

## Organizations and Pluralist Democracy

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The ideal conception of pluralist democracy can be seen as a schematic picture of actual conditions. On the local level – in the municipalities – there are a number of variants of pluralism. If local political systems can be assumed to be of varying character, it stands to reason that the roles of organizations in those sub-systems can also vary.

The following three general conclusions concerning the role of organizations in Swedish municipal politics are supported by our empirical findings:

- (1) A heterogeneous pattern of values in a municipality promotes the development of an arrangement in which organizations predominantly assume the role of political opposition.
- (2) The interaction between municipalities and organizations is a function of the pattern of local political values. The more heterogeneous this pattern, the more frequent are politically oriented contacts.
- (3) Increased overlap of the social, the economic and the political arenas, and a more incrementalist decision-making structure in modern municipalities, creates greater incentives for the formation of organizations.

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This quotation elucidates the difficulty of dealing theoretically with the nature of organizations. Being well aware of these problems, we endeavor to approach the question of the relationship between the local political and social structures, on the one hand, and the composition and political role of local organizations, on the other. The data have been collected as part of a survey study of a representative sample of

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organizations in five 'ideal type' Swedish municipalities: Grästorp, Lidköping, Sjöbo, Kävlinge and Luleå.<sup>1</sup>

The article begins with an attempt at defining in a macro-perspective certain concepts which can be assumed to be central factors in the behavior of local organizations. The five municipalities are classified according to a scheme derived from these concepts. A number of roles of direct or indirect political relevance which organizations can be expected to assume to various degrees, as seen from a micro-perspective, are presented. This conceptualization is then confronted with empirical data on organizational contacts with municipalities and on politically oriented activity of organizations in general. With this as a point of departure, some general hypotheses concerning the relationship between municipal structure and the political activity of organizations are formulated. Considering the fact that this is based on a case study of five municipalities, hypothesis testing in a more strict sense cannot be carried out; rather the empirical results can at most be seen to lend support to various possible hypotheses.

## Background

There is an ideal conception of political democracy which derives support from the theory of the perfect market. In the political market, sovereign voters correspond to consumers and political parties to producers. Voters seek to maximize satisfaction of their needs, and the parties are primarily interested in maximizing votes. In this way political innovation is stimulated and new demands are raised.

All of the interests which *can* be represented *will* be represented as the political parties compete over these interests. Parties seek to secure for themselves votes and members in the same way that businesses seek customers. Politics, in the theory of the political market, is seen as a result of the free workings of organizational forces (Hernes 1978).

A basic feature in this ideal conception is a belief in pluralism, i.e., in a system in which relative harmony is seen as resulting from competition between different interests. If different interests are allowed to compete against each other, an optimal compromise will be reached in the end.

Although it is held, for example, in the preparatory work to the Swedish Instrument of Government, that 'even in the future, political activity shall be carried out primarily through political parties', in practice there is a strong belief in the involvement of organizations in politics. The political activity of organizations is sometimes described as a central component of 'inter-election' democracy, i.e., the democratic process which

takes place continually as a complement to the regularly recurring manifestations of popular will through general elections. However, the intimate relationship between the political role of organizations and representative democracy is not regulated further in any constitutional context.

It is within the nature of a pluralist order that potential conflicts regulate themselves. The result is assumed to be a compromise (condition of equilibrium) reached through the mutual struggle of the actors and not through regulation of the process in advance.

The fact that the role of organizations in politics is not more closely regulated and is only the object of sporadic attention at various times allows for system change without the change being intended or even predictable. Changes of this kind do not occur randomly but are dependent upon factors which can be found in the surroundings and actions of the actors involved.

The municipal amalgamation reforms of the postwar period can be seen as implying a change in factors affecting the role of organizations in politics, but it would be a mistake to believe that simple relationships can be established. Structural changes other than those due to the amalgamation reforms can be observed during the same period of time; for example, the process of concentration in the economy, urbanization, development in labor law, and the expansion of the public sector. A study of the role of organizations on the regional or local levels need not make use of the same type of analytical procedures as a study on the national level. It is a matter of choosing a perspective.

## Conceptual Framework

A complex reality places higher demands on theoretical perspectives, which highlight more important properties and which can pave the way for hypothesis testing and empirical analysis. One common strategy is to study the role of organizations in municipal politics as an aspect of communication in which the political activities of organizations are depicted as a complement to representative democracy and in which the type and comprehensiveness of this communication, among other things, are said to constitute the local political system (Bergqvist 1969). However, descriptive studies of this kind lead to exemplifications of a pluralist system which itself deserves a more thorough and critical analysis.

Instead of assuming an ideal model of a pluralistic system in which the role of organizations is seen as a matter of frequency of interaction, we have chosen to study the role of organizations in a structural context in which the concepts *modernization* and *pattern of political values* are used

to describe structural relationships within municipalities and in which the activity of organizations themselves is seen as *role behavior*. The idea underlying this perspective is to treat structural relationships within municipalities as important explanatory factors with regard to the political role of organizations.

### *Modernization*

The concept of modernization is usually used to describe the development of *entire political systems*. Modernization is used particularly in the literature dealing with developing countries to depict societal change, but even terms such as welfare society, post-industrial society, etc., can be seen as examples of discussions of modernization. Various kinds of theoretical terms are then attached to modernization in order to explain why societies tend to change (e.g., discussions of phases or stages) (Bill & Hardgrave 1973).

The concept of modernization could be applied to *political subsystems* in Sweden in a less exacting sense in order to obtain a basis for comparing the level of development in different municipalities. Despite the fact that Swedish society is to some extent homogeneous with regard to development, there is significant local variation. These variations, for example, between rural municipalities and suburb municipalities, should be large enough to motivate a discussion about how these differences influence organizational behavior.

The concept of *arena* is commonly used on a macrolevel to describe different systems of interaction, in the political, social, or economic realms. Here this concept is used to illustrate where in society the distribution of private and collective goods takes place. Depending on what type of interactions are involved, the distribution of these goods can be said to take place in different arenas.

The degree of *overlap between different arenas* in the municipalities is seen as a primary indicator of modernization, in which low values illustrate a *traditional* municipality and high values a *modernized* municipality.

In the *social arena* there is the type of interplay between people which is based on the principle of social exchange. People perform services for each other, either with expectations of comparable services in return or due to generally accepted norms of personal affections which make such commitments natural. Of course, people also maintain contact with each other because these contacts fulfill a social need.

In the *economic arena* there is an exchange of various goods and services whose values are determined by the principle of supply and de-

mand. The production of those goods and services which are sold on the market can also be located here. The important lines of demarcation in this arena run between capital and labor, and between production and consumption.

Finally, there is the *political arena*, which is the most centralized. Both the economic and social arenas are, at least ideally, decentralized. The most important characteristic of the political arena is that an *authoritative distribution of values* takes place there. This includes the distribution of goods and services as well as regulations and sanctions of various types.

An attempt at sketching the development of the arenas during the past fifty years is presented below.

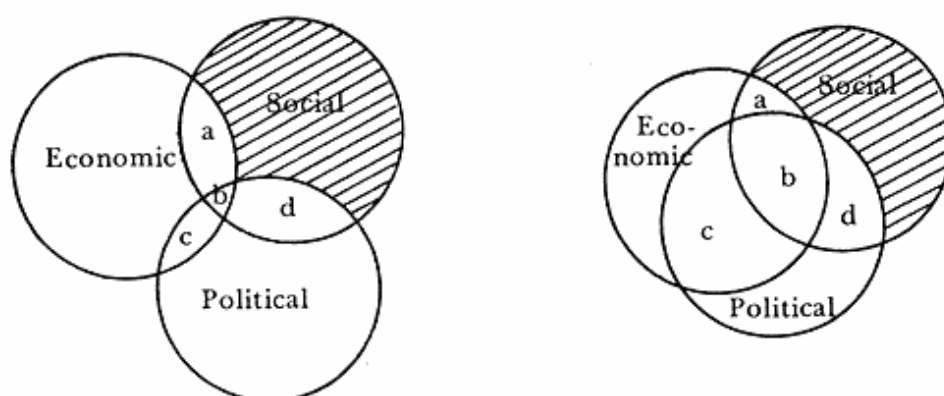


Figure 1. Development of arenas '1930 - 1980'

We conceive of Sweden at time  $t_0$  (perhaps 1930) as having relatively distinct and mutually independent arenas. The distribution of material values took place largely within the market economy and to some extent in the social arena by means of self-subsistence and 'barter economy'. The state functioned mostly as a 'night watchman' and was responsible for military defense and the maintenance of societal norms. There was what might possibly have been an embryo of a welfare state, but the public sector was not particularly extensive. At a later point in time  $t_1$  (perhaps 1980) the arenas overlap to a large extent. As a result of rapid industrialization, the traditional social exchange of the type that took place in the local rural communities has become less important. Instead, people purchase goods and services in the economic arena, i.e. in the market place, or receive public services - subsidized or not - to the extent to which comparable goods and services can be demanded in population centers. The social arena has, therefore, been commercialized and politicized.

The economic arena has also been politicized. This means that society, besides being itself responsible for certain economic activities, intervenes and adjusts the economy. Interventions in the market can be directed toward producers as well as consumers and can involve general or selective supports or controls. Finally, during the post-war period the political arena has been the most dynamic, which is reflected in the rapid growth of the public sector. Almost two-thirds of the GNP is channelled through this sector, half of which is transferred back to businesses and private individuals.

It follows from this simplified sketch of the development of the arenas that it is becoming more and more important to take the relationships between the arenas into consideration in an analysis of political processes.<sup>2</sup>

The overlap of the arenas indicates something about the character of *economic structure* (a low degree of overlap denotes a uniform structure with a few dominant base industries) and something about the conditions under which *public decision-making* takes place. It is not difficult to see the link between arena overlap and economic structure. On the other hand, it can be more troublesome to interpret the implications of the relations between arenas for public decision-making.

Increased overlaps between arenas in a municipality can be seen as an indication of increased volume of public decisions. More and more goods, but above all services, are distributed through the public sector. As experience has shown, an increased volume of decisions in a given administrative body increases the complexity of decision-making and places demands on professionalization of administrators and decision-makers. Complex bureaucracies are characterized by considerable formalization in which different areas of competence are differentiated into positions established for each area. This development can be said to be similar for many of the decision-making bodies in the welfare society. However, the character of decision-making may vary.

It could be thought that professionalization and differentiation needed for dealing with the complexity of different matters would lead to increased rationality in decision-making. A rational decision-making process is an arrangement in which political decisions are made as a result of political/ideological preferences, considerable planning, and conscious choices between a complete range of alternatives (Lindblom 1968, 12). However, there are many indications that the decision process in complex organizations, such as municipalities, is characterized by incrementalism, i.e. the lack of comprehensive goals, absence of proper planning, and a situation in which choices between alternatives are

characterized by a struggle of interests rather than by rationality (Richardson & Jordan 1979).

A characteristic of an incrementalist approach among decision-makers is the opinion that decisions should primarily involve marginal changes rather than sweeping reappraisals. Given this approach, the most apparent alternative in situations of growth involve increasing resources. However, the problems which decision-makers are nonetheless forced to handle can involve substantial changes which do not necessarily reflect rational deliberations. In order for problems of various groups of citizens to come to the attention of decision-makers and to be placed on the political agenda, the incrementalist model of decision-making postulates that every problem of importance for citizens in a free society will either be channelled via established organizations of some type or bring about the formation of new temporary organizations through which these citizens can make themselves heard to the decision-makers. In this way, incrementalism ultimately presupposes a politicizing network of organizations.

In a situation in which dependence on external factors and the volume of decisions are increasing, it seems likely that the ability of decision-makers to set up rational goals for their programs and to plan in accordance with these goals will diminish. A municipality can hardly plan housing projects or expansion of the social sector without taking into consideration the situation in the labor market, an area which municipalities can only be said to have slight control over. Nothing succeeds as planned (Hellers 1979).

Despite the fact that politicization has demonstrably increased in municipalities and that municipal elections are increasingly characterized by local political factors (Gidlund & Westlund 1982), this does not necessarily lead to politics becoming more ideological and goal oriented. On the contrary, room for planning and long-term political stands have probably decreased. Municipal decision-makers can wind up in the unenviable position of *awaiting* problems rather than anticipating them, and of trying to alleviate problems rather than orienting themselves toward special goals. It need hardly be pointed out that the role of organizations as interest groups and their opportunities for having an impact on municipal decisions increase in a decision-making situation of this kind.

Incrementalism can be assumed to be more prevalent when the degree of arena overlap is high than when the situation is to the contrary. Incrementalism can also occur with a low degree of arena overlap, but in municipalities in which professionalization, differentiation, and com-



plexity are less prevalent, some of the preconditions for incrementalism disappear. Thus, a municipality can be considered to be either traditional or modernized. What is characteristic for the former case is a low degree of arena overlap (uniform economic structure and less incrementalism in decision-making). Characteristic for the latter case is a high degree of arena overlap (complex economic structure and a high degree of incrementalism).

## Pattern of Political Values

Attempts to find standard terms for different value orientations in society are particularly common in anthropological literature, but even political scientists look for general expressions for social norms and values. Since political scientists study political phenomena, the orientation of individuals to the political system is in the foreground. Attitudes, knowledge, and judgements prevailing in a given society are thought to comprise the political culture of that society (Almond-Verba 1963). Political culture is a broad concept. For that reason we confine ourselves to studying the main patterns at values in terms of election results.

*Election results* can be said to comprise *one* measure of the distribution of political values. The presence of stable majority situations in municipal councils over time is seen as an indication of *homogeneity*, while unstable majority situations indicate a *heterogeneous* distribution of values. Election results are usually seen as a projection of the local pattern of values on a left-right scale (LR), but it is conceivable that other dimensions can complement the picture of the distribution of values in a municipality. However, the LR dimension is of particular relevance as an indicator of main trends since certain other dimensions tend to be of a temporary nature, i.e., dependent upon special issues (nuclear energy, land use, etc.).

### *Classification of Municipalities*

The purpose of grouping the five municipalities in the study is to allow for a discussion of causality in which structural characteristics can be related to the political role of organizations. The structural variables – modernization and pattern of political values – can assume the values traditional or modernized, and homogeneous or heterogeneous, respectively. The five municipalities can then be grouped according to a two-to-two table resulting from these variables.

*Sjöbo* and *Grästorp* are placed in the homogeneous political cell. Both of these municipalities display stable bourgeois majorities (and an organizational dominance by the Swedish Federation of Farmers) and, therefore, a homogeneous political culture. *Grästorp* and *Sjöbo* are also judged

to be traditional. The degree of arena overlap is considered to be low, which can be illustrated by the uniform economic structure (39% and 43%, respectively, employed within the agricultural sector) and the relatively limited municipal activity.

*Kävlinge* is classified as having heterogeneous pattern of political values and as traditional. The parliamentary situation is clearly unstable with only a single mandate socialist majority at present and a couple of majority shifts during the past decade. For these reasons, *Kävlinge* is considered to have a heterogeneous pattern of political values. The arena overlap is greater in *Kävlinge* than in *Grästorp* and *Sjöbo* with regard to economic structure, but the number of municipal employees per 1000 inhabitants indicates a comparatively limited municipal activity. The fact that *Kävlinge* has the character of a commuter town to *Lund* and *Malmö* also contributes to a classification as traditional, since the demands on municipal service can be expected to be lower.

*Lidköping* is considered to have a heterogeneous pattern of political values and to be modernized. The heterogeneity is illustrated by a disparate party system with a slight bourgeois majority. The number of municipal employees per 1000 inhabitants in 1981 was 46, which appears large in this connection. The size of the public sector as well as the high degree of complexity in the economy indicates that *Lidköping* should be classified as modernized.

*Luleå* is seen as having a homogeneous political culture and as modernized. There has been a stable social democratic majority in the municipal council for a long time (and the dominance of the labor movement in the overall organizational activity in the municipality is marked). *Luleå* is modernized, as indicated by the figure of 50 municipal employees per 1000 inhabitants and a complex economic structure.

By way of summary, the municipalities can be classified as follows:

Table 1. Classification of municipalities

Pattern of political values	Modernization	
	Traditional	Modernized
Homogeneous	<i>Grästorp</i> <i>Sjöbo</i>	<i>Luleå</i>
Heterogeneous	<i>Kävlinge</i>	<i>Lidköping</i>

### *Organizational Roles*

Popular organizations can be seen as responses to various types of problems: working conditions, the monopoly of the state church, alcohol

abuse, environmental conditions, etc. These problems or controversial issues do not stem in the first place from intellectual considerations, but are rather a result of changes in the conditions for groups of citizens and, consequently, of newly emerging needs. Certain organizations have traditionally asserted special interests, while others have incorporated more general goals for society in their programs. Quite naturally, organizations with varying goals make use of different means for achieving these goals. In some cases an organization can attain the aims sought after by itself, in other cases the organization has to engage in various forms of lobbying in order to influence those actors who ultimately control the values of importance to the organization. Depending on the goals of the organizations and on the positions in the decision-making structure sought after, organizations will attempt to develop special roles.

The following roles can be suggested:

- *mobilization role*
- *service role*
- *political opposition role*
- *negotiation role*

The *mobilization role* refers to the propensity of organizations to unite individuals under its leadership. Mobilization in this sense is not seen as manifest property but as a potentiality, i.e., mobilization most importantly involves the ability of organizations to unite people in a common purpose when confronted with problematic situations. There are several conceivable indicators of mobilization. Various measures of membership and activity are proposed here as the main indicators. However, there could also be more qualitative measures in which the emphasis is on ideological and other factors of importance to mobilization in organizations, for example, the extent to which mobilization is a necessary condition for the realization of organizational goals.

In order to study the roles of organizations empirically, these roles must be operationalized, i.e. given empirical indicators. In certain cases the indicators are almost given in advance. In other cases there are several alternatives among which choices must be made.

Mobilization is particularly difficult to measure since it involves a potential rather than a regular pattern of behavior. However, it can be argued that a certain minimum number of members and activists in the everyday workings of an organization will probably be necessary, if not sufficient, conditions. In the absence of adequate measures, mobilization has, therefore, been considered to be indicated by an organization having at least 100 members and 50 members regularly active in the work of the

organization, or by the organization having been able to organize at least 250 people for some purpose on at least one occasion. The result of this is that a certain number of the organizations on which a mobilization role is conferred probably lack this potential.

By *political opposition role* will be understood the propensity of organizations to offer alternatives in political situations which ordinary political organs are not believed to be capable of dealing with. The political opposition of organizations in this sense involves a kind of institutionalized protest which can be seen as an alternative to the work of the political parties.

Political opposition must be measured in a manner which discriminates between political communication between organizations and society, on the one hand, and opposition in the sense presented above, on the other. The measurement of opposition has to be based on attitudes and conceptions within the organization which can motivate a political role and on a link between attitude and behavior so that an oppositional attitude is combined with actual political activity.

In the questionnaire to the organizations, there are a number of questions about the contacts between the organization and the municipality. In addition, there is a question which reads as follows:

- 'Has your organization sometime during the past three years, either alone or together with other organizations, attempted to get politicians or civil servants to do something about some deficiency or fault in the municipality?'

Another question in the questionnaire reads:

- 'What type of role is your organization interested in playing in relation to the procedures and activities of your municipality?
  - An active and influential role
  - Want to remain outside and only act when our own organization is directly affected by municipal decisions
  - Want to remain completely outside'

The answers to these questions have been used as indicators of whether an organization assumes a political opposition role. To be classified as having assumed this role, an organization must have actively attempted to influence the municipality in some matter sometime during a three-year period and at the same time have wanted to play an 'Active and influential role' in municipal politics.

The *negotiation role* refers to the position of organizations in terms of the market, i.e., the extent to which organizations are active in the distribution of utilities in cases in which another party (political institution, other organization, business, etc.) has control of the utilities.

The negotiation role is to a large extent tied to different actors like enterprises and housing establishments. This means that the operationalization can be accomplished by an a priori determination of which organizations should be considered to assume this role. What we have in mind here are various labor union organizations and tenant associations.

The *service role* refers to the extent to which an organization produces goods and services for its members. The most obvious cases are organizations which have been formed specifically for this purpose, for example, cooperatives, community centers, etc. The service role is essentially a matter of special organizations which were formed for the purpose of producing services. It often involves so called secondary organizations, i.e., organizations which have other organizations as members. This applies to consumer cooperatives, the Swedish Federation of Farmers, community centers, etc.

It is primarily the political opposition and negotiation roles which are interesting in the study of organizations in municipal politics. The latent influence which the mobilization and service roles can have should not be underrated, but both opposition and negotiation seem to characterize activities which can to a greater degree be associated with the political distribution of values. The roles can, thus, be arranged in a hierarchical pattern according to their political relevance.

### Empirical Analysis of the Role Structure

In the empirical analysis certain organizations do not behave in accordance with any of the roles defined above, either because they do not try to assume these roles or because they are not able to live up to their own aims.

There are large variations in the distribution of roles within different organizations as well as between categories. The mobilization role is held by organizations such as athletic clubs, labor union organizations (particularly the Confederation of Swedish Trade Unions), the agricultural movement, churches, tenant associations, and pensioner organizations. The organization which appears to be mobilized to the greatest extent according to the measures used here is the pensioner organization. It can be noted that one of the 'classic' popular movements – the temperance movement – is not represented among organizations characterized by the mobilization role.

The opposition role yields a different distribution. In terms of absolute numbers, the picture is dominated by labor organizations, athletic clubs, parent associations, agricultural organizations, and action groups. This

last category belongs to the most oppositional in as much as nine of the eleven action groups in the study behave in accordance with this role. Action groups, tenant associations, and parent associations more often assume the opposition role than the mobilization role.

Most common among organizations which do not behave in accordance with any of the roles studied are athletic clubs, churches, and youth clubs.

It can hardly be said that organizations specialize in a single role – many actors take on several roles. With reference to the discussion of political arenas above, it is conceivable that the roles are assumed in particular arenas in society. The political opposition role can quite naturally be assigned to the political arena, just as the negotiation role alludes to the economic arena. In the latter case, more subtle distinctions can be made with regard to co-determination negotiations in the public sector, but for the sake of simplicity these are considered to be economic. Mobilization and service production are most immediately related to the social arena, even though parts of the service role border on the economic. By localizing the roles to specific arenas, the set of roles of the actors can be illustrated on the basis of the arena structure.

The most common sets of roles for the actors are the mobilization role, the opposition role, the negotiation role, and the mobilization plus the opposition roles. Other combinations or roles occur considerably less

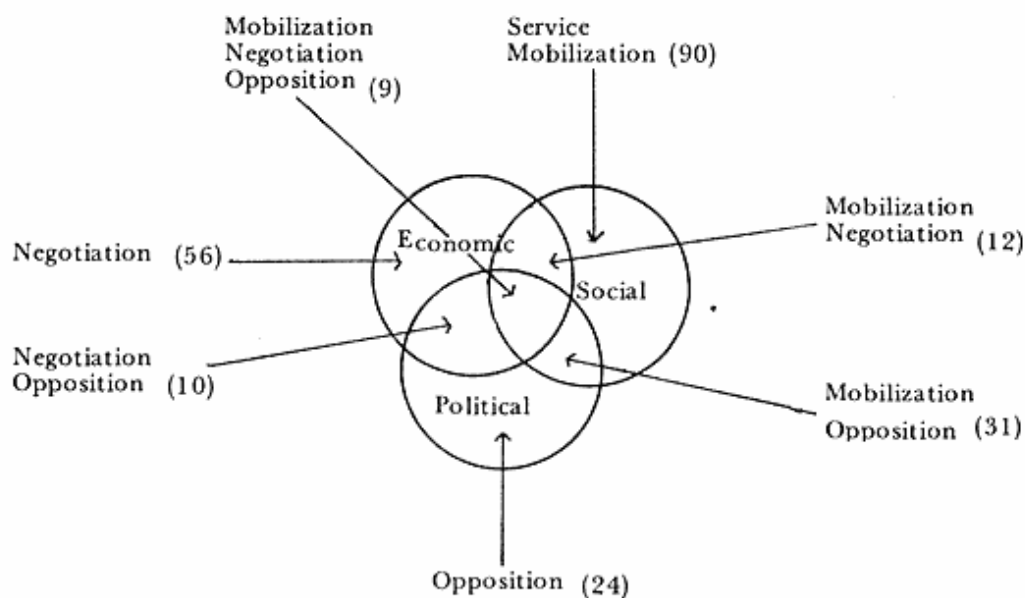


Figure 2. Sets of roles for the organizations in five municipalities in an arena perspective (n = 400)

frequently, granted that frequencies alone need not be decisive in determining which set of roles are the most important in local political processes seen from a more comprehensive perspective. It could be the case that in every municipality there are a small number of organizations which exercise most of the political influence of the organizations as a whole.

In three cases out of four, those organizations which specialize in the negotiation role have territorial subdivisions comprising more than one municipality, often entire counties, and to some extent even larger regions. The general level of contact with the municipal functions is confined to a minimum in several cases.

It can be noted that the combination mobilization + opposition + negotiation only occurs in Kävling, Lidköping, and Luleå.

A detailed examination of responses to the questionnaire for the various categories of actors shows that those organizations which have sets of roles in which the opposition role is included are also the most politically relevant organisations. This anticipated result supports the interpretation that the operationalization of opposition role is valid, even if not perfect.

As has been previously pointed out, the roles can be arranged in a hierarchical pattern according to their political relevance. All of the organizations which occupy a role of political opposition regardless of whether they also fill other functions are placed in the highest rank. In second place on the scale come all of the organizations which assume a negotiation role, with the exception of labor organizations which are already located on the first rank. The third level is occupied by organizations which assume mobilization or service roles, but neither the opposition nor negotiation role. Finally, occupying fourth place in the ranking, come other organizations which have not been assigned any of the roles in the study according to the criteria being applied. Through this procedure, an instrument for analyzing the positions of organizations in the local community based on the arena perspective is created. This instrument can be used initially to describe the role structure in each of the five municipalities.

There are clear differences in hierarchical role structure between the five municipalities. The political arena is most developed in Luleå and Kävlinge, the economic in Luleå and Grästorp, the social in Sjöbo, and 'role-less' organizations are most common in Lindköping and Grästorp. A grouping of the municipalities shows that Kävlinge and Luleå have a similar structure with regard to politics and role-lessness. Sjöbo represents a middle category which is located closest to Luleå and Kävling.

An obvious hypothesis is that differences in role structure are dependent upon structural differences between municipalities, particularly economic structure and population size. However, there do not seem to be any simple relationships. The most pronounced agricultural municipalities are Grästorp and Sjöbo, in which 40% of those gainfully employed are engaged in agriculture. There are, however, clear differ-

Table 2. The hierarchical role structure in five municipalities

Roll	Kommun Grästorp (n = 37)	Sjöbo (n = 65)	Kävling (n = 77)	Lidköping (n = 111)	Luleå (n = 110)	Total (n = 400)
Political	3	12	23	18	25	19
Economic	24	19	18	7	23	17
Social	22	31	22	23	18	23
Other	51	39	36	52	35	42
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

ences in role structure, for example, with regard to economic and social roles. Among the industrial municipalities, Lidköping distinguishes itself on several points. A grouping of the municipalities by proportion employed in prime economic sectors, i.e., agriculture and forestry, industry and construction, shows that about 2/3 of the gainfully employed in Grästorp, Sjöbo, and Kävlinge are employed in these sectors, while the corresponding figure for Lidköping and Luleå is 40 – 50%. These groupings, which otherwise correspond to the size variable, do not have a covariance to any great extent with role structure either.

Table 3. Estimate of the total number of organizations which fill a political opposition role in five municipalities, making allowances for non-response and sample weights

Municipality	Number of organizations with political opposition role	Number of members in average	Number of political organizations/1000 inh.
Grästorp	2	170	0.4
Sjöbo	18	582	1.2
Kävling	36	251	1.8
Lidköping	56	383	1.6
Luleå	84	1331	1.2

The number of organizations which assume a political opposition role varies greatly – from two in Grästorp to 84 in Luleå, according to the



estimate made. The difference in the number of opposition organizations is partly dependent on differences in size of municipalities, but the relationship between number of organizations and size of municipality does not explain more than a portion of the differences. Therefore, there is reason to examine the extent to which the classification of municipalities (Table 1) can explain the variations between municipalities with regard to the number of organizations with a political opposition role per 1000 inhabitants.

As can be seen from the table below, the municipalities which have been classified as having heterogeneous patterns of political values (Lidköping and Kävlinge) seem to have a markedly higher relative number of politicizing organizations than other more homogeneous municipalities. On the other hand, the modernization dimension does not show any effect in this respect. Thus, the hypothesis which arises is that a *heterogeneous pattern of values in a municipality promotes the development of a structure of organizations having the political opposition role as a distinguishing feature*. Municipalities which are characterized by homogeneity can more easily obtain satisfactory representation of various interest groups through the party system than is the case in a more pluralistic situation. It appears probable that the greater the degree of competition between organized interest groups, the greater the propensity of organizations to take on a political opposition role.

Table 4. Number of organizations with a political opposition role per 1000 inhabitants in five municipalities by modernization and pattern of political values

Pattern of political values	Modernizing	
	Traditional	Modernized
Homogeneous	0.4, 1.2	1.2
Heterogeneous	1.8	1.6

## Organizational Contacts with Municipalities

There are significant interactions between municipalities and organizations. The way in which the functions of municipalities and organizations are generally distributed requires a certain minimum of contact in order for the system to operate. For example, an athletic association has many occasions on which to contact the municipality in matters of athletic grounds, grants for various activities, and services of various kinds. Other organizations are often faced with similar predicaments. To be sure,

contacts of this kind are political in the sense that the municipality is run politically and decisions on athletic grounds and grants in the last resort are political, but for those concerned in the concrete cases, the political aspects are probably often considered as limits or rules of the game to be taken for granted. For this reason, the contacts are many times felt to be administrative or practical, and the thought that political influence is being exerted ought to be rather remote. Typical for many of these contacts is that the subjects which are discussed emanate from the problems which the organization has run up against in the course of its activity rather than from problems of the municipality in a more general sense.

Organizations which assume a political opposition role are characterized by the fact that the content of their contacts sometimes – but hardly always – extends beyond the internal framework of the organization. The opposition is a limited part of the total flow of contacts between the municipality and organizations. Therefore, it is important that the opposition role is not defined on the basis of the existence of contacts with the municipality in general but is qualified so as to refer to issues which concern ‘shortcomings or faults in the municipality’ in combination with a definite attitude toward the political role of the organization.

There is a general tendency for organizations with a political opposition role to take up municipal problems in their contacts to a greater ex-

Table 5. The contact network of various municipalities with organizations with a political opposition role. Percent. Frequency.

Contact	Sjöbo	Kävling	Lidköping	Luleå
Organization has contacted the municipality on several occasions	38	67	70	78
Medium number of contacts	1.4	2.1	1.5	2.0
Medium number of contacts for all of the organizations in the municipality	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.4
Municipality has contacted the organization on several occasions	38	22	30	44
Medium number of contacts	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.2
Medium number of contacts for all of the organizations in the municipality	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8

a) Grästorp is not included in the table since the number of political organizations is very small.

tent than other organizations, which place greater emphasis on their own internal matters and problems.

The remainder of the presentation involves a detailed examination of the contacts of organizations in each of the municipalities in the study. The discussion is limited to organizations with a political opposition role.

There are marked differences in the frequency of contacts between the various municipalities. The group of organizations having the most frequent contacts is comprised of 38 % of the political organizations in Sjöbo while the comparable figure for Luleå is 78 % (Table 6). However, it is difficult to see any simple pattern in the variations of contact frequency. An unclear pattern also emerges with regard to contacts initiated by the municipality – it can be observed that the municipality has the most intensive contact activity in Luleå and Sjöbo. In the cases in which the municipality initiates the contacts, the similarity between Luleå and Sjöbo is related to the fact that these municipalities have a homogeneous pattern of values and that, for this reason, the contacts do not become highly conflictual in nature and lend themselves to administrative treatment. But before the cases in which organizations initiate contacts with the municipality are dealt with, there is reason to illuminate the forms of contact which occur and the matters which are dealt with.

With regard to forms of contact, there is a clear pattern. The most politicized forms are most common in Luleå and Linköping, for example contact with municipal politicians or parties. A difference in range of contact forms can also be discerned. While the political organizations in Sjöbo use few means, an assortment of alternatives are available in Luleå. Differences in contact forms seem to reflect a modernization dimension. In traditional municipalities there are fewer and less politicized contact routes than is the case in the modernized and larger municipalities.

Without going into detail about the issues dealt with in contacts between municipalities and organizations, a distinction can be made between issues which derive from the internal problems of an organization (e.g., grants, meeting halls, investments in facilities for activities of the organization) and issues which concern more general political issues in the municipality (e.g., physical planning, housing, child care, employment). If the content of contacts is distributed into these two categories for political organizations in the various municipalities, certain differences arise. Fifty percent of the contacts in Grästorp, Sjöbo, and Luleå and 60 % of the contacts in Kävlinge and Lidköping are aimed at political areas in a more general sense. The former municipalities have a substantially greater element of internal organizational matters than the

latter. By means of the calculation which was carried out in Table 3 concerning the total number of organizations with a political opposition role in the various municipalities and the information in Table 5, an estimate of the contact frequency of the most important matters during 1979/1980 can be made. In order to obtain a measure of the political content in these contacts based on the information presented above concerning the nature of the issues, a rough estimate in this regard can also be made. In order to avoid the effects of size, calculations of contact frequency per 1000 inhabitants are made.

The results of the arithmetical operation which is presented in Table 6 are clear. The heterogeneous municipalities have both a higher frequency and a greater element of political issues in their contacts. The uncertainty in the contacts between municipalities and organizations which was presented by way of introduction thus changes into conditions which can be understood in terms of the explanatory model used here, because size of municipality, presence of political organizations, and the political content in the contacts are controlled for. The thesis which finds empirical support – if not proof – in the material analyzed is that *contacts between municipalities and organizations are a function of the local pattern of political values. The more heterogeneous the pattern, the greater the number of contacts and the more political the contacts, all else being equal.*

Table 6. Estimate of the contact frequency of the most important matters and the frequency of politically oriented contacts, respectively, per 1000 inhabitants between municipalities and organizations with a political opposition role by modernization and pattern of political values. The total contact frequency is presented within parentheses.

Pattern of political values	Modernization	
	Traditional	Modernized
Homogeneous	1.9 (2.7)	2.5 (4.0)
Heterogeneous	3.9 (4.9)	3.5 (4.5)

## Organizations and Pluralist Democracy

The ideal conception of pluralist democracy can be seen as a schematic picture of actual conditions. However, it is not clear that ideal types always correspond to reality. On the local level – in municipalities – there are a number of variants of pluralism. If local political systems can

be assumed to be of varying character, it stands to reason that the roles of organizations in those systems can also vary.

What general conclusions can be drawn concerning the role of organizations in municipal politics? The following three general conclusions concerning the role of organizations in municipal politics are supported by the empirical findings:

- (1) A heterogeneous pattern of values in a municipality promotes the development of an arrangement in which organizations predominantly assume the role of political opposition.
- (2) The interaction between municipalities and organizations is a function of the pattern of local political values. The more heterogeneous this pattern, the more frequent politically oriented contacts.
- (3) Increased overlap of arenas and a more incrementalist decision-making structure in modern municipalities create greater incentives for the formation of organizations.

There should not be any doubt about the fact that the amalgamation reforms tended to create modernized municipalities at the cost of traditional, and in that way contributed to the creation of a more differentiated and multifaceted structure of organizations. However, whether the organizations in this structure are going to develop relevant political roles or not will depend more on the pattern of local political values than on other structural factors.

A cautious hypothesis concerning future developments is that as homogeneous patterns of values tend to be weakened in most municipalities, a more pluralist system will ensue. Accordingly, it could be said that the amalgamation reforms *together* with other structural factors are in the long run positively correlated with pluralism!

#### NOTES

1. This article is a revised version of a chapter that originally appeared in a research report titled 'folkrörelser och kommunalpolitik'. The empirical findings presented here stem from a questionnaire sent to 600 organizations in 5 municipalities. Translation by Merrich Tabor, Stockholm.
2. This figure, like the discussion of arenas, has previously been presented in Gidlund, J., *Planering och medinflytande* ('Planning and Joint Influence') (Byggeforskningsrådet R32:1981), 46 ff.

#### REFERENCES

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