



**SCHOOL OF
GLOBAL STUDIES**

LEISURE POLITICIANS IN A SWEDISH MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE

**An anthropological study of perceived difficulties and motivation
among leisure politicians in a municipal committee in Sweden**

Melker Stensgaard

Bachelor's thesis in social anthropology

Dissertation:	15 hp
Program and course:	Bachelor's Programme in Social Anthropology
Level:	Bachelor
Term/year	Spring 2024
Supervisor:	Jörgen Hellman
Examinator:	Mirko Pasquini
Word count	10 798

Abstract

Political engagement is declining in Sweden, so is the amount of people willing to engage in municipal politics and become leisure politicians, who make up a majority of public representatives. This paper is concerned with the working conditions of leisure politicians as well as their motivations. It aims to illuminate the difficulties they face in their everyday political activities; their relationships with each other, the municipal hierarchy, and the administrations. This paper argues that leisure politicians face a concentration of power from them, the elected representatives, into the hands of both administration and political leadership in the municipal executive board, as well as the political parties. This in turn has a negative effect on the perceived influence leisure politicians have, and can exert, which also diminishes their motivation to continue their political careers thus reinforcing the democratic issue that is the concentration of power into fewer positions. Dramaturgical theory and emotional labour are employed to discuss the performative nature of leisure politicians' duties as well as emotional impacts of problems faced. The methods used for this project included participant observation in a Swedish municipal committee in early 2024, in addition to semi-structured interviews with a handful leisure politicians in said committee.

Key words: leisure politicians, concentration of power, emotional labour, motivation, performance

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the engagement of the politicians who took time out of their already busy lives to share their perspectives, sometimes for hours. Special thanks go out to you who took my idea seriously enough to let me shadow you for several weeks. To you I am deeply grateful.

Furthermore, I owe thanks to my supervisor, Jörgen Hellman, who forced me to reflect, realistically refocus my aims and inspired me to work hard to the end.

I would also like to thank my family, my parents and my siblings for their understanding and patience during the process of writing this paper. Additional thanks go out to my big sister for her help proof-reading and giving advice.

Lastly, with me through many nights of writing and re-writing was my partner Amilia Ringström, without her unyielding belief I doubtlessly would have settled for less. Thank you for all your help, love and support.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Aim and scope	5
1.2	Background	5
1.2.1	What is a municipality?	5
1.2.2	What are political parties?	6
1.2.3	Who are politicians?	6
1.2.4	The state of political engagement in Sweden	7
1.3	Literature review	8
1.3.1	Politicians' emotion work and burnout	8
1.3.2	Ethnographic methods in political science	8
1.3.3	What motivates politicians?	9
1.4	Theoretical framework	10
1.4.1	Dramaturgical analysis	10
1.4.2	Emotional labour, personal efficacy and false face acting	11
1.5	Material and methodology	12
1.5.1	Participant observation	12
1.5.2	Interviews and elite interviewing	13
1.6	Ethical considerations	14
1.6.1	Positionality statement	14
2	Ethnographic discussion	15
2.1	Concentration of power in two ways	15
2.2	Scarcity	19
2.3	Meetings	21
3	Conclusion	24
	Bibliography	26

1 Introduction

Sweden's municipalities function with the aid of people who voluntarily engage in the municipality's many organisations through political parties. In recent years engagement in said parties have been declining and so have the amount of people willing to stand for election as leisure politicians (Erlingsson, 2017; Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010). Additionally increasing amounts of leisure politicians are pre-emptively resigning from their positions. This can quickly become a democratic issue since the municipalities rely on the political parties to fill positions in the municipal council, committees, companies, and other organs. Consequences of this engagement decline could be the concentration of power into fewer positions, effectively giving less people more power, as well as a crisis of legitimacy for Swedish democracy due to being unable to fill the positions required for it to function as it has.

It is therefore of interest to find out what problems are present among leisure politicians, how they manage them, as well as their motivations for continuing to engage politically in the municipality despite these difficulties.

1.1 Aim and scope

This paper aims to showcase leisure politicians' perspectives and relaying what they think the challenges in their political work are. By doing so the findings are predicted to contribute to research regarding the working conditions of leisure politicians in Sweden. This will be done by showing:

- What difficulties (ex: lack of time, knowledge etc) do leisure politicians face during their time in office and what do they do to countermand them?
- What motivates leisure politicians to continue their political work regardless of these difficulties?

1.2 Background

Before the material of this paper is shown some explanations of Swedish political structures are due. This section will cover what municipalities, political parties and politicians are, their functions as well as their responsibilities. Terms used in the paper will also be explained here. Afterwards will be a section about the state of political engagement in Sweden.

1.2.1 What is a municipality?

There are three levels of government in Sweden: national, regional, and municipal. The last one being the smallest and the one this project was conducted within. Sweden's system of government is a representative democracy, where the electorate vote every four years for a party as well as delegates for various positions in government. On the same day the electorate vote for their representatives in the national parliament they also vote for representatives in the municipal and regional government.

Swedish municipalities have multiple bodies that function much like the national parliament. The decision-making body being the municipal council (*kommunfullmäktige*), the local equivalent of the national parliament (*riksdag*). Here is where motions and policies are formally decided upon. Over this institution reigns the municipal executive board (*kommunstyrelse*) which is an organ consisting of both majority and opposition leaders called municipal commissioners (*kommunalråd*), that function as a watchdog over the rest of the municipality. Under the municipal council are the municipal committees (*nämnder*) consisting of elected politicians charged with various responsibilities such as providing electricity, clean water, and cultural projects. These committees all have their own executive branches: the municipal administrations (*förvaltningar*) the people working here, permanent secretaries or civil servants, are charged with executing that which the politicians decide on in the committees (Norén Bretzer, 2021).

1.2.2 What are political parties?

Political parties are almost inseparable from representative democracies. The political parties are essential for their delegating and anchoring functions in all levels of government in Sweden (Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010, p. 24). What this entails will be expanded upon further in this section.

In their survey study on politicians who elect to leave their offices Erlingsson and Öhrvall have aggregated several sources' explanations as to the main functions of political parties in a representative democracy such as Sweden. Firstly, the parties serve to aggregate and articulate the electorate's opinions into a functioning political programme that the electorate can hand their votes to. Secondly the parties are supposed to be a communicative channel both up and down the political system. This means both communicating the electorate's wishes upstream into the government as well as communicating the governments decisions and policy decisions downstream to both their party members and the electorate. Simply: anchoring decisions with the populace. The party's third function is summarized as socialisation, activation, and recruitment. Parties are supposed to function as an arena where people can engage with political ideas and gain political awareness through socialisation in the party, stimulating political debate and an interchange of ideas. Here they are also supposed to activate the party members' societal engagement and make them engage with political issues in society at large. Lastly, the parties serve a critical function for democracy, namely recruiting out of their membership base candidates for government, educating them and making them participate in politics in all levels of government (2010, p. 24). Erlingsson and Öhrvall conclude their discussion by stating that there is little scientific research conducted on the subject of the internal functioning of Sweden's political parties

1.2.3 Who are politicians?

The politicians this study focus on are so called leisure politicians; those who do politics in addition to another occupation. Specifically, the term applies to elected officials that receive remuneration for 40% or less than that of a full-time occupation. There are two other categories of politicians: full-time (sometimes referred to as professional) politicians, and part time politicians. The first being those who work full time, and the latter those who work what is considered 40% of full time or more, but not full time. In 2019 leisure politicians made up

96% (34 535 people) of all politicians active in Sweden whereas the other two groups only 4% (1356 people) (SCB, 2020, p. 58).

A crucial distinction for politicians in Sweden is that it is not a job, it is an elected office. This means that there are no requirements for being a politician except being elected. The responsibilities for the same positions differ between municipalities and are often decided upon through informal decisions within the municipality (Erlingsson, 2017, p. 90). It also means that they are unsalaried, instead receiving commissions based on their expected workload, the number of meetings they attend, as well as their positions.

As opposed to other countries where politicians tend to be alumni from prestigious universities, Sweden's politicians tend to have much more modest educational backgrounds in comparison. Instead emphasis is placed upon other educational institutions such as folk high school courses, study associations and educational instances within the political parties themselves (Nordvall et al., 2020, p. 18).

In a survey conducted by SKR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions) some aspects of politician's working conditions are put into comparison between those of professional and leisure politicians. This being done through a nationwide survey asking politicians themselves about their working conditions. The results of the survey show that professional politicians have more right to insurance than leisure politicians, the same being the case for pension rights. It also shows that a third of respondents state that there are no regulations concerning leave of absence due to parental leave, absence due to sickness or other reasons (2015, p. 11). The survey also shows that 83% of politicians do not receive compensation for expenses relating to taking care of children (2015, p. 14). 30% percent of respondents state that their municipality or region do not have routines that ensure communications in connection with council or committee meetings are accessible to all including those with disabilities (2015, p. 17). It also shows that 14% of municipalities do not compensate politicians for lost income due to their elected offices (2015, p. 19).

1.2.4 The state of political engagement in Sweden

Political engagement has been declining in Sweden. Recruitment for political parties have decreased, and defections have been increasing among both elected officials and ordinary party members (Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010, p. 33). The amount of people engaged in a political party plummeted by 50% between 1991 and 2004 (Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010, p. 30). Additionally, between 2007 and 2014, 173 leisure politicians left their offices (Erlingsson, 2017, p. 87). This constitutes a democratic problem (Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022, p. 140). The biggest problem parties face as a result of this is finding people willing to take on positions in government as elected officials. Said another way: finding people in the party to make politicians out of. Which is one of the main functions political parties serve in a representative democracy (Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010, p. 32).

1.3 Literature review

1.3.1 Politicians' emotion work and burnout

Weinberg argues that political work is inherently emotional and emotionally labour intensive. He suggests that politicians must at once be representatives for the electorate, the party, the legislature, and the government and are expected to be able to switch between these at will. Weinberg suggests that when a politician interacts with the public, they must perform various emotionally labour intensive acts such as emotive sensing, emotive reflexivity as well as altered emotional display (2021, p. 4). All these acts are possible to place under the umbrella of surface acting which is explained in section 1.4.2 of this paper. These acts, which Weinberg brings up in reference to a social interaction between politician and constituent, are being performed in order to sensitize the latter to the former in hope of this interaction (performance) being convincing enough to make said constituent vote for said politician. Weinberg suggests such performances must be repeated often and always with precision and care to the affective state of whomever the politician is interacting with. Weinberg also adds that politicians face unique consequences if they do not perform false face acting (the portrayal of emotions the actor isn't experiencing, more on this in section 1.4.2) since a lapse of personal efficacy or a failure to perform emotion work (more on this in section 1.4.2) could be detrimental for gaining support in an environment that is very critical against politicians (2021, p. 5).

Emotional labour increases the likelihood of burnout amongst most public-facing work groups, which Wienberg argues that politicians inhabit, there is also a correlation between a higher amount of emotional labour and job satisfaction (Weinberg, 2021, p. 16). Here one must be more precise in what aspects of emotional labour is being referred to. Weinberg suggests that while false-face acting increases the likelihood of burnout (2021, p. 7), personal efficacy actually increased occupational wellbeing. This means that politicians who engage in emotional labour such as false-face acting and other emotion work view their role as more meaningful than those who perform less of it, but crucially it also increases their risk of burnout symptoms (2021, p. 7).

1.3.2 Ethnographic methods in political science

Political scientists, policy analysts and social scientists broadly agree that there is a place for ethnographic methods in the study of government (Coleman et al., 2017, p. 448). Although, it seems to have been secluded to its own part of the field because of its qualitative, spontaneous nature. Political science generally places great value on being generalizable whereas anthropology, with its ethnographic methods, prides itself on being local and context specific. This has led to anthropological works and those from other fields that use ethnographic methods being underused and somewhat misused by political scientists through this want to find the generalizable and what MacKay and Levin call "the search for law-like regularities" (2017, p. 444).

MacKay and Levin go further to postulate that political science and the like falters behind contemporary anthropological theory. This faltering resulting in an already aged version of anthropological methods and theory which induce what they call "critical lag" (2017, p. 440).

They argue that great focus was placed upon Geertz and his immediate intellectual descendants without paying heed to the critical turn that followed within anthropology. This resulted in a use of ethnographic methods but less of an understanding of the power relations underlying ethnographic material. MacKay and Levin argue that this creates the expectation of ethnographic methods to generate material that anthropologists no longer see those methods as useful in producing. (2017, p. 441). This means that while ethnographic methods are not rare in the study of government, anthropological concepts such as reflexivity seem to be.

In looking for works of political science that break this norm, Bevir and Rhodes' *Interpreting British Governance* (2003) is a prime example of trying to break this generalizing norm that in some respect describes political science, policy analysis, as well as international relations (Coleman et al., 2017). Bevir and Rhodes attempt to undo the influence of natural science (2003, p. 2) has had on political science through taking inspiration from anthropological, post-structuralist and hermeneutic theory in developing an interpretive approach to political science where they stress the importance of analysing beliefs and desires in order to understand political life (2003, p. 18). The "decentred theory" they developed aims to generate narratives about peoples reasoning rather than finding what they call causal inferences or law-like mechanics (Bevir & Rhodes, 2022, p. 155). They argue that bureaucratic and political life are constructions by *actors* with different *beliefs* rooted in different *traditions* which the actor receives through socialisation. These beliefs are then reconstructed and resituated when confronted with *dilemmas*. While these terms can help explain motivations behind decisions politicians make they provide little aid when attempting prediction since Bevir and Rhodes still leave room for the novel ways individuals act through their term *situated agency* (2022, p. 154). While the aforementioned terms colour an individual's actions, it does not determine them. These terms are used in section 2.1 to aid in the discussion of leisure politician's emotional labour and how it affects their emotional wellbeing and perceived influence.

Similarities to Bevir and Rhodes theory can be found in works concerning Swedish politics, an example being the prevalence of different intellectual traditions among different parties (Nordvall et al., 2020, p. 65), this will also be covered in section 2.3. Nordvall et al. use the term party cultures (*partikulturer*) to discuss how different Swedish parties view what personal qualities inform of a party member's party loyalty and personal compatibility with the party in much the same way Bevir and Rhodes use the term tradition to infer how a political actor can perform their agency while being under the behest of a larger intellectual tradition (Bevir & Rhodes, 2022, p. 154). For example, Nordvall et al. shows that while one Swedish party places great importance on individual theoretical knowledge, another views collective knowledge gained from study associations and educational programmes as more important (Nordvall et al., 2020, p. 66).

1.3.3 What motivates politicians?

Much of what is publicly thought about politicians would suggest that they are motivated by extrinsic factors such as personal gain (Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022, p. 135). This idea might be what fuels the public mistrust of politicians (Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010, p. 84; Syssner et al.,

2017, p. 87) even though recent research into the motivation of local politicians seem to show that motivation stemming from a sense of community responsibility (SOC-R) has a correlation with willingness to stand for re-election (Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022, p. 146). In addition to this, a politician's perceived influence is also a major contributor to their willingness to stand up for re-election (2022, pp. 140, 148). This is also supported by studies on local representatives in Swedish municipalities which suggest that here too politicians tend to be motivated by a will to "contribute to the development of a better society" and a "general interest in politics and social issues"(Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010, p. 84). Additionally, Weinberg shows that in the United Kingdom intrinsic rewards associated with a political career are limited in comparison to other career paths thus also suggesting pro social motivation to be essential in understanding politicians' motivation (Weinberg, 2021, p. 7).

A possible issue with the correlation between perceived influence and continued political engagement is the suggestions research has made that influence is being dwindled away from local politicians into both the municipal administration and the local political elite. These being the political commissioners in the executive council (Erlingsson, 2008, p. 64). In a Swedish study from 2005 it is revealed that 58% of politicians with positions in a municipal council agreed that their principal duty is limited to auditing proposals made by the administrations (2008, p. 63). "To be a leisure politician is to sit in meetings and take a stance on proposals written by public officials" (Erlingsson, 2008, p. 63). The same study also shows that about half of the local representatives think that the administrations often infringe on the mandate of politicians. Erlingsson thus suggests that it is not in the municipal council (where elected officials sit, among them mostly leisure politicians) (2008), but outside of it that decisions are made, and influence is exerted. In large part within the municipal executive board between commissioners who are professional politicians but also through unofficial channels, what Erlingsson calls "corridor-negotiations" between different actors in the municipality (2008, p. 68).

1.4 Theoretical framework

1.4.1 Dramaturgical analysis

Here I will cover some aspects of Goffman's dramaturgic analysis. Of interest are his terms *front- and backstage*, *role*, *performance*, *personal front*, *appearance*, *manner*, *dramatic realization*, *cynic*, *belief*, *collective representation*, and *actor*. These will be laid out in this section.

Fundamental to dramaturgic theory are the terms *front-* and *backstage*. These being the different arenas where *actors* perform and prepare their *performances*. Goffman used the term performance to describe most activities done in the presence of others that influence them (1956, p. 22). As can be surmised the respective stages, front and back, are analogous to those of a theatre stage, the front being where the performance is held and the back where the actors can relax and rehearse with their *team* (a group of actors working together). These performances are made in order to define the social situations actors find themselves in, establishing their respective roles and their characteristics. To define these Goffman used the

term *personal front* and additionally it's contingent parts, *appearance* and *manner* (1956, p. 22). The aforementioned being an actor's social status and position, the latter being how they behave and how they expect interactions to play out.

Goffman emphasises that a performance isn't necessarily deceptive, to aid in this emphasis he employs the terms cynical and sincere, aimed at establishing an actors *belief* in the performance at hand (1956, pp. 17–18). A cynic is a person who does not believe that their act is a true representation of reality, which a sincere actor does.

Dramatic realization refers to the act of dramatizing one's role to the audience. Goffman uses a surgeon as an example of a role that does not require this realization since an observer can immediately see the quality and usefulness of the surgeon's occupation. This cannot be said for nurses, Goffman argues, who are charged with observing patient's wellbeing and their actions can be interpreted by an observer as idly wasting time, when in actuality they are performing the tasks their role requires, namely, checking vital signs, regularity of breathing etc (1956, pp. 30–34). Goffman brings up a dilemma this can create wherein a professional who is competent at their job does not have the means to effectively show that this is the case since they are skilled at the job itself, not it's dramatization. He calls this expression vs action. Expressing one's competence takes time and effort away from one's occupational duties. Where they instead focus on the dramatic realization of their role this would inhibit their competency in the actual work.

Another relevant phenomena Goffman highlights is that of collective representation. A particular front (described above) can become associated with a particular role or occupation. This means that people who join that occupation find that there already is a front associated with it, one that they are expected to take on: a manner of speaking, a particular appearance etc (1956, pp. 27–29).

1.4.2 Emotional labour, personal efficacy and false face acting

The terms covered in this section are *emotional labour*, *emotion work*, *emotion management*, *false face acting*, *surface acting*, *deep acting*, and *personal efficacy*.

An increasing amount of people are expected to manage their emotions as part of their occupational duties. This salaried emotional management, or emotion work (Hochschild, 2003, p. 7) is what is referred to as emotional labour; the act of inducing or repressing emotion in order to impress a certain feeling in the recipient.

This emotional labour is not inherently negative as it has been shown to increase feelings of job satisfaction (Wharton, 2009, p. 160), It is instead when coupled with emotional dissonance when negative consequences can occur. This term, emotional dissonance (Hochschild, 2003, p. 90), aims to articulate the prolonged false-face acting produced by that emotional labour which is not congruent with a person's sincere emotions. Another term has appeared here, false face acting. This term is an umbrella term for surface- and deep acting. These acts are emotionally laborious: the first being the conscious act of displaying an emotion that isn't being experienced (Hochschild, 2003, p. 37; Steinberg & Figart, 1999, p.

11) whereas the latter is the internalizing of the emotions one is expected to show, either intentionally or unintentionally (Weinberg, 2021, p. 3).

How well a person perceives their handling of the emotion work required for their occupation is called personal efficacy. Being more competent at performing emotional labour, or only perceiving this competency, is associated with a higher sense of occupational wellbeing whereas the aforementioned false-face acting is correlated with burnout (Weinberg, 2021, p. 16).

What can be gathered from this is that emotional labour is inherent to political work (Öhberg & Cassel, 2023, p. 234). How exactly it is performed and perceived by the individual politician is the determining factor in whether it is a positive aspect of the role, meaning it is perceived as enjoyable, or a factor that is perceived as difficult and bothersome therefore having an adverse relationship with occupational wellbeing.

1.5 Material and methodology

This study combines both primary and secondary material, the aforementioned was gathered during a three-month long fieldwork in the beginning of 2024 where I was allowed to shadow a leisure politician to a large part of their political duties such as committee meetings, party meetings, association meetings and more as well as a handful of interviews with leisure politicians. More on this in section 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 respectively.

The secondary material gathered for this project was mainly aimed at finding previous research concerning political anthropology as well as ethnographies in governmental studies such as political science, international relations, and policy analysis. While I attempted to focus my reading to that which concerned politicians in Sweden this proved to be difficult because the lack of qualitative research concerning them, although there was some (Norell, 2007). Though there is an abundance of quantitative data regarding politicians, for this study most was retrieved from the Centre for Municipal studies at Linköping University (*Centrum för Kommunstrategiska Studier*, CKS), (Erlingsson, 2017; Erlingsson & Öhrvall, 2010; Nordvall et al., 2020; Syssner et al., 2017; Wittberg & Erlingsson, 2023) as well as the Central Bureau of Statistics (SCB, 2020) and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR) (SKR, 2015). Thus the geographic area was expanded to include all of Scandinavia, mostly Denmark (Hjelmar et al., 2010; Pedersen et al., 2018; Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022), as well as interpretive political science developed in the United Kingdom (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003) which promotes ethnographic methods as discussed in section 1.3.2.

1.5.1 Participant observation

The primary method of data collection for this project was participant observation. When initiating the project, I reached out to many politicians and eventually one answered my email wherein I asked if I could follow them during their political work, to which they said yes, making my project possible. What followed was an introduction between me and them where we discussed the nature of the project and what events I would observe. This resulted in more than I had hoped: a list of all their political meetings, where and when they took place so that I could simply show up and observe. I was allowed to join them for everything except some

meetings with the municipal executive board and preparatory meetings for the municipal councils where observers were not allowed for security reasons.

My fieldwork consisted of me observing 30 events during the span of 5 weeks. These events consisted of committee meetings, party meetings, association meetings, presidium meetings, public panels, council meetings, inaugurations, and party conferences. Most of my time spent in the field was during meetings of all sorts. Due to the nature of the field it is necessarily multi-sited meaning people were observed in various locations with the common denominator being the culture shared between those people (Coleman et al., 2017, p. 448), which naturally follows them wherever their political duties take them. Throughout all these locations I used the snowball method (Mannik & McGarry, 2017, p. 121) to gather interviewees.

1.5.2 Interviews and elite interviewing

My interviewees varied in age and occupation, some being pensioners and others in their 30s, they also varied in political experience: some having decades long careers whereas some were relatively new, some having held higher positions in the municipal governments, others being deputy members. Some of my informants also had several assignments in different committees and municipal companies and others only one. Therefore, I believe that I have gathered representatives from several different ways a leisure politician's responsibilities can look. Although it must be said that the interviewees were, with the exception of one, in the party group that my main informant belonged to. This means that they were ideologically similar which I believe could have an effect on the material regarding the motivations my participants have. All seeming to have strong pro-social motivation and an ambition to counteract perceived negative developments in society, mostly from growing right wing movements in Sweden, more on this in section 2.1. But since this study is not about the politics, rather the politician's themselves and their working conditions, this is not deemed to be a flaw.

I conducted six interviews in total varying in length from 3 to 1 hours. During these I mainly employed grand tour (Roberts, 2020, p. 3189) and other open ended questions (Mannik & McGarry, 2017, p. 124). Through using these methods, in combination with a loose interview guide as recommended by Trost (2010), I wanted my interviewee's to tell me of their experiences as leisure politicians as they thought of them, not necessarily within the restrictions of an interview concerning only the problems they face, since that could colour the material more negatively than they perceive their experiences. Although an open ended style of interview is more prone to memory bias (Weller, 2015, p. 364) I still felt this to be an appropriate way to go and I could delve deeper into specificities if so required by asking specifying questions (Roberts, 2020, p. 3195), which is the way Weller recommends interview to proceed: from the general to the specific (Weller, 2015, p. 373).

Through these methods I received a lot of information from my interviewees on how they came to engage in municipal politics, some even gave reasons for this as far back as their childhoods, explaining their political journey to me in some detail which was both fascinating and informative. Since the interviews took place after my time in the field I could also use the things I had learned in my discussions, mitigating the problems associated with interviewing

elites such as establishing credibility and trust and seeming uninformed (Liu, 2018; Mikecz, 2012; Rhodes, 2007), especially so for novice researchers. Additionally, the interviews informed me of the politicians' perspectives on the administrations, to each other, to their parties among other things which proved valuable for my analysis.

The interviews were recorded, with consent from the interviewees, and took place in the University's premises where I had booked rooms for the duration of the interviews, thus effectively creating a private space where our conversations could not be heard. After the interviews had taken place they were transcribed and translated into English from Swedish which they were conducted in.

1.6 Ethical considerations

All participants in this project have been anonymised and the experiences and information imparted to me has been dissected and hidden behind fictional identities, meaning that there is no direct line between a pseudonym and one of the informants, what is written under the pseudonym Rio, for example, are actually the experiences from several people. This is done because of the risk of internal recognition within the municipality which could lead to attribution of things expressed in this paper to my participants. All interviewees have consented to participate and been informed of their right not to answer questions or disengage from the study entirely. This study has been conducted in accordance with both the AAA's (The American Anthropological Association, n.d.) and the Swedish Research Council's guidelines (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017) for research.

1.6.1 Positionality statement

My position as a researcher was defined by me being a young student with little experience manoeuvring institutions like the municipal committee I conducted my fieldwork in. This led to nervousness and carefulness when interacting with people therein when calmness and engagement would have been preferable and make the results of my methods more fruitful, especially the snowball method which relies on making connections and being assertive. When doing research this closely related to politics it would also be of interest for the reader to know that I have not engaged with any political party organisations, which made the observations of how these organisations function more novel to me than they would be where I to be already acquainted with them.

2 Ethnographic discussion

The ethnographic discussion that will be laid out in the next few pages will focus on difficulties leisure politicians face not only during their time conducting political work but also some repercussions of this work on other aspects of their lives. In the first chapter, the relationships between the administration and the committee will be covered and some perspectives leisure politicians have on this relationship, how it affects and colours the nature of municipal committee politics as well as how it affects politicians' perceptions of their own role in the committee. In addition to this the first chapter will also cover the influence of the party on the politicians in the committee and, in addition to the influence of the administration, how these two forces influence what happens in the committee. The following section will cover scarcity and the relationships between politicians as well as their views on media and the public.

2.1 Concentration of power in two ways

During my fieldwork there has been one central concern taken from my excursion into sociological, (ethnographic) policy analysis and political science, namely the fear of the increasing power and influence administrations hold over leisure politicians. This was a concern shown in several sources and I could not help noticing signs in the relationship between politicians and the administration of this potentiality. In this section I will lay out some of these observations, what leisure politicians' thoughts are on the matter as well as an analysis of its consequences on leisure politicians' motivation.

Several politicians that I interviewed expressed concern for the growing influence of the administration and its effect on the politics that are being done in the committee. Mainly it seems to be a discrepancy in how much time the two parts, committee, and administration, can spend on the issues at hand. While the committee only conducts meetings once a month the administration and its bureaucrats work full time with said issues. In addition to this the administration consists of people educated in the field the administration is responsible for. This professionalisation is caused by what Michels (1983, as cited in Erlingsson, 2008) calls the process of organising, he argues that as an organisation grows larger its workforce and leadership becomes ever more knowledgeable, educated, professional and homogenous and thus isolated from the "ordinary people" in the organisation or those not educated in its workings. The process of organising applies to all complex organisations and can thus be argued to include both political parties and administrations. This means that the administration employees the politicians in the committee interact with, the leadership, have a lot more insight into the workings of both the administration and the municipality at large and can thus exert influence over what the committee decides to do. Some of the leisure politicians interviewed in the course of this project have expressed their views on this, these will be imparted to the reader throughout the remainder of this section.

This can be seen in my interview with Rio, who told me that they were initially surprised by how much influence the administration held over the committee. Rio told me of their time in the now discontinued city district committee where they found the administration to be hard

to work with. They felt that the committee had to “drag the administration along” in order to get them to concede information and even when they managed to get the information requested; the administration would deliver said information in a “half-hearted manner” and not amicably so. More shockingly they informed me that on occasion they and the committee even found out about important information through the media. With this as background they tell me that one of the most important parts of being a leisure politician is, in their own words, acting as democratic watchdog against the administration. They told me that they and the other politicians were laypeople with little formal training in the matters the administration were responsible for. Even so they thought it important to have “normal” people present in order to see what the administrations were doing. To make sure they know they are being watched by democratically elected people, charged with making sure the administration does what it is supposed to. Important to note here is that whereas Rio says that they and the other politicians in the committee disagreed with the administration’s judgment on occasion it was more common that they did agree with it. Rio said that initially they questioned the importance of their participation since they did what the administration recommended most of the time but soon realised that were it not for leisure politicians such as themselves the administration would be working unobserved, “which as it stands now wouldn’t be a big problem by itself”, they said, “but it could very well be in the future”.

Another leisure politician, Lin, shares a similar perspective. They argue during our interview that the administrations are too slow and don’t have much drive of their own, always having to be poked and prodded into action. And sometimes when action is taken, it is unwanted changes. An example of can be seen in a particular issue that Lin spotted during my time in the field. In a normal proposal the administration sent out they discovered an order making it impossible to hold meetings of political nature of any kind in premises the committee was responsible for. This order had not been made known to anybody in the committee and would partially inhibit functioning of several organisations the committee was responsible for since they were using those premises to hold panel talks, debates etc. This was brought up with the administration leadership in the presidium where the politicians were confronted with an appeal to the municipal executive board, so that the municipal commissioners there could resolve the issue. This process would take a lot of time.

I relay these perspectives here in order show what a leisure politicians' perspective on the administrations increasing authority and to bring forth observations made in my own fieldwork of this. Rio told me that it could be difficult to, as a layperson, bring forth motions in front of an administration who in general knows more than they do about how the administration functions practically. Rio says that it is intimidating when the administration argues against a motion their party group proposed since they are the ones with the expertise, but at the same time they have their own opinion that doesn’t necessarily align with the committee’s. The difference between the administration saying, “this is a bad idea” and “we don’t like this”, can be hard to discern for, as Rio would say, a layperson.

Municipal politics works from the centre and out into the periphery. What this means is that the municipal council, executive board and crucially, the political parties decide what the leisure politicians are to do in the committees. While they are often trusted to represent the

party's interests they are also given certain objectives they need to accomplish during their mandate period. While this may seem obvious, it is of interest since most of the leisure politicians spoken to during the course of my project seemed to be more devoted to their parties than the public. While this might be a semantic issue since the parties are supposed to represent the people's opinions it is still of interest since when asked who the leisure politician's felt they represented they invariably answered: the party, as opposed to the people. This is of interest because this is a sign of the second point where power is concentrated, namely the aforementioned party and its political secretaries as well as professional politicians in the municipal executive board. These people hold sway over municipal politics and thus deign leisure politicians to be their hands in the committees. Therefore, that which happens in the committees can be likened to a performance that leisure politicians act out in the formal positions of power in order to enact decisions that have already, albeit informally, been made for them in the backstage of the parties.

The term performance, though a generalisation since leisure politicians do have considerable agency over their actions as well as what methods are used in pursuing the goals set out for them, can be informative when discussing leisure politician's activities. Using the terminology of dramaturgical analysis can aid in seeing how for example strategic political positioning can affect leisure politicians themselves. Following is an example of a situation where this is the case.

When talking to Rio about whether or not they usually agreed with the decisions their political party made they said that they mostly did but because of the coalition their party was in concessions had to be made and their vote had to be given to motions whose content's Rio did not agree with. This cynical routine is something that is a given in politics on all levels but can create a paradoxical position where a leisure politician wishes for a stronger opposition. Rio tells me during our interview that because of the weak opposition in the committee all those motions they have to vote for because of the party coalition they are in pass unchallenged whereas if the opposition was strong they would be challenged and perhaps brought up to the municipal executive board, something Rio cannot do due to the strategizing done by the party. This fits into the term cynic or cynical performance, wherein the actor has little faith in the routine being performed but does so as a means to an end. In this case Rio is acting like they agree in lieu of complicating the party group's collaboration. Therefore, they have to *act* as if they agree, in order to further this collaboration. Here Rio is experiencing a dissonance between their own view, that this hypothetical motion is undesirable, and the view of their party, that it is desirable because it allows for continued cooperation with the other parties in the coalition. Emotionally laborious though it may be, Rio rationalises this position by appealing to the fact that it is better to compromise than to achieve nothing at all, they say: "nobody is interested in what I think if I give up my power to act".

Another view is that of Eli, also a leisure politician. In our interview they tell me that the things they and the other politicians are doing feel unfruitful. Eli tells me that there is always more work to be done, more things to read in order to become educated enough for the issues they are deciding upon, which, in addition to their other political activities, make the work practically limitless. They tell me that they did not expect to endure so many meetings with so

few positive results. “If one out of five things succeed”, they said, “I cannot go outside tomorrow”. They felt it would be too embarrassing. As Eli explains this to me they speculate that as a politician you might become hardened by all the failures you endure, but they inform me they are not interested in that. They are not satisfied by the results of their work in the committee. They tell me that by focusing on the bigger picture, on the party politics and their larger ideological goals they can receive some motivation to continue working. But the time available to Eli for that is limited by the time that must be spent on committee matters.

Here we can see how personal efficacy affects leisure politicians’ perception of their work. While Rio rationalises their cynical performance through appealing to the practical consequences of their cynical compromise, Eli is less able to do so and asks themselves if they are appropriate to be a politician because of the negative consequences of said compromises. Another factor are the political traditions (Bevir & Rhodes, 2022, p. 155) they both come from; Rio is a member of a small party with relatively recent admission into municipal governance whereas Eli belongs to a larger party whose members have described it as activistic (this is an emic term that several participants have used when describing each other and their parties). Possibly making them less willing to compromise those values, a tacit implication here is also that “activists” are more unreasonable. Eli tells me themselves that their pessimism when it comes to the committee might stem from their activist side but also that they cannot just sit by and watch. When asked how they reconcile their activism and their role in the municipal committee they answer, “I don’t think I can.” Eli’s cannot make their view of what a politician should be (the role’s collective representation (Goffman, 1956, p. 27)) able to do align with their own feelings of inadequacy as have been described above. Being able to synthesise one’s own beliefs with the expectations of others, Weinberg argues, is an essential part of what politician’s everyday work entails (2021, p. 4). An exploration of what this means is hereafter called for.

This dilemma (the restrictions political collaboration enforces on the expressions of leisure politicians’ beliefs: what they must vote for) forces Rio and Eli to readjust their beliefs about their own positions as leisure politicians, away from practicing their own beliefs (Bevir & Rhodes, 2022), and instead into the emotionally laborious, cynical performance of surface acting. But due to their different degree of personal efficacy the dilemma takes different tolls on them (Weinberg, 2021). Rio sees it as due course for the job and accepts it in lieu of future progress, whereas Eli sees the compromise as infringing on their personal beliefs and political goals, thus being less able to accept it; making them question their competence altogether. Here we can see the consequences of the concentration of power; those with less personal efficacy see the siphoning away of their influence, in addition to their shortcomings when it comes to handling consequences of compromise, resulting in a lack of motivation and subsequent disillusionment (Erlingsson, 2008; Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022). Throughout these examples I hope to have shown how political traditions and personal efficacy can affect a leisure politicians’ perception of their own occupational wellbeing and their motivation for continuing political work.

The initial question to my interviews “please describe as detailed as you can how you came to be a leisure politician” prompted an explanation of life circumstances, occupational status and

crucially motivation. While the motivator stated may be coloured by the political traditions my informants belong to there was a shared sentiment between them all. To challenge perceived negative developments in Swedish politics and society. This negative development seemed both a central motivating factor for starting and continuing political engagement. A sort of damage control, this sense of urgency and responsibility for improving society is in line with previous research on politicians' motivations (Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022).

2.2 Scarcity

” If you are a leisure politician then you are a leisure politician, and it haunts you. The home, you're gone in the evenings, you sit and read, it haunts the family. You need a partner that is prepared take on responsibility at home.”

- Lin

This statement was passed on to me during my interviews with Lin when prompted to describe how leisure politics affected other aspects of their life. The sentiment came to be repeated by other politicians. There just is not enough time in a day to devote to politics without sacrificing crucial aspects of social life, childcare, studies, and rest. Several of my informants imparted to me their thoughts on this and told me that having children during one's political career was very rare and the examples they did bring up were demystified by also adding the fact that this was done by extraordinarily strong people, others, they said, would have taken a long break from politics after having children. When asked if they believed time scarcity to be one of the biggest issues for leisure politicians one of my informants replied: “I believe that firmly, the fact that you're supposed to have time for your job, eventually picking up kids, that is, before you even have time to pick up your documents, the day is already past”. They add that meetings are situated at inopportune times that do not consider parental responsibilities such as picking children up from school and making them dinner since meetings tend to drag on towards the evening, making one's parental duties impossible and instead having to be taken on by one's partner.

Not only is time available for preparatory elements of leisure politician's political duties hard to allocate for, but time also moves very quickly when things are actually happening, as Kim stated during our interview. Kim was sharing their thoughts on how their first budget negotiation went wherein they were supposed to establish what assignment their committee would have the following year. They said that: “you talk, talk, talk, and talk until all of a sudden you're supposed to make a decision... Like, tomorrow”. This created such time pressure that Kim was unable to anchor what they and their party-colleagues in the committee wanted to communicate to their representatives in the municipal executive board. Here Kim adds that they assume that their party-colleagues were under no illusion that they could actually make many ventures due to the economic situation, but notes that they were dissatisfied with the situation. Kim said that “Even though there was no possibility of making any ventures... If you are in that committee then you want the opportunity to... You don't just want to be a button-pusher, you want the opportunity to make an impact, to make an impression.”

This is related to an opinion Rio shared during our interview, that the budget is formally decided in the committee, but is practically already handed to them beforehand. “If you want to do something bigger after the budget is already established”, they said, “it will most likely be impossible due to financial restrictions, unless you want to scale something else back”. Thinking back to Kim’s being unable to relate their colleagues’ wishes to the board we can see that this must have diminished their perceived influence, since the budget negotiations are so essential to what the committee can accomplish.

Instead, the assignments Kim and their party did receive were perceived as unconventional and somewhat unimpressive, but crucially, workable without great costs. Kim adds that mistakes such as not anchoring communications to the executive board with one’s colleagues is usually not appreciated but due to their recent inauguration as committee chair it was instead seen as a learning opportunity. This will be brought back to the attention of the reader in the discussion at the end of this section, following will be a short section on how politicians are taught what their roles entail.

Learning what a politician does

Politicians are taught the responsibilities their positions comprise of in educational activities orchestrated by their parties, their committees, and outside actors but comparably more so through the experience they gain through everyday political work. This is the view my informants offered me. Kim, for example, said that while the educations were valuable in getting them thinking about what their work would entail, there was no substitute for the real thing. Something to be wary of, according to Kim, is also being exploited by others when doing politics. “A lot of people want to make a career, to be seen in different ways, and I’ve come to realize... in different positions that I’ve had that I’ve done a lot of work without getting credit for it... Which I think is unacceptable”. Of relevance here is also Rio’s experience from a smaller municipality where they got little guidance in what they were supposed to do in that committee. Now, in a larger municipality, introductory courses were helpful but crucial was help from party colleagues who could give advice when issues arose.

What can be surmised from this is that while introductory courses given, as in Rio’s case, a couple weeks after taking office are helpful in that they teach their visitors the structures of municipal politics, they do not prepare for the multifaceted practice that is politics. Instead, it is taught out of issues created by lack of knowledge by colleagues.

Consequences

Now it can be seen that the situation regarding Kim’s anchoring was caused by two things: a lack of time and resources, in this case knowledge. It being Kim’s first time being responsible for the anchoring of their colleagues’ wishes to the board they failed to allocate adequate time for this process. In turn making their party colleagues perceived influence diminished. These situations, created by the scarcity of resources, make politician’s less motivated, as is shown in section 1.3.1, as well as creating tensions between politicians themselves. How scarcity affects leisure politicians’ work will be further illustrated in the next section.

2.3 Meetings

This section contains a combination of my experiences observing the meetings of a municipal committee. Before the meetings I was also allowed to observe meetings between the chairs of the committee and the administration as well as the preparatory meetings of a party group. Such meetings took place twice ahead of every committee meeting, one a week before, and one took place immediately before the committee meeting was held.

Pre-meetings

The first of the preparatory meetings were those for individual parties a week ahead of the committee meeting and were conducted online as digital meetings during the evening. During these 30 minutes party colleagues could talk backstage about what their cross-party compatriots might want to highlight ahead of the next committee meeting. The conversations were somewhat less guarded than in party-group meetings since everybody present belonged to the same party. On this level everybody was mostly in agreement. They are a Team as Goffman would put it (1956), and they are practicing staging talk ahead of meeting with the other parties in the coalition. During one of these meetings somebody said that the smaller parties might raise issues we cannot afford, whereupon another replied that they are difficult to deal with indeed. While everybody was adamant that collaboration worked amicably in hindsight, the party divisions are still always looming; guards are raised when the parties must convene. Speaking in favour of the well function nature of the collaborations however is the fact that these party specific meetings were seldom prioritized by the politicians as can be seen by their ad-hoc nature and the fact that on occasion nobody but me and the chair was present as the others had either forgot or been unable to participate.

Subsequently another preparatory meeting usually took place, but this time with the whole party group convening digitally immediately after the previous (party-specific) meeting. I can only assume that the other parties preceded this meeting with party specific meetings such as the one described above. Extending Goffman's dramaturgic allegory even here we can see that there are now multiple teams (parties) with differing traditions and manners (1956) expectations of how the meeting is supposed develop, more on this dynamic will be covered in a paragraph further down detailing the physical preparatory meetings ahead of the committee meeting.

Group meetings

After the two previous meetings a week passes, and it is now the day of the committee meeting. During lunch the different party-groups convene in adjacent meeting halls with large tables fit for 20 people; extravagant indeed for a group of less than 10 people. Most arrive late, carrying fast-food meals picked up on their way from work, panting from the exertion. There are a couple politicians from each of the three parties represented and they sit next to their party comrades. The meeting starts and the chair initiates the meeting. Slowly they trudge through the protocol for the coming committee meeting, some already having read it as they should have, some did not have the time, sparking irritation from their colleagues. The chair is in control of the speaking order and the others raise their hand when they want to

speak, although this rule is only nominally followed; whenever someone is excited enough, they speak out of turn anyway, usually with little repercussion.

In my interviews with Eli and Mio, who belong to the same party, they express dissatisfaction with the meeting-style the other parties practice and how they prefer the one their own party championed; this style being saturated with practices meant to challenge techniques of dominance and naturalised hierarchies. To do this, Eli explained, they initially divide the meeting attendees by gender whereupon they collectively explore how others and they themselves have used dominance techniques during previous meetings. Eli argues that this process makes them more aware of how they behave during meetings.

As an example of being unaware of one's own influence on how a meeting is performed they point to another member of the party-group who is completely unaware of how their dominance techniques and behaviour drives Mio crazy. Eli emphasises that they are not a bad person because of this, and that everybody occasionally uses dominance techniques. They tell me during our interview that they could discuss this in the party-group together but that this has not occurred. On one occasion Mio became so frustrated with this behaviour that they loudly exclaimed "shut up!". Eli explains that this person practically usurped the role of meeting chairperson and took up too much space in the meeting. Whereupon they received this exclamation from Mio, since such behaviour was unacceptable in their party's meeting tradition, which Mio had described as explicitly rigid and hierarchical in order to ensure everybody's right to speak and say their piece. What this person is unaware of is how their manner (Goffman, 1956) resonates with the manners of the other people in the meeting, this manner stemming from their different traditions (Bevir & Rhodes, 2022), how they expect meetings to proceed. Cross-party collaboration creates these kinds of dilemmas that, without discussion and consolidation, can create conflict within the party group.

The preparatory meetings last until there is no time left before the committee meeting starts, whereupon somebody declares that "the committee is starting soon" and everybody present collects their things, throw their now empty food containers and coffee mugs in the trash, and they collectively stream out of the room where they had spent the last two hours. The stream advances until it is stopped by a dam: the serving table where an assortment of sandwiches and coffee have been made available for collection. Having stood and mingled for a few minutes the politicians as well as the administration's staff enter the large room where the committee meeting is about to start. Only I remain, waiting to be allowed entrance.

Committee meetings

When I enter the room the meeting has already started since my being allowed entrance had to be decided by vote. Hence I was not able to observe the first couple minutes of the committee meeting. This meeting is much more structured than the previous ones. Those meetings being, as previously stated, nominally structured by the chairman, whereas this one is functionally so. Upon being allowed in I scurry to the closest available seat, unfortunately resulting in me facing the backs of half the politicians in the room. This being due to the fact that the tables were arranged in such a manner as to create a large U shape in the room. The committee

chairman located in the centre of the base of the shape with the administration chair on their left and the meeting secretary on the right. The leisure politicians belonging to the opposition always sat on the left-hand side of the chairperson, the governing side on the right. In addition to the politicians present there were additional administration leadership as well as union representatives for the administration's staff.

After formalities such as establishing the meeting's agenda the administration chair reports information deemed relevant for all politicians in the committee to hear. Included here are past and upcoming events, outcomes of investigations, announcements, and anything the administration wants the politicians (and thus also the public, since these meetings are public) to know. Afterwards proposals from the politicians are brought forward and voted upon, the amount can vary making the length of these meetings differ by several hours. For some meetings, proposals had been made by the public, albeit rarely so. On one such occasion however, a proposal had been made by a member of the public. It requested the committee to create a unified database of all events where measures to ensure accessibility had been made. As this person, who was vision impaired, laid out their personal history and how their disability impaired their everyday functioning everybody in the room listened intently. Previously, all leisure politicians had expressed support for the idea but lamented the practical impossibility of it, now they had to express this sentiment. This is an example of emotional labour having to be performed (Weinberg, 2021).

When this person had made their proposal, the leader of the opposition initially answered and thanked her for coming to talk in front of the committee, emphasising the importance of the committee hearing her perspective. Ultimately, however, this was not the responsibility of this committee, rather it is purview of the committee for disability assistance. Another leisure politician also added that it was important for them to hear this. Another connects it to an alternative source of revenue that had been explored in previous meetings, the administration informs again that it still was not feasible, as had been explained before. Then the committee chair explains how the proposal would be very resource intensive as the constituent who made the proposal listens, still looking hopeful, the vote is proclaimed on whether this matter would be investigated further and no politicians show their approval and the matter is closed, but the chair adds that they will have this proposal in mind during next year's budget discussions. The constituent, downtrodden, asks if they will receive any follow up, the answer: we have your contact information.

When the proposal was finally dismissed the politicians had listened to this constituent's proposal for over 20 minutes knowing it had to be turned down. Then they had to practice several aspects of emotion work and surface acting in order to let her down as gently as possible although it is clear she would be. Here the politicians' roles are complicated: as a representative of the people, they should be championing this persons right to have access despite their disability, as a representative of the party they do not want to be seen as insensitive to the needs of disabled people but as a governing body they have to be clear that they do not have the resources to provide the service. Simply, they cannot give the constituent what they want, and they cannot put a positive spin on the dismissal. Therefore this situation has no positive outcome and the politicians have to respond negatively to this proposal and

only their personal perceptions of how competent they are at letting people down (personal efficacy) (Weinberg, 2021) determine how it affects them. They must also act professional regardless of how the matter affects them (surface acting).

3 Conclusion

This paper has explored two questions; what difficulties leisure politicians face, and what motivates them to continue despite these difficulties. How these questions have been answered will be shown in the following two paragraphs respectively, followed by suggestions on how the field can be explored further and then the authors reflections.

This study reaffirms suggestions that one of the main difficulties leisure politicians face is concentration of power into the hands of both the administration on one hand and political parties and professional politicians in the municipal executive board on the other (Erlingsson, 2008). This in turn decreases the perceived influence leisure politicians can exert which has been shown to correlate with declining motivation to continue one's political career (Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022), this is discussed in section 2.1. Additional difficulties are scarcity of time and knowledge as is shown in section 2.2, emotional labour leading to burnout (Weinberg, 2021) as is explored in section 2.2 and 2.3 and difficulties working with other politicians arising from clashes between political traditions (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, 2022; Nordvall et al., 2020) as is seen in section 2.3 through the discussion on different manners in meetings.

In regard to what motivates politicians to continue their political duties the results of this study agree with previous research that suggest that prosocial motivation is a contributing factor to leisure politicians' motivation. The leisure politicians contributing to this paper invariably said that the main reason for working with leisure politics is to counteract perceived negative trends in society. This is line with previous research which showed that politicians with a greater sense of community responsibility are more likely to stand for re-election (Pinheiro & Trondal, 2022).

The importance of this area of study cannot be overstated since leisure politicians are an essential aspect of the functioning of Swedish democracy. As this paper has left many aspects of the issue unexplored, further lines inquiry will be given here. Lines such as the administration leadership's perspectives on working with leisure politicians, how gender affects leisure politician's motivation and personal efficacy, the differences between a small political party and a larger one, as well as smaller and larger municipalities. Influence techniques used by leadership (administration, party, committee), further exploration of parties' traditions and their impact on motivation and performances, how leisure politicians' pay correlates to time spent doing political work. I could go on.

Concluding thoughts

Of course, as any in fieldwork more time in the field would allow for more informative results, so would more expertise in the fields of policy analysis and political science, as would more experience in bureaucracies, municipal politics and administrations as much time had to

be allocated to introduce myself to those fields and doubtlessly relevant information for answering my research questions is out there unbeknownst to me.

While this paper attempts to show the sacrifices leisure politicians make in working towards what they believe is right I want to conclude by emphasising the importance of not just acknowledging their struggles but also making practical changes to make their work not just easier but more attractive and inviting, so as to make the position more attractive to those who historically have not been able to partake in politics; those with less control over schedules, life dynamics , limitations due to disabilities and so on.

I hope this paper has made clear to the reader how essential leisure politicians are to the functioning of Sweden's democracy as well as the magnitude of the issues they face. Making their work more manageable is not just important because all people deserve work-life balance, but also because improving their working conditions would make the role more appealing to more people and counteract the negative trends illustrated in this paper; hopefully making Sweden's democracy more effective, stable, and crucially: worth working for.

Bibliography

- Bevir, M., & Rhodes, R. (2003). *Interpreting British Governance*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203135914>
- Bevir, M., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (2022). All you need is ... a network: The rise of interpretive public administration. *Public Administration*, 100(1), 149–160.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12817>
- Coleman, S., Hyatt, S. B., & Kingsolver, A. E. (Eds.). (2017). *The Routledge companion to contemporary anthropology*. Routledge.
- Erlingsson, G. Ó. (2008). *Partier i kommunpolitiken: En kunskapsöversikt om partier, makt och legitimitet*. Sveriges kommuner och landsting.
- Erlingsson, G. Ó. (2017). Begär vi för mycket av våra lokala ledare? In J. Syssner, S. Häggroth, & U. Ramberg (Eds.), *Att äga framtiden: Perspektiv på kommunal utveckling*. Centrum för kommunstrategiska studier (CKS) vid Linköpings universitet.
- Erlingsson, G. Ó., & Öhrvall, R. (2010). *Politikens villkor: Om engagemang och avhopp i kommunpolitiken*. Centrum för kommunstrategiska studier, Linköpings universitet.
- Goffman, E. (1956). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Penguin Books.
- Hjelmar, U., Olsen, A. L., & Pedersen, L. H. (2010). Should I Stay or Should I Go Now? Voluntary Retirement from Danish Local Government: *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 33(4), 402–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9477.2010.00257.x>
- Hochschild, A. R. (2003). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling* (20th anniversary ed). University of California Press.
- Liu, X. (2018). Interviewing Elites: Methodological Issues Confronting a Novice. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1), 1–9.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918770323>

- Mannik, L., & McGarry, K. (2017). *Practicing ethnography: A student guide to method and methodology*. University of Toronto press.
- Michels, R. (1983). *Organisationer och demokrati: En sociologisk studie av de oligarkiska tendenserna i vår demokrati*. Ratio.
- Mikecz, R. (2012). Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18(6), 482–493. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800412442818>
- Nordvall, H., Bladh, D., & Malmström, L. (2020). *Den lokala politikerns bildningsarenor*. Linköping University Electronic Press.
- Norell, P. O. (2007). Governing Karlstad: An Insider's Story. In R. A. W. Rhodes, P. 'T Hart, & M. Noordegraaf (Eds.), *Observing Government Elites* (pp. 103–128). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230592360_5
- Norén Bretzer, Y. (2021). *Sveriges politiska system* (4:e uppl). Studentlitteratur.
- Öhberg, P., & Cassel, F. (2023). Election campaigns and the cyclical nature of emotions—How politicians engage in affective polarization. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 46(3), 219–240. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12258>
- Pedersen, L. H., Hjelm, U., & Bhatti, Y. (2018). What does the minister do? On the working conditions of political leaders. *Public Administration*, 96(2), 259–275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12393>
- Pinheiro, R., & Trondal, J. (Eds.). (2022). *Organising and governing governmental institutions: Essays in honour of Dag Ingvar Jacobsen*. Fagbokforlaget.
- Rhodes, R. A. W. (Ed.). (2007). *Observing government elites: Up close and personal*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roberts, R. (2020). Qualitative Interview Questions: Guidance for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4640>

- SCB. (2020). *Förtroendevalda i kommuner och regioner 2019* (Democracy Statistics Report 26).
- SKR. (2015). *Villkor för förtroendevalda Ersättnings- och arbetsvilkor för förtroendevalda I kommuner, landsting och regioner*. Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting.
<https://skr.se/download/18.5627773817e39e979ef7ab1e/1642748843103/7585-265-2.pdf>
- Steinberg, R. J., & Figart, D. M. (1999). Emotional Labor Since: The Managed Heart. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 561(1), 8–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000271629956100101>
- Syssner, J., Häggroth, S., & Ramberg, U. (Eds.). (2017). *Att äga framtiden: Perspektiv på kommunal utveckling*. Centrum för kommunstrategiska studier (CKS) vid Linköpings universitet.
- The American Anthropological Association. (n.d.). *AAA Statement on Ethics*. Retrieved 1 December 2023, from <https://americananthro.org/about/policies/statement-on-ethics/>
- Trost, J. (2010). *Kvalitativa intervjuer* (4., [omarb.] uppl). Studentlitteratur.
- Vetenskapsrådet (Ed.). (2017). *God forskningssed* (Reviderad utgåva). Vetenskapsrådet.
- Weinberg, J. (2021). Emotional labour and occupational wellbeing in political office. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 23(3), 430–450.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148120959044>
- Weller, S. C. (2015). Structured Interviewing and Questionnaire Construction. In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology* (2nd ed). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wharton, A. S. (2009). The Sociology of Emotional Labor. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35, 147–165. JSTOR.

Wittberg, E., & Erlingsson, G. Ó. (2023). *Uppdragskoncentration i svenska kommuner: Om uppdragsjämlighet och maktkoncentration* [CKS Rapport]. Linköping University Electronic Press. <https://doi.org/10.3384/9789180753074>