolster collaboration.

How are standardized agreements on collaboration, proposed by DUA, constructed to function as a technique of power?

In examining how DUA sought to shape collaboration through standardized agreements, attention was paid to how the committee devised the agreements to work upon the actors. It was argued that DUA purposefully coupled agreements with a specific drafting process to ensure uniformity and subversion of autonomy. This facilitates governance as it allows for cross-sectional comparison and incentivizes the

alignment of subjects in a predetermined manner. In addition, it was found that delimitations of responsibilities were conceived as central to how the agreements should function as a technique of power. It was argued that demarcations of responsibilities shape how the actors conduct themselves as it sets clear standards for them to evaluate themselves and each other.

How are the PES and Swedish municipalities subjectified by the standardized agreements on collaboration proposed by DUA?

In examining how the agreements make the parties identify themselves, attention was paid to commonalities in how the actors delimited responsibilities. It was argued that the agreements elicited mutual commitments to collaboration through pledges to devote resources to safeguard collaboration. One can reason that including these charges accomplishes the directive the national state issued DUA: safeguard and bolster collaboration. It ensures that both parties of the agreements are devoted to collaboration.

Aside from shared mutual commitments to collaboration, the actors assumed diversified local labor market policy responsibilities. Regarding the subjectivity assumed by the PES, it was argued that the agency assumed a uniform identity throughout localities, mainly corresponding to its nationally mandated obligations. This manifested itself primarily in administrative responsibilities. On the other hand, municipalities exhibited significant differences in the duties they ascribed to. However, when municipalities assumed responsibilities, they commonly entailed providing interpersonal and complementary labor market services. Given the PES's standardized approach to assuming responsibility, it was argued that adaptation to local circumstances was mainly accomplished by municipal efforts.

6.1.1 The Conduct of Constellations

Having traversed how contemporary collaboration is conceptualized from thought to practice, one can address this thesis's scope. Previous research (c.f. Ulmestig, 2007, pp.141, 213; Brauer 2022b, p.13) has yielded inconclusive answers to the question of who is in power. This thesis does not address this question decisively. Instead, it has,

as Beronius (1986, p.47) argues is a more appropriate approach to power as opposed to trying to identify who is in power, examined how constellations of actors are maintained and whether this could be conceived as power.

The exercise of power allows one, at a given point in time, to mobilize others for one own desire (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.183). In the above, one can note that collaboration in political discourse, in part, is concerned with ensuring the equivalence of services and the functioning of labor market policy following the reform. Recruiting municipalities for these ends justifies the modes of collaboration proposed by DUA. However, the mobilization of municipalities to this end is coupled with the risk of them refusing engagement, given their autonomy in matters of labor market policy. From the above, one can garner how a standardized model for inter-organizational collaboration mobilizes and binds the municipalities to subjectivities as local labor market policy actors.

Thus, the new approach to collaboration allows for the governance of collaborative constellations. This is achieved not through legislative means but rather through delimitations of responsibilities. The contents thereof might be unspecified, but the standardized approach and process thereto exert power over the subjects in predetermined ways. The national state has reformed labor market policy in conjunction with new modes of service delivery through the market. It has adapted how it exerts the power of collaborative constellations in the public sector. This by attempting to align municipalities with its desires - in other words, to identify themselves as responsible for labor market policy. Collaboration through DUA's proposed approach is a mode of governance of collaborative constellations.

6.2 Concluding Discussion

This thesis derives its methodological approach from social constructionism. This influences how the findings should be interpreted and how one should evaluate the claims. Constructionist knowledge does not claim to provide the reader with an objective account of the reality of generalizable character. Instead, it offers readers ways of conceptualizing reality from a given logic (Howarth, 2007, p.147). This thesis makes no claim to provide accounts of objective or generalizable character.

One should, however, not conflate the above with an abandonment of intellectual integrity. As addressed in Section 4.3.1, the epistemological assumption of social constructions contends the feasibility of objective research (Burr, 2015, p.3). In addressing the research questions, the answers have been scrutinized to ensure their footing in the material and rationality. Nonetheless, the proposed knowledge claims are based on a given way of structuring the material, not separable from its author. There are undoubtedly many other ways of understanding and organizing the material. Whether social constructionist conclusions hold merit is ultimately a question for the scientific community to assess (Howarth, 2007, p.150; della Porta & Keating, 2012, p.24). It is, therefore, worth addressing concerns relevant to such assessments.

Forgoing a case-study design has consequences for the quality of claims, especially those relating to the ethos of collaboration. One must remember that local labor market policy differs significantly between localities (e.g., Brauer, 2021, pp.12; Johansson, 2022, p.425). This limits the adaption of contextual sensitivity in presenting claims on the subjectivities of the actors. However, it is argued that rigorous case selection, beyond convenience justifications, is impossible. When sampling rigorously, one must be mindful of what it represents (Mason, 2018, pp.57, 80). Having no prior insight into the subjectivities of collaborative labor market policy, it would be hard to justify the inclusion of one locality over another theoretically.

The findings have implications for further research. Having identified the common subjectivities of the actors in collaboration, one can amend this thesis's limitations and further examine how power constitutes the relationship between the organizations. Foucault (1982, p.780) notes that instances of resistance are fruitful elements in examining power relations. As indicated in section 5.4.4, some municipalities could be interpreted as renouncing any engagement in collaboration with the PES. Fielding a comparative case study, with a sample of municipalities interpreted as resisting coercion and municipalities closely aligning with identities as labor market policy actors, can shed additional light on the relationship between municipalities and the PES.

Furthermore, the findings have implications for the practice of collaboration and labor market policy. Foucault (1983, p.231) denounced attributions of his scholarly work providing any solutions or alternatives to the relations of power he observed. As the

author argues, that was not his point. The value of his work derives from the activism that a critical understanding of the phenomenon in question spurs (Foucault, 1983, p.232). As argued in Section 4.3.2, the practical implications of this thesis stem from its contribution to allowing for reflexivity in practice.

7. Bibliography

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8. Appendices

Appendix Nr. 1 – Literature Review

Search Terms

Keywords (Eng)	Keywords (Swe)	Synonyms (Eng)	Synonyms (Swe)
Collaboration	Samarbete	Co-ordination	Samverkan
Municipality	Kommun	-	
Public Employment Service	Arbetsförmedlingen	-	-
Labor Market Policy	Arbetsmarknadspolitik	-	-
Activation	Aktivering	Active Labor market measure	Aktiveringspolitik
Unemployment	Arbetslöshet	-	-
Unemployed	Arbetslösa	-	-
Discourse	Diskurs	-	-
Power	Makt	-	-
Governmentality	-	-	-
Sweden	Sverige	-	-

Example Search-equations:

“Labor market policy” AND power AND Sweden

Collaboration AND “Public Employment Services” AND Municipalities

Appendix Nr. 2 – Empirical Material - Episteme

Document System	Responses
Documents	
Arbetsmarknadsutskottets yttrande 2020/21 - AU 1y	
RFR 2019/20:RFR4	
RFR 2021/22:RFR7	
prop. 2020/21:55	
prop. 2021/22:1 - Utgiftområde:13	
prop. 2021/22:1 - Utgiftområde:14	
prop. 2021/22:51	
prop. 2021/22:123	
prop. 2021/22:216	
prop. 2023/24:1 - Utgiftsområde: 14	
skr. 2020/21:105	
mot. 2022/23:2052	
mot. 2020/21:3170	
mot.2021/22:919	
mot. 2021/22:2612	
mot.2021/22:3278	
mot.2021/22:3725	
mot.2021/22:3848	
mot.2021/22:3965	
mot.2021/22:4432	
mot.2021/22:4687	
mot.2022/23:852	
mot.2022/23:1299	
mot.2022/23:1672	
mot.2022/23:1729	
mot.2022/23:2032	
mot.2023/24:76	
mot.2023/24:245	
mot.2023/24:1537	
mot.2023/24:1938	
mot.2023/24:2385	
mot.2023/24:2464	
mot.2023/24:2620	
Svar på fråga 2020/21:1565	
Svar på fråga 2020/21:2622	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2019/20:957	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2019/20:1081	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2019/20:1503	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2020/21:538	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2020/21:1270	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2020/21:2454	
Svar på skriftlig fråga 2021/22:664	

	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2021/22:723	
	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2021/22:1215	
	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2022/23:514	
	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2023/24:134	
	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2023/24:185	
	Skriftlig fråga 2021/22:656	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2021/22:656
	Skriftlig fråga 2023/24:277	Svar på skriftlig fråga 2023/24:277
	prot.2019/20:69	
	prot.2020/21:42	
	prot.2020/21:55	
	prot.2021/22:2	
	prot.2021/22:63	
	prot.2021/22:94	
	prot.2021/22:95	
	prot.2021/22:126	
	prot.2021/22:134	
	Interpellation 2019/20:324	Prot. 2019/20:87
	Interpellation 2020/21:367	Prot. 2020/21:82
	Interpellation 2020/21:687	Prot. 2020/21:122
	Interpellation 2020/21:740	Prot. 2020/21:135
	Interpellation 2021/22:209	Prot. 2021/22:57
	Interpellation 2021/22:330	Prot. 2021/22:70
	Interpellation 2021/22:447 – Revoked	
	Interpellation 2021/22:491	Prot. 2021/22:123
	Interpellation 2021/22:538 - Not Answered	
	Interpellation 2022/23:19	Prot. 2022/23:32
	Interpellation 2022/23:194	Prot. 2022/23:70
	Interpellation 2022/23:246	Prot. 2022/23:86
	Interpellation 2022/23:363	Prot. 2022/23:130
	Interpellation 2023/24:110	Prot. 2023/24:28
	Interpellation 2023/24:120	Prot. 2023/24:29
	Interpellation 2023/24:134	Prot. 2023/24:37
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2020/21:AU2	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2020/21:AU5	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2021/22:AU7	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2021/22:AU9	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2022/23:AU9	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2023/24:AU3	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2020/21:AU9	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2022/23:AU6	
	Arbetsmarknadsutskottets betänkande 2023/24:AU2	
	Granskningsbetänkande 2020/21:KU10	
	Socialförsäkringsutskottets betänkande 2019/20:SfU17	

	Socialförsäkringsutskottets betänkande 2021/22:SfU1	
	Socialförsäkringsutskottets betänkande 2021/22:SfU17	
	Socialförsäkringsutskottets betänkande 2022/23:SfU1	
	Socialförsäkringsutskottets betänkande 2022/23:SfU14	
	Socialutskottets betänkande 2019/20:SoU9	
	Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 2021/22:UbU18	
	Utbildningsutskottets betänkande 2021/2022:UbU23	

Appendix Nr. 3 - Empirical Material – Techne 1

Document System		
Documents		
	Mellberg (2023) Samverkan med kommuner och Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete, Slutredovisning. Arbetsförmedlingen.	
	Larsson et al. (2022a) Samverkan med kommuner och Dua, Delredovisning 1. Arbetsförmedlingen.	
	Larsson et al. (2022b) Samverkan med kommuner och Dua, Delredovisning 2. Arbetsförmedlingen.	
	SOU 2023:7 <i>På egna ben Utvecklad samverkan för individers etablering på arbetsmarknade</i> Slutbetänkande av Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete	

Appendix Nr. 4 – Empirical Material – Techne 2

Document name	Municipality Cluster
Älmhult	
Alvesta	
Aneby	
Ånge	
Ängelholm	
Arboga	
Åre	
Arjeplog	
Arvidsjaur	
Åstorp	
Åtvidaberg	
Avesta	
Båstad	
Berg	
Bjuv	
Boden	
Bollnäs	Ovanåker, Söderhamn
Borlänge	
Botkyrka	
Bräcke	
Bromölla	
Eda	Arvika, Hagfors, Hammarö, Grum, Filipstad, Forshaga Forshaga, Karlstad, Storfors,
Ekerö	
Eksjö	
Emmaboda	
Enköping	
Essunga	
Fagersta	
Falkenberg	
Falköping	
Falun	
Färgelanda	Dals-ed, Bengtsfors, Mellerud, Åmål
Filipstad	Arvika, Eda, Forshaga, Grums, Hagfors, Hammarö, Munkfors
Finspång	
Flen	
Gagnef	
Gällivare	
Gävle	
Ginslaved	

Gnesta	
Gnosjö	
Göteborg	
Götene	
Gotland	
Grums	Arvika, Eda, Filipstad, Forshaga, Hagfors, Hammarö, Munkfors
Gullspång	
Habo	
Hagfors	Arvika, Eda, Filipstad, Forshaga, Grums, Hammarö, Munkfors
Hällefors	
Hallstahammar	
Halmstad	
Hammarö	Arvika, Eda, Filipstad, Forshaga, Grums, Hagfors, Munkfors
Haparanda	
Härjedalen	
Härnösand	
Härryda	
Hässleholm	
Heby	
Hedemora	
Helsingborg	
Herrljunga	
Hjo	
Hofors	
Höganäs	
Huddinge	
Hudiksvall	
Hylte	
Järfälla	
Jokkmokk	
Jönköping	
Kalix	
Kalmar	
Karlshamn	
Karlskoga	Degerfors
Karlskrona	
Karlstad	Arvika, Eda, Filipstad, Forshaga, Grums, Hagfors, Hammarö, Munkfors
Katrineholm	
Kil	
Kiruna	
Klippan	
Knivsta	

Köping	
Kramfors	
Kristianstad	
Kristinehamn	
Krokom	
Kungälv	Lilla Edet, Ale, Stenungsund, Öckerö, Tjörn och Orust
Laholm	
Landskrona	
Laxå	Askersund, Hallsberg, Kumla
Lekeberg	
Lessebo	
Lidingö	
Lidköping	
Lindesberg	
Linköping	
Ljungby	
Ljusdal	
Ljusnarsberg	
Luleå	
Lysekil	
Malå	Lycksele
Markaryd	
Mellerud	Dals-ed, Färgelanda, Bengtsfors, Åmål
Mölnadal	
Mönsterås	Högsby, Oskarshamn
Mullsjö	
Munkedal	
Munkfors	Arvika,Eda, Filipstad, Forshaga, Grum, Hagfors, Hammarö, Karlstad
Nacka	Värmdö
Nässjö	
Nora	
Norberg	
Nordanstig	
Norrköping	
Norrtälje	
Nyköping	
Nykvarn	
Ockelbo	
Olofström	
Örkelljunga	
Örnsköldsvik	
Orsa	Mora, Älvsdalen
Orust	Lilla Edet, Kungälv, Stenungsund, Ale, Öckerö, Tjörn

Osby	
Oskarshamn	Högsby, Mönsterås
Östersund	
Ostra Goinge	
Ovanåker	Söderhamn, Bollnäss
Overkalix	
Overtornea	
Oxelösund	
Pajala	
Partille	Alingsås, Lerum
Perstorp	
Pitea	
Ragunda	
Rättvik	Leksand
Ronneby	
Sala	
Salem	
Sandviken	
Säter	
Sävsjö	
Sigtuna	
Simrishamn	
Sjoberg	
Skellefteå	Norsjö
Skinnskatteberg	
Skövde	
Skurup	
Smedjebacken	Ludvika
Söderhamma	
Söderköping	
Södertälje	
Sollentuna	
Solna	
Sölvesborg	
Sorsele	
Sotenäs	
Stockholm	
Storuman	
Strömsund	
Sundbyberg	
Sundsvall	
Svalöv	
Täby	
Tanum	Strömstad
Tibro	
Tidaholm	

Timrå	
Tingsryd	
Tjörn	Lilla Edet, Kungälv, Orust, Ale, Öckerö, Stenungsund
Tomelilla	
Töreboda	
Torsås	Borholm, Nybro, Mörbylånga
Torsby	
Tranås	
Trelleborg	Eslöv, Hörby, Höör, Kävlinge, Lomma, Lund, Staffanstorp,
Trollhättan	Grästorp, Vänersborg
Tyresö	Haninge, Nynäshamn
Uddevalla	
Ulricehamn	Borås, Bollebygden, Mark, Tranemo, Svenljunga
Upplands Bro	
Upplands Väsby	
Uppsala	
Uppvidinge	
Vadstena	Motala, Mjölby, Ödeshög, Boxholm
Vaggeryd	
Valdemarsvik	Söderköping
Vallentuna	
Vänersborg	Grästorp, Trollhättan
Vansbro	Malung-Sälen
Vara	
Varberg	
Vårgårda	
Värmdö	Nacka
Värnamo	
Västervik	
Vaxholm	
Växjö	
Vetlanda	
Vilhelmina	Dorotea
Vimmerby	
Vindeln	Nordmalings, Robertfors, Vännäs, Bjurholm, Umeå
Ydre	
Ystad	