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# Why rock the boat?

A qualitative case study concerning three municipalities'
reasons for large-scale organisational change

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# Abstract

There is an ongoing debate within Swedish public administration regarding whether municipalities can handle contemporary issues that require some amount of coordination as well as whether they are straying from democratic principles. It is argued that the origin of this debate lies in the sectorisation of the Swedish welfare system, where the traditional model has been deemed unfit. There is concern about technical coordination, as officials are unaware of work occurring outside their own department as well as apprehensions related to a sectorised political organisation. Implemented by approximately 20 percent of Swedish municipalities, a new organisational trend of committee organisation has subsequently achieved social authority as a solution. However, the organisational pendulum has swung once more, as some municipalities have reverted to the traditional model. It is fascinating how municipalities facing the same contemporary issues choose differing organisational solutions.

This study aims to analyse why municipalities differ using a theoretically driven case-based method that applies recent institutional approaches to change. The study follows a qualitative approach and compares three municipalities' organisational change through conducting interviews. The analyses show that the reasons why they change are more closely related to the reform to which they adapt rather than a coherent perspective. Historical-institutional patterns showcase the reasons why municipalities revert to the traditional model and that external factors create pressure to choose committee organisation.


*Keywords*: organisational change, sectorisation, coordination, municipalities, public administration
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# 1    Introduction

"Governing is one of the oldest activities of the human race but it has perhaps never been more difficult or complex … many political elites have come to favour several sets of ideas that bring traditional forms of governing into question" (Dahlström et al., 2011, p. 3).

The objective of this study is to address the Swedish sectorisation debate in public administration by examining two contemporary organisational changes. Since the 1980s, municipalities have been considered to be the welfare state's most important institution (Montin, 1990, p. 248), one which is arguably experiencing a transition and "dark times" (Nabatchi et al., 2011, p. 29). Swedish public administration has undergone extensive changes due to globalisation, privatisation and technologisation, which has created welfare challenges. This has resulted in a societal debate where municipalities are questioned regarding how they run their organisations (Mattisson, 2017, p. 133).

This debate has two sides. On the one hand, clear tendencies are starting to show a rising dynamic process of change to adapt municipal welfare services to new contemporary societal challenges that require coordination. On the other hand, scholars' have recently problematised Swedish local democracy, arguing that the democratic process is straying from democratic principles. The issue is due to both the decreasing rate of individuals joining political parties as well as the lack of available platforms among citizens and politicians between election times. This debate is argued to be a legitimacy crisis (Siverbo, 2009, p. 1; Mattisson, 2017, p. 133).

The sectorisation of the Swedish welfare systems is said to be one of the main reasons for this lack of trust between citizens and the state and is considered to be a problem of democracy and efficiency (Fridolf, 2003, p. 7; Kolam, 2007, p. 84). Due to new and increased demands, municipalities have attempted new approaches and methods by intentionally changing their organisational structure through implementing reforms (Blomquist, 1996, p. 13). Committee organisation is an organisational model which has become more popular among Swedish municipalities in recent years, claiming implementation from approximately 20 percent of Swedish municipalities. In an attempt to focus on coordination and to deal with wicked issues as well as to vitalise the municipal council itself, the idea is to abolish the sectorised boards and to implement advisory committees to serve beneath the municipal council, which is the "supposedly" most democratic institution in municipalities. The council has been one of the main causes of the legitimacy issues, since they formally take decisions made elsewhere. The committee organisation has gained social authority as the universal solution of the sectorisation debate, since the abolishment of boards represents a coordination strategy and provides a further holistic view of organisations (Siverbo et al., 2009, p. 1-2; Bovaird & Löffler, 2003, p.18). Nevertheless, there are parallel processes of "decentralization and centralization and of regulation and de-regulation" (Christensen, 2005, p. 81). The organisational pendulum is said to have swung once more, and some municipalities that have implemented changes have proceeded to re-sectorise and revert to the old model (Karlsson & Gilljam, 2015,

p. 14). Thus, this debate is about two sides of the same coin, de- and re-sectorisation.

> "The implementation of public management reform may entail radical change for public sector organisations, as it implies changes in the values of the organisation. Although such organisational changes are widespread and prevalent in the public sector, the processes through which such changes take place are largely overlooked in the public management literature" (Van der Voet et al., 2014, p. 171).

During a time when decentralisation and the creation of free markets have gained ground in public administration research, it is interesting to study a new norm ideal. The challenge is to identify which factors make organisations choose the reform of de-sectorisation, and its committee organisation, and how in some cases revert to the old model of sectorisation. The fact that municipalities change in different manners signify a need to shift focus toward differing norms, which is unusual since there have often been dominant trends regarding the organisation of local structures. The issue of coordination has though been previously debated in the late 1980s and 1990s when the Local Government Act allowed decentralised boards, which then became popular among larger municipalities and are still used by approximately seven (Amnå et al., 1985, p. 1-2). Organisational change is thus not new in Swedish public administration, as municipalities have always been objects for change.

Organisational change has no best practice, since different organisations choose different reforms due to different reasons. Scholars argue that municipal organisations are sensitive to administration trends and can therefore too quickly alternate between different structures (Jonasson, 2013, p. 12-13). Some argue that this sensitivity is due to political features such as laws and regulations, while Nordic scholars advocate that change occurs due to a historical-institutional legacy causing internal pressure to implement change (Montin, 1990, p. 248; Blomquist, 1996, p. 15). Since 1991, the Local Government Act states that Swedish municipalities do not need to implement the sectorised model, but instead, they may change their structure in ways which they perceive to be best. Shortly afterward, Sweden experienced changing values in public policy and new trends inspired by the New Public Management (NPM) doctrine, which implies that organisations change due to external pressure. External pressure has often been regarded as a solution to the growing welfare state that demands more of the municipality (Mattisson, 2017, p.134; Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p.34).

Change is of interest beyond the individual organisation since similar development can be observed in other authorities. There are several reasons for why the phenomena and process of change is important to understand the development of the welfare state. The types of values which are popular and perceived as modern organisational expression at specific points in time are highlighted depending on the reforms that spread. In addition, the decision of which reform to implement questions dominant and traditional values such as the Swedish case of sectorisation (Rövik, 2000, p. 24-25). Ongoing change has been studied in foreign contexts and on differing levels in Sweden, where the issues are often connected to local democracies and their welfare service responsibilities. However, Swedish municipalities have the power to change their organisation in

response to different tendencies without state interference, which is unique in the European context. This therefore provides an opportunity to study this phenomenon from a new and different perspective.

## 1.1 Research question and aim

The aim of this study is to provide a better understanding of large-scale organisational change occurring in Swedish municipalities and of the reasons to adapt to different reforms. The focus is narrowed to two different reforms that have gained significant attention in recent years: de- and re-sectorisation. The intention is to highlight contemporary welfare and democratic challenges faced by municipalities and to address the ongoing debate regarding sectorisation and coordination. Thus, the analysis attempts to unfold the factors that led to the reforms and drove the change. To shed light on the factors driving the change is possible using organisational theory with three different explanatory factors: historical-institutional legacies, political features and external pressure (Blomquist, 1996, p.14; Bezes et al., 2013, p. 158). The approach of this study follows new institutionalism in order to provide new contributions to the research field through utilising a more complex perspective on organisational change.

This study therefore proposes to qualitatively compare different organisational design changes of three municipalities by conducting a case study consisting primarily of interviews but also complemented by a supplementary text analysis. This is arguably of empirical relevance, as municipalities today face challenges due to the emerging need of coordination, and these three cases have tried to fix this issue and arrived at three different solutions.

The objectives are twofold: firstly, to offer a fine-grained and comparative analysis of the different reforms with tendencies towards a further sectorisation or by trying new steering ideals through a de-sectorisation, which has barely been studied in a Swedish context; and secondly, to contribute new findings since the research field often focuses on abstract theories and not case studies.

Guided by the research aim and problem described above, the research question is narrowed down by the theoretical framework and the method as the following:

*Why do Swedish municipalities facing the same contemporary welfare challenges choose different organisational design solutions?*

These organisational changes were implemented in the term between 2010 and 2014, which is thus the period of focus for most of the research. However, it is still important to avoid too much delineation due to changes potentially occurring before or after this term. The time period examined is different between the cases since they have different histories of reform.

## 1.2   Delimitations

The study is only concerned with three municipalities, as studying more would have reduced the depth of the analysis, which is further discussed in the method section. Furthermore, the interviews were solely conducted with individuals in some type of management position due to their importance to the process. Interviewing individuals lower in the organisation would have been interesting but represents a delimitation due to the limited timeframe and focus of the study. The study is also solely concerned with large-scale organisational change, and smaller changes were not considered if they failed to contribute to explaining the bigger picture.

## 1.3   Disposition

The first chapter discusses the motivation and choice of research area and also defines the problem. The subsequent theoretical framework introduces the extensive research field of organisational theory and reform recipes underlying this study and then discusses how to apply the theories. The third chapter discusses methodological considerations, while the fourth chapter consists of the analysis based on the material gathered. In the sixth and final chapter, the conclusion is presented which is followed by a discussion to consider this study's implications in a broader context before finally suggesting further research.

# 2 Theoretical framework

Comparing organisational change requires "a common grammar" (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 149). The theoretical framework originates from three factors for organisational change provided by Bezes, Fimreite, Le Lidec and Lægreid (2013): historical-institutional legacies, political features and external pressure. Even if there are other ways to approach organisational change, these three factors seem to be the most central to earlier research. It is argued that multiple theoretical factors can aid in understanding how organisations choose to organise themselves (Allison & Zelikow, 1999. p.379). The main argument is that one perspective would not be suitable to explain organisational change, as municipal structure is "driven by a number of different forces" and entails increasingly complex internal conditions and environmental constraints (Christensen & Lægreid, 2010a, p. 399).

Therefore, to understand organisational change, as a triangulation of theories the three factors serve as the main inspiration and foundation for the theoretical framework. Even so, the theoretical framework is complemented with other scholars' theories for organisational change (see Table 1), which is further examined throughout this chapter.

**Table 1.** Table of the three factors

| Historical-institutional legacies | Political features | External pressure |
|---|---|---|
| Historical legacies | Organisational change motivated by power dimension | Technical environment |
| Organisational change motivated by internal organisational problem | Democracy and legitimacy arguments | Institutional environment |
| Internal pressure | Law and regulations | Phenomenon of time |
| Cultural institutional factors | | Cultural factors for external pressure |

## 2.1 Application

To answer the research question the theoretical application is divided into two categories of concepts: outcome and factors for change. Since the aim of the study is to explain an event that has occurred (an outcome of organisational change), the three factors are chosen to observe how they affected the outcome. This represents an attempt to both clarify the theoretical framework as well as to provide a more transparent discussion regarding the theory's connection to the research question to explain the social phenomena.

The outcome concepts are used to explain the event of organisational change through a discussion of the two reforms of de- and re-sectorisation, demonstrated through coordination and specialisation. These reforms and concepts are theoretically compelling since they address the contemporary debate of sectorisation, and they explain how the organisations structurally change (Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 31; Montin, 2006, p. 8-9). This is also a reason for choosing these reforms as case studies, as it is also easier to try to understand patterns regarding why change occurs if the two most different reforms are used in combination with these concepts.

The three factors of historical-institutional legacies, political features and external pressure provide a meta-level theory to explain why changes occur and how each affected the outcome in order to demonstrate both the complexity of the explanations as well as how each offers a different perspective. Considering the aforementioned complexity of public administration, even if these factors provide three different perspectives on change they should not be seen as independent from each other (Rövik, 2008, p. 184; Bezes et al., 2013, p. 147). Even so, one can be more dominant than the others.

Furthermore, the theory of policy process serves as an underlying structure in the analysis of the municipalities. The stages of thinking are a common standard within public administration and are used both to provide insight and a better understanding of the process.[1]

The present work is based on the perception of social constructivism, which argues that the world is socially constructed (Blomquist, 1996, p. 24). One main assumption of this study is based on the intersubjective perspective, according to which organisational forms have consequences on the organisation, actors, and policies involved. This approach is chosen based on both the author's beliefs as well as the main theories identified (Christensen & Lægreid, 2001, p. 24-25; Bezes et al., 2013, p. 147).

To describe this study's context, the theory of organisational theory is first discussed followed by the two classic schools within organisational change. Secondly, the outcome is explained by addressing the Swedish municipal system having undergone the two reforms of de- and re-sectorisation. This is followed by an operationalisation of specialisation and coordination as well as of the three factors in conclusion.

## 2.2   Organisational theory and its classical schools

Organisational theory focuses on understanding organisations and is a multidisciplinary science. It can be perceived as a positive science, where organisational design (the structure of the organisation) is normative and "concerned with how things ought to be, with devising structures to attain goals" (Baligh et al., 1996, p. 1648). Within modern organisational theory, organisations are perceived as systems that consist of different elements that are closely connected, where change happens to all elements and influences every part of the organisation (Jacobsen, 2005, p. 89).[2]

Two opposing classic perspectives of organisational change include the dominant rational-economic paradigm (rational choice), which views reforms as a rational adaption to a changing external environment, as well as the contrasting institutional-sociological (institutionalism) paradigm, which focuses on viewing

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[1] The stages are according to Werner and Wegrich theories of the policy cycle in Fischer and Miller (2006): initiation, adaption and formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. The focus is primarily on the first three stages due to the aim of provide an understanding of change, but the actors' reasoning about the latter two can also give valuable insights (p. 29).
[2] See appendix 1 for figure

institutional factors such as organisational culture and management fashions as explanation to reforms. The dominant rational choice approach is thus based on causal relations between goals and means, suggesting that organisations want to change due to utility (Blomquist, 1996, p. 25-29; Rainey, 2014, p. 31). Institutionalism in contrast believes that both change and stability concern repeated patterns of actions and that institutions are shaped and reshaped by actors and actions through norms and values that are eventually taken for granted in a constant process (Blomquist, 1996, p. 59).

These perspectives are not used as subjects for a rigorous empirical testing in this study but instead to present the striking difference in the theoretical camps of organisational theory and to serve as a theoretical background to the empirical gathering. The foundation of this theoretical framework nevertheless lies in theories of institutionalism, not solely since they relate to the theories used in this study but more importantly to stray from the belief that organisations choose reforms based on the best value. The intention is to instead use a social constructivist approach to consider institutional and societal constraints which rational choice theory would overlook (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 149; Blomquist, 1996, p. 27).

This research also aims to provide another perspective and to avoid framing the study only within the mainstream realm of rational choice. Although the study falls within the scope of new institutionalism, there is no denying the effects of rational choice's dominance in the field, which makes it clear throughout the data collection that the municipalities may point out some rational choice thoughts.

## 2.3   Outcome

### 2.3.1  Swedish municipal system and the reforms

With an extensive unitary welfare state, Sweden has large public sector where the local self-government is a "distinctive feature of the Swedish political system" (Montin, 2014, p. 1). Swedish municipalities have a high degree of autonomy, but the basic structure is regulated by the Local Government Act (Montin, 2014, p. 4-5; Wollman, 2004, p. 640). The Swedish local democracies' political institution consists of both the municipal council (Kommunfullmäktige) and the municipal executive board (Kommunstyrelsen). The former is the elected assembly which establishes who sits in the latter, which "leads and coordinates municipality work" (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015). As long as these two institutions are included, and organisations follow the Local Government Act, the municipalities can organise themselves as they please.[3]

The **traditional governmental model** represents how a re-sectorised[4] municipality looks (see Figure 1). The traditional model is government structured,

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[3] For further info about the Swedish Local Government:
https://skl.se/tjanster/englishpages/municipalitiescountycouncilsandregions/localselfgovernment.1305.html
[4] See appendix 2 for further theoretical information about re-sectorization and its tendencies

sectorised and based on Weberian bureaucratic principles, where the municipal executive board oversees the underlying boards (facknämnder) and where politicians make decisions concerning specific areas and often have their own administrative sectors (förvaltning) according to their field of business, meaning that the organisation is single-purpose and quite specialised (Johansson, 2016, p. 22; Karlsson & Gilljam, 2015, p.31).

The **committee model** is de-sectorised following the reform which strayed from the traditional model, abolishing boards and their sectors, except the mandatory boards such as elections and concerns with bias (see Figure 2). This model's origins lie in governance theory and is arguably a part of postmodern values (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 16; Hill, 2007, p. 20). When a de-sectorisation occurs, the municipal executive board acquires the operational responsibility of the municipality's affairs. The administration is unified under one institution ruled by the municipal executive board. The municipal council has advisory committees (beredningar) that are visionary and multi-purpose, which is the goal of de-sectorisation. The advisory committee can be temporary and is often thematically oriented to a specific task on which the municipality wishes to focus. De-sectorisation reform is arguably a scheme that intervenes with the old Weberian bureaucratic values (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 28-31; Van der Voet et al., 2014, p. 172).

**Figure 1.** Traditional governmental model
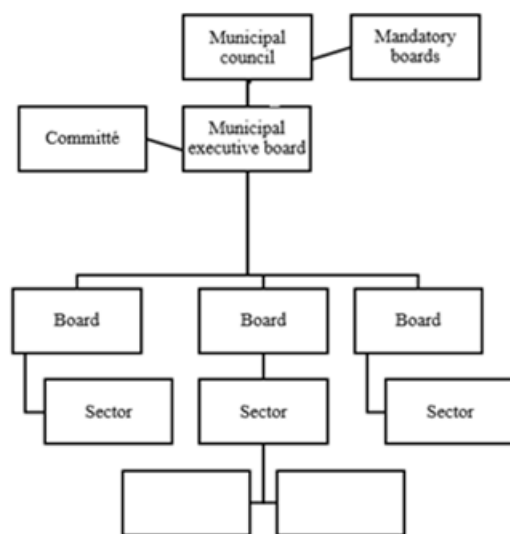


Source: Johansson (2018)

**Figure 2.** Committee organisation
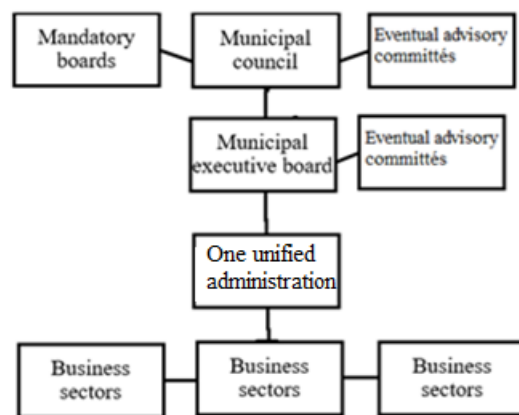


Source: Johansson (2018)

In practice, no municipality will exactly use one of these two models as they more represent ideals, and the names of the boards and committees differ depending on the municipalities (Johansson, 2018, p. 20-21).[5]

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[5] Disclosure: this source is a report the author performed in a research project for Halmstad University as a research assistant. It should not be seen as the main source as its theories are based on several scholars, but since it is almost the only paper handling re-sectorisation it has been decided to regard it as a reliable source.

### 2.3.2 Operationalisation of specialisation and coordination

Two models for how municipalities structure themselves include the concepts of specialisation and coordination, which in this study are used to explain which changes occur in the structure when organisational change occurs. The concepts relate to a power dimension in public administration and specific strategies regarding how to best steer organisations, namely challenges in determining how to specialize (single- or multi-purpose, who is in charge) and coordinate (by what means should coordination across different functions, levels and sectors be achieved) the municipality. The concepts help to expand understanding of the organisation as well as the reform process (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 97).

In the **traditional sectorised model,** "specialisation may be defined as the creation of new public-sector organisations, with limited objectives and specific tasks, out of traditional core-administrations which have many tasks and different, sometimes conflicting objectives" (Lægreid & Verhoest, 2010, p. 5). This is according to horizontal and vertical specialisation, where the vertical refers to "differentiation of responsibility on hierarchical levels, describing how political and administrative tasks and authority are allocated between forms of affiliation" while the horizontal refers to splitting the administrative and political organisation into many boards to focus on how authorities at the same level allocate tasks (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 150). Horizontal specialisation thus leads to specialised officials and politicians with a lack of knowledge concerning the rest of the organisation. This model is often viewed to be effective in identifying who oversees what and thus who has high accountability (Statskontoret, 2010, p. 23, 26).

To deal with wicked issues, coordination is commonly used as opposed to specialisation and is described as "the purposeful alignment of tasks and efforts of units to achieve a defined goal. Its aim is to create greater coherence in policy and to reduce redundancy, lacunae, and contradictions within and between policies" (Lægreid & Verhoest, 2010, p. 5-6). The municipality can decide to implement negative coordination even if the boards are following horizontal specialisation, which entails minimal coordination and focusing on preventing sectors from harming each other and on minimising conflicts. These concerns are a focus of the sectorised municipal model (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 11).

The classification according to the **committee model** and de-sectorisation is arguably the opposite, as this model concerns vertical and horizontal despecialisation. The vertical model shifts responsibility and power closer to the political leaders, leading to centralisation. The horizontal "implies merging organisations at the same administrative level" and creates synergies in the decision-making process through the ways in which different units complement and strengthen each other in finding solutions (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 150), thus abolishing boards and creating advisory committees to work in more visionary ways (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 6). Coordinating work areas in this manner is considered by some scholars to be an argumentation for the post-NPM movement (Statskontoret, 2010, p. 26; Bezes et al., 2013, p. 149), which is a response against vertical specialisation. These scholars argue that NPM focuses too much on details and that politicians should be more visionary and deal with "what"-

questions rather than "how" to perform the task. Furthermore, despecialisation has also been criticised for leading to difficulties regarding accountability (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 11).

De-sectorisation is often referred to as a "whole-of-government" reform to address wicked issues and to increase positive coordination, which is "focusing on building up coherent and integrated policies and means". In the case of de-sectorisation, the goal is also to have one unified administration to avoid sector guardians and to provide officials with a comprehensive view of the organisation (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 150). A more centralised organisation is desired to vitalise the power of the municipal council as a democratic strategy. Even so, studies show that the power is often centralised even further to the municipal executive board (Karlsson et al., 2009).

## 2.4 Factors for organisational change

### 2.4.1 Operationalisation of historical-legacies, political features and external pressure

*Historical-institutional legacies*

The first factor concerns both historical legacies and institutional theories, where the focus is on why change occurs due to driving forces within the organisation. The essence is that organisational changes occur within historical-institutionalised contexts that influence contemporary reforms. Examining the historical perception of a public organisation allows analysis of characteristics and understanding whether and how a municipality is receptive to a reform (Christensen & Lægreid, 2010a, p. 399; Blomquist, 1996, p. 120-122). The expectation is that these institutional legacies will influence how problems are perceived within the organisation today as well as the variety of alternatives (Thelen, 2003, p. 209). Historical legacies thus concern whether the municipalities have a history of reforms (are they accustomed to reforms), their path dependency and institutional memories. These concepts have proven to be of evident importance in earlier research into initiating and implementing a reform (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 41). Path dependency theory refers to challenges in organisational change due to individuals being set in their ways and thus prolonging the decision-making process. This theory includes institutional memory, where even if the organisation has changed, actors will often refer to the previous organisation over time (Norén Bretzer, 2000, p. 29).

Institutional factors based on historical legacies are often referred to as an organisational change motivated by internal organisational problems. According to Rövik, one of the most prominent organisational scholars, something is portrayed as an internal problem which leads to a change (2000, p. 118). According to earlier research, the two most common internal problems are sector guardians and coordination issues, as previously mentioned. Sector guardians occur when politicians and/or officials protect the business areas' interest and do not consider the whole organisation. Coordination issues concern when parts of

the organisation have issues correlating in mutual matters, which has been argued to lead to reduced quality of service to citizens (Johansson, 2016, p. 1). Even so, another scholar named Jacobsen argues for the importance of internal pressure regarding institutional factors, which can be a strong driving force for change due to different social systems. This means that norms and values within the institution determine the ways in which the organisation will react in different settings, and there are therefore no power dimensions or other factors explaining the change besides the fact that it was desired by the organisation. This is because if the organisational change occurred due to internal pressure, there was a consensus in the organisation (Jacobsen, 2005, p. 41-46).

The internal environment of an organisation is often analysed using the theory of organisational culture. Cultural factors are important because "when public organisations are exposed to reform processes, the reforms proposed must go through a cultural compatibility test" which also highlights the importance of historical legacies (Christensen & Lægreid, 2010a, p. 397). It is useful for this theoretical framework to identify these factors and different traits which affect the organisation's ability to change since they can showcase eagerness (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 33). This can be derived to two different factors. The first regards whether the culture in the organisation is more dynamic or conservative, referring to whether the institution perceives change as an opportunity or as a threat. This is also interesting to examine from a historical perspective and thus use an organisation's history of reforms to determine whether they have always viewed change as an opportunity or whether organisational change mostly occurs because they desire change and possibly view themselves as risk-takers. The second cultural traits regard whether they perceive themselves as risk-takers or control committed, where the latter refers to exercising increased cautiousness when implementing change (Bergström, 2002, p. 56-57; Björk & Bostedt, 2003, p. 32).

**Table 2.** Historical-institutional legacies

| Historical-institutional legacies for organisational change | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Historical legacies<br>- History of reforms<br>- Path dependency and institutional memory | Organisational change motivated by internal organisational problem<br>- Sector guardians<br>- Coordination issues | Internal pressure | Cultural institutional factors<br>- Dynamic or conservatism<br>- Risk-takers or control committed |

*Political features*

The political factor concerns the power dimension that is within all public organisations and addresses the classic questions concerning the presence of political and democratic reasons for change. It thus regards organisational change motivated by a power dimension. This factor is especially actor driven, meaning that whoever has the power to initiate and implement an organisational change is perceived to be an important driving force through either dominance, persuasion or diffusion. Public management thus plays a leading role in organisational changes. Studies show that leadership is of great importance to organisational development, both during the leaders' time in position and even afterward (Bezes

et al., 2013, p.151; Siverbo, 2004, p. 35). Earlier research shows that the change agent, the bearer of the reform, can be any member or members in the organisation, and since public administration is "the barging between elites" in the organisation, this can include both leading politicians and officials (Siverbo, 2004, p. 35; Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 47). Organisational change in this factor is often referred to as top-driven. Furthermore, elite-decision-making is also implied here, which is when a group of leading actors or a political party believes a change is needed without primarily relating to internally or externally created problems (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 33; Bezes et al., 2013, p.152).

Political factors also include democracy and legitimacy issues, concerning whether the municipality has democratic arguments for organisational change (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 33). In earlier research the most common legitimacy issue in Sweden regarded the municipal council, which is supposed to be the most democratic institution of the organisation since it is the only institution elected by the people, however reports show that it often only formally takes decisions made elsewhere. Furthermore, the democratic discussion, which by law should belong in the municipal council, occurs elsewhere or nearly not at all. Therefore, a vitalisation of the municipal council can be a democratic argument for organisational change. This can also concern transparency by making the organisation more accountable to stating where decisions are made (Scott, 2014, p. 189; Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 6).

Furthermore, problems with delegation for an organisational change are seen as a power balance between two actors and is in itself a democratic argument for change. As stated in the literature, it is considered to be harmful to democratic principles when officials possess power rather than elected politicians (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 21).

A growing problem in Swedish local democracies is that the political parties face challenges in recruiting new politicians, especially younger ones. Therefore, utilising different organisational designs can be viewed as a solution to engage more people in politics, which arguably follows utilitarian motives (Karlsson & Gilljam, 2015, p. 23). The final democratic reason can be "mellanvalsdemokrati", referring to a so-called democracy between elections by principle of proximity, which is a newly popular topic in Swedish public administration. This concept can be explained as trying to engage citizens into dialogue regarding political concerns in order to decrease the distance between politicians and citizens and to ebb the feeling of elite-decision-making (Karlsson & Gilljam, 2015, p. 31-34).[6]

The most classic political factor however regards law and regulation from the national level, which can create a need for change to meet new demands or handling the pressure of increasing tasks (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 152).

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[6] Even if this could be argued as an external pressure, scholars undoubtedly state this as a democratic factor (Karlsson & Gilljam, 2015, p. 31).

**Table 3**. Political features

| Political features for organisational change | | |
|---|---|---|
| Organisational change motivated by power dimension (dominance, persuasion, diffusion) <br> - Change agent (leadership and/or management) <br> - Elite-decision-making | Democracy and legitimacy issues <br> - Vitalisation of the municipal council <br> - Transperancy <br> - Power balance between officials and politicians <br> - Easier recruitment of politicians <br> - Citizen dialogue | Law and regulations |

*External pressure*

The third factor concerns the external environment and is also called socio-economic forces by scholars. Scholars argue that external pressure create negotiation space for organisations (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 153; Baligh et al., 1996, p. 1648-1649) as the public sector changes in response to "their environment, and changes in ideas about governing, with a variety of structural and procedural mechanisms" (Dahlström, 2011, p. 3). External pressure can be described as organisational change motivated by externally created problems. Following a social constructivist approach, this is nonetheless believed to be created internally rather than objectively appearing from the outside. For example, municipalities can either perceive external pressure as causing to change, or they can perceive themselves as wanting to change due to this, such as to create better welfare service for the citizens, meaning that their own will causes this pressure rather than any outside force (Rövik, 2000, p. 122-123,).

External pressure can be divided into technical and institutional environments that drive public reform (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 33). The technical environment refers to specific problems with strong external determinism and concerns triggers for change as "technology developments, change in citizens' taste or trust for the organisations" (Christensen & Lægreid, 2010b, p. 412). In the research field, trends in finance and economy are believed to have strong implications for organisational structure, meaning that economies of scale are aimed to reduce costs or to promote more efficient policies (Siverbo, 2004, p. 15; Mattisson, 2017, p. 133).

The institutional environment regards pressure within organisational fields, meaning organisations within common settings within a social sphere such as municipalities (Blomquist, 1996, p. 62-63; Christensen et al., 2006, p .10). Myths of rationality, or mimetic isomorphism, is a common organisational term for organisational change where "everyone seems to be doing this, so we better try it too" (Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p .76). The concept of mimetic isomorphism is mainly an organisational theory concerning "best organisational forms", where the best recipe for a solution has become a social authority and where fashion setters (scholars, prominent leaders or similar organisations) promote a type of reform (Bergström, 2002, p. 36; Abrahamson & Fairchild, 1999, p. 708). Social authority explains how institutionalised myths are perceived to give the organisation legitimisation (Palthe, 2014, p. 64; Pollitt & Bouckeart, 2017, p. 76).

External pressure can also concern the phenomenon of time such as in the variety of solutions for organisation some reforms attain the classification of

modern or fashionable. Reforms are then perceived as fashion phenomena rather than as a rational solution to effectivity problems (Rövik, 2000, p. 91; Blomquist, 1996, p. 70). Abrahamson and Eisenman´s research on trending fashions in public administration focuses on diffusion of so-called popularity waves of ideas, referring to external pressure ̋to transform organisational inputs into organisational outputs̋ (2008, p. 719). Fashion trends are not independent but are instead transitory with the goal to make the organisation satisfy followers to increase legitimacy. Terms such as modern and progress are far often more positive than stability and continuity (Bringselius & Thomasson, 2017, p. 155), and "attempts at modernization typically include change" (Abrahamson, 1996, p. 270-272). On the other hand, the phenomenon of time can also regard so-called time-typical problems that are supposed to be experienced by all similar organisations and that are considered to be critical and serious. A reform has thus often been promoted by fashion setters to be the universal solution for these time typical problems (Rövik, 2008, p. 125; Rövik, 2000, p. 118-125).

Furthermore, it is important to describe two cultural factors in order to explain whether an organisation is open to external pressure. The first factor concerns openness or closeness, referring to whether the organisation perceives itself as being open to new impulses from the outside and whether it positively regards them. The second is the factor of obedience or disobedience, referring to whether the organisation believes it is important to adapt to the outside world's expectations (Bergström, 2002, p. 56-57; Bovaird, 2003, p. 61-62).

**Table 4**. External pressure

| External pressure for organisational change | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Technical environment <br> - Technology developments <br> - Change in citizens taste or trust for the organisation <br> - Change in economic conditions/financial pressure <br> - Promote more efficient policies | Institutional environment <br> - Myths of rationality or mimetic isomorphism <br> - Fashion setters and social authority | Phenomenon of time <br> - Modern (fashion) <br> - Universal solution | Cultural factors <br> - Openness or closeness <br> - Obedience or disobedience |

Furthermore, due to the deductive approach of this study the appropriate methodological approach is derived from the theoretical framework.

# 3   Methodological considerations

To explain the methodological starting points and provide the reader with an understanding of the research's structure, it is important to reflect on the possibilities and limitations of the research (Bergström, 2002, p. 57). The method was chosen based on the theory-driven nature of the study to be aligned with the research's aim and theoretical framework. A qualitative approach is thus appropriate for several reasons. First, in contrast from a quantitative approach, the former does not rely on numerical approaches to study specific aspects of a phenomena but instead relies on small numbers of cases to study more in-depth. Furthermore, the abundance of data creates possibilities for rich descriptions and explanations of both the social and institutional phenomena concerning change in organisations, which would not be possible with the preciseness of quantitative research (King et al., 1994, p. 3-4; Tracy, 2010, p. 841). A qualitative approach facilitates the understanding of change in municipalities (Merriam, 1994, p. 8-9). A quantitative survey nonetheless would have allowed for more respondents, such as a survey to all 290 Swedish municipalities with a variety of roles, which would strengthened the generalisability of the study. Nevertheless, the aim to attain a deeper understanding was deemed to be difficult to achieve through a quantitative study.

Regarding epistemology, a qualitative study is associated with interpretivism, which is in line with the theoretical perspective of social constructivism. This signifies that the researcher is attempting to understand the social world and its order through interpretation (Furlong & Marsh, 2010, p. 184-185, 199). A deductive approach is used due to the theoretical abundance of the research, meaning that the framework generates the empirical data collected rather than vice versa in an inductive approach (Bryman, 2011, p. 26-27).

## 3.1   Study design

The design is an empirical multiple case study based on ideas, as scholars have argued reforms are initiated by ideas perceived by actors. Change occurs in a process rather than suddenly, and all change initiatives stem from ideas. The behaviour of actors within the organisation makes ideas obsolete, as "the relations between ideas and behavior are mutual" (Lundquist, 2007, p. 163). The material is thus studied through interpretations of ideas according to the three factors. Qualitative case studies are heuristic, meaning they improve the readers' understanding of the phenomena, as well as particularistic, which implies the study focuses on a particular context (Merriam, 1994, p. 25; Björk & Bostedt, 2000, p. 15). As a method, case studies manage to research the specific problem as a type of investigation of a specific happening, and therefore to study contemporary reform in Swedish municipalities, case studies are suitable based on the nature of this research. It is methodological tool that is sensitive, which allows the researcher to interpret social institutions (Merriam, 1994, p. 19).

Furthermore, to understand the process of change a comparative study is used with three cases or municipal representatives, since the aim is to identify

differences and similarities between the study objects. Observation across several cases of a political reform "provides valuable opportunities for policy learning and exposure to new ideas and perspectives", which makes it unsuitable to use one single case (Hopkin, 2010, p. 285). Even if a single case would allow deeper understanding of the organisation, the aim here is to provide an understanding of change, and it can be debated whether one case can really accomplish this objective due to internal validity issues between the observations made and the theoretical framework (Wagner, 2007, p. 5).

### 3.1.1 Case selections

Since the municipalities' organisational maps are complex a mixed-system strategy has been applied, referring to the combination of the most different and most similar cases. It is not recommended to study more than four cases in a qualitative case study, and regarding choosing the research questions and method, three cases can be deemed suitable for representation, as using more would reduce the depth of analysis (Daymon & Holloway, 2011, p. 115). The cases vary regarding the three background variables but are most similar in that they have all experienced a de-sectorisation in order to strengthen the reliability (Bezes et al., 2013, p. 148). The background variables where the cases differ include classification, population and current organisational structure. Classification is used to attain a variety of sizes and business compositions, population for variety and the organisational structure due to the theoretical application.

The organisational design as well as the cases are divided into three models: de-sectorised, re-sectorised and a concept of tendencies towards a re-sectorisation. Based on the requirements listed, Ängelholm, Svedala and Båstad were selected. Regarding the selection of Ängelholm,[7] there are around 60 Swedish municipalities with a de-sectorised model today, but nonetheless the sample is limited since many municipalities adapted to the reform in the late 1990s to the early 2000s, and therefore key individuals with knowledge about the reform are no longer in the organisation, which is crucial for the material gathering. Ängelholm is also the municipality that has most recently adapted to the reform. Furthermore, Svedala[8] was chosen since there are only four municipalities that have undergone a re-sectorisation, and the other three did so too far back in time. In addition, Svedala is interesting since they were one of the of the committee organisation pioneers of the late 1990s. Nonetheless, for the third case there are several cases with tendencies towards a re-sectorisation, but only one municipality described themselves as "halfway" between the organisational designs with both boards under the executive board and committees under the municipal council. Thus, Båstad[9] was selected (see Table 5).

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[7] See appendix 3 and 4 for Ängelholm organisational map before and after the de-sectorisation
[8] See appendix 5 and 6 for Svedala organisational map before and after the re-sectorisation
[9] See appendix 7 and 8 for Båstad organisational map before and after the tendency to re-sectorisation

**Table 5**. Classification of the cases

| | Population 2017 | Organisational design 2017 | Classification of Swedish municipalities* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Ängelholm* | 40 200 | De-sectorized | B |
| *Svedala* | 20 200 | Re-sectorized (Traditional sectorized model) | A |
| *Båstad* | 14 400 | Tendencies towards re-sectorization | C |

*According to SKL 2017, scale on A-C, A- Large cities and municipalities near large cities, B- medium-sized towns and municipalities near medium-sized towns, C – Smaller towns/urban areas and rural municipalities

**Source:** SKL, 2017d

It can be argued that these municipalities were chosen due to availability, which is partly true, but there is also more to it as shown by the discussion above. The cases represent average-sized municipalities, and due to their average size and population they are not outliers when considering all Swedish municipalities. This thus does not represent a significant limitation regarding reliability. External reliability or generalisability is a goal that should be held by all studies, even though qualitative research in a contextual setting is limited in this sense due to the relation to time and space. Even if generalisability is not possible in a strict sense, it does not mean that this result lacks relevance to other municipalities, since the analyses as arguably represent an expression of contemporary societal phenomena and relevant research. Furthermore, the context of the cases should not be viewed as unique, as local municipalities often represent one type of a more general pattern, and to state they are unique can create methodological problems (Bergström, 2002, p. 40, 58; Van der voet et al., 2014, 171-172). This case-study approach therefore also allows the author to study three "district processes of change within an identical context" (Yin, 2014).

Furthermore, it is important to address that due to the ambition to have variation in the case selection, consequently, the theoretical interpretation may also have resulted in being guided. Nevertheless, since the cases are chosen both due to the reflection above, and scholarly debate on main driving forces, it is not being assumed that this will be perceived as an issue.

### 3.1.2 Material

To answer the research question the primary data are gathered using face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher, which increases the study's reliability. Except in one case where a phone interview was performed. Interviews were chosen as they allow a more in-depth analysis of the responses and their underlying interpretations. Actors are also the focus of this study according to the theoretical framework, since they are the bearers of the reforms. Furthermore, the interviews are semi-structured, which means a general topic guide is used to provide the interviewee the opportunity to freely shape and develop their answers and to give the researcher greater freedom to connect and focus on different follow-up questions. Interviews are both an important tool and are argued to be one of the best choices when handling cases studies, even if they have some implications (Merriam, 1994, p. 19-21), such as that it is important to remember

that interviews represent interviewee statements rather than absolute truth. Regardless, a researcher cannot expect absolute truth from any method. It is also important to recognise that the researcher as well as the interviewees' interpretations are important for the results and to some extent limit the study. There is a risk that the interviewee also reacts and subconsciously attempts to understand what the researcher seeks and gives answers which they believe to be best, thus representing the limitation of demand characteristics (Bryman, 2011, p. 415; Bergström, 2002, p. 58).

The topic guide[10] is theme based, meaning that thematic areas focus the central aims of the interviews, beginning with a short introduction asking about the interviewees' profession and, due to ethical reasons, whether it is permissible to record the interview. The two other thematic areas are rooted in the theoretical concepts to achieve validity (Esaisson et al., 2012, p. 239, 265).

The sample of the respondents[11] includes politicians and officials to represent the internal actors in order to answer the research question from both a top-down (politicians') and bottom-up (officials') approach. Politicians are those who are elected in the municipal organisation, even if research has shown that it is the officials that can have great influence on the process of change as well as sometimes even initiate it and serve as the primary bearers. Furthermore, external actors have been included to further represent the third perspective of external factors in order to broaden the understanding of the organisation's external pressure. The respondents thus include individuals which play key roles in the reform process. Two politicians, one official and an external actor were chosen as samples for each municipality due to their central positions often referenced in policy documents. To understand the political factor in the theoretical application, two politicians have been perceived to be suitable both concerning variety in political parties and to understand whether there was consensus achieved in the decision-making of the reform (Esaisson et al., 2012, p. 258; Gjelstrup & Sörensen, 2007, p. 351). Furthermore, a theoretical saturation had been reached in all municipalities after these planned interviews, except in the case of Ängelholm. After performing the interviews some details were missing, and thus it was decided to interview an additional official that all other interviewees had mentioned.

Nonetheless, it was only possible to include an external actor in the case of Ängelholm, were a team of scholars have performed an evaluation of the new organisation. In the case of Båstad an external consultant was contacted that had performed an extensive evaluation of the municipality in 2013, and they initially accepted an interview but later declined stating they did not want to "speculate". The evaluation has thus instead been used as an external perspective for Båstad. Concerning Svedala there was no external actor to contact, as neither the media nor citizens followed the re-sectorisation, and no external actor had been hired for evaluations as they were performed in-house. There were 11 interviews in total.

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[10] See appendix 9 and 10 for topic guide
[11] See appendix 11

After obtaining permission, the respondents were disclosed by name in the analysis, since political representatives are well-known figures and knowing party affiliations and the position of the respondent provides valuable insights. Keeping the names anonymous would not make a difference while revealing the affiliated party and position, as the latter would suffice to clarify the identify of a person. It therefore only seems appropriate to disclose their names the same as the other actors. Thus, ethical reasons have been considered (Tracy, 2010, p. 846).

The primary data are supplemented by secondary data through a text analysis of policy documents concerning the reform, which was performed following collection of the primary data to avoid subconsciously steering the interviews in any direction. Furthermore, gathering material from more than one source serves to enhance validity and avoid bias from one single perspective (Dayman & Holloway, 2011, p. 115). The text analysis provides insight into larger and smaller changes within the organisation which serve as motives for reforms, goals, evaluations and analysis. Text analysis is also relevant when examining the historical-institutional legacies in the municipalities (Bergström 2002, p. 62; Björk & Bostedt, 2003, p. 72-73).

To continue, the analysis section then presents the results from the data collection, where the municipalities of Ängelholm, Svedala and Båstad are analysed according to the three perspectives presented in the theoretical framework.

# 4 Analysis

## 4.1 Ängelholm – An attempt to modernise

### 4.1.1 Historical-institutional legacies – conservative yet dynamic?

Ängelholm municipality lacks an extensive history of reforms, as the municipality has not dramatically changed since the great municipal mergers in the 1970s.[12] The municipality has been a traditional sectorised organisation focusing on specialisation. However, changes began occurring in the 2000s. In 2007 Ängelholm decided to further specialise their political organisation by implementing a technical board. This wave of changes continued during the term of 2006-2010, when discussions regarding the traditional model began. However, no changes resulted in implementation at the time, revealing their history of favouring smaller adjustments over large-scale changes (Tebring, interview, Ängelholms kommun, 2013a, p. 3).

Nevertheless, in 2014 the municipality decided to de-sectorise. In the early stages of the policy process, path dependency and institutional memory are not detectable, which is common when implementing such a reform (Johansson, interview). Even so, in the later stages of implementation and evaluation, these concepts are detectable but not identified as an explanation for change.

Concerning organisational change motivated by internal organisational problem, the change was not directly perceived due to internal problems. Even so, there was some concern within the organisation that can be perceived as implicit explanations for change.

> "So why could not a municipality change then? No, we just thought so, without finding anything particularly that was wrong. We could do it in a different way" (Hansson, interview).

In a SWOT-analysis regarding the traditional organisation from 2011, respondents mention sector guardians, perceiving internal organisational problems among both politicians and officials, as a threat in two manners (Ängelholms kommun, 2011a, p. 57-58). First, concern involved coordination issues regarding confidentiality between boards.[13] The two boards engaged with social services and schools, while overlapping matters concerning the same individuals, were described as having different cultures resulting in complex coordination (Hansson, interview). This issue had been ongoing for several years, which is a pity since the politicians nonetheless could not achieve the full picture and coordinate. This factor is mostly mentioned by one of the interviewees, who considered it to be a strong driving force (Hansson, interview). Second, sector guardians are further

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[12] When the state merged smaller municipalities into larger ones.
[13] "Sekretess", when you by law are not allowed to talk to anyone about the matter except the other politicians and officials involved.

described as a threat by the manager of the municipal office. In 2007, when the organisation became further specialised, coordination issues started more explicitly arise. Individuals guarded their own interests and "became their own gang and drove their separate line" (Tebring, interview). The issue at hand was that the new board did not consider the whole organisation, which consequently led to issues (Sandén, interview). It was sometimes questioned why that board was initiated, as they were difficult to deal with and inflexible concerning the municipalities' general goals (Tebring, interview).

> "Partly, the old organisation can be perceived as dull. In every budget process there was a clear territorial thinking, at least when the Building board and the Technical board declared their proposals. 'We think, and we need…' And to try to compromise was difficult, and we thought this we can do in a better way." (Sandén, interview).

Nonetheless, for the majority involved internal coordination issues did not represent any of the initial factors driving change, but instead it was more underlying factors discussed during the policy adaption and formulation stage (Hansson, interview; Holmberg, interview).

Concerning cultural factors of the organisation, it is difficult to perceive whether they are the reason for change in the classic sense. The organisation seems to identify themselves with conservative ideals and committed to control, as the process of change was planned, and every angle was extensively examined (Hansson, interview; Tebring, interview).

> "Ängelholm has been still for several years with an old-fashioned organisation. So, this was the first step we took, and it was a huge one" (Tebring, interview).

Nonetheless, there is a desire to become more dynamic. Change is perceived as positive by most, as organisational members display a competitive spirit against other municipalities, and the person described as a suitable fit in the organisation should be open to change and be flexible (Hansson, interview; Tebring, interview). The new dynamic side of the organisation can be interpreted as a new phase in their municipal history. Because conservative values were prominent in the past, an institutional memory lingers where some actors describe themselves as more traditional and state that they sometimes miss the sectorised model:

> ".. in my political party we are many that is of the understanding… even if I am relatively young, I can still be quite traditional in how I think a municipal or political organisation should be" (Holmberg, interview).

## 4.1.2 Political features - vitalisation

*Power dimension*

In the initial stage of organisational change, most of the interviewees agree that the change agent was the former Deputy Major from the conservative party that pushed for it. She managed to quickly reach agreement with other leading, including the opposition leader. Hence, a parliamentary committee was

established to investigate how a new political organisation could be initiated in 2010 (Holmberg, interview; Sandén, interview). However, the opposition leader recalls that both she and the Deputy Major equally initiated and desired change (Hansson, interview).

> "The initiative came from the politicians. We had tried the term before, when we appointed a group to discuss but then the courage was not there, and nothing happened. But in this period, something happened, it was the Deputy Major that really wanted to achieve something, to modernise … compared to the term before, a window of opportunity opened" (Tebring, interview).

The quote suggests that a change agent made all the difference. The discussion started in 2006, but it was only in 2010, when the municipality's leading figure took the role as the bearer of the reform, that something happened through a power dimension and dominance thanks to her position (Tebring, interview). This is not surprising in the case of Ängelholm, as the municipality seems to claim a long history of strong leaders (Johansson, interview).

Thus, there was no political party that specifically initiated the reform. Great attention was given to the adaption and formulation stage to achieve consensus, which was an ambition due to lessons learned from other municipalities and scholars that argued that a de-sectorisation is a large-scale change requiring endurance and everyone's participation (Tebring, interview). Therefore, in the decision-making process all parties were on board and agreed "to 99%". Everyone agreed that the administrative organisation should be unified, but there were some disagreements concerning whether there should be one more board or less (Sandén, interview). This is not surprising since Ängelholm municipality seems to have a long tradition of consensus solutions and compromise (Holmberg, interview). Nonetheless, even if the politicians were mainly positive, the officials had different feelings towards the change. Mainly people within the townhall were strongly positive, but some members lower in the organisation questioned the change or did not perceive it as affecting them (Sandén, interview; Johansson, interview).

### *Democracy and legitimacy arguments*

During the adaption and formulation stage, the political factors are most vivid and primarily concerned with democratic strategies to legitimise the organisation. First, by some interviewees, the vitalisation of the municipal council is described as the main driving force for organisational change (Tebring, interview; Ängelholm, 2011b, p.3). It was believed that the executive board had too much influence due to a power concentration in the committee (KSAU) beneath it, where the leading politicians were members. The other politicians perceived that the matters handled by the council were already decided by this group (Tebring, interview). Thus, the attractiveness of being a politician became questionable if there were only five people in one committee making the decisions and they needed to vitalise:

"The debates in the municipal council was perceived as some kind of charades, where representatives from the political parties debated concerning issues that everyone involved already knew had been decided…" (Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 34).

Furthermore, the vitalisation thus primarily would occur through the advisory committees beneath the council. The committees provided a way to find a new approach to make the debate livelier and were described as being quite unconventional (Johansson & Severinsson, 2017, p. 2; Ängelholms kommun, 2014a, p. 4) Hence, the vitalisation was also considered to address concentrating the decision-making to the politicians to decide "what" while delegating the officials to offer a solution regarding "how" (Sandén, 2017, p. 19). The intention was to vitalise the political organisation by allowing the politicians more time to discuss strategies and overall policy questions, while everyday matters should be handled by officials (Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 61). Therefore, some describe these committees as "revolutionary" and state they were intrigued by the new organisation since it was believed to be more flexible as a result of the advisory committees (Ängelholms kommun, 2012a, p. 2; committee for political steering, 2017).

A second driving force for organisational change was citizen dialogue to legitimise representative democracy, or namely to open a platform for political debate that was not controlled by the political parties but integrated the citizens on their terms and in another manner. This was the committees' main task and was perceived as a new organisational strategy by gathering citizens' opinions and proposals (Sandén, 2017, p. 19; Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 13-15; Hansson, interview). Nevertheless, citizen dialogue was not the focus during the initiation stage of the process, but rather it became something which arose and gained attention during the adaption and formulation stage (Ängelholms kommun, 2013b, p. 1-2).

"For the citizens to think 'this is what the social contract should be about'. If I say something my voice will be heard, maybe it will not turn out as I wish but it is no closed door. There are possibilities to influence … Those things the municipality must be careful with, because it is much easier to demolish this trust than to build it back up" (Sandén, interview).

Scholars that have followed the new political organisation of Ängelholm argue that the political realm has become more complex, and therefore citizen dialogue is a way to legitimise democracy and allow the municipalities to focus more on wicked issues (Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 30).

The committee organisation was also seen as a strategy to engage new people in politics. In a SWOT-analysis from 2011, the traditional model was labelled as a threat of legitimacy concerning the recruitment of new politicians. The committee organisation was considered to be a solution to this (Ängelholms kommun, 2012a, p. 1-2).[14]

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[14] See appendix 12 for SWOT-analysis

"The committees were also a thing many people put a lot of trust in. Another way to be a politician … there is an issue with regrowth. There is statistics from all over the country concerning this issue, lower number of members in the political parties and so on. Somewhere they wanted a lower threshold in, and maybe also make it more interesting to be a politician … In a board you get really involved in specific issues, some love that but the big long-term issues that others love to dwell in was forgotten in the old organisation" (Sandén, interview).

The scholars that have been evaluating Ängelholm's new organisation state that there are many elderly individuals holding on to their positions since there are hardly any newcomers willing to take over. The median age of politicians in Ängelholm is 56 years old, which is not far from the national average (Johansson, interview; Ängelholms kommun, 2012b, p. 1-2).[15] It seemed more thrilling to participate in a committee than a board, since the committees represent an easier way to be introduced to the realm of politics, as they entail a shorter period compared to boards and are often less time consuming since they do not handle every last detail (Tebring, interview; Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 51). Furthermore, the legitimacy issue with recruitment is also connected to the problem of diversity:

"Do you trust the system if you don't feel a connection to it?" (Tebring, interview)

The municipality is worried that the gap between them and the citizens will widen with the years when mostly elderly people are represented. They want to have an organisation with politicians representing the entirety of society (Tebring, interview).

### 4.1.3 External pressure –institutional environment as game changes

*Technical environment*

In the study material, one recurring driving force is the technical environment concept as an externally created problem:

"What I actually think is the most interesting with the political organisation is the Welfare board. And on paper that is the easiest thing, coordinate the schools and social services. But in practice it is very complex and very hard with laws and regulations that ... But with the new organisation we are saying like "no, this is not good enough", that one person must turn to so many when they need help … It is included in the project that nowadays we should not be able to pass someone around, in the municipal labyrinth." (Sandén, interview).

The quote delves into the problems regarding specialisation for the sake of the citizens as the driving force is identified as the need to create more efficient policies for the them through a coordinated organisation. This was not due to citizen demand, but rather it was viewed as an externally created problem, where the municipality could perform better in this scenario and therefore also should. The new organisation, and especially the administrative organisation, aimed to

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[15] See appendix 13 for graph

place the citizen in the centre. This was believed to increase the efficiency of all work procedures and to provide better services (Karlsson et al., 2018, p. 52).

> "For the individual citizen the service should be getting better, the service will get better. That's the point with it all. … Yes, with the operative structure overall. The surrounding world is changing, there are new demands and the public administration somewhere must match that or decide that it is not part of the task from the state. But, if it is included in the task laid upon us we must be able to bring about these services..." (Sandén, interview).

The external interviewee, a political scientist involved in an evaluation of the new political organisation, perceives this factor to be far more important than the democratic reasoning:

> "To coordinate was a means to make the administration more efficient for the citizens, that was probably the strongest driving force. … I even think it was more important than the democratic model and is almost perfectly associated with the incentive for one unified municipal administration." (Johansson, interview).

Furthermore, in the annual reports from the scholars investigating the political organisation, this is considered to be one of the greatest driving forces (Karlsson et al., 2018, p. 37; Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 57). Nonetheless, there is a contradiction in the material, as the external actor believes another driving force to be one of the main ones, one which the internal actors do not mention:

> "If everything was satisfying and everyone was positive, a strong support from citizens I wonder if they had… There is no reason to change just because. Here there must have been a discussion in Ängelholm that initiated the organisational change and they started to analyse what it was they could do better. I believe it was about an underlying citizens dissatisfaction with Ängelholm municipality. They have had the referendum of the bridge, and traffic outlines, which had created this displeasure. It was questions like that I believe was perceived in the municipality both form politicians and officials, it was a lot of critics from the citizens of Ängelholm, and therefore they wanted to oversee the organisation" (Johansson, interview).

Citizen trust is also mentioned as a driving force in the annual report Johansson and three others wrote for the municipality (Karlsson et al., 2018, p. 21). Concerning the conflict in the material, the scholar believes the truth may lie somewhere in between:

> "… of course, if you talk to persons within the organisation they of natural reasons want to tone this down. If you come from the outside you maybe tend to exaggerate this problem picture, the truth is maybe somewhere in between. But without doubt there was some sort of legitimacy issue for Ängelholm that went on. … The organisation was quite top driven, and several citizens felt this. There was a lot of critique with things, and they had to start to build a new organisation" (Johansson, interview).

*Institutional environment*

The institutional environment is detectable as an explicit driving force during the policy adaption and formulation stage. Myths of rationality, mimetic isomorphism and social authority from other municipalities are clear both from

the interviews and from policy documents. The organisation has visited several municipalities nationwide (Ängelholms kommun, 2011c, p. 1; Ängelholms kommun, 2013b, p. 2). It is interesting that the change was perhaps not intended to become so vast prior to the adaption and formulation stage:

> "Initially we appointed a committee for the politicians to just reflect about how, is there any other way we can try, quite modestly. … something happened when we visited Lerum and other municipalities. If we had not been there this might never have happened. Then we might just have split one board or something, nothing big. But there we saw a whole other way of working, that was the big inspiration. … The outspoken idea was playing with the thought, okay what do they have that is so good, so we can steal it" (Sandén, interview).

The institutional environment can thus be considered to be a game changer for organisational change. Two specific municipalities caught their eye and were constructed as a social authority and considered to be fashion setters: Lerum and Ulricehamn. Lerum was perceived to be preferable and were contacted by Ängelholm when issues arose during the adaption and formulation stage. The Deputy Major that had been the bearer of the de-sectorisation in Lerum was also hired as a consultant together with a team he had assembled during this period. This team proved to be influential to the future organisational structure of Ängelholm (Tebring, interview; Sandén, interview).

Furthermore, during this stage the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) is also mentioned in policy documents. This agency is considered to be a benchmark, and Ängelholm often refer to their documents concerning committee organisation when an issue arises. This agency is often implicitly referred to as a fashion setter (Tebring, interview; Ängelholms kommun, 2011b, p. 2; Ängelholms kommun, 2013a, p. 1).

### *The phenomenon of time*

The phenomenon of time as a concept is also considered an explicit argument of organisational change. The reform was perceived to be a modern and universal solution as well as a "done package" that could simply be picked up and reshaped after demographic preconditions. The goal of modernisation is something several of the interviewees mention as the starting point of change and as an underlying force all throughout the policy process (Ängelholms kommun, 2013c, p. 3; Hansson, interview; Holmberg, interview). Hence, the committee organisation was the only model considered (Tebring, interview). The change can even be described as overdue:

> "…like why you reorganize, that is something everyone does, all companies at least … So why should not a municipality do it, I thought, or no, we thought. … But we could do it in a different way, and many were concerned with to do it better for the citizens…" (Hansson, interview).

> "What I have understood it was all about was that they thought the old organisation was slow and bureaucratic. I got the impression they perceived it as unmodern" (Sandén, interview).

In the scholars' annual report about Ängelholms' new model, they argue that the municipality follows a trend, sometimes referred to as a dominating trend, that has been noticed by other municipal researchers as a strategy for addressing the traditional model's problems with specialisation (Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 33).

*Cultural factors*

Considering external pressure as a strong driving force is not surprising when analysing the organisation's cultural values. They argue that they are an open municipality with an extensive external monitoring of both other municipalities as well as state agencies, which is perceived as a requirement and as something they will have to contribute more resources towards in the future. They are involved in several collaborations within the nearby geographical area and are not reluctant about hiring consultants to deal with matters or when the specialisation needed is not provided within the organisation. Furthermore, they are also categorised as quite obedient, at least when speaking about the citizens, as they constantly place them in focus and structure the work procedures based on them (Sandén, interview; Holmberg, interview).

## 4.2   Svedala – organisational change as a strategy to vitalise

### 4.2.1  Historical-institutional legacies - the sectorised model as outdated

*Historical legacies*

Svedala municipality has a long history of change, which is due to the fact that the municipalities have changed through societal development and its democratic issues. These issues are rooted in both the expansion of the welfare state in the 1950s and the municipality enlargements in 1970s. The political role changed from conducting all tasks, even administrative, to a more specialised municipality due to the laws and regulations as well as the increased welfare demands imposed upon them. Specialisation is mentioned several times throughout the years, both in the sense of the municipality but also in a societal sense, as increased demands required increased specialisation (Svedala kommun, 2010, p.3; Hardenstedt, interview).

Therefore, in 1999 the municipality decided to become one of the pioneers and did a de-sectorisation in order to be able to address contemporary problems (Svedala kommun, 2010, p. 4; Hardenstedt, interview). During this time the focus was on coordination to solve more pressing issues and to achieve a more coordinated generalist organisation to bring a holistic perspective (Brorström et al., 1990, p. 17; Jepsson, interview).

> "The focus on specialisation brings unwished consequences. Old structures should therefore be replaced by new, that in a more efficient way to make tradeoffs for the best of the citizens" (Brorström et al., 1998, p. 21).

There are some doubts regarding how this change occurred, as some argue it was planned while scholars argue it was due an economic crisis (Hardenstedt, interview; Brorström et al., 1998, p. 10). The intention was to legitimise the municipality by implementing citizen dialogue and to vitalise the council through implementing a more coordinated work procedure (Svedala kommun, 2010, p. 4). The change was strongly influenced by the phenomenon of time and modernisation as well as mimetic isomorphism (Jepsson, interview).

> "If we had woken up Per Albin Hansson[16] he could just have walked right in and worked in that political organisation, nothing has happened since. We needed to wake the interest among the politicians since it was cooling down … There was a strong will for something new, and we did not know if this would be the best option, but someone had to be first" (Hardenstedt, interview).

Historically this dynamic side persisted, but around 2002 there was some disagreement since the politicians felt they still lacked enough influence, and the organisation has slightly evolved since. The main issue of politicians was that the committees lacked their own budget, which gave them a sense that the decisions were made elsewhere. This problem has coloured the reforms through the years as well as the debate between specialisation and despecialisation (Hardenstedt, interview).

In 2010 there was a breaking point and the organisation was evaluated. The steering model "an open municipality" from 1999 was given new life and adjusted following contemporary societal demands. Three goals were introduced: to further strengthen the council, to clarify the roles regarding political responsibility and to develop citizen dialogue (Svedala kommun, 2014a, p. 5). Thus, a slightly altered organisation was introduced with a greater focus on committees.[17] A re-sectorisation was not pursued due to concerns regarding specialised organisation and sector guardians as well being perceived as old fashioned. Even so, this change did not lead to any significant difference in work procedures (Hardenstedt, interview; Larsson, interview).

Therefore, this change in 2010 can be perceived as a predecessor to the re-sectorisation, since similar issues were on the agenda back then as well as during the process of re-sectorisation a few years later. Thus, the re-sectorisation might have been a gradual change, and in 2013 the municipal council decided to re-sectorise after almost 15 years of a committee organisation.

Furthermore, path dependency was quite strong regarding an unwillingness to change the organisation in a large-scale way. The dominant driving force agreed on by interviewees also explains that the large-scale change did not occur in 2010 since many respondents had invested their time and the committee organisation lacked essentials faults. It therefore took them 15 years to re-sectorise, otherwise it likely would have happened sooner (Jepsson, interview). Furthermore, the concepts also occur due to the classic problem that politicians in the committees revert to old patterns and act like boards, meaning they make

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[16] Swedish Social Democratic prime minister in the 1930s and 1940s
[17] See appendix 14 for the organisational map 2010

decisions they are not allowed to (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 38; Larsson, interview). In addition, the institutional memory from 1999 created worry that a re-sectorisation would mean too much specialisation and that they would lose the holistic perspective. This meant that the re-sectorisation did not result in an absolute specialised administration, but instead it is today still perceived as unified with different business sectors in order "to keep the good" according to negative coordination. Some politicians however wanted to divide the administration according to the political organisation (Larsson, interview).

*Organisational change motivated by internal organisational problems*

There have been some organisational problems in the committee organisation that have been perceived as a driving force for change. There are two problems arising in both the advantages and disadvantages analysis[18] as well as the interviews. First is the classic issue that the municipal executive board becomes too extensive and requires more time than what is suitable to do an effective job as a politician. There was great restraint placed on the executive board due to the heavy workload and the concern was that the executive board lacked the time necessary to fully fulfil their task or grasp the matters (Hardenstedt, interview; Svedala, 2013b, p. 10; Jepsson, interview).

> "One of the reasons was that they thought it was too much, big and hard to deal with. Responsibility for all the parts they thought was too much, they wanted to balance it more out. To push some of the responsibility from them. That someone else would take the responsibility to make the accountability clearer ..." (Larsson, interview).

Second, there was ambiguity as who was responsible over what in the organisation between the officials and politician, which some blame on the despecialisation. This was a concern for both leading managers as well as politicians and was furthermore not only an internal issue, but rather some thought it also harmed the citizens when they were not able to provide them a clear answer regarding whom to seek (Jepsson, interview; Israelsson, 2013, p. 1; Borgiues, 2013, p. 1).

Due to these internal problems, Svedala wished to make the organisation more efficient, a key word in their re-sectorisation, and to make the roles more distinctive. The traditional model was perceived as a solution for this, with clearer roles provided due to specialisation. The discussion also concerned letting the politicians be more specialised than the committee organisation allowed (Svedala kommun, 2013, p. 5-6; Jepsson, interview).

Nonetheless, the interviewees stated there was no clear internal problem that was a strong driving force for change. The above-discussed issues were a concern but could have been dealt with in ways other than a re-sectorisation. There were four different alternatives when evaluating the committee organisation: to keep the committee organisation with some alterations, to keep

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[18] See appendix 15

the committees under the council but make further committees under the executive board, to re-sectorise or to abolish the committees under the council and only have those under the executive board (Svedala kommun, 2013, p. 12).

It is also important to mention an internally constructed problem which did not concern the committee organisation but instead what could happen if they re-sectorised, an issue that was heavily focused on. During the adaption and formulation stage of the re-sectorisation, when they did not know whether it would be a full-blown re-sectorisation, there were many concerns regarding the possibility of sector guardians. This made them doubt whether they should re-sectorise, since if the politicians were to become specialised, would they take too much advantage?

> "The difference is that you can work more with the comprehensive picture without boards. I will be honest and say I was one of them that was not that especially advocating to go from committees to boards, I was afraid of the focus on specialisation. That everyone watches over theirs. … It was easier for me before the boards as a Municipal Chief Executive, because then we owned the whole picture and there were no boundaries and focus on specialisation" (Larsson, interview).

There was therefore a vivid focus on negative coordination in the re-sectorized organisation, with extra "bridge meetings" between the boards to ensure they avoid harming each other and to implement a budget committee. This is to increase the efficiency of both the political steering and the economic process (Hardenstedt, interview; Larsson, interview).

*Internal pressure*

The internal problems considered to be light driving forces all boil down to internal pressure. The norms and social systems in the organisation led to an internal pressure that something should happen which was a strong driving force for the re-sectorisation due to the ambition to make the organisation as simple as possible:

> "It did not disturb anyone. Rather, than to improve the municipality's way to handle the decision-making process" (Jepsson, interview).

Initially, the internal pressure mainly came from the politicians (Larsson, interview) since they perceived that they did not have as much influence as they could. The focus was on the budget, and the politicians felt that since the budget decision was up to the executive board, they felt they lacked the influence they wanted in the committees. It was also not always clear where the money went, and when they made decisions about individuals they were not supposed to solely consider the money, which many politicians thought was fishy (Hardenstedt, interview).

> "We discussed a lot and had strategies, then someone else decided over the money. … we did not have the last say in the matter … to be in a specialized board meant we had the responsibility" (Hardenstedt, interview).

This was a factor already mentioned in 2009 and obviously was not solved back then. This factor is however contradicting, as the executive board rarely

declined a committee's budget suggestion (Hardenstedt, interview; Karlsson, et al., 2009, p. 37). They initially thus merely wanted more influence over the economy, but it was not perceived as an internal problem. There is a possibility this has something to do with the factor of the unclear roles previously discussed. Establishing a re-sectorisation would bring politicians increased engagement and satisfaction with their work since they had control. It was an internal pressure to change, which some interviewees connect to this budget factor (Hardenstedt, interview).

Nonetheless, the pressure also stemmed from some leading officials not in the sense of bearers of the reform but more during the adoption and formulation stage where they agreed the sectorised model would be a better option (Israelsson, 2013, p. 1; Borgiues, 2013, p. 1). There are some differences however among the officials, as some wanted the change, and some wanted to retain the committee organisation. The Municipal Chief Executive explained this by stating it depends where you come from, as if you have worked within a sectorised model you may miss it (Larsson, interview).

*Cultural factors*

The internal pressure and the history of reforms can be explained by cultural factors and norms within the organisation, which are arguably according to the concepts of dynamic and risk-takers. The organisations have an emphasis on trying new things in the attempt to find the best solution for right now due to contemporary challenges. They perceive changes as positive and sometimes even as necessary (Hardenstedt, interview; Larsson, interview).

> "When we started this journey with vision 2000 and committee organisation, we had worked very interdisciplinary. Which probably has meant that we have a tradition of working pragmatic. … We are a municipality that works with coordination and consensus." (Hardenstedt, interview).

The dynamic side is also mentioned when discussing the reforms. When the de-sectorisation occurred, it was always seen as a transition phase, but it was unknown exactly how it would change. The democratic committee oversaw developments and efforts to find new solutions to vitalise the council, which has led to some alterations throughout the decade as can be observed in the history of reforms (Karlsson et al., 2009, p. 20-21). Furthermore, the dynamic side is present since there is always something going on and evaluations are more a rule than exception. Even now during the evaluation phase of the re-sectorisation they are considering alterations in the organisation following the election in September (Larsson, interview).

In the organisation they do not believe it is negative to be pioneers, but instead they believe the opposite and often attempt new ideas. This portrays that they are somewhat risk-takers. Even so, according to them the re-sectorisation was planned over a long time just to make the right decision and since there were not a special problem rushing the matter (Jepsson, interview; Larsson, interview).

## 4.2.2 Political features – no power dimension

It can be argued that the organisational change was not motivated by a power dimension. Most members desired a change, and thus there was no need for a power dimension (Hardenstedt, interview; Larsson, interview). Nonetheless, this can partly be explained by the municipal tradition of consensus, thus it was highly important for them to achieve this in the re-sectorisation as well:

> "I had my doubts how many would jump on board but there was no protesting, everyone bought it. … I was a strong advocate, but how much advocating I did I do not remember. If you yell too loud someone will fight back" (Jepsson, interview).

There was no certain change agent or elite-decision-making, as some political parties pushed for further specialisation and more boards than was decided upon, but it was overruled due to worries about to much specialisation (Hardenstedt, interview).

Nonetheless, two democratic arguments to legitimise the municipality were discussed. Foremost, in the interviews they discuss the fact that there was discussion regarding whether the municipal council was as vitalised as they had intended back in 1999. They do not entirely recall since it was such a long time ago, so they decided to turn to other sources. They draw a conclusion from reports written by other municipalities as well as from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. In these reports they write that the councils often become partly vitalised due to the committees but not to the length to match ambitions. They thus assume a vitalisation has occurred but not to the degree they would have preferred. This implicit drive for change can be explained by the fact that the municipality is always constantly aware of strategies to vitalise the municipal council. The opposition leader of the municipality describes that something new must happen depending on the organisational model, since alterations are assumed to lead to vitalisation. They state that the organisation must not walk around in old footsteps and that they are to somewhat steer the organisation:

> "I am not unfamiliar with organisational change, you should not do it without reason, but I perceive it as quite vitalising to do an organisational change … to start to reflect why we do as we do" (Hardenstedt, interview).

Therefore, vitalisation can be argued to be a driving force for change but more as an implicit argument because the change was happening (Svedala kommun, 2013a, p. 4). Secondly, citizen dialogue has been a key factor as an attempt to vitalise in both reforms. It is mentioned that they had hoped for more citizen dialogue with the council through the advisory committees.

> "The thought was very good, to involve citizens but it was not that many that showed up on the meetings. It did not become that debate in the municipal council as we had wished for" (Larsson, interview).

Some interviewees reflect that perhaps citizens do not care which type of organisation they have. It was not perceived that the sectorised model could better

handle citizen dialogue but more that it could renew it (Larsson, interview; Hardenstedt, interview).

### 4.2.3 External pressure – is mimetic isomorphism essential?

In Svedala's case, the external pressure is either not vivid or implicit depending on the perception. In the adaption and formulation stage of the re-sectorisation the technical environment was stated to be one of the key factors in the process in policy documents, meaning the adaption and formulation should be performed from a citizen's perspective it (Svedala kommun, 2014b, p. 3). It is not perceived to be a strong driving force but rather more implicit since the interviewee does not mention it. Nonetheless, this was initially perceived as an issue due to the externally created problem regarding concern that citizens would view the traditional sectorised model as old-fashioned. This was during early stages but following implementation there have been no such indicators (Larsson, interview).

In Svedala the citizens often discuss things with politicians when something "gets them off" (Jepsson, interview). Some of the politicians even argue that the power within the organisation lies with the citizens, and that they have many conversations with them. This external factor is thus usually vivid in the municipality, which makes it extra clear that the citizens did not care about the re-sectorisation since they did not engage (Jepsson, interview; Hardenstedt, interview). Neither citizens nor the media have focused on the new organisation before or after the early 2000s (Larsson, 2002).

Referring to the institutional environment, the municipality is not restrained from mimetic isomorphism or cooperation with other municipalities. In the case of the re-sectorisation, they partly considered whether other municipalities had re-sectorised during the adaption and formulation stage in order this to determine whether they perceived the committee organisation as desirable. They also compared how many municipalities in Sweden used a traditional versus committee organisation (Jepsson, interview; Svedala, 2013, p. 1-3). This influenced the decision-making process but was not perceived to be a strong driving force by the interviewees, instead it was more perceived as facts which are useful to know (Larsson, interview; Jepsson, interview). Nonetheless, this aligns with the phenomenon of time, as the organisation seems to not follow trends, even if they argue it is important to be aware. It can be argued that since other municipalities had tendencies towards a re-sectorisation, they perhaps did not perceive it as a trend but instead as something that further legitimised their choice. Thus, the trend of de-sectorisation was not that strong and the traditional model was more common (Hardenstedt, interview; Larsson, interview).

Cultural factors can explain this nature which is supposedly open and obedient, at least to the citizens and other municipalities. They are open to the surrounding environment and often become inspired by different actors, mostly neighbouring municipalities, as "they switch with each other" and help each other out (Jepsson, interview). To be aware of the surrounding environment is perceived as being highly important:

"Yes, it also becomes very important to remember the local features but also to adapt to things that happen around us. … The surrounding world hits the local society direct." (Larsson, interview).

They think it is quite important to be obedient to the surrounding world, to discuss with citizens, see what other municipalities are doing (Larsson, interview). They are dependent on others and greatly focus on external factors in their daily work.

## 4.3   Båstad – doomed to fail from the beginning?

### 4.3.1   Historical-institutional legacies – no consensus

*Historical legacies*

Båstad municipality has a history of reforms and alteration as well as municipal enlargements in the 1970s. During the term 2010-2014 the organisation changed through a de-sectorisation (Båstad kommun, 2013a, p. 1). The change agent and the initiative came from the Deputy Major and the Municipal Chief Executive in 2006 (Gustafsson, interview; Wendt, interview). The preparations for a new organisation in the adaption and formulation stage were coloured by mimetic isomorphism. They also wanted to further legitimise the democracy by increasing focusing on long-term strategies. Since they did not have time for this in the sectorised model, the committee organisation with its advisory committees seemed to be a solution. The change was thoroughly planned over a period of two years and was guided by concepts such as trendiness (other municipalities did it), curiosity, vitalisation, coordination issues and citizen dialogue (Gustafsson, interview; Wendt, interview; Ernst & Young, 2013, p. 2). The concern with the traditional model involved sector guardians which could led to financial issues (Båstad kommun, 2013b, p. 2). Thus, the de-sectorisation seems too have concerned political, internal and external factors.

According to documents and the interviewees, the de-sectorisation occurred through an elite-decision-making with the smallest possible majority, which some argue led to many concerns regarding the implementation:

"The politicians decided to do the organisational change with 21 against 20 in the municipal council… That means a massive resistance, when almost half does not think the same they revolt against it … they work against the organisation itself. …the implementation becomes extra tricky when people do not want to do it." (Elofsson, interview).

The Bjäre party, Center party and Christian party reserved themselves from the decision of a committee organisation (Båstad kommun, 2012a, p. 9). It should be clarified that these parties, who were already in the advisory committee that worked with a new political organisation, voted against almost every decision during the adaption and formulation stage (Båstad kommun, 2012a, p. 1-2; Båstad kommun, 2011, p. 42).

Therefore, in the case of the re-sectorisation, path dependency and institutional memory represent a firm driving force for the organisational change,

as the motivation for the parties that decided upon the re-sectorisation was that "it was better before" (Wendt, interview; Gustafsson, interview). Also, boards from the former organisation that had become advisory committees sometimes still acted like boards and made decisions which they by law were no longer allowed to decide, thus relating to path dependency and institutional memory (Elofsson, interview). This factor is also detectable while reading the evaluation from Ernst and Young, who in a survey had several politicians state that they would prefer returning to the former traditional mode, in order to once more be allowed to specialise in one area like before. Despecialisation and positive coordination was not preferred by everyone, as there was a split into camps, where people that voted no to the committee organisation are more negative than the majority that voted yes, which could be expected. The parties that wanted the de-sectorisation argue that the new organisation is better for political steering and that it has not been given a chance due to path dependency (Ernst & Young, 2013, p. 10).

*Organisational change motivated by internal organisational problems*

In Ernst and Young's, evaluation they mention that the lack of consensus resulted in a turbulent implementation stage for the committee organisation. In comparison with other municipalities, they describe the turbulence as being expected, but Båstad stands out regarding the consensus issue (2013, p. 11). Due to these historical legacies, several internal factors are detectable as motivation for re-sectorisation, mainly during the implementation stage (Elofsson, interview). Three internal problems are primarily perceived: the executive board is too time consuming, lacks legal security and the relationship between the officials and politicians is restrained, which is aligned with the problems in the advisory committees.

The main concerns with the executive board in the committee organisation included the heavy workload leading to uncertainty with the lack of legal security. Since the long meetings and considerable amount of document to read before became such a heavy burden for politicians in the executive board, it created uncertainty when ruling over citizen matters since board members lacked sufficient time to fully grasp the issues at hand (Wendt, interview; Båstad kommun, 2013b, p. 6).

> "… we did not believe the big executive board was fully functional. It was an impossible task I would state, for a normal politician to keep up with all those legal matters on top of everything. We became too of an easy victim for the officials … You can just imagine, what if a citizen appeals to the court, have prepared themselves and some deadly tired politicians just say "oh, what is this, an errand the officials has prepared, just approve"" (Wendt, interview).

Furthermore, it was also not believed that the executive board had fulfilled the ambition of achieving a holistic view due to the heavy workload. Even so, other parties argue they have the same amount of work today in the sectorised model (Gustafsson, interview).

The other two internal problems are somewhat related, where on the one hand officials lacked time to prepare the advisory committees meetings, which made the politicians irritated and restrained the relationship between them and the

officials. The situation is described as the "officials are playing hard to get", which the officials contradict by claiming that they lacked enough resources. Nonetheless, this problem already existed in the traditional organisation before 2010 but was mentioned here as a problem specific to the committees (Wendt, interview). On the other hand, this was one factor where the committees were not seen as being fully functional, but the main reason was due to some politicians' nonchalant behaviour. Some failed to attend the meetings and the committees were condescendingly mentioned as the "b-team" by some parties to highlight their low status (Gustafsson, interview; Båstad kommun, 2013b, p. 2; Båstad kommun, 2013c, p. 2). The conservative politicians believe this was nonchalant and rooted in the fact that others did not fully grasp the purpose of the committees. During the implementation they should have held meetings and informed about the importance of long-term strategies, which she argues was a mistake from their side (Gustafsson, interview).

*Cultural factors*

The cultural factors also explain the divided field that is Båstad's political landscape. The dynamic side of the organisation seems to be split, to where they are unsure how they perceive change. It is argued that it depends on whom one asks, as it can be either positive or negative, described as a "grey-zone" which relates to the case of the two reforms whit people split into two camps. At the same time, they would still state they might be more change oriented compared to other municipalities in which the interviewees have worked (Wendt, interview; Elofsson, interview; Gustafsson, interview).

Båstad is thus arguably dynamic since change often historically occurred in smaller manners, but they do not perceive change as being either positive or negative. Even so, some perceive them as being more control committed. It could be that the two large-scale changes occurring within the span of a few years has taken its toll. Perhaps they are normally quite dynamic. Nonetheless, the concept of risk-takers accurately describes Båstad, who implement a large-scale change without conducting further analysis beforehand since they are often not afraid of change on any scale.

## 4.3.2 Political features – a sudden elite-decision?

*Power dimension*

When actors in Båstad recall the re-sectorisation, it is remembered by some as being expected and by others as a total surprise. This can be related to the power dimension that occurred through dominance rooted in historical legacies.

It was the 18th of December in 2013, and the municipal council was assembled to discuss the evaluation of the committee organisation made by consultants (Båstad kommun, 2014, p. 52). Before the meeting, the political parties had submitted reports of their thoughts about the evaluation. Two political parties argued for a re-sectorisation: the Bjäre party and the Center party. The other parties more favoured performing some adjustments to the committee

organisation or lightly favoured a re-sectorisation (Miljöpartiet, 2013, p. 1; Centerpartiet Båstad, 2013, p. 1; Gustafsson, interview).

In the meeting two alternatives were provided for the council to consider with neither leading to change, but instead it was a third unexpected alternative that won:

> "I will never forget it. Because it was discussion matters on the agenda, very basic. … suddenly, they just decide to change the entire organisation without a proper impact analysis. They just decide it right there on the meeting in December, so it was a little bit of panic I can easily state, since then it was not just about add one more board or so, the entire organisation changed … they did such a decision solely on some squares… On a basis for discussion that was not intended for an entire organisational change" (Elofsson, interview).

The two political parties that pushed for the change, Bjäre and the Center, had already made up their mind before implementation of the committee organisation. They thought the organisation was a mistake and a failure on all accounts (Bjärepartiet, 2013, p.1). Thus, the initiation stage occurred at the meeting, where the majority had decided that it had to be done. There was no further political initiative to change the organisation, but rather it was more due to historical legacies:

> "It was the Bjäre party that wanted to have it so, they had made their decision and gained the necessary majority. We were disappointed but had to accept it. … The Bjäre party did not want to have the committee organisation. Some other party as well, … the Center party and the Environmental party, because I believe they had not understood the journey" (Gustafsson, interview).

The empirical material clearly shows that the organisational change concerned the lack of consensus about the de-sectorisation that occurred in 2010. Several parties voiced their dislike for the top-down change. The parties that through a small majority introduced the committee organisation argue that the municipal council's decision to execute de-sectorisation was never accepted by the other parties (Moderaterna, 2013, p. 1; Båstad kommun, 2013a, p. 6). Therefore, a power dimension of dominance by an elite-decision-making is considered to be a dominate driving force for the re-sectorisation.

> "I think it was so that they never wanted the organisation from the start and never gave up. But that is only my own speculations … They were not happy and wanted the old boards back" (Elofsson, interview).

Re-sectorisation is described as an alternative suggestion throughout the new term of office beginning in 2014, since it was not originally part of the municipal council's agenda. Thus, the policy adaption and formulation stage of the re-sectorisation somewhat occurred after the decision-making, when the administration produced an impact analysis (Elofsson, interview). Furthermore, in these later stages some parties tried using all means of persuasion to keep parts of the committee organisation, but failed (Wendt, interview).

Democratic arguments of citizen dialogue or recruitment of new politicians for the re-sectorisation are barely mentioned as reasons for organisational change. Transparency is mentioned in some documents, such as when the opposition parties accuse the majority, the same majority that pushed for the de-sectorisation, of withholding material, which affects the trust within the organisation and contributed to the distrust of the committee organisation (Båstad kommun, 2013b, p. 3). This is however constructed by the opposition parties and not perceived as an explicit driving force for change.

Two democratic arguments are however discussed in greater detail. On the one hand there is the power balance between the politicians and officials, largely due to delegation by the officials which gave them influence. The Bjäre party argues for this democratic issue being the foremost reason for change:

> "The Bjäre party sees the new political organisation as deeply unfortunate because it overall affects the democratic principles. … The new organisation has transferred the political decision-making to a small group in the executive board, … as well as transferred big parts of the decision-making to the officials." (Bjärepartiet, 2013, p.1).

It is perceived that the officials informally make decisions belonging to politicians. The Bjäre party leader even questions to the media regarding whether there should be elections held in the municipality when the officials have all the power, a power balance which everyone accepts except them (Wendt, interview). Other parties also mentioned the delegation problems, but not everyone agreed regarding the extent of the problem (Gustafsson, interview).

On the other hand, the vitalisation of the municipal council is mentioned. The politicians were dissatisfied with the vitalisation of the committee organisation's council. The politicians do not perceive the forum as being lively, but rather they simply still attend and approve matters already decided elsewhere, which is the exact practice they wanted to avoid in the committee organisation (Ernst & Young, 2013, p. 6; Wendt, interview; Elofsson, interview). This driving force is thus not perceived as explicit, but rather it is more a democratic argument regarding why the organisation should change as opposed to why the re-sectorisation occurred.

## 4.3.3  External pressure – the media does not understand the magnitude

Organisational change motivated by externally created problems has not been the case with Båstad. Related to the technical environment, it is mentioned that the citizens and the media have not been interested in the two organisational changes. The citizens merely care about the service they receive, not how (Wendt, interview; Gustafsson, interview).

> "I don't believe they really understand the magnitude, the media I mean, because if we relate to Ängelholm, did the media take an interest in theirs? No, I do not believe so." (Gustafsson, interview).

Even so, some articles can be found suggesting that the media somehow covered the organisational change, but such cases mostly concerned the political climate of parties not getting along rather than the actual structure (Richardsson, 2012). This has however not been perceived as a pressure to change.

The internal environment is not mentioned as a driving force either, and indeed the interviewees state that they rarely compare themselves to others, which can serve as an explanation (Gustafsson, interview; Wendt, interview). Nonetheless, the Manager of the Municipal office argues that for different cases they compare themselves with different municipalities, since it is difficult to find someone with the same challenges and demographics. Monitoring the surrounding world is however highly important to maintain awareness of trends (Elofsson, interview). Trends are discussed as something important to know about, but nonetheless it is argued that there can also be too many trends and that it can be difficult to know where they originate. Some argue for origination in consultants and scholars while others mention the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions as a fashion setter (Gustafsson, interview; Wendt, interview).

Nonetheless, isomorphism is observed to be a positive thing in the context of organisational change in the sense that it is not always favourable to be first with something:

> "To change a political historical organisation to something new is a very big reform that requires contribution from all. … Båstad municipality together with 40 other municipalities have been predecessors for a new political organisation. It had been of value if the other 200 of the 290 Swedish municipalities had done the same before Båstad to gain information about issues with the reform. It is not always preferable to be before everyone else" (Centerpartiet, 2013, p.2).

Why some felt relent for the new organisation can be how they perceive the term modern, a term they seem to not focus on. It could be argued that the sectorised model is seen as a universal solution due to the fact that it is proven to function, but nonetheless it is not a new or modern solution and is not a topic of focus by the interviewees. Thus, it fits neither in theory nor in the empirical gathering.

It could be the case that cultural factors can explain why external factors are not occurring. Båstad municipality is argued to be quite focused on internal issues, and indeed there are so many demands placed on municipalities that they must maintain this focus (Elofsson, interview; Gustafsson, interview). Being open to external pressure and obedient does not seem to be part of their culture. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that when the de-sectorisation occurred, as observed in the section of history of reforms, mimetic isomorphism and modernisation seem to be clearly involved.

# 5 Conclusion and discussion

## 5.1 Conclusion - three municipalities and three situations for change

This study has provided three different perspectives that have been analysed to provide an understanding of organisational change, as well as why municipalities facing the same problems choose different solutions. This research has been based on two different empirical materials in an attempt to identify the driving forces and underlying ambitions. To understand why the municipalities change, the sectorisation debate has proven to be essential and has been dominated by wicked issues and the coordination required to address them.

The three municipalities provide not only different institutional arrangements but also three different dominating factors regarding why change has occurred. Nevertheless, they are all somewhat characterised by all three factors and the different solutions can be argued to be the municipalities' individual way of handling the contemporary issues at hand.

### 5.1.1 Ängelholm – external pressure

In the case of Ängelholm and the de-sectorisation, key factors have included issues with coordination as an externally created problem and a goal of modernisation. The intention has been to achieve a broader management perspective through an organisation's focus on positive coordination. The main features for organisational change is by first site in the material due to democratic arguments and legitimacy issues. The ambition has been to vitalise the council through establishing new advisory committees that focus on citizen dialogue and achieve a lower threshold to engage new politicians. Political leaders were the change agents and bearers of the reform, which also implies that political features are the dominant driving forces. Furthermore, even if there were historical-institutional issues involving sector guardians, this was not found to be a strong drive for change.

Nonetheless, the picture of political features as dominant driving force changes when analysing the material further. On the one hand, it is described that before the organisational change, the municipality experienced vast issues concerning coordination. This is argued to have been unacceptable since the citizens had to turn to different parts of the organisation concerning a single matter. The coordination need was especially obvious on the school and social service boards, where the citizens deserved more efficient policies. This is an externally created problem constructed internally, since no one was pressuring them. For the administrative part of the organisation this was almost solely the driving force for their change. External pressure continues to outshine the political factors in the later stages of the policy process, and concepts such as mimetic isomorphism and social authority can be perceived as being game changers. Several interviewees stated that the change was initially not intended to become this great, and without these study visits the change agent's thoughts concerning

vitalisation would probably have led to smaller adjustments rather than a large-scale organisational change of both the political and administrative organisation.

It can be argued that there is a research conflict between the analysis and some of the interviewees that argues the democratic arguments as political factors were the most important reason for change. Even so, the reasons stated in policy documents or by the managers do not always contain the entire truth, as far as this analysis can tell. Thus, external pressure is concluded to be the main driving force.

## 5.1.2 Svedala – historical-institutional legacies

Svedala is less a case of 'why change' so much as 'why not'. The municipality is dynamic and quite obedient to their surrounding environment. Achieving pragmatism and often reflecting on how to further vitalise the democracy seems to constantly be on the agenda. They do not see the re-sectorised model as their final organisation, rather the opposite. Nonetheless, in the case of the re-sectorisation, historical-institutional legacies and specifically internal pressure have been found to be key factors for the organisational change. This internal pressure has resulted in a gradual change towards a re-sectorisation, since the politicians already in 2010 considered further sectorising the organisation but instead altered the committee organisation. Internally motivated problems within the organisation that also drove the change included issues regarding efficiency and clarity of the roles of the politicians and officials, as it had been an issue knowing who was responsible for what. This is however more implicit than a significant driving force for change.

In Svedala's case, it is interesting that the change had no power dimension and that it was almost inevitable not due to internal problems but more due to path dependency and internal pressure, where efficiency and a citizen focus led to a re-sectorisation. The citizen focus however is more evident in policy documents, while in the interviews it is not clearly a driving force for change. The main driving force for change was thus historical-intuitional legacies.

## 5.1.3 Båstad – political features

In the case of Båstad, there is one strong driving force for change which differs between actors. On the one hand it was perceived by most as a power of dominance, where political parties that did not want the de-sectorisation from the beginning suddenly took the decision to re-sectorise. This occurred during a meeting when they were supposedly merely discussing the organisational structure, where no alternative of permanently changing the organisation had been prepared beforehand. They won by marginal majority, and the ones that voted against were the same persons that voted yes for the de-sectorisation. On the other hand, the parties that made the decision of re-sectorisation agree that it largely concerned the fact that they had already decided from the beginning that they did not want the committee organisation, historical legacies, but they further dwell upon democratic issues of too much delegation to officials that gave them power they should not have. Both answers thus representing political features.

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Furthermore, issues with bad implementation has also been dwelled upon. Nonetheless, if the organisational problem with poor implementation is due to the negativity and never-acceptance stance regarding the political decision of the de-sectorisation, or if the problems would have occurred even so, depends on which party is asked. Nonetheless, re-sectorisation would never have occurred if not for the power dimension and the dominance of the elite-decision-making. An alteration of the committee organisation would otherwise probably has occurred though not a re-sectorisation. This is also the reason for why Båstad is a "half-half" organisation, with a sectorised political organisation but a positive coordinated administration with the possibility for temporary committees. The power dimension changed the political organisation, not the administration, since this was seen as something positive from the committee organisation.

## 5.1.4 Concluding remarks

The answer to the research question regarding why different types of organisational changes occur in Swedish municipalities concerns multiple factors and simply lacks a single perspective. This study shows that all three factors have served as the dominant view for one case. The reasons why municipalities facing the same problems choose different organisational designs are therefore related to these factors, but this study suggests that it perhaps has more to do with the type of reform in question. The different reforms include different explicit perspectives as driving forces. According to this analysis, a de-sectorisation occurs with external factors such as mimetic isomorphism, more efficient policies and modernisation. These are the main triggers for change even if the democratic reasons connected to legitimacy issues are important. De-sectorisation is perceived as a universal solution to the problem that there is national pressure created through legitimacy issues of the political system. It therefore focuses on positive coordination through despecialisation. However, re-sectorisation is more concerned with in-house matters, the loss of specialisation, political features and historical-institutional legacies. It arguably more regards path dependency, as the traditional model is well known, feels legit, and it is easy to revert to old patterns. It almost seems like path dependency and internally motivated problems would be the main reason for a re-sectorisation, as often an institutional memory lingers and causes effects regardless of whether change occurs. Even so, political features are also a main factor as in the case of Båstad. Interestingly though, it is possible that Båstad is an exception and that historical-institutional legacies are the dominant driving forces for a re-sectorisation, as Nordic scholars state. In Ernst and Young's evaluation, they argue that Båstad is the only municipality that lacked consensus when the decision of a de-sectorisation was made. This factor thus led to the power dimension that possibly would not have developed had everyone originally agreed.

In conclusion, all changes are affected by the debate regarding coordination and specialisation. Why organisations change in a certain manner depends on whether they wish to coordinate and despecialise due to external created problems and de-sectorise, or they execute a re-sectorisation due to path dependency and the politicians' desire to specialize, or the coordination has issued orders

regarding who is in charge over matters. Nonetheless, the organisational changes interestingly seemed to be inevitable to most members.

## 5.2   Discussion – why rock the boat

It can be argued that Swedish municipalities face a cross-road and must choose to either rely on the steady sectorised model and work with negative coordination or take a risk and try to change according to the world around them and work with positive coordination and despecialisation. The research material clearly shows that municipalities today change due to different reasons in order to address contemporary issues which are often connected to welfare issues such as school and social service. The democratic argument to legitimise the representative democracy is also clear, and something must change to solve these issues. They all feel demand from the state that pressures them to focus on a new coordination need and realise it is quite difficult in a sectorised organisation. Furthermore, this is interestingly quite contradictory since law and regulations as political features have not been pointed out as being a driving force for organisational change. Even if municipalities' mention new demands and more challenging tasks from the state, it is more an implicit underlying factor for change and it is perceived that they almost do not realise it is connected to their reforms. A factor that taints the entire organisation is not argued to be a driving force. It can be explained that the welfare challenges have gradually arisen while the coordination issue is more stated than discussed. These welfare challenges are perceived as external pressure instead of political factors, which possibly is not the entire truth.

According to this analysis, the reform of de-sectorisation is observed to be a universal solution for these contemporary issues by all municipalities, even if two decided to re-sectorise. It is obvious that the contemporary discussions at municipalities and state agencies all boil down to conflicts regarding coordination and specialisation. Both reforms include pros and cons. Båstad kept their unified administration and Svedala partly kept theirs, with both examples involving political reasoning concerning democratic issues and to at least keep some degree of coordination. This demonstrates the need for coordination between the municipalities of different sectors today. Even if the municipality re-sectorise into different tendencies, they still want to keep a coordinated organisation.

Furthermore, all three municipalities agree that there are problems entailed by sectorisation and too much specialisation, meaning that issues with sector guardians and negative coordination are implemented in the re-sectorised organisations to ensure that the boards do not harm each other. Beyond these issues, the fact is that politicians lose the possibility to specialise in a single area following a de-sectorisation, which has to do with institutional memory. Often the lack of experience with the new model makes the actors uneasy, and the historical way to manage the organisation with the traditional model feels legit even after a de-sectorisation:

"The traditional model is old … and everyone understands it when you look at it, even so it does not mean it is right. But at the same time, it is quite proven for a long time. I do not know, maybe you see trends, but it would not surprise me if we gradually try to go back to the clearer structure that we, historically speaking, are used to working with." (Holmberg, interview).

It can be argued to be surprising that the municipalities displayed different main factors regarding reasons for the change. As previous research stated, political or historical-institutional legacies should have been dominant. This study can either confirm or strongly disagree with this finding. As argued, according to the material, it seems that which factor is most dominant depends on which reform is examined, meaning that perhaps neither political nor historical-institutional factors best explain organisational change. Ängelholm mostly changed due to external pressure, which can be connected to the fact that the de-sectorisation classically more closely concerns these issues to solve contemporary issues faced by all municipalities and to act as the wind of modernisation to legitimise the democracy. Re-sectorisation however is more about in-house issues and in these cases rarely regard external pressure. Svedala is not as explicit of an example as the other two cases, but the internal pressure and historical-legacies are observed to be the dominant driving force for change, even if the change can be described as being gradual. In Båstad there has been no external pressure to change, but instead there has been a power dimension and balance between different political parties and officials, all rooted in historical legacies with no consensus regarding when the de-sectorisation occurred. This separates this case from the rest, and it could be argued that the reform was doomed from the beginning. This thus refers to political features describing organisational change. Nevertheless, external pressure was shown to play the dominant role for at least all de-sectorisations in the case of Ängelholm and when looking back at Båstad and Svedala's history, a perspective which earlier research has perhaps neglected to highlight.

Furthermore, the question is whether the study has fulfilled its aim. It can be argued a pity that the study cannot provide a simple answer to the question of why municipalities change. Even so this is not surprising when examining earlier research as stated, and the empirical relevance of the study has been fulfilled since the sectorisation debate has been highlighted and provided insights into contemporary municipal issues, thus providing an understanding of organisational change.

An obvious validity limitation throughout the empirical gathering has been the fact that the primary data are based on individuals' own perceptions. This was the study's aim, but due to power tensions within political organisation it has sometimes been difficult to differentiate whether the truth is told in some cases or whether they constructed their truth during the interviews. Furthermore, qualitative studies often include these issues, and since these interviewed actors possess formal and informal power in the municipality, these are still perceived to be the most interesting and preferable interviewees. Their perception regarding 'why changes' is what is interesting.  The case of Ängelholm was one example representing concerns between the contradicting opinions regarding whether

change in citizens' trust as an external pressure. As the external actor perceived it, this was the starting point of the change, but it is not mentioned by the other internal interviewees. After research, no citizens seem to have been explicitly engaged in the reform, with no letters written to the municipality or magazines. Even so, it could be that it was a general feeling of mistrust after the referendum and the politicians felt an external pressure to do something. Nonetheless, this is not seen as something that would have affected the conclusion, especially since other external factors were so explicit.

Why rock the boat then? Organisational change is no simple matter and requires the attention of all actors. External pressure affect which organisations are perceived as modern, and currently de-sectorisation is observed to be the answer for at least smaller municipalities. The interviewees stated that a municipality with more than 45,000 citizens would have a difficult problem with having the municipal executive board as the only board to handle all citizen matters. It can thus be argued that there is no single ideal organisation or way to manage the organisation. This is implied by this study's findings, since in all cases the de- or re-sectorisation was never perceived to be the final solution but more as a starting point for future alterations. If an ideal organisation existed there would be no debate:

> "I think not everything is about boxes and squares, it is about the organisation and other things that are important to work with. … It is interesting with organisations, sometimes it is hard to state which organisation is good and bad. If the ideal organisation existed everyone would have used it. When we speak about reorganisations it is so many local factors that has to be considered…" (Larsson, interview).

In conclusion, what this study portrays is that we should never be content with the political system for decision-making, as something can always be done better, and perhaps that is the point of democracy: to always discuss and improve. Change is a strategy to vitalise the representative democracy for some municipalities. As Svedala's Opposition Leader points out, the municipalities have not changed since the 1940s or even before then, which is fascinating compared to how much society has changed and the municipalities should be part of the citizens over which they rule.

## 5.2.1 Further research

There are some issues that need to be addressed in future research. Even if this study had the methodological aim to dig deeper and describe a social process using a comparative study to determine patterns, a discourse analysis of the power dimension within the municipality would be interesting in order to determine how the decision-making process works and to achieve a deeper understanding of concepts such as internal pressure and the goal for modernisation. As a research assistant for Halmstad University I conducted a report where text analyses were performed concerning fourteen de-sectorised municipalities with a longitudinal perspective to study whether they had executed a re-sectorisation as scholars had suggested (Johansson, 2018), and I felt I had only scratched the surface of steering ideals in Swedish municipalities. Through conducting this study, I perceive I have

come further, yet some questions remain. It would be fascinating to conduct a qualitative and/or quantitative study that analyses how management ideals are spread, what is it that makes a trend gain social authority or the label as a universal solution for so many organisations. Do external actors such as consultants and scholars, spread the ideas, or does reform grow in the municipalities' own organisational fields?

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# 7 Appendix

## 7.1 Appendix 1 – Elements of organisational change

**Figure** - Different elements of organisational change
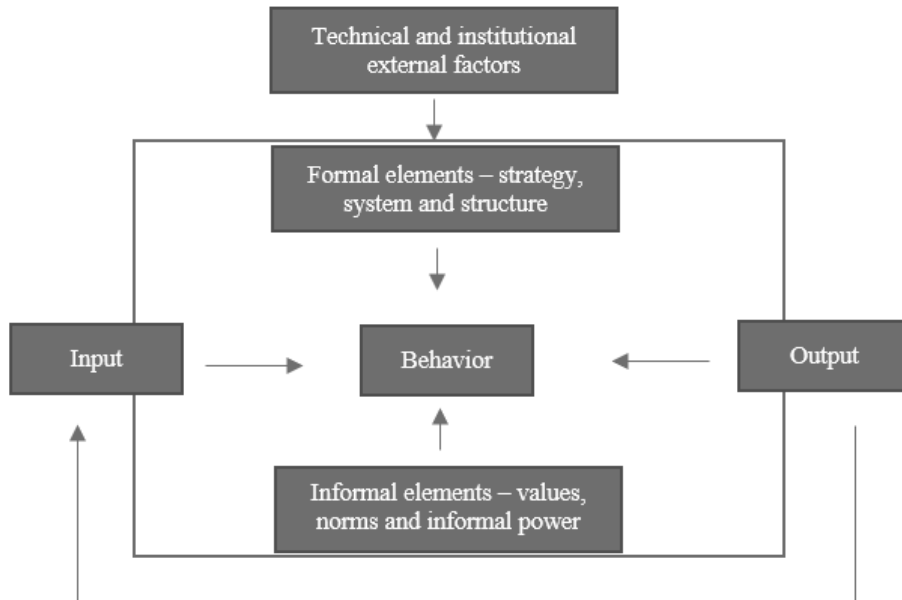


**Source**: Jacobsen. (2005, p.238)

## 7.2 Appendix 2 – Theory of de-sectorisation, tendency towards re-sectorisation and re-sectorisation

**Figure** - Flow diagram
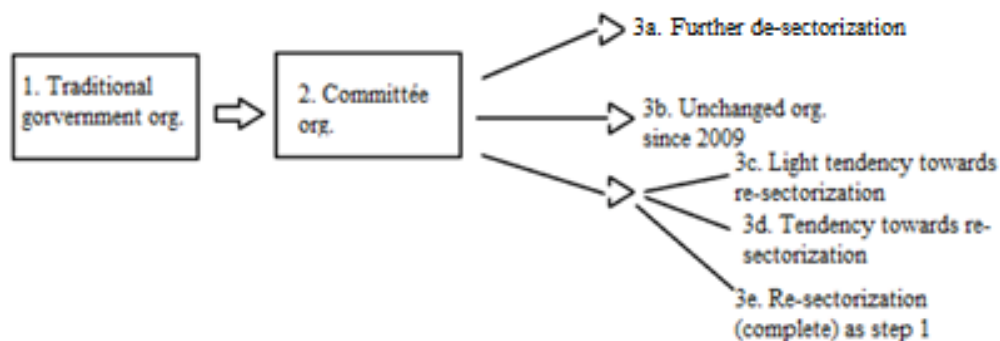


**Table.** Operationalization of the analytical model

| | Def. | | Political org. | Administrative org. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3a. Further de-sectorization | Coordinated the political and/or administrative org. even further with business sector or boards that has merged. Actions in the ambition to vitalize KF further as well as more committees | | | |
| 3b. Unaltered since 2009 | The organization has not changed since 2009 | | | |
| 3c. Light tendency towards re-sectorization | The org. has developed with additional 1-2 boards/sectors which means tendency towards further sectorization | | | |
| 3d. Tendency towards re-sectorization | A slight more tendency towards re-sectorization with additional 3 or more boards/sectors | | | |
| 3e. Re-sectorization | A complete re-sectorization where the org. has gone back to the traditional government model, see figure 2 step 1 | | | |

**Source**: Johansson. (2018, p. 18-19)

# 7.3 Appendix 3 - Ängelholm political organisational map 2014
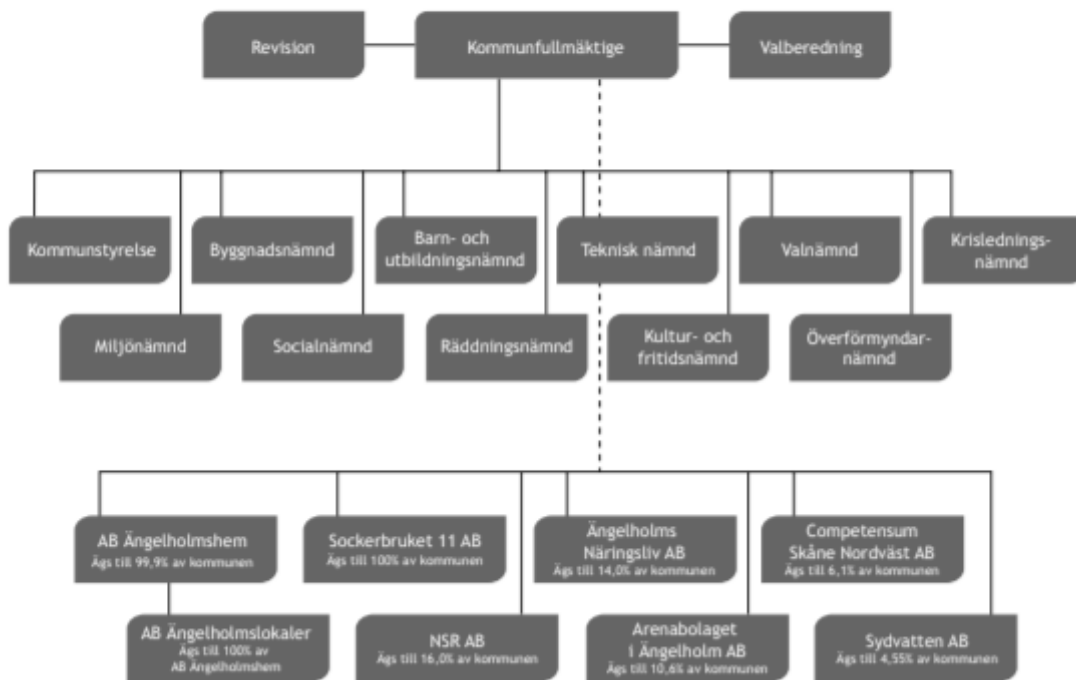


**Source:** Ängelholm. (2015)

## 7.4 Appendix 4 - Ängelholm organisational map 2015-2018
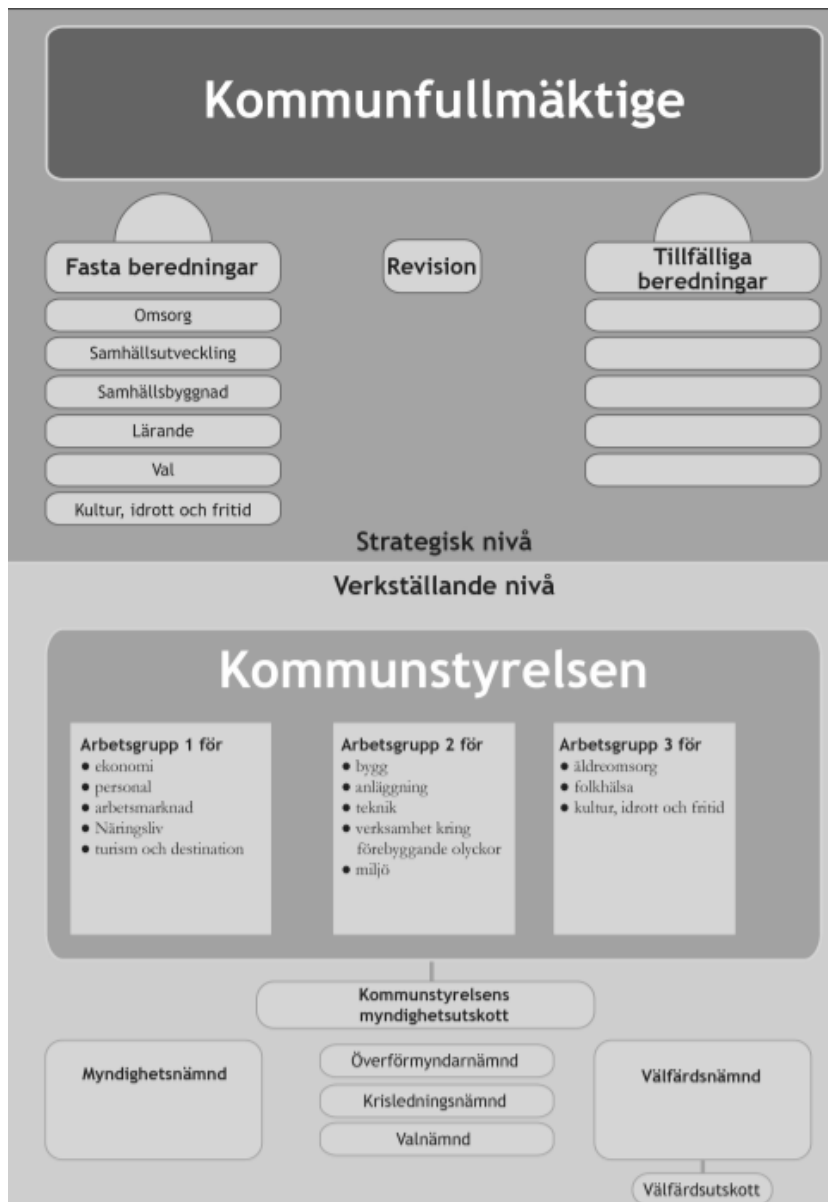


**Source**: Ängelholms kommun. (2018)

## 7.5 Appendix 5 - Svedala political organisational map 2009



**Source:** Johansson. (2018, p.71: Based on Karlsson et al, 2009)

## 7.6 Appendix 6 - Svedala organisational map 2015-2018

*Den politiska organisationen 2015 – 2018*

Kommunfullmäktige

Kommunrevision

Valberedning

Budgetberedning

Personalutskott

Plan- och exploateringsutskott

Utskott för arbete och integration

Bygg- och miljönämnd

Kultur- och fritidsnämnd

Socialnämnd

Teknisk nämnd

Utbildningsnämnd

Kommunstyrelsen

Valnämnd

Överförmyndarnämnd

Ungdomsparlamentet

Medborgarmöten

**Mandatställning 2014-10-15 – 2018-10-14**
Kommunfullmäktige

| Parti | Antal mandat |
|---|---|
| Moderaterna (M) | 12 |
| Socialdemokraterna (S) | 12 |
| Sverigedemokraterna (SD) | 10 |
| Miljöpartiet de gröna (MP) | 3 |
| Liberalerna (L) | 3 |
| Barapartiet (BP) | 2 |
| Centerpartiet (C) | 2 |
| Vänsterpartiet (V) | 1 |
| **Summa** | **45** |

Mandatperioden för nämnder och styrelse är:
2015-01-01 – 2018-12-31

Kommunstyrelsens ordförande: Linda Allansson Wester (M)
1:e vice ordförande: Anette Jelvemark Nordqvist (L)
2:e vice ordförande: Ambjörn Hardenstedt (S)

Kommunfullmäktiges ordförande: Göran Jepsson (M)
Vice ordförande: Björn Jönsson (S)

SVEDALA KOMMUN

2016-08-10

Kommundirektör
Elisabeth Larsson

Kommunledning

Kansli
Teresa Fridell

Kommunikation
Nina Gilljam

Ekonomi
Luisa Hansson

HR
Charlotte Svensson

IT
Mikael Wigerhäll

Upphandling
Robert Aradszky

Näringsliv, turism
Thomas Carlsson

Utbildning
Johan Lundgren

Grundskola
Lise-Lott Nilsson

Gymnasium/vuxenutbildning
Fredrik Aksell

Förskola
Annika Kraft

Kultur och fritid
Annika Kraft

Vård och omsorg
Anna Borgius

Arbete och integration
Fredrik Palmgren

Individ och familjeomsorg
Fredrik Palmgren

LSS
Maria Danielsson/Fredrik Palmgren

Socialpsykiatri
Fredrik Palmgren

Äldreomsorg
Hälso- och sjukvård
Maria Danielsson

Miljö och teknik
Fredrik Löfqvist

Gata och park
Johanna Andersson

Vatten och avlopp
Anne-Marie Pedersen

Avfall
Annci J:son Svensson

Bygg och miljö
Lena Gerdtsson

Räddningstjänst
Mikael Jönsson

Service
Annci J:son Svensson

SVEDALA KOMMUN

2017-01-11

**Source**: Svedala kommun. (2018)

# 7.7 Appendix 7 - Båstad organisational map 2010-2014



**Vad ska nås?**

| Valberedning | Kommunfullmäktige | Beredning för välfärd och kultur |
| 1 ledamot från varje parti i KF | | 16 ledamöter |

Revision
7 ledamöter

Kommunfullmäktige
41 ledamöter

Beredning för välfärd och kultur
16 ledamöter

Beredning för tillväxt och samhällsbyggnad
14 ledamöter

Demokratiberedning
1 ledamot från varje parti i KF

Tillfällig beredning
9 ledamöter+3 utjämn. platser

Samordningsgrupp
KF Pres, KS Pres, Kommunchef

**Vad ska göras?**

Jävsnämnd
3 ledamöter + 3 ersättare

Valnämnd
5 ledamöter + 5 ersättare

Överförmyndare
1 + 1 ersättare

Kommunstyrelse
13 ledamöter
+ 13 ersättare

Välfärdsutskott
5 ledamöter + 5 ersättare

Samhällsbyggnadsutskott
5 ledamöter + 5 ersättare

Ekonomiutskott
5 ledamöter + 5 ersättare

**Hur ska det göras?**

**Förvaltning**
7 verksamhetsområden

Ledningsgrupp

KLK Ledningsgrupp

Utvecklingsgrupp

Kommunchef

Kommunledningskontor
HR, IT, Ekonomi, Kansli, Kommunikation

Stab

Barn & skola

Samhällsskydd

Bildning & arbete

Teknik & service

Vård & omsorg

Samhällsbyggnad

**Source:** Båstad kommun. (2015, p.5)

## 7.8 Appendix 8 - Båstad organisational map 2018

**BÅSTADS KOMMUN**

# Organisationsschema

**Vad ska nås?**

Överförmyndare [1]

Valnämnd [5]

Revision [7]

**Kommunfullmäktige [41]**

KF presidium

Demokratiberedning [9]

Tillfällig beredning [5-9]

**Vad ska göras?**

Kommunstyrelse [13]

Myndighetsnämnd för miljö, bygg och säkerhet [7]

Vård- och omsorgsnämnd [9]

Utbildningsnämnd [9]

Kommunstyrelsens arbetsutskott [5]

Förhandlings- utskott [5]

Utbildningsnämndens arbetsutskott [5]

**Hur ska det göras?**

Förvaltning
6 verksamhetsområden
Kommundirektör

Kommunkontor

Bildning och arbete

Teknik och service

Barn och skola

Samhällsbyggnad

Vård och omsorg

**Source:** Båstad kommun. (2018)

# 7.9 Appendix 9 – Topic guide for officials and politicians

*Theme 1 – Background*
   a. Tell me a little bit about yourself?
   b. What task do you have in the municipality?
   c. In what way were you involved in the process/decision-making of the organisational change?

*Theme 2 – The reform and the new organisation*
   a. Why was the new organisation adapted?
   b. Were there any problems in the municipality before this decision was made?
   c. What would you say was the main reason for the new organisation?
   d. Which ambitions did you have concerning the new organisation?
   e. Was the process prior to making a decision more or less time consuming?
   f. Were there any other alternatives of organisational models you considered?
   g. Was there a discussion among the politicians when the organisation was formulated?
   h. Who/which persons would you argue was/were the change agent/s, the ones most driven for the new organisation?
   i. Has there been an interest from the citizens and/or media for the new organisation?
   j. According to you has there been a real change in the work procedure since the implementation of the new organisation?
   k. How does the political work differ today?

*Theme 3 – The organisation and its culture*
   a. How do you perceive external impulse/fashion?
   b. How important is it to be obedient to the surrounding world?
   c. What relationship is there to change?
   d. Looking back historically wise, do you have a tradition of adjustments in the organisation or reforms?
   e. In what manner is your municipality unique?
   f. Who do you compare yourself with?
   g. What do you say to outsiders when talking about the municipality?
   h. Where do you collect ideas from and get inspired?
   i. Who fits in this organisation?
   j. Which type of person is quickest in rising to the ranks?
   k. What is the relationship between officials and politicians?
   l. Where would you say the power in the municipality lies?

Something you believe I forgot to ask?

# 7.10 Appendix 10 – Topic guide for external actors

*Theme 1 – Background*
    a.   Tell me a little bit about yourself?
    b.   In what way were you involved in the process of the organisational change?

*Theme 2 – The reform and the new organisation*
    a.   What do you perceive the new organisation is about?
    b.   Why was a new organisation decided?
    c.   According to you, were there any problems in the municipality before this decision was made?
    d.   Which ambitions did you have with the new organisation?
    e.   What would you say was the main reason for the new organisation?

    f.   Who/which persons would you argue was/were the change agent/s, the ones most driven for the new organisation?
    g.   Has there been an interest from the citizens and/or media for the new organisation?
    h.   Was there a discussion among the politicians when the organisation was formulated?
    i.   According to you has there been a real change in the work procedure since the implementation of the new organisation?
    j.   Do you believe any other organisational models were considered?

*Theme 3 – The organisation and its culture*
    a.   How is this municipality compared to other municipalities you worked with?
    b.   Who do the municipalities compare themselves with today?
    c.   Where do they get their ideas from?
    d.   In which way is this municipality unique?
    e.   How do you regard they perceived external impulse?
    f.   How important is it to be obedient to the surrounding world?
    g.   What relationship is there to change?
    h.   Who do you believe fits in this organisation?
    i.   Which type of person is quickest in rising to the ranks?
    j.   What is the relationship between officials and politicians?
    k.   Where would you say the power in the municipality lies?

Something you believe I forgot to ask?

# 7.11 Appendix 11 - List of interviewees

**<u>Ängelholm</u>**

*Politicians*
**BrittMarie Hansson**
Social democrat (Socialdemokraterna)
President of the welfare board and board member of the municipal executive board
Interview 13 of March 2018, at Ängelholm town hall

**Robin Holmberg**
Conservative party (Moderaterna)
Second vice president of the municipal executive board, Opposition Leader
Interview 13 th of March 2018, Ängelholm town hall

*Officials*
**Henrik Sandén**
Administrative secretary, secretary of the advisory committee that where in charge of the new political organisation
Interview 13th of March 2018, Ängelholm town hall

**Lena Tebring**
Manager at the Municipal office, secretary of the advisory committee that where in charge of the new political organisation 2010-2014, lawyer (Statsjurist)
Phone interview 22th of March 2018

*External actors*
**Jörgen Johansson**
Political scientist and external actor for Ängelholm municipality. Part of a research project investigating Ängelholms new political organisation.
Interview 21th of March 2018, at Halmstad University

**<u>Svedala</u>**

*Politicians*
**Göran Jepsson**
Conservative party (Moderaterna)
Chair of the municipal council 2014-2018, president of the advisory committee that evaluated the former political organisation (committee organisation)
Interview 5th of April 2018, at Svedala town hall

**Ambjörn Hardenstedt**
Social democrat (Socialdemokraterna)
Opposition Leader, chief of the municipal executive board
Interview 9th of March 2018, Svedala town hall

*Officials*
**Elisabeth Larsson**
Municipal Chief Executive
Interview 14th of March 2018, Svedala town hall

**Båstad**

*Politicians*
**Kerstin Gustafsson**
Conservative party (Moderaterna)
Member of the municipal council and executive board, Former Deputy Mayor and part of the group investigating a new political organisation before the term of 2010-2014
Interview 15th of March 2018, at Båstad town hall

**Bo Wendt**
Bjärepartiet (local party)
Deputy Major, chief of the municipal executive board
Interview 12th of March 2018, Båstad town hall

*Officials*
**Catharina Elofsson**
Manager of the Municipal office
Interview 15th of March 2018, Båstad town hall

## 7.12 Appendix 12 - SWOT-analysis for the traditional model Ängelholm[19]

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| The Social board has responsibility for the whole area | Specialisation/sectorisation (stuprör) is a risk for less coordination |
| The Children and Youth board has the responsibility for the whole area | Sector guardians among officials and politicians |
| Connections to law and regulations | It is unclear what is exercise of public authority and what is the administration |
| A clearer task division for the electives | The politicians risk to eb to much in "the workshop" (details) |
| The decision-making is divided to many different persons | The line between officials and politicians can be perceived as unclear |
| The Children and Youth board: contact persons in each board for each school creates more commitment | Unusually many tasks per politician |
| Closeness to the boards tasks | |
| Several task for the politicians as foundation for democracy | |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Collaborations with other municipalities | The tasks for the Social board and the Children and Youth board is perceived as to demanding |
| Carry out joint missions together with other municipalities, for example a mutual board, municipal company | There is not as many persons that can or are willing to be involved as politicians in the future |
| More "younger" pensioners can become politicians | High middle age among politicians |
| Smaller political areas can be vitalized | The high middle age among politicians does not match the population |
| Delegate more "small" decisions to get more time for strategic decisions | Ängelholm is to small municipality to deal with all tasks |
| The IT-development gives more opportunities for citizen dialogue/democracy | The responsibility cannot be delegated away, but can diluted (urvattnas) |
| The political organisations legitimise with the citizens can increase by new forms of democracy | The political organisations legitimacy can decrease among citizens |

**Source:** Ängelholms kommun. (2012a)

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[19] Translated by the author, should be seen as a paraphrase

## 7.13 Appendix 13 - Statistic over politicians average age Ängelholm municipality

I Ängelholms kommun finns 436 politiska uppdrag och 155 förtroendevalda, vilket ger 2,8 uppdrag per förtroendevald. Genomsnittet är 1,6 uppdrag i riket 2007.

| Medelålder 2011 | | Medelålder KF |
|---|---|---|
| Riket | 41,1 | |
| Skåne | 40,9 | |
| Ängelholm | 43,3 | 56,2 |

Andel förtroendevalda 2011-2014

| | Riket | Ängelholm |
|---|---|---|
| 18-29 år | 8% | 4% |
| 30-49 år | 32% | 28% |
| 50-64 år | 37% | 44% |
| 65 år och uppåt | 23% | 24% |
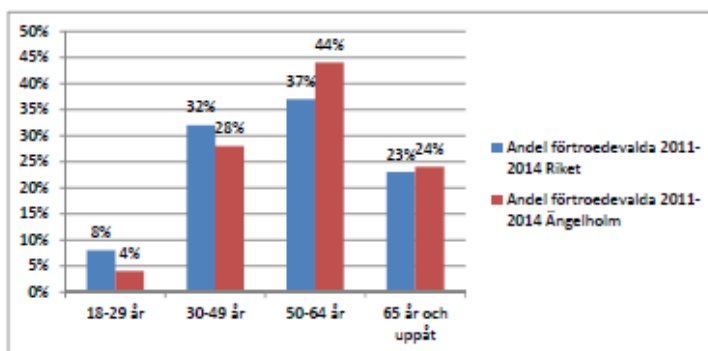


**Source:** Ängelholms kommun. (2012c)

# 7.14 Appendix 14 - Svedala political organisational map after the alteration in 2010

Den nya politiska organisationen
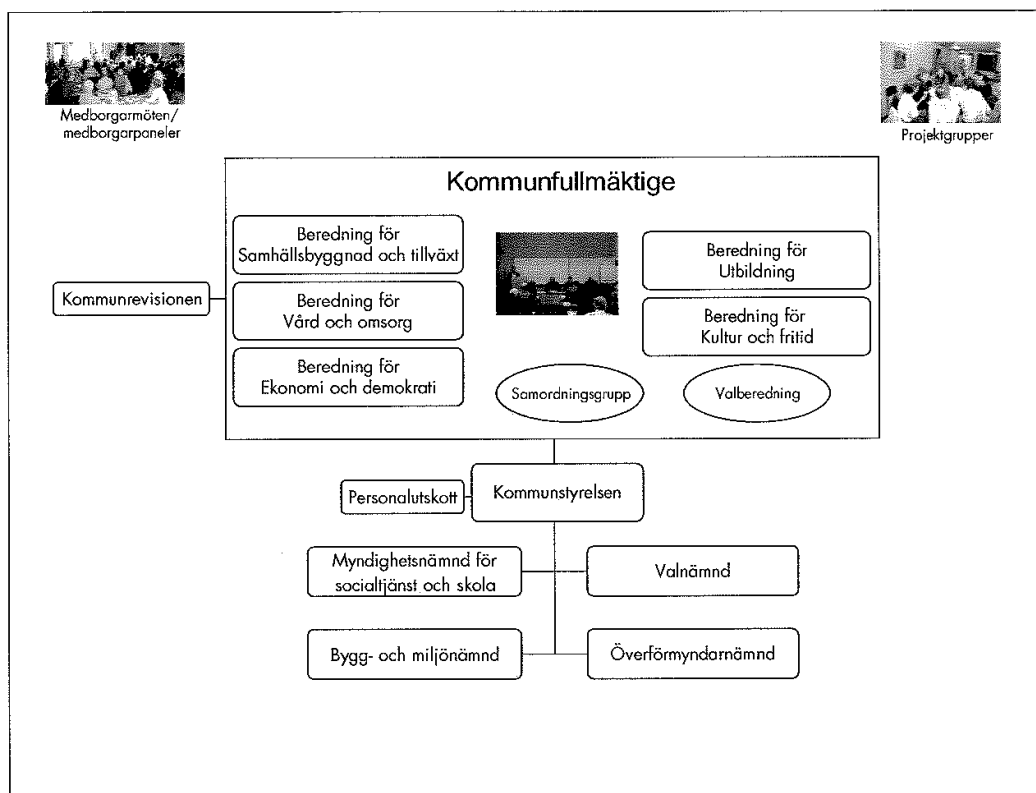
## 7.15 Appendix 15 - Strengths and weaknesses of the committee organisation and the traditional model for Svedala municipality[20]

|  | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|---|
| **Committee organisation** | The committees cannot take decisions by themselves, all matters must pass the executive board and sometimes the council. Which gives the executive board amore holistic view and strengthen their role<br><br>The committees can focus on strategic questions and do not need to consider daily detail matters<br><br>Politicians in other municipalities has perceived that the council has gained a stronger position and a livelier debate | The executive board gains a bigger role than intended<br><br>The executive boards meeting is often quite long, since all matters is decided there<br><br>Ambiguity for citizens as well as officials – who is in charge of my question?<br><br>Difficulty to decide who shall take care of a matter that is both strategic and long-term, was well as short-term<br><br>Matters usually take more time to process since the committees cannot take decisions<br><br>The committees tend to act like boards |
| **Traditional model** | It is clear who is in charge of what<br><br>The matters can be decided upon quicker if the boards have the right to decide<br><br>The executive board gets less of a burden and can focus on more strategic matters | Can lead to a very sectorized and specialized organisation. The politicians might represent their boards interest instead of the municipality as a whole<br><br>Can lead to sector guardians |

**Source:** Svedala kommun. (2013a, p.6)

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[20] Translated by the author, should be seen as a paraphrase