A Democracy of Scale. Size and Representative Democracy in Swedish Local Government

David Karlsson*

David Karlsson
School of Public
Administration,
University of Gothenburg

Abstract
Two central mechanisms of representative democracy are A) the identification of the people's will by elections and B) the process wherein elected representatives enforce policies preferred by the voters. This article demonstrates that municipal size is of vital importance for how these two mechanisms function in Swedish local democracy. A prerequisite for mechanism A is that voters are provided with a variety of political alternatives to choose from. If the political alternatives are limited, voters will have trouble deciding which parties or candidates reflect their political opinions. To interpret election results as a manifestation of the people's will in such situations is highly problematic. The study shows that the manifestation of political alternatives in local politics increases significantly with the size of the municipality. The results also show that the political knowledge and influence (in relation to national and local bureaucracies) of local political leaders correlate positively with municipal size. The conclusion is that the success of local political leaders in their endeavour to identify and enforce the will of the people depends on the size of the municipality they govern.

Introduction

Municipal size is one of the most decisive institutional aspects of local politics. Size determines the scope of municipal activities in terms of economic revenues, infrastructure, service production and citizen participation. But how does the size of a municipality affect local democracy and the political leadership of elected representatives?

Local democracy in most Western countries is formed around the principle of representative democracy (e.g. Loughlin et al., 2010). In a representative democracy, the will of the people is transformed into realised policy by three major mechanisms (e.g. Bäck & Gilljam, 2006): The first mechanism is the identification of the people's will by elections and systems of political accountability. Policies proposed by election winners are assumed to reflect the will of the people. A prerequisite for this mechanism to work is that the democratic system provides a variety of viable political alternatives for voters to choose from. Such alternatives are manifested in the form of political conflicts between candidates, between parties and between the ruling majority and the opposition. The second mechanism is the process wherein elected representatives enforce the policies preferred by the voters. In order to accomplish this task effectively, political leaders need sufficient political strength and knowledge. The third and final

***David Karlsson** is Associate Professor in Public Administration at School of Public Administration, University of Gothenburg. His research is focused on local and regional politics and democracy, especially the attitudes and practices of local representatives. This article is written within the project Local Political Leadership at the School of Public Administration, University of Gothenburg. The project is financed by The Swedish Research Council. As David Karlsson is the co-editor of this special issue, the ordinary editors of SJPA were responsible for the review process and publication decision regarding this article. E-mail: david.karlsson@spa.gu.se

mechanism is the implementation of policies by public authorities. Successful implementation requires that authorities possess the expertise and resources needed for the job.

The main aim of this article is to focus on the first two of these mechanisms, and to analyse the relationship between municipal size and 1) the manifestations of political alternatives and 2) the strength of local political actors and institutions in Swedish local government. The importance of municipal size with regards to the third mechanism, policy implementation, is a topic well covered in earlier research (e.g. Boyne, 1995; Houlberg, 2000; Blom-Hansen, 2005; Christoffersen & Larsen, 2007). However, since the problems of this field mainly focus on economic and administrative logics rather than democratic processes and political leadership, this mechanism will not be included in this study.

Size of demos and democracy

The quest for the ideal size of demos is as old as the idea of democracy itself. From the city states of ancient Greece and onwards, the size of demos has limited the scope of possible democratic practices. The necessity of gathering all citizens in a single location in order to make decisions put severe restrictions on the maximum population size. Aristotle thought it necessary to know all of the people eligible for political office (Aristotle, 1998). The ideal of small-scale democracy remained connected to the idea of democracy over the centuries, and the forebears of modern democracy such as (Rousseau, 1762/1997) and Montesquieu thought of it as a requirement of good government. The latter insisted that the common good in larger republics 'is sacrificed to a thousand considerations' while in a small republic 'the public good is more strongly felt, better known, and closer to the each citizen; abuses are less extensive, and consequently less protected' (Montesquieu, 1748/1989:124).

In later years, when the inventions of representative democracy and public elections went beyond the narrow limits of a possible demos, the romantic ideal of small-scale democracy remained in the minds of many democrats. Advocates of local democracy in particular have clung to the 'small is beautiful' ideal from the time of the city states. The position that local democracy seems to work better in smaller municipalities has been proved repeatedly in studies on the subject (Mouritzen, 1989; Oliver, 2000.; Nielsen, 2001; Rose, 2002; Frandsen, 2002; Baldersheim, et al., 2003; Johansson, 2007).

At the same time, it is apparent that the arguments about municipal size are by no means unambiguous. This is underlined in the classic study 'Size and Democracy' (Dahl & Tufte, 1973), in which the term 'system capacity' is used to emphasise the ability of the political system to live up to the demands of citizens. The study shows that efficiency is not only an economic value; it is instrumental to the legitimacy of a democracy as well. The conclusion is that a demos cannot be too small if its political administration aspires to keep the long-term trust of its citizens.

It is not surprising that these two perspectives, the ideal of the small demos and the need for system capacity, have been central in the debates on municipal amalgamation reforms (e.g. SOU, 2007:10). An underlying notion has always been that gains in economies of scale and the legitimacy which an efficient organisation brings when local administrations are united should always be weighed against any losses with respect to democracy (Häggroth, 2005).

In 2002 and 2003, Danish studies reached a remarkable conclusion: when controlled for a number of relevant variables, all the advantages of the smaller municipalities seemed to disappear (Larsen, 2002; Kjaer & Mouritzen, 2003). These reports also turned out to be pivotal in the process leading to the Danish amalgamation reform, which was finally completed in 2007 (Bundgaard & Vrangbæk, 2007)

In fact, studies indicate that the effects of municipal size on local democracy could be evaluated very differently, depending on which democratic values are in focus (Johansson et al., 2007). In many instances, the local level is regarded as the safe haven for participatory democracy, a form of democracy that for practical reasons is very hard to apply on the national and regional level; here democracy is instead based on elections and competition between parties (e.g. Gustafsson & Karlsson, 2010). In this view, municipalities should be the arena for active citizenship, participation and deliberations, not party politics and conflicts. However, in most western countries the institutionalised democracy on the local level is no less based on elections and party competition than national democracy. To evaluate the effects of municipal size on local democracy only in light of participatory values is therefore one-sided. The effects on the values of liberal representative democracy must be taken into account at least to the same degree.

A source of inspiration for this approach is Kenneth Newton's article: 'Is small really so beautiful? Is big really so ugly? Size, effectiveness, and democracy in local government.' (Newton, 1982). Newton, who in his time was very much a lonely voice in this debate, tried to nuance the discussion by highlighting factors in older studies which did not support the superiority of a small demos. He especially questioned the premises of the field. For example, he asked why political conflicts, which are assumed to be more common in larger municipalities, should necessarily be regarded as a bad thing. And he stated:

> The … antagonism towards large units of government derives from a strong preference for the kind of direct, individual participation which is possible … in small, face-to-face communities. Indirect, collective participation via pressure groups and political parties is thought to be an extremely poor substitute for pronged, first hand political commitment. This biased, not to say intolerant, view of the world is not shared by most people, who want to be left alone to get on with the important things in life … For most people, politics does not warrant more than the odd attendance at a meeting, and allowing pressure groups and parties to defend their interests in between. (Newton 1982:205).

9

Newton made a strong argument, but unfortunately he did not carry out a study of his own to take his case farther. And his points do not seem to have much encouraged any of the later students on the subject of size and democracy. This is especially unfortunate in relation to the Scandinavian municipal model, where in fact the values of party-based representative democracy are the foundation of the political institutions. Instead, most indications of the 'small is beautiful' hypothesis in earlier studies have continued to take a certain democratic ideal for granted: a communitarian 'strong democracy', where citizen participation between elections is high and the relationships between electors and the elected are close. If we value a system where it is a realistic expectation that a citizen will personally know her elected representative, then a small demos is always preferable — for purely mathematical reasons. And almost all studies on size and local democracy seem to have adopted a citizen-centred perspective. Studies taking such an approach automatically focus on the participatory aspects — because that is what citizen data can offer. But the situation for those who carry out on a daily basis the functions of local democracy – the elected representatives of the citizens – has not been taken into consideration.

Liberal representative democracy in the case of Sweden

The Nordic countries are unique in their level of decentralisation of public services (Hesse & Sharpe, 1991; Loughlin, Hendriks & Lidström, 2010). Local administration plays a central part in the daily lives of millions of Swedes. Municipal politics deals with issues all over the political spectrum: general welfare policy, taxes, education, environment, culture, leisure, business development, communications and infrastructure etc. The local election system and the roles of parties are analogous to those at the national level. Therefore, the case of Sweden is exceptionally well suited for a comparative local government study, in particular if we also wish to relate the results of the analysis to larger and more complex political systems.

The discussion on size and democracy in Sweden has been ongoing since the creation of the modern municipal system in 1862 (Wallin, 1966; Wångmar, 2003). During its first 90 years, the Swedish local government system consisted of about 2500 municipalities. During the 20th century, two major amalgamation reforms were implemented and today there are 290 municipalities in Sweden, a ninth of the figure for 1862 (Erlingsson, et al., 2010). During the same period, the number of Swedes more than doubled. Municipalities grew extensively, both in population and in terms of the services they provided. The responsibilities of the local authorities had been gradually increasing for decades, and this was, of course, the main reason behind the amalgamations (Westerståhl & Strömberg, 1983). As the number of municipalities in the country decreased, so did the number of local politicians. But the expansion in municipal size also led to a dramatic increase in the number of politicians per municipality. In the aftermath of the reforms, some criticism suggested that the amalgamation had gone too far. Since the 1970s, in thirteen cases parts of municipalities have seceded and

formed new municipalities (Erlingsson, 2001; Nielsen, 2003). The introduction of neighbourhood committees as a sub-municipal political level in the 1980s and 1990s could also be interpreted as a reaction to the amalgamation reforms (Bäck et al, 2001).

Since the 19th century, Swedish local democracy has been regarded as a place for citizen participation and an unpretentious school of democracy for the politically engaged (Kaijser, 1962). The discourse of local democracy as a communitarian, consensus-seeking, less confrontational and ideological arena is continuously strong (Sanne, 2001; Bäck, 2003; Karlsson, 2003) and was confirmed by the Governmental Commission of Local Democracy (SOU, 2001:48). While participatory and electoral democratic practices are not necessarily exclusive, they reach for very different goals. From a communitarian and 'strong democratic' viewpoint, citizen participation is a crucial element in all democratic practices. From a liberal perspective, it is at most secondary. Strong democrats claim that participation between elections not only improves the democratic process, but also that it has an intrinsic value, educating and empowering citizens (Barber, 1984). Liberal critics point to well-founded evidence that citizens who are engaged in participatory activities often belong to resourceful and well-educated social groups (Verba, et al., 1995). Instead of realising goals such as inclusion and the spread of power, participatory democracy could lead to increased segregation, giving well-situated citizens even greater influence over local politics (Gilljam, 2003).

The risk that local democratic institutions based on citizen participation could favour the local elite was apparent to Swedish liberals as early as the 1860s. On that basis, they advocated the importance of elected bodies, arguing against their conservative opponents, who thought the electorate assemblies would better embody the sovereignty of the people (Palme & Lindberg, 1962). Since then, the debate on the pros and cons of participatory democracy has continued under the surface of the hegemonic strong-democracy discourse.

However, there are indications that the local politicians themselves are very critical of the ideals of participatory democracy. A comparative study with data from the early 1990s found that Swedish local leaders were more willing to engage in political conflicts than might be expected bearing in mind the earlier research on the topic. The study questioned what had, to that point, been the prevailing interpretation of Sweden as a consensual democracy (Szücs, 1998). A few years later, another study found that Swedish local leaders believed that the best way for citizens to influence the political process was through institutions of representative democracy: party memberships and elections. The study also established that, among several alternative party functions, Swedish politicians see the role of coalition building as the most important one, and the role of facilitating citizen inclusion as the least important (Szücs & Strömberg, 2006). The tendency over time has been for local representatives to prefer the representation style of party soldiers rather than trustees or voter delegates (Bäck, 2000). Party loyalty as measured in this way is now stronger in local politics than in the national parliament (Gilljam, Karlsson & Sundell 2010).

11

In fact, when compared to their colleagues in other countries, Swedish local leaders are the very eager advocates of party-based electoral democracy in Europe, and – at the same time – among the strongest opponents of citizen participation between elections and outside of the parliamentary system (Karlsson, 2006; Karlsson 2012).

These results alone should be a sufficient motive for using the values of representative democracy as an evaluative benchmark for local democracy in the discussion on municipal size. But even more important is the local 'constitution' itself. The Swedish local election system is built on the same principles as the national equivalent. The common election day of the local, regional and national levels underlines the cohesion, and so does the fact that, in most municipalities, it is the traditional national parties that dominate the political scene. Practically all Swedish municipalities are run by informal coalitions of parties, and there is likewise a natural opposition from minority parties. The quasi-parliamentary system is now so well established that it must be regarded as an institutionalised part of the local constitution, if still not yet fully recognised by the Act of Local Government (Henry Bäck, 2006). As in other parliamentary systems, different parliamentary situations create variations in levels of conflict and influence patterns (Gilljam & Karlsson, 2012), and the parliamentary positions of councillors affect their political attitudes (Gilljam, Persson & Karlsson, 2012; Karlsson, 2010).

Size and representative democracy: Two hypotheses

This study will analyse the relationship between municipal size and 1) the manifestations of political alternatives, and 2) the strength of local political actors and institutions in Swedish local government.

Will we then find higher degree of political polarisation and conflict in larger or smaller municipalities? Earlier research gives us some clues: Danish studies have found that, when municipal size increases, citizens tend to abandon strategies of individual participation and focus on collective action. Instead of trying to influence local politics through personal contacts, they join organisations (Mouritzen, 1991; Houlberg, 2003). Meeting greater numbers of organisation representatives rather than greater numbers of individual citizens is, in that perspective, a more effective way to keep in touch with many citizens in a larger locality. Earlier research has thus concluded that party-politicisation and conflicts are more prominent in larger municipalities (Dahl & Tufte, 1973; Westerståhl & Strömberg, 1983; Bäck, 2000; Karlsson, 2001). In a survey of local councillors in 49 Swedish municipalities in 2006, local elections were to a higher degree perceived as dominated by party competition in larger municipalities (Karlsson, 2007a). As Newton (1982) mentioned, it is likely that small groups and communities often suppress their disagreements because of lock-in effects; minority positions are outmanoeuvred. This is a clear disadvantage for smaller municipalities from the point of view of liberal representative democracy.

On the basis of the cited earlier studies, the expected relationship between municipal size and the manifestation of political alternatives is that municipal

size has a positive effect on the degree of political alternatives and conflicts in a municipality (Hypothesis A). "Manifestation of political alternatives" is here defined as the distance between political actors in a municipality, measured both as perceived differences and actual differences of opinion. If the hypothesis is correct, we would expect the political alternatives to be more varied in larger municipalities.

The second question examined in this study concerns the relationship between municipal size and the political strength of local political actors and institutions. "Political strength" is here defined as the capacity of local political representatives and institutions to govern the municipality and to implement policies of their choice.

Is the strength of political leaders stronger in smaller municipalities where the organisation they govern is more manageable, or are political leaders stronger in larger municipalities where the number of candidates for leadership positions is higher? Nielsen (2003) has shown that citizens in larger municipalities believe their representatives to be more competent. A larger constituency will, ceteris paribus, provide greater selection opportunities since the number of citizens per position is higher. This thought is not new. John Stuart Mill wrote at the time of the first Swedish municipal reform:

> A mere village has no claim to a municipal representation. … Such small places have rarely a sufficient public to furnish a tolerable municipal council: if they contain any talent or knowledge applicable to public business, it is apt to be all concentrated in some one man, who thereby becomes the dominator of the place. It is better that such places should be merged in a larger circumscription. (Mill, 1862: 294).

The results from another earlier study show that in municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, more than 60 per cent of the councillors agree that 'it is hard for my party to find candidates for political office'. In municipalities larger than 80,000 inhabitants, only 21 per cent find recruitment to be a problem (Karlsson, 2007a). The chance of finding candidates among party members with exceptional qualities for top office should also be greater. It does not matter that small municipalities tend to have slightly higher levels of party members (Johansson, 2007); it is the nominal number of candidates that is crucial.

Larger municipalities might have fewer politicians per citizen, but those they have work harder. Karlsson (2007a) also showed that councillors in the largest municipalities spend twice as many hours on their political work as do their colleagues in smaller municipalities. One consequence of this is that they manage to meet more people. In particular, they have more contacts with journalists and representatives from other municipalities, and considerably more interactions with political colleagues in their own municipality. In smaller municipalities, it is more likely that a citizen will have contacted a politician recently, but that does not mean that politicians in larger municipalities are isolated from the people. Between small and large communities, there is no real difference in the number of citizens a councillor has contact with. Nor are politicians' individual

meetings with those employed in local administration related to municipal size. But since there are many more councillors in larger municipalities, the total nominal number of citizens and employees in contact with the politicians is considerably higher in larger municipalities (ibid).

On the basis of the results of earlier research, the expectation is that the strength and knowledge of local political actors and institutions will be higher in larger municipalities and lower in smaller municipalities (Hypothesis B).

The variable 'municipal size' and sources of data

In this study the definition of 'municipal size' will be the number of inhabitants in a municipality. The average population of a Swedish municipality is 32,700 inhabitants (2011). However, this number is skewed by a few very large cities such as Stockholm (864,000), Gothenburg (520,000) and Malmö (303,000). The median municipality of Sweden has about 15,200 inhabitants. Municipal size is, however, not such a distinct variable as one might think. For example, in many cases the number of people inside the geographic area of a municipality varies between day- and night-time. People live (and vote) in one municipality but they work and spend the day in another (Lidström, 2006; Karlsson, 2007b). But in the end, the multicollinearity problem would be insurmountable if we were to include multiple versions of municipal size in the same analysis. We will have to make do with the formal population size — and that is after all what most people refer to when speaking of municipal size.

In general, the effect of municipal size on various dependent variables is not proportional, since the marginal effect of an increase in population size could in most cases be expected to decrease. In the analyses in this article, a logarithmised version of municipal size is therefore used. A logarithmised size variable also reduces the consequences of outliers in the form of a few very large municipalities.

Since one purpose of this article is to provide a new perspective on the size and democracy question by adapting the viewpoint of the politicians, the main source of data will be a survey directed to all councillors in the 290 municipalities in Sweden between October 2008-February 2009 (Gilljam, et al., 2010; Gilljam, et al., 2011). The survey was answered by 9103 councillors. This number represents 70 per cent of the 13,004 non-vacant council seats in Swedish municipalities. The response rate was below 50 per cent in only 7 of the 290 municipalities, the lowest result being 42.2. When using data from this survey in this article, the respondents' answers are aggregated to the municipal level. This means that N in all analyses is 290 municipalities, where the value of each municipality is based on the answers of 13 to 70 (on average 31) councillors. For general socio-economic data and election statistics in this article, the source is Statistics Sweden.

The dependent variables

Political alternatives

The first hypothesis (A) is that municipal size has a positive effect on the manifestation of political alternatives in a municipality. "Manifestation of political alternatives" is here defined as the distance between election alternatives in a municipality, measured both as perceived differences and as actual differences of opinion. If the hypothesis is correct, we would expect the conflicts to be more prominent, and the political alternatives thereby more dispersed, in larger municipalities.

Three indicators (A1-3) will be used in order to measure the manifestation of political alternatives in the municipalities. The first indicator (A1) measures the *perceived degree of party conflict* (A1) in a municipality. The indicator is based on the councillors' response to the following question: "How would you describe political affairs in your municipalities: Are they characterised primarily by consensus or primarily by party conflicts?". In this variable, the responses are coded on a scale from 0 (primarily consensus) to 100 (primarily party conflicts). The degree of conflict in each municipality is measured as the mean value of the councillors' answers. The mean value among all municipalities is 46 and the municipalities with the highest and lowest perceived conflict were Älvdalen (87) and Ydre (14).

However, while perception of political conflicts is probably a good indicator for the political culture or atmosphere in a municipality, it is not necessary a reliable indicator for the actual scope of political differences (e.g. Karlsson, 2003). The second indicator (A2) is an absolute deviation index representing the *degree of divergence among councillors in different political issues*. A2 is therefore a more objective measure of the degree of actual political discord in a municipality than A1. The absolute deviation index (A2) was constructed on the following grounds: in the questionnaire, the councillors answered ten questions regarding local political issues. The questions are cited in Table 1. If all councillors in a council had unified views on each issue, the absolute deviation value would be 0. If the council was divided in half, with one side favouring the extreme view for every issue, and the other half the other extreme view, then the value would be 50. The mean value among all municipalities on A2 is 23 and the municipalities with the highest and lowest values were Staffanstorp (29) and Arjeplog (18).

The indicators A1 and A2 are based on different level of analysis: relationship between parties (A1) and relationship between individual councillors (A2). However, the most important conflict relationship in a liberal representative democracy is that between the ruling majority and the opposition. When a voter is holding the political leaders accountable on election day, he or she must be able to identify the opposition as a viable alternative to the ruling majority. If there were not a distinct political distance between majority and opposition, election could not be used by voters as an instrument for changing the political course. The third indicator (A3) is therefore an index based on the degree of *political disagreement between the ruling majority and the opposition*. The index is based on the same ten survey questions as A2. In each municipality, all councillors

were grouped into two categories as either members of the ruling majority or members of the opposition in a municipality. For each of the ten questions a mean value for both groups of councillors is identified, and the mean differences between the two groups in all ten questions determine a municipality's value for A3. If all majority members are united in an extreme view for each question and all opposition members hold the other extreme view, the index value of the municipality would be 100. If the mean values of the majority group and the minority group are the same for all ten questions, the index value would be 0. The mean value among all municipalities for A3 is 29 and the municipalities with the highest and lowest values were Degerfors (45) and Höganäs (7).

Table 1 presents the mean value among the 290 municipalities for each of the ten questions used in A2 and A3, and the table also presents the absolute deviation values and the majority-opposition distance values for each question.

Table 1 Divergence of political opinions on ten local political issues.

	Mean (0-100)	Difference of opinion among councillors and majority/opposition	
		A2. Absolute deviation	A3. Majority-opposition distance
Support businesses that wish to establish in the municipality	83	15	7
Intensify the local efforts in order to achieve gender equality	75	17	15
Give more resources to local cultural services	64	19	14
Uphold a more restrictive local alcohol policy	62	20	11
Receive more refugees in the municipality	60	19	14
Increase the use of consumer choice in local services	59	26	41
Allow private entrepreneurs to be responsible for a larger part of local services	57	30	50
Raise the local tax rate rather than reduce local services	54	25	32
Introduce a child-care allowance for children age 1-3 years	42	35	57
Give more resources to private schools	39	29	48
Mean of all questions		23	29
N	290	290	289

Comments: Answers to all questions were reported on a five grade scale (0=Very bad proposal, 25=Rather bad proposal, 50=Neither bad nor good proposal, 75=Rather good proposal, 100=Very good proposal). The unit of analysis of the table is the municipality, where the value of each municipality is based on 1) the mean value of each question among all members of the council, 2) the absolute deviation (the mean difference) from the median response in the council, and 3) the difference between the mean values of majority and opposition councillors in the council. Proposals are ranked in order of popularity.

Table 1 reveals that the political issue on which political disagreement is largest in Swedish municipalities concerns child care allowance. Child care allowance [Swedish: Vårdnadsbidrag] is a policy especially supported by Christian democrats. The policy is fervently opposed by parties on the left, and many liberal councillors are sceptics as well. Traditional left-right issues regarding privatisation, consumer choice and taxes are also divisive, while disagreements on issues such as business support, gender equality, reception of refugees, culture policy and alcohol policy are smaller.

Political strength

The second hypothesis of the study (B) is that municipal size has a positive effect on the political strength of local political actors and institutions. "Political strength" is here defined as the capacity of local political actors and institutions to govern the municipality and to implement policies of their choice. If the hypothesis is correct, we would expect the political competence of local political institutions, as well as the political actors' ability to influence local affairs, to be higher in larger municipalities and lower in smaller municipalities.

In this study, the degree of political strength will be measured by three indicators (B1-3). The first two indicators concern the influence of local political actors in relation to bureaucracies. The first indicator, B1, measures the influence of *national authorities* over local political affairs. Each municipality is assigned a value on this indicator based on how its councillors perceive the situation. In the questionnaire, the councillors were asked the following question: "In your opinion, how influential are [national authorities] over local political affairs". The responses were coded on a scale from 0 (very large influence) to 100 (no influence at all). A higher value thus indicates a higher political strength in a municipality. The mean value among all Swedish municipalities was 41 and the municipalities with the highest and lowest values were Norrköping (53) and Dorotea (28).

The influence of national authorities over local affairs limits the scope of action of local politicians and local administrators alike. B1 is thereby a measure of the degree of political strength in relation to higher tiers of government. However, the influence of the local bureaucracy in relation to local political actors also varies among municipalities. Therefore, the second indicator (B2) measures the influence of local political actors in relation to the *local bureaucracy*. This indicator is an index based on the same set of survey questions as B1. Among the actors mentioned in the question on influence over local affairs were three categories of politicians/political institutions: "The Executive Board", "The Chair of the Executive Board" (i.e. the Swedish Mayor equivalent) and "Other politicians". The mean value of the perceived influence of these three actors is here regarded as a measure of the relative degree of influence of local politicians in a municipality. A fourth actor group mentioned in the question was "Local administrators". A municipality's value on the B2-index is the difference between the mean value for the three political actors on the one hand and the mean value of the local administrators on the other hand. If all politicians were perceived as

17

having very large influence by all councillors, and all councillors agreed that local administrators had no influence at all, then the index value of a municipality would be +100. If the opposite was true, the value would be -100. If the mean value regarding the perceived influence of the administrators and the politicians was the same, the index value would be 0. The mean value among all municipalities for B2 is +10 – indicating that politicians in general have a somewhat higher degree of influence than administrators. However, in some municipalities the value for B2 is negative, indicating that the influence of administrators supersedes the influence of politicians. The municipalities with the highest and lowest values for B2 were Norberg (+25) and Vaxholm (-7).

The Executive Board is the political elite of a municipality, and it is comprised of leading members of both the ruling majority and of the opposition. The third indicator (B3) measures the perceived political knowledge of the Executive Board. B3 was based on the survey question: "In your opinion, how much do [the Executive Board] know about political affairs in your municipality?". The responses are coded on a scale from 0 (no knowledge at all) to 100 (very good knowledge). The mean value among all municipalities is 71 and the municipalities with the highest and lowest values were Överkalix (84) and Gullspång (54) respectively.

Control variables – party structure and socio-economic factors

To isolate the effect of municipal size on the manifestation of political alternatives, analyses must be made under control for several relevant factors. One such factor is the party fragmentation of the council. If one party dominates the political scene, it is likely that its members will perceive the degree of party conflict to be limited, and the absolute deviation of political attitudes will probably be narrower when many members belong to the same party. It is almost self-evident that the political alternatives increase with the number of parties. Parties represent different points of view and more parties ought to increase the absolute deviation of political attitudes present in the council.

An indicator for political fragmentation that incorporates both the dominance of single parties and the number of parties in an elected assembly is the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index[1] (HHI) wherein higher values signify a lower degree of party fragmentation in a parliament:

$$\text{HHI} = \sum_{i=1}^{N} party\ share\ _i^{\,2}$$

For example, if a council consists of three parties with 50, 30 and 20 per cent of the mandates, the HHI value would be $0.5^2+0.3^2+0.2^2=0.38$. If all mandates in a

---

[1] The index, named after Orris C. Herfindahl and Albert O. Hirschman (Hirschman, 1964), was originally a measure of the size of firms in relation to their industry and an indicator of the amount of competition among them. It has since been widely used as a measure of party fragmentation (or rather party concentration).

council belong to the same party, the HHI value would be 1. If the mandates instead were dispersed among an infinite number of parties with exactly equal shares, the HHI value would be 0 (this is, of course, impossible). The Swedish municipality with the lowest party fragmentation after the 2006 election (i.e. the highest HHI value) was Vellinge (0.53) while the highest party fragmentation was found in Hörby (0.17). The median value (.,24) was held by several municipalities, among them Bengtsfors.

Earlier results have indicated that political conflicts may be somewhat higher in municipalities with minority rule (Gilljam and Karlsson, 2012). This factor, as well as the left-right bias of the council (measured as the percentage of Social democrat and Left party councillors), will also be included among the party structure control variables.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that effects of municipal size are not spurious due to intercorrelation with the social-economic characteristics of a municipality, four control variables are included the analysis: Education level (per cent with higher education among adult inhabitants in 2008), Economic strength (taxable income per inhabitant in 2008), Employment (per cent unemployed among adults in December 2007) and Demographic development (per cent population change 2000-2009).

Analysis

The analysis will proceed as follows: First, the bivariate relationship between municipal size and the six dependent variables A1-3 and B1-3 will be established. Secondly, the effect of municipal size will be studied by multiple OLS regression analyses. In these analyses, the effect of municipal size will be separated from the effect of party fragmentation and controlled for effects caused by party structure and the socio-economic structure of the municipality.

Starting with the bivariate relationship between municipal size and the dependent variables, Table 2 presents the mean values for the six indicators for all municipalities and for six groups of municipalities of different sizes. The table also presents the bivariate correlation (Pearson's r) between municipal size (logarithmised) and the dependent variables.

In order to confirm hypothesis A, i.e. that the manifestation of political alternatives in a municipality increases with municipal size, we would expect significant positive correlations between municipal size and A1 (Subjective perception of party conflicts), A2 (Absolute deviation of political opinions among councillors) and A3 (Degree of difference in political opinions between ruling majority and the opposition). In order to confirm hypothesis B, i.e. that the political strength of a municipality increases with municipal size, we would expect significant positive correlation between municipal size and B1 (Perceived influence of state authorities over local affairs) to be negative and the correlations with B2 (Perceived influence of local politicians vis-à-vis local administrators) and with B3 (Perceived political knowledge of Executive board).

19

Table 2 Manifestation of political alternatives and strength of local political actors in municipalities by size (mean and correlation values)

Municipal size (inhabitants)	A. Political Alternatives			B. Political Strength			N
	A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	
A. 0 – 5,000	34	20	24	35	-38	66	13
B. 5,000 – 10,000	46	22	26	39	0.9	68	60
C. 10,000 – 20,000	43	23	27	40	3	71	98
D. 20,000 – 40,000	47	24	31	42	16	72	65
E. 40,000 – 80,000	51	25	32	43	7	74	33
F. 80,000 -	54	26	36	46	11	76	21
All municipalities	46	23	29	46	23	29	290
Correlation with municipal size (Pearson's r)	0.24***	0.56***	0.40***	0.47***	0.17**	0.47***	

Comment: The values of the table represent mean values (grand mean) for political alternatives and strength in the 290 municipalities of Sweden). One of the 98 municipalities in the size group 10,000 – 20,000 had an unclear parliamentary situation at the time of the survey and its councillors are excluded from the analysis of indicator A3. The final row of the table presents the correlations (Pearson's r) between municipal size (logarithmised) and the six indicators. P-values: ** $P<.01$ *** $p<.001$.

Table 2 shows that the bivariate correlations between municipal size and the six independent variables A1-3 and B1-3 are all significantly in line with what the two hypotheses predict. The correlation is entirely linear with regards to indicators B1, B3, A2 and A3, and the correlation values between municipal size and these variables all supersede 0.4. Regarding A1 (Subjective perception of party conflicts) it seems like the conflicts are perceived to be slightly higher in the group with 5,000 – 10,000 inhabitants than in the group with 10,000 – 20.000, and the correlations values between A1 and municipal size is therefore lower, but still significant on the 0.001-level ($r = 0.24$). The weakest link in this analysis is the correlation between municipal size and B2 (Perceived influence of local politicians vis-à-vis local administrators) since the correlation value, significant on the 0.01-level, is only $r = 0.17$. The bivariate relationship between B2 and municipality size seems to be somewhat curvilinear since politicians are perceived to have the highest relative influence in middle sized municipalities (20,000 – 40,000 inhabitants). However, there is a threshold effect: the smallest municipalities have much lower values on B2 than medium sized and larger municipalities. In municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, the local administrators are perceived to have more influence than politicians, while the opposite is the case in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

In the next step, the bivariate results will be tested by multiple OLS regression analysis in order to secure that the effects are not spurious due to intercorre-

lation between municipal size and other characteristics of municipalities. Special attention will be paid to the effects of party fragmentation measured by the HHI-index as explained above. Party fragmentation is a likely source of political conflict and it is also possible that it could weaken the local political system and thereby the strength of political leaders.

Furthermore, it is feasible that the parliamentary situation in a council could affect the results in other ways, and hence two variables are introduced as control variables: majority or minority rule and left-right tendency (percentages of socialist parties in council). A bivariate analysis shows that there is a weak but significant correlation between municipal size and party fragmentation (r = -0.19) and with left-right tendency (r=-0.16). Party fragmentation is slightly lower and socialist parties are somewhat larger in smaller municipalities. There is no significant correlation between municipal size and minority rule.

The regression analysis is carried out in three steps: First, the effects of bivariate regression are identified with the indicators A1-3 and B1-3 as dependent variables and municipal size and party fragmentation as independent variables. Second, municipal size and party fragmentation are introduced into a multivariate model with the addition of parliamentary situation control variables ("Model 1"). Third, the socio-economic factors are also added as control variables ("Model 2").

In order to confirm hypothesis A, i.e. that the manifestation of political alternatives in a municipality increases with municipal size, we would expect the effect of municipal size on A1 (Subjective perception of party conflicts), A2 (Absolute deviation of political opinions among councillors) and A3 (Degree of difference in political opinions between ruling majority and the opposition) to be significantly positive in all models.

In order to confirm hypothesis B, i.e. that political strength increases with the size of a municipality, we would expect the effect of municipal size on B1 (Perceived (lack of) influence of state authorities over local affairs), B2 (Perceived influence of local politicians vis-à-vis local administrators) and B3 (Perceived political knowledge of Executive board) to be significantly positive, in all three models.

The results in table 3 confirm that all effects are in line with hypothesis A, i.e. that municipal size has positive effects on the manifestation of political alternatives. This is especially evident in relation to A2 (Difference of opinions among councillors) and A3 (Majority-opposition distance), where municipal size alone explain 32 and 16 per cent respectively of the variation in the dependent variables. The effects of size on the two indicators remain undiminished and significant in the multivariate models. In the case of A1 (Subjective perception of party conflicts) the effect is weaker, and significant only in the bivariate analysis and in Model 1. In Model 2, where socio-economic factors are accounted for, the effect is still positive but no longer significantly so.

Table 3: Effects of municipal size on manifestation of political alternatives and political strength. Multivariate OLS regression. (B-values and standard errors).

	A. Political Alternatives			B. Political Strength		
	A1 Subjective perception of party conflicts (0-100)			**B1** (Lack of) Influence over local affairs: state authorities (0– 100)		
	Bivariate	Model 1	Model 2	Bivariate	Model 1	Model 2
Municipal Size	9.1***	7.5***	2.1	6.1***	6.2***	5.3***
(log)	(2.2)	(2.2)	(3.6)	(0.69)	(0.84)	(1.2)
HHI (0 high -1	-66.5***	-50.0*	-55.8**	3.6	5.9	3.2
low party frag.)	(17.3)	(19.7)	(20.9)	(6.2)	6.4	(6.9)
Parliamentary situation		CF	CF		CF	CF
Socio-economy			CF			CF
Adj R^2	0.06 (size) 0.05 (HHI)	0.09	0.10	0.21 (size) 0.00 (HHI)	0.21	0.22
	A2 Difference of opinion among councillors (absolute deviation) (0-50)			**B2** Influence over local affairs: politicians vis-à-vis bureaucrats (-100 – +100)		
	Bivariate	Model 1	Model 2	Bivariate	Model 1	Model 2
Municipal Size	3.2***	2.9***	3.1***	2.4 **	2.7***	3.1 *
(log)	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.5)	(0.,8)	(0.84)	(1.4)
HHI (0 high -1	-12.9***	-6.8**	-7.5**	14.8*	22.0*	18.1*
low party frag.)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(2.6)	(67)	(7.6)	(8.1)
Parliamentary situation		CF	CF		CF	CF
Socio-economy			CF			CF
Adj R^2	0.32 (size) 0.08 (HHI)	0.36	0.36	0.03 (size) 0.01(HHI)	0.05	0.06
	A3 Difference of opinion: Majority-opposition distance (0-100)			**B3** Political knowledge of Executive board (0– 100)		
	Bivariate	Model 1	Model 2	Bivariate	Model 1	Model 2
Municipal Size	7.8***	7.3***	7.9***	6.0***	6.6***	6.9***
(log)	(1.1)	(1.0)	(1.7)	(0.76)	(0.76)	(1.3)
HHI (0 high -1	-19.4*	8.5	5.7	19.0**	28.5***	27.3***
low party frag.)	(9.4)	(9.5)	(10.1)	(6.6)	(6.9)	(7.3)
Parliamentary situation		CF	CF		CF	CF
Socio-economy			CF			CF
Adj R^2	0.16 (size) 0.01 (HHI)	0.21	0.21	0.17 (size) 0.02 (HHI)	0.23	0.23

Comment: The values of the table represent b-values and standard errors. Adjusted R^2 values are presented for the bivariate effects of municipal size and HHI, as well as for the multivariate models 1 and 2. Units of analyses in all models are the 290 municipalities of Sweden. One municipality had an unclear parliamentary situation at the time of the survey and its councillors are excluded from the analysis in Model 1 and 2 (where parliamentary situation is a control variable). Parliamentary situation includes the variables Majority or minority rule, and Left-right bias. Socio-Economic control variables included Education level, Economic strength, Unemployment and Demographic development.CF=Controlled for.
P-values: * P<.05, ** P<.01, *** p<.001.

The results also show that party fragmentation is of significant importance in explaining perceived party conflicts (A1) and the difference of opinions among councillors (A2). Higher party fragmentation is most definitely a source of conflict in these instances. Regarding A3 (Difference of opinions between ruling majority and opposition) party fragmentation has a significant bivariate effect, but the effect becomes insignificant in the multivariate models.

Table 3 also shows that the effect of municipal size on political strength is positive and remains significant when controlled for party fragmentation, parliamentary situation and socio-economic characteristics of the municipality. The bivariate effect on B1 (Local political strength in relation to national authorities) is slightly weakened in Model 2, while it is strengthened in the multivariate models regarding B2 (Influence of politicians in relation to local bureaucracy) and B3 (Political knowledge of the Executive Board). The results also show that Party fragmentation (HHI) has significant effects on B2 and B3. A higher degree of party fragmentation decreases the influence of politicians in relation to local bureaucrats and the political knowledge of the Executive board is perceived as lower where party fragmentation is higher.

In conclusion, the analyses have shown that the effects of municipal size are in line with hypothesis A (manifestation of political alternatives increases with municipal size) and hypothesis B (political strength increases with municipal size). The analyses have presented significant bivariate correlations between municipal size and six different indicators of political alternatives and strength. The effect of municipal size is confirmed in multiple OLS regression analyses, where models control for party fragmentation and parliamentary situation. The effect also remains significant for five of the six indicators when the socio-economic characteristics of the municipality are introduced into the model, the only exception being the A1 indicator (Subjective perception of party conflicts) which remains positive but not significantly so when controlled for socio-economic factors.

Conclusion and discussion

This study has analysed the importance of municipal size in relation to the ideals which are the foundation of the Swedish constitution and election system on both the national and local levels: liberal, party based representative democracy.

The article started by recognising the elections as the first fundamental mechanism of representative democracy. In representative democracy, the policies proposed by election winners are the approximation of the will of the people. However, if the political alternatives on election day are limited or unclear, it will be difficult for the voters to find parties or candidates that reflect their political opinions. To interpret the election result as a manifestation of the people's will is very questionable in this situation. The analyses in this study have indisputably shown that the manifestation of political alternatives in local politics increases significantly with the size of the municipality. Referring to the index-values used in Table 2, the results show that divergence of opinion between in-

dividual councillors and between the ruling majority and the opposition is 30 to 50 per cent higher in municipalities with more than 80,000 inhabitants than in municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants. These effects of municipal size remain undiminished when controlled for party fragmentation, parliamentary situation and socio-economic characteristics of the municipality. The perceived degree of party conflict is also higher in larger municipalities, but the effect of size is reduced and does not remain significant when controlled for other variables. An interpretation of this latter result is that perceived degree of conflict and actual policy differences are two very different things. Where the former may be more of an indicator of political culture, the latter is an objective measure of opinion differences. In relation to the functionality of the democratic mechanism, it is the scope of actual political alternatives, not the degree of squabble, which is crucial.

The results have also clearly indicated that the second mechanism of representative democracy – the elected representatives' ability to enforce their policies – is positively correlated with municipal size. The perceived political knowledge of the political leaders in the Executive Board is significantly higher, and the influence of state authorities is lower, in larger municipalities. In general, the effect of municipal size on the influence of representatives vis-à-vis the local bureaucracy is weaker. But this analysis has identified a threshold effect: in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, political strength in relation to local administrators is seriously weakened.

This article has noted results from earlier studies showing that in larger municipalities, parties find it easier to recruit candidates for political office and that representatives spend more time on their political work and have a wider network of contacts. It is therefore not surprising that representatives in larger municipalities, who are recruited amidst greater competition and have found more time to engage in their political work, feel empowered in relation to the local and national bureaucracy. Party organisations in larger municipalities are bigger and more well-equipped for competitive elections and more principled political debates (e.g. Karlsson, 2007a).

Earlier studies have predominantly evaluated the democratic effects of municipal size solely in relation to communitarian, strongly democratic values, and these studies have generally concluded that smaller municipalities offer better conditions for local democracy in terms of participation, trust, political knowledge and citizen involvement. Nothing in this study contradicts these results. However, when the main principle of government in municipalities is liberal, representative democracy other values must be taken into consideration. This study has indicated that the democratic organisations which enable the mechanisms of local representative democracy are undoubtedly more robust in larger municipalities. The success of local political leaders in their endeavour to identify and enforce the will of the people depends on the size of the municipality they govern.

References

Aristotle (1998) *Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York.

Baldersheim, Harald, Per Arnt Pettersen, Lawrence E. Rose & Morten Øgard (eds) (2003) *Er smått godt? Er stort så flott? Analyser av kommunestrukturens betydning*, Forskningsrapport 1/2003, Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet. Universitetet i Oslo.

Barber, Benjamin R (1984) *Strong democracy. Participatory politics for a new age*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Blom-Hansen, Jens (2005) "Stordriftsfordele i den kommunale verden", Oekonomi og Politik, 78 (2):2-10.

Boyne, George (1995) "Population-Size and Economies of Scale in Local Government", Policy and Politics, 23 (3):213-222.

Bundgaard, Ulrik & Karsten Vrangbæk (2007) "Reform by Coincidence? Explaining the Policy Process of Structural Reform in Denmark", Scandinavian Political Studies, 30 (4):491-52.

Bäck, Hanna & Mikael Gilljam (eds) (2006) *Valets mekanismer*, Liber, Malmö.

Bäck, Henry (2000) *Kommunpolitiker i den stora nyordningens tid*, Liber, Malmö.

Bäck, Henry (2003) "Party Politics and the Common Good in Swedish Local Government", Scandinavian Political Studies, 26 (2):93-123.

Bäck, Henry (2006) *Komparativ kommunal konstitutionspolitik. En kunskapsöversikt*, Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, Stockholm.

Bäck, Henry, Folke Johansson, Ernst Jonsson & Lars Samuelsson (2001) *Stadsdelsnämnder i Stockholm - Demokrati och effektivitet*, IKE, Företagsekonomiska institutionen, Stockholms universitet.

Christoffersen, Henrik. & Karsten Bo Larsen (2007) "Economies of scale in Danish municipalities: Expenditure effects versus quality effects", Local government studies, 33 (1):77-95.

Dahl, Robert A. & Edward R Tufte (1973) *Size and Democracy*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Erlingsson, Gissur Ó. (2001) *Kommundelningseffekter. En inventering av 1990-talets nya lokaldemokratiska erfarenheter*, Att vara med på riktigt - demokratiutveckling i kommuner och landsting. Bilagor till betänkande av Kommundemokratikommittén SOU 2001:48, Fritzes, Stockholm.

Erlingsson, Gissur Ó., Erik Wångmar & Jörgen Ödalen (2010) "Kommunsammanläggningarna 1952–1974. Hur blev de politiskt möjliga?", Offentlig förvaltning-Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration, 14 (3 and 4):3-36.

Frandsen, Annie Gaardsted (2002) "Size and electoral participation in local elections", Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy 20 (6):853-869

Gilljam, Mikael (2003) "Deltagardemokrati med förhinder" in Mikael Gilljam & Jörgen Hermansson (eds), *Demokratins mekanismer,* Liber, Malmö.

Gilljam, Mikael, Donald Granberg, Bengt Holm, David Karlsson, Mikael Persson & Anders Sundell (2011) "Comparison of Web and Mail Responses in a Census of Swedish Local Political Representatives", Survey Practice www.surveypractice.org, (June 2011).

Gilljam, Mikael, David Karlsson & Anders Sundell (2010) *Politik på hemmaplan. Tiotusen fullmäktigeledamöter tycker om demokrati*, SKL Kommentus, Stockholm.

Gilljam, Mikael & David Karlsson (2012) "Tungan på vågen-partier i svenska kommuner" in Jenny Björkman & Björn Fjaestad (eds) *Tungan på vågen. Vågmästare och balanspartier*, Makadam förlag, Göteborg.

Gustafsson, Anette, & David Karlsson (2010) *Regionstorlek och demokrati, möjliga effekter av en sammanslagning mellan Västra Götaland och Värmland.* Landstinget i Värmland, Region Värmland, Västragötalands-regionen.

Hesse, Joachim Jens & Lawrence J. Sharpe (eds) (1991) *Local government and urban affairs in international perspective: analyses of twenty Western industrialised countries*, Nomos, Baden-Baden.

Hirschman, Albert O. (1964) "The Paternity of an Index". *American Economic Review* (September 1964): 761-62.

Houlberg, Kurt (2000) Kommunale stordriftsfordele: Hvor finder vi dem, og hvor store er de?, AKF,

Houlberg, Kurt (2003) "Kommunalpolitisk deltagelse mellem vagene" in Ulrik Kjaer & Poul Erik Mouritzen (eds), *Kommunstörrelse og lokalt demokrati,* Syddansk universitetsforlag, Odense.

Häggroth, Sören (2005) *Staten och kommunerna*, Rapport till Ansvars-kommittén, Fritzes, Stockholm.

Johansson, Folke (2007) "Demokratin i stora och små kommuner: Ett medborgarperspektiv" In Folke Johansson, David Karlsson, Bengt Johansson & Ylva Norén Bretzer, *Kommunstorlek och demokrati,* Sveriges kommuner och landsting, Stockholm.

Kaijser, Fritz (1962) "1862 års kommunalförordningar" in Sven Ulric Palme (ed), *Hundra år under kommunalförfattningarna 1862-1962,* Svenska Landskommunersnas förbund, Svenska Landstingsförbundet, Svenska Stadsförbundet. , Stockholm.

Karlsson, David (2001) *Sveriges kommunala kulturpolitiker*, Förvaltnings-högskolan, Göteborgs universitet.

Karlsson, David (2003) *En chimär av endräkt. Ideologiska dimensioner i kommunal kulturpolitik.*, Förvaltningshögskolan, Göteborgs universitet.

Karlsson, David (2006) *Den svenske Borgmästaren. Kommunstyrelsens ordförande i den lokala demokratin*, Förvaltningshögskolan, Göteborgs universitet.

Karlsson, David (2007a) "Demokratiska stordriftsfördelar? Kommunstorlek och demokrati ur ett politikerperspektiv" in Folke Johansson, David Karlsson,

Bengt Johansson & Ylva Norén Bretzer, *Kommunstorlek och demokrati,* Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, Stockholm.

Karlsson, David (2007b) "Kommunstorlek och demokrati - en introduktion" in Folke Johansson, David Karlsson, Bengt Johansson & Ylva Norén Bretzer, *Kommunstorlek och demokrati,* Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, Stockholm.

Karlsson, David (2010) "Effektiv demokrati" in Folke Johansson (ed) *Kommunalvalet 2006. Väljare och partier i den lokala demokratin*. CEFOS, Göteborgs universitet.

Karlsson, David (2012) "The Hidden Constitutions: How Informal Political Institutions Affect the Representation Style of Local Councils". *Local Government Studies* iFirst 1-22 2012.

Kjaer, Ulrik & Poul-Erik Mouritzen (eds) (2003) *Kommunestørrelse og lokalt demokrati*, Syddansk universitetsforlag, Odense.

Larsen, Christian Albrekt (2002) "Municipal size and democracy: A critical analysis of the argument of proximity based on the case of Denmark", Scandinavian Political Studies, 25 (4):317-332.

Lidström, Anders (2006) "Commuting and citizen participation in Swedish city-regions", Political studies, 54 (4):865-888

Loughlin, John , Frank Hendriks & Anders Lidström (Eds.) (2010) *The Oxford handbook of local and regional democracy in Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Mill, John Stuart (1862) *Considerations on representative government*, Harper & Brothers, New York.

Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat (1748/1989) *The spirit of the laws*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Mouritzen, Paul Erik (1989) "City size and citizens' satisfaction: two competing theories revisited", European Journal of Political Research, (17):661-688.

Mouritzen, Poul Erik (1991) *Den politiske cyklus*, Publica, Århus.

Newton, Ken (1982) "Is small really so beautiful? Is big really so ugly? Size, effectiveness, and democracy in local government", Political Studies, 30 190-206.

Nielsen, Peder (2001) "På och av - om uppdragsvillighet, rekrytering och avhopp i den kommunala demokratin" in *Att vara med på riktigt - demokratiutveckling i kommuner och landsting.* Bilagor till betänkande av Kommundemokratikommittén SOU 2001:48*,* Fritzes, Stockholm.

Nielsen, Peder (2003) *Kommunindelning och demokrati. Om sammanläggning och delning av kommuner i Sverige*, Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, Uppsala universitet.

Oliver, J. E. (2000.) "City size and civic involvement in metropolitan America", American Political Science Review, 94 361-373.

Palme, Sven Ulric & Ernst-Folke Lindberg (1962) "De första statdsfullmäktigevalen" In Sven Ulric Palme (ed), *Hundra år under kommunalförfattningarna*

1862-1962, Svenska landskommunernas förbund, Svenska landstingsförbundet, Svenska stadsförbundet, Stockholm.

Rose, Lawrence E. (2002) "Municipal size and local nonelectoral participation: findings from Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway ", Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 20 (6):829-851

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques (1762/1997) *The social contract and other later political writings*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Sanne, Marika (2001) *Att se till helheten. Svenska kommunalpolitiker och det demokratiska uppdraget*, Statsvetenskapliga institutionen, Stockholms universitet.

SOU (2001:48) Att vara med på riktigt - demokratiutveckling i kommuner och landsting, Fritzes, Stockholm.

SOU (2007:10) *Hållbar samhällsorganisation med utvecklingskraft.* Slut-betänkande, Fritzes, Stockholm.

Szücs, Stefan (1998) *Democracy in the head. A comparative analysis of democratic leadership orientations among local elites in three phases of democratization*, CEFOS, University of Gothenburg.

Szücs, Stefan & Lars Strömberg (2006) "The Untouchables: Stability among the Swedish Local Elite" in Stefan Szücs & Lars Strömberg (eds) *Local Elites, Political Capital and Democratic Development. Governing Leaders in Seven Euorpean Countries,* VS Verlag, Wiesbaden.

Wallin, Gunnar (1966) "Småkommunerna på avskrivning" in Gunnar Wallin, Hans G Andersson & Nils Andrén (eds), *Kommunerna i förvandling,* Almqvist och Wiksell, Stockholm.

Verba, Sidney, Henry E. Brady & Kay Lehman Schlozman (1995) *Voice and equality: civic voluntarism in American politics*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Westerståhl, Jörgen & Lars Strömberg (1983) De nya kommunerna: en sammanfattning av Kommunaldemokratiska forskningsgruppens under-sökningar, LiberFörlag, Stockholm.

Wångmar, Erik (2003) Från sockenkommun till storkommun: en analys av storkommunreformens genomförande 1939-1952 i en nationell och lokal kontext, Växjö University Press, Växjö.