What Logics Drive the Choices of Public Decision-Makers?

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Political Science
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores what logics drive the decisions of public decision-makers. More specifically, and drawing on new institutional theory, the topic is investigated from the perspective of how institutions, i.e., the formal and informal patterns of rules and practices, influence public decision-makers. New institutionalism offers a variety of ideas regarding how this decision-making occurs, and recent research in this tradition emphasizes the importance of context for the empirical support of these ideas. At the same time, studies exploring, contrasting, and converging new institutional ideas, and how these vary depending on context, i.e., their conditionality, are lacking. In this dissertation, I set out to address this knowledge gap and, moreover, to examine the role of personal values for the new institutional ideas on how institutions affect public decision-makers. Personal values have not been emphasized in new institutional studies, but have successfully explained decision-making from other perspectives. By adding this dimension, I seek to explore whether individual factors, in this case the personal values that public decision-makers bring with them into the institutional context, affect the way they make decisions. Consequently, the aim of this dissertation is to explore what decision-making logics – differing in terms of how institutions influence individuals – are applied by public decision-makers and how this varies with decision-making context and personal values. This exploration is conducted by deriving and testing hypotheses on decision-making, from rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism, in two different contexts, parliaments and collaborative management, within the same national arena. Parliaments have a homogenous composition of actors, i.e., politicians, whereas collaborative management arenas include both public and private actors in decision-making, resulting in a more heterogeneous composition. Through a study of local parliaments and wildlife conservation committees (a form of collaborative management at the regional level) in Sweden, the aim of the dissertation is achieved through survey and interview analyses of decision-making regarding various policy issues. The results show that there are different decision-making logics at play in the two studied contexts. Further, personal values do influence the decision-making logics of public decision-makers. The implications of these results are, firstly, that the conditionality of new institutionalism, as suggested in earlier research, is empirically prevalent in the studied cases and, secondly, that personal values influence what decision-making logics are at play. Further research is encouraged to delve deeper into the results, preferably through qualitative studies that could complement the primarily quantitative focus of this dissertation and through studies of other national contexts than Sweden.

Keywords: Decision-making, new institutionalism, rational choice, sociological institutionalism, values, public administration, wildlife management, local parliaments, collaborative management
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Paper II
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Paper III
Nilsson, J. “When do politicians follow good examples? — Imitation and decision-making at the local level”.
*Submitted to Local Government Studies*

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Papers I-IV
"the world is made up of cliques […]
Each of these cliques has its customs, its mores,
indeed, its own language.
To put it simply, each has its rules,
and these rules determine the game."
- Jean Renoir
1. WHAT LOGICS DRIVE INDIVIDUAL DECISION-MAKING?

How individuals make decisions is a research topic explored in a variety of ways in the behavioral and social sciences. In psychology, factors that influence people’s decision-making include their values, norms, perceptions, attitudes, and awareness of consequences, but also their personalities and cognitions (Tversky & Kahnemann, 1984; McCrae & Costa, 1987; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Eysenck, 2001; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). In sociology, the structural inequalities between groups (see Giddens, 1993) and the ambiguity surrounding decision-making in organizations (see Shapira, 2002) are often emphasized as explanations, whereas economists usually identify the calculative nature of rational individuals as the primary driver of choices made in decision-making situations (see, e.g., Lucas, 1972; North, 1990; Turner, Pearce, & Bateman, 1993).

In political science, decision-making constitutes a central study object that has been studied from many different theoretical perspectives. Some perspectives have been inspired by economics research, where the calculative nature of rational individuals is used to explain decision-making phenomena such as voting behavior (Downs, 1957) and bureaucratic decision-making (Niskanen, 1971). Others have highlighted how gender discourses have implications for decisions and the shaping of, for example, regional (Hudson & Rönnblom, 2007) and health sector policies (Payne, 2014). Following psychology studies, political scientists have also highlighted the importance of personal values for decision-making, for example in regard to various environmental issues (e.g., Steg & Vlek, 2009; Sagiv, Sverdlik, & Schwarz, 2011; Jagers, Martinsson, & Matti, 2016).

A **decision** is characterized by a choice between two or more alternatives and needs to be distinguished from a **judgment**. To vote yes or no in a national referendum, to vote for one of two or more available political parties, or to choose between different policy suggestions are examples of decisions. Judgments, on the other hand, concern the evaluation of an object in regard to some criteria (Redlawsk & Lau, 2013), e.g., how good or bad you find a certain policy to be or how much impact you believe a certain decision will have on people affected by it.
Institutionalism is a theoretical perspective in political science with a particular interest in decision-making. Institutionalism is, according to Peters (2012), as old as political science itself and the focus of this approach has always been on how the arrangements of political rules and practices affect individual actions and decisions. The quintessence of the approach is that in order to understand why individuals act the way they do and make the decisions they make, you have to study the patterns of rules, customs, and practices, i.e., the institutions, surrounding the individuals (see Peters, 2012; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). Institutions are prevalent in all aspects of life and include things such as the voting system in the country you live in and the formal and informal rules in your workplace.

Institutionalism is characterized by a wide array of ways to explore and explain how institutions are important for understanding individual decision-making. This fragmentation has led to a broad range of competing and/or complementary explanations of how institutions affect individuals in their actions and choices, as well as how individuals can affect and even change the institutions. Some institutionalists have focused on the formal institutional aspects, where decision-making is understood in relation to the construction of formal rules, such as laws (e.g., Riker, 1982; Karvonen, 2003; Bergman & Strom, 2011), while others have focused on explaining the informal aspects of institutions. These informal aspects are practices, customs, and rules stemming from social norms and traditions rather than written official policy or laws (see North, 1990; Lowndes, 2010).

The formal aspects of institutions can be described as “how things should be done around here,” whereas the informal aspects have more to do with “how things are done around here.” Discrepancies between what should be done and what is done is emphasized by institutionalists studying the informal aspects (e.g., Levi, 2005; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Janssen & Ostrom, 2006; Scott, 2008).

There is a great range of explanations to decision-making presented by institutionalism, covering both formal and informal aspects. They diverge, for example, in regards to how individuals relate to their own preferences when affected by certain rules, how and to what extent uncertainty leads to imitation among actors, as well as how social norms of doing what is appropriate influence individuals in decision-making situations (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; March & Olsen, 1984; March & Olsen, 1989; North, 1990; Hall & Taylor, 1996; Ostrom, 2005; Janssen & Ostrom, 2006; Peters, 2012). They also differ in how much freedom to act the individuals are
seen to have in regards to the institutional context (Peters, 2012). Thus, the common denominator is that institutions affect individuals, while there are differing views concerning how and to what degree. The different approaches in institutionalism have developed competing ideas for explaining this common denominator. The rise of a common set of problems, such as the problem of explaining institutional change, has led to a consolidation between the competing explanations (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013).

This consolidation has led to an emphasis on the conditionality of institutionalism (see Müller, 2004; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013), which implies that different approaches in institutionalism, earlier seen as contrasting and incompatible, can now be seen complementary. Consequently, the explanations provided by different strands of institutionalism are conditional rather than all-encompassing. Several aspects guide individuals in their choices, and they may shift modes of decision-making depending on contextual factors (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). Thus, individuals may sometimes act and make decisions according to their own preferences, calculating benefits and losses of certain actions based on their perceived self-interest (referred to as bounded rationality by Simon, 1957), but may behave differently in other contexts, e.g., by adjusting more to social norms and to what they find appropriate given their role (referred to as the logic of appropriateness by March and Olsen, 1989).

I argue that it is important to address the issue of how institutions influence individuals while acknowledging the possible impact of the decision-making context. Thus, institutions matter, but so does the context, and individuals behave differently depending on the context. However, the conditionality of institutional explanations has not been thoroughly addressed, explored, and tested (see arguments in Peters, 2012; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013). Even though theoretical arguments on how different institutional explanations might converge and be prevalent in different situations have been presented (e.g., Katznelson & Weingast, 2005; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013), empirical evidence is still lacking.

Furthermore, although institutionalism emphasizes the relationship between institutions and individuals, the relationship has been studied mainly at organizational or societal level (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Scott, 2008), giving rise to a void of analyses at the individual level and an over-emphasis on how institutions control individual conduct (see arguments in Villadsen, Hansen, & Mols, 2010; Willmott, 2011). In this dissertation, I will explore these knowledge gaps and study how individuals make decisions through an
institutional lens by focusing on the individual level and acknowledging the conditionality of the institutional explanations.

Given the focus on how individuals may differ in how they relate to institutions, I will also explore the influence of personal values on this variation in decision-making modes. As mentioned above, psychology and political science research has found that personal values have a significant impact on decision-making. However, institutionalism has mainly focused on how values embedded in the institutions are internalized by the individuals, thereby neglecting the potential role of personal values (e.g., March & Olsen, 1989; Hinings et al., 1996; Washington, Boal, & Davis, 2008). This dissertation explores these aspects through a study of public decision-makers, a common analytical unit in institutional studies, in different contexts (e.g., March & Olsen, 1989; Villadsen, 2011; Bergman & Strom, 2011).

1.1. Aim of the dissertation
The aim of this dissertation is to explore what decision-making logics – differing in terms of how institutions influence individuals – are applied by public decision-makers and how this varies with decision-making context and personal values.

The ambition is to contribute to the development of institutionalism in the following ways: First, the dissertation explores the context-dependency of institutional ideas by examining whether some ideas are more prone to explaining decision-making in certain situations than others. This aspect is often emphasized but more seldom empirically studied. Second, the dissertation highlights and investigates decision-making departing from an individual-level approach to institutional studies, which is unusual in contemporary research (Villadsen, Hansen, & Mols, 2010).

Third, by incorporating the influence of personal values on the relationship between institutions and public decision-makers, a driver of individual behavior identified as important in other research fields is added to the study, thus broadening our understanding of the relationships between institutions and decision-making. Finally, the research conducted within the scope of this dissertation contributes to the understanding of decision-making in the particular empirical cases.
1.2. Structure of this dissertation summary

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical foundations of the dissertation; it discusses institutionalism and various notions of how institutions relate to individual decision-making. Fundamental aspects, such as the concept of institutions, the division of approaches to studying institutions, the relation between institutions and individual behavior, as well as the role of values in understanding this relationship, are discussed. Further, the theoretical discussion ends with an analytical framework and presents the research questions guiding the dissertation.

Chapter 3 presents the research design; it begins with a description of the philosophical views on science that are relevant for the choice of methodology and my positioning on these matters, and then follows a presentation of the empirical research conducted to achieve this dissertation’s aim, a review of empirical cases and methods used in the four research articles, and a discussion of the methodological choices.

Finally, Chapter 4 presents the results of the articles and discusses the implications of these results in relation to the research questions and aim of the dissertation.
2. NEW INSTITUTIONAL THEORY:
A FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Section 2.1 focuses on describing and discussing different definitions of the concept of institutions. Since the concept of institutions is the key feature of institutionalism, it is important to pin down what it is and how it has been used in the social sciences.

Section 2.2 gives a presentation of institutionalism, new institutionalism, and the third wave of institutionalism. This presentation gives a chronological review of how the ideas on and studies of institutions have evolved over the years, and includes an account of the traditional categorization of approaches found under the new institutionalism umbrella, namely rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism. The presentation also includes a description of the third wave of institutionalism, i.e., the focus of contemporary institutionalism and the point of departure for this dissertation.

In Section 2.3, I discuss how different strands of new institutionalism, including the three above-mentioned ones but also others, are categorized. I present my thoughts on the ongoing debate about how to distinguish between the strands and argue for why I condense them into two broad approaches in this dissertation.

Section 2.4 describes the different ideas on how institutions affect individual behavior, and constitutes a fundamental theoretical component of the dissertation. Because of the individual-level perspective adopted in this dissertation, theoretical ideas on the relation between institutions and individuals are essential for the purpose of formulating hypotheses that could guide the empirical research presented in the four research articles.

In addition, a section describing and discussing the importance of personal values as a factor for understanding individual decision-making and why it should be incorporated in a study seeking to understand decision-making from an institutional perspective can be found. This section focuses primarily on personal values as described by Schwartz (1992; 2010). The chapter is concluded with a figure illustrating the theoretical framework as well as two more specific research questions, serving as guiding foundations for how to achieve the aim of the dissertation.
2.1. The concept of institutions

There are probably more definitions of the concept of institution than there are institutional theories. Most of them share some common elements, however. There are important issues to discuss in relation to what an institution is and how institutions are conceptualized. With Goldmann, Pedersen, and Østerud (1997), as well as Áström (2011), as a conceptual starting point, I define institutions as the patterns of rules and procedures that affect the behavior of actors in collective units.

With the term affect, I wish to emphasize that institutions are not deterministic. Institutions affect individuals and other actors as they provide guidelines for actions. Actors tend to follow these guidelines yet may also act contrary to the institutional path and even change the institution (but doing so is generally both difficult and costly). By using the term actors, I want to stress that those affected by the institutions can be both individuals and organizations.

Finally, by collective units, I mean it is necessary to conceptualize the actors as part of a group or as having some kind of denominator. For example, they may be politicians in the same party, voters voting in the same national election, or public officials working in the same government agency, whose actions are constrained and facilitated by rules and practices prevalent in their respective context. Conceptualizing the actors in collective units eases the task of mapping out which actors the institution affects and thus also which actors to study.

It can sometimes be hard to distinguish between the concept of institutions and the concept of structures. Institutions can indeed many times be seen as structures, while not all structures are institutions. To exemplify, structures with a more material foundation, such as income, can be shared by a group at the aggregate level but are not to be considered as an institution (since income is not a pattern of rules, procedures, conventions, or norms). My definition of institutions shares the structural and constraining elements found also in Ostrom’s (1990) definition of institutions as:

“the sets of working rules that are used to determine who is eligible to make decisions in some arena, what actions are allowed or constrained, what aggregation rules will be used, what procedures must be followed, what information must or must not be provided, and what payoffs will be assigned to individuals dependent on their actions” (Ostrom, 1990, p. 51).
North (1990) expresses the same focus on rules when defining institutions as “the rules of the game in society or, more formally, ... the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction” (North, 1990, p. 3). Jeppson (1991) acknowledges a vagueness of referring to institutions as “rules of the game” and elaborates further on the concept by defining institutions as “a social order or pattern that has attained a certain state or property” (Jeppson, 1991, p. 145).

By order or pattern, Jeppson (1991) refers to standardized interaction sequences and, following this, institutions as a “social pattern that reveals a particular reproduction process” (Jeppson, 1991, p. 143). By elaborating further on the concept of institutions, and ways to avoid the vagueness, Jeppson (1991) puts his finger on one of the core criticisms of institutionalism: With such a broad definition of institutions, cannot almost every social phenomenon be seen as an institution? If so, do institutional explanations explain anything at all?

On the same theme, Rothstein (1996) warned that institutions can be almost everything, implying a risk of becoming a theoretically useless concept explaining nothing. Peters (2012) addressed the need for new institutionalism to test their theories in empirical studies in order to escape accusations conceptually vagueness and irrelevance. The concept of institutions has almost become a theoretical itch: the more you scratch it and try to sort out its meaning, the more problems seem to arise.

Political science became a discipline in its own right by studying political institutions (Peters, 2012). To address the criticism discussed above, studies within the realm of institutional theory need: a) further and deeper elaborations of the concept and its constructs (see arguments in DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) and b) to develop refined methods on how to operationalize the concept of institutions in empirical studies. If this can be done, we may eventually find the right lotion for the theoretical itch of conceptual vagueness. In the next section, I discuss how institutions have been studied in the social sciences over the years.

2.2. Institutionalism, new institutionalism, and the third wave
As Peters (2012) highlights, the concept of institutions is central to political analysis, and institutionalism is as old as political science itself. The close historical connection to political science notwithstanding, institutional theory
is continuously both debated and contended in the field of political science. Approaches to studying institutions differ in how they understand and explain the nature of institutions, i.e., how institutions form, change, and dissolve and how these processes constrain and facilitate human behavior (see March & Olsen, 2006; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010; Schmidt, 2010; Peters, 2012; Lowndes & Roberts, 2013).

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, institutionalism has seen a revival in what has come to be called new institutionalism (see March & Olsen, 1989; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Hall & Taylor, 1996). Whereas old institutional studies focused on how formal structures, such as law and form of government, affect political processes and outcomes, new institutionalism includes a more dynamic conception of institutions, where informal elements, such as informal rules and conventions, also are considered (Lowndes, 2010).

Although there are divergent views among the new approaches to studying institutions, Peters (2012) identifies four shared elements. The first element is a focus on a structural feature of society that can be either formal (e.g., a legal framework) or informal (for example a set of shared norms). The second shared element is stability over time. A phenomenon that occurs only once is not considered an institution. The third element highlighted by Peters (2012) is that there has to be some shared values or ways of constructing meaning of the members of an institution. The fourth and last element is that institutions must influence the behavior of individuals. If it does not influence individual behavior, it is not an institution. The impact does not need to be deterministic, but it must facilitate and/or constrain the individuals affected by the institution (Peters, 2012).

Lowndes (2010) highlights the notion that new institutionalism, when compared with old, concerns not only the impact of institutions on individuals but also the reciprocal interaction between institutions and individuals. The focus is more on exploring how individual behavior is affected than simply assuming that institutions do affect individual behavior. This latter element of new institutionalism is essential for the aim of this dissertation, and different approaches provide different answers regarding what this relationship looks like.

Three broad approaches to institutional studies emerged in this new institutionalism: rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Even though several scholars have argued for further divisions (e.g., Lowndes, 2010; Peters, 2012), the above categorization is still the most common (e.g., Koelbe, 1995;
Rational choice institutionalism (RCI) uses rational choice theory to explain how institutions affect individual behavior and decisions. The focus in RCI thus lies on how institutions affect the perceived benefits and costs of self-interested, bounded rational individuals (i.e., rational individuals without perfect information and with cognitive restrictions) trying to make decisions in line with their personal preferences. Historical institutionalism (HI) focuses more on how the historical ways of performing actions remain and are hard to change, which is the foundation for processes of institutionalization and referred to as path-dependency. In sociological institutionalism (SI), institutions socialize individuals into how they make sense of and create meaning for their actions from the institutional context in which they are embedded (Hall & Taylor, 1996).

New institutionalism has contributed to a deeper and more complex understanding and explanation of decision-making in contexts such as the European Union (e.g., Lewis, 2005), parliamentary decision-making (e.g., Strom, 2000), common-pool resource dilemmas (e.g., Ostrom, 2006), and public administration (e.g., Villadsen, Hansen, & Mols, 2010). However, criticism has been raised against new institutionalism, with one of the more prominent concerns being the vagueness and lack of precision of institutional theories and the theoretical foundations of these, e.g., in regard to how and why institutions change (see discussions in, e.g., Tversky & Kahnemann, 1984; Green & Shapiro, 1994; Mizruchi & Fein, 1999; Monroe, 2001; Peters, Pierre, & King, 2005; Steinmo, 2008; Lowndes, 2010).

Attempts to solve problems, such as the inability to explain institutional change, gave rise to the third wave of institutionalism in the early 2000s. Whereas the different approaches were seen as discrete and rivaling during the rise of new institutionalism, the third wave led the development in the opposite direction towards convergence and consolidation. Instead of focusing on differences, the third wave emphasized that all approaches addressed a common set of quandaries, of which the conditionality of how institutions shape individual behavior was one and the issue of explaining institutional change was another (Lowndes & Roberts, 2013).

Although the shift toward consolidation began with the third wave, the different ways of studying institutions remain, as illustrated by the most commonly used division between RCI, HI, and SI. Even though the consolidation is driven by the ambition to solve the same problems, research is still conducted mainly within these three strands (attempts to synthesize do,
My dissertation is based on, and contributes to, this third wave of institutionalism.

However, even though there has been consolidation and convergence, the different approaches associated with new institutionalism still serve as starting points when studying institutions. It is therefore my intent to outline all these different approaches and relate them to my focus in this dissertation. Hence, the next section outlines how Peters (2012) categorizes different approaches to studying institutions and I discuss how this division, for the purpose of my studies of public decision-makers, can be reduced. This discussion leads to the categorization of two main approaches to studying institutionalism, which in turn is followed by a discussion on how these two approaches explain how and why institutions affect the behavior and decisions of the public decision-makers.

I also thoroughly discuss how I, coming from the third wave arguments, see these two categories as complementary rather than rivaling. I want to explore their conditionality, i.e., in which contexts explanations derived from either of the two approaches are more commonly found. Thus, my viewpoint, which is discussed below, is that the categorization can be reduced to only two approaches, RCI and SI, when looking at how institutions affect the behavior and decisions of public decision-makers. My attempt to make this point is made by, first, introducing Peters’ (2012) categorization and, second, arguing for how these categories can be incorporated under either RCI or SI for the purpose and scope of this dissertation. Peters’ more extensive (2012) categorization can, however, be very useful when looking at other aspects of institutions in other studies.

2.3. Peters’ categorization of new institutional approaches
Some scholars argue for further addition of approaches besides the three traditional ones, i.e., RCI, HI, and SI, to categorize the broad array of new institutional theories. Peters (2012), one of the most cited political scientists studying institutions and institutional theory, adds the following approaches: normative institutionalism, empirical institutionalism, discursive/constructivist institutionalism, institutions of interest representation, and international institutionalism.

There are also examples of other divisions. Schmidt (2010) argues for discursive institutionalism as the fourth approach besides RCI, HI, and SI. Lowndes (2010) uses the same approaches as Peters (2012), but adds feminist
institutionalism. Since discursive institutionalism is part of Peters’ (2012) categorization, I depart from Peters (2012) and add the feminist institutionalism mentioned by Lowndes (2010) in the discussion below.

The RCI, HI, and SI approaches, which have been described earlier, remain part of Peters’ (2012) categorization. The first new approach that Peters (2012) introduces is what he calls normative institutionalism (NI). This approach is mainly based on March and Olsen’s (1984; 1989) theory of the logic of appropriateness. The main arguments of this theory are that values and norms are of central importance in political analysis and that institutions are central for understanding the influence of values and norms on choices in the political realm. Individuals, the public decision-makers in my case, act according to what they perceive to be appropriate according to their role, regardless of their self-interest, and the content of this role is determined by the institutional context. The individual preferences are shaped by the individuals’ involvement with institutions where they learn and internalize the institutional values and norms (Peters, 2012).

The second approach that Peters adds is empirical institutionalism (EI). Here Peters categorizes studies and scholars who empirically study the impact of structural factors, such as formal institutions (e.g., parliamentarism and presidentialism) on various outcome variables, for example voter turnout in comparative politics. Peters makes this categorization by contrasting the theoretical focus of other new institutional approaches without delving deeper into what signifies this approach (except for the implicit assumption that structure determines action rather than agency).

Peters’ third addition is discursive/constructivist institutionalism (DCI), and this approach is in line with the category suggested by Schmidt (2010) and Lowndes (2010). Here Peters gathers studies and scholars who focus on the role of ideas from an epistemologically interpretivist perspective (see next chapter). This approach sees the relationship between institutions and individuals as deeply intertwined and in mutual dependency, much like the structuration theory and duality of structure as put forth by Giddens (1984).

The fourth approach, i.e., institutions of interest representation (IoIR) refers to extra-constitutional structures that function as a link between society and the state. Such institutions include political parties, social networks, and interest organizations. The institution can be seen as the aggregation of the individuals within these structures. This approach is more empirically oriented, and the structures that it focuses on are not typically seen through the institutional lens, even though, as argued by Peters, they contribute to the
understanding of institutions (Peters, 2012). Peters (2012) also points out that this approach contains limited original and independent theoretical foundations in regard to institutions, and states that its empirical scope for the most part can be seen through the lens of the more general theories found in RCI and SI. The theoretical connection between the literature on networks and the sociological theories is especially emphasized.

The last addition is that of international institutionalism (II). Much like IoIR, the subject in II is empirically oriented. Further, as Peters (2012) points out, international relations are often characterized by anarchy rather than institutional rules; yet, by framing international regimes as patterns of behavior, they may, and should, be seen as institutions. Moreover, this approach makes use of the theoretical ideas found in both RCI and SI to explain empirical problems (Peters, 2012).

Finally, feminist institutionalism (FI) highlights how gender norms function within institutions (Lowndes, 2010). Gender norms and gendered power dynamics are maintained by institutional processes. The broad and fragmented nature of FI has led to the formation of the more narrow approaches labeled feminist historical institutionalism (e.g., Waylen, 2011) and feminist discursive institutionalism (e.g., Friedenvall & Krook, 2011).

2.3.1. My take on new institutional approaches
My main argument for reducing Peters’ (2012) approaches to two categories when exploring how institutions affect the decisions of public decision-makers is that all approaches listed by Peters can be seen as belonging to either RCI or SI. Thus, the theoretical ideas of the broader range of different approaches can be placed into either RCI or SI. I argue why this is the case in the following pages.

In the case of NI, there have already been scholars, including Hall and Taylor (1996), who perceive the theories of March and Olsen (1984; 1989) not to be independent, discrete approaches but rather part of SI. I agree with the inclusion of NI as a part of SI mainly because of the resemblance between NI and what DiMaggio and Powell (1991) label old sociological institutionalism (old SI).

Old sociological institutionalism, much associated with the work of Selznick (1957), emphasizes the role of values and norms in understanding institutional phenomena and focuses on how these institutional values and norms shape people’s preferences. As do March and Olsen. Even though old
SI does not address the logic of appropriateness per se, the focus on norms and ideas is so similar to March and Olsen’s theories I do not find it necessary to treat it as a separate approach in my study.

Peters (2012) also acknowledges this resemblance, but his main objection to why NI should not be part of old SI is March and Olsen’s (1989) focus on individuals, whereas old SI mainly focuses on structures, i.e., patterns of rules at the aggregate or societal level. I do not find this discrepancy to be sufficient for a separation to be made in my study since I consider it more of an issue of the level of analysis than of theoretical differences. The theoretical arguments for why institutions affect individual behavior are the same and since this is my focus in studying public decision-makers, I include NI in SI.

One argument for why EI, IoIR, and II are not to be categorized as separate approaches to institutional studies is mentioned by Peters (2012) himself. These approaches primarily use theories and assumptions found in RCI and SI when explaining the empirical phenomena and, because of this, I categorize them as part of either of these two rather than as separate approaches. For example, the empirical studies of political parties and parliamentary democracy in Northern Europe found in Bergman and Strom (2011) belong to EI if we use the categorization provided by Peters. At the same time, the common theoretical foundation for these studies is the principal-agent theory, which is a RCI theory. This is why I exclude EI as a separate approach in this dissertation.

I choose to include DCI under the larger SI umbrella. The main argument for doing this is that both the epistemological positioning of interpretivism and the methodology used in DCI, such as the focus on discourses (e.g., González and Healy, 2005), can be found also in SI. Further, as Bell (2011) points out, Schmidt’s (2010) argument for seeing DCI as the fourth approach under the new institutionalism umbrella is largely based on the ability of DCI to explain institutional change, a task that RCI, HI, and SI for a long time have had problems doing. The problem of explaining institutional change could, according to Bell (2011), be solved by applying HI explanations, such as the ones promoted by Mahoney and Thelen (2010).

HI borrows at lot of its theoretical foundations from both RCI and SI (see Hall & Taylor, 1998; Katznelson & Weingast, 2005) and could consequently also be categorized under either one of them. The explanations for how and why institutions affect individuals are found in the scope of RCI and SI. Since I wish to explore how this relation affects public decision-makers, HI is not treated as a separate approach in this dissertation.
I also choose to include FI in SI. The focus on norms, in this case gender norms, and how they create and maintain power dynamics, is related to the emphasis on norms by both March and Olsen (1989) and the old SI. Since this is the main explanation in FI for how institutions affect individuals, such as public decision-makers, the integration of FI into SI is logical. Another argument is that the discursive elements of FI can be seen as a part of SI for the same reasons discursive institutionalism also can be integrated into SI, as discussed above.

TABLE 1. The categorization of new institutionalism into two approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rational Choice Institutionalism</th>
<th>Sociological Institutionalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Institutionalism</td>
<td>Historical Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical Institutionalism</td>
<td>Empirical Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions of Interest Representations</td>
<td>Institutions of Interest Representations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Institutionalism</td>
<td>International Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normative Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discursive/Constructive Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminist Institutionalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In light of the arguments presented above, the categorization of new institutionalism into two main approaches, RCI and SI, serves the purpose of this dissertation (see Table 1 above). The next section outlines these approaches and their differences.

2.4. Ideas on how institutions affect the decisions of public decision-makers according to RCI and SI

I want to explore what decision-making logics – differing in terms of how institutions influence individuals – are applied by public decision-makers and how this varies with decision-making context and personal values. To understand this, it is important to look into the RCI and SI assumptions regarding how institutions affect the decisions of individuals.

The positions of RCI are based on behavioral ideas stemming from rational choice theory. Institutions provide individuals with alternatives, information and incentives that influence how to choose and how to act. From these incentives, the individuals then try to obtain utility according to what
they find beneficial according to their personal preferences (North, 1990). Thus, in RCI, individuals ultimately evaluate and act on the information they obtain in a rational way according to their preferences. This is referred to as *bounded rationality* (Simon, 1957). Rationality means that institutions provide individuals with information and alternatives they can choose between and incentives on what is desirable in relation to their preferences and the particular institutional environment. Institutions also obscure choices (North, 1990). Bounded rationality is more limited than fully informed rationality (see, e.g., Lucas, 1972; Hindmoor, 2006) and differs from the traditional rational choice theory in three ways.

First, individuals are not comprehensive decision-makers. Decisions are made in isolation from each other and without knowing the full implications they may have on subsequent decisions. Second, in contrast to the fully informed individual in rational choice theory, individuals cannot take the full range of possible choices into account when making decisions. Third, because of this incomplete information, individuals focus on the most prominent and important aspects when choosing among alternatives (Hindmoor, 2006).

In RCI, individuals constitute the fundamental unit of analysis (methodological individualism) and are assumed to be *self-interested*, bounded rational decision-makers, meaning that they make informed decisions in line with their personal preferences. Consequently, individuals are not driven by emotions, frustration, routine, or any other non-rational factor (Johnston, 1991; Hindmoor, 2006). Instead, they calculate the effects of certain actions in attempt to pursue their self-interest, and the framing and outcomes of these actions are affected by the institutional context (Ostrom, 1986). In RCI, finally, institutions do not shape the individuals' preferences. Instead they present the individuals with incentives encouraging behavior deemed beneficial. Thus, preferences are often seen as *exogenous* to institutions in this strand of research (Peters, 2012). This means that the preferences of individuals do not change depending on the institutions; merely their calculations do.

In contrast, SI focuses on cultural aspects of institutions and how they provide individuals with meaning and thus guide their behavior. The setting socializes individuals as individuals internalize the norms and values of the institution (Hall and Taylor, 1996). These processes are driven by norms, cognition, and sense-making (March & Olsen, 1989; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Weick, 1995; Scott, 2008). In contrast to RCI, SI thus treats the preferences of individuals as *endogenous* in relation to institutions. This means
that institutions shape parts of individuals’ perceptions and that individuals internalize the institutional norms into their own perceptions. Institutions are important for changing the preferences and views of the individuals active in a context (Peters, 2012).

SI offers a wide array of ways to study institutions and views on how individuals and institutions interact. For example, organizationally based explanations (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), emphasizing how institutions tend to create similarities among organizations (through imitation), differ from March and Olsen’s (1984; 1989) focus on how individuals internalize what is deemed appropriate or other SI scholars emphasizing the role of the discourse (e.g., Schmidt, 2010).

In this dissertation, I focus on two strands within SI, namely March and Olsen’s (1989) logic of appropriateness and the notion about imitation stemming from organizational theory (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Scott, 2008). The reason behind my focus on the logic of appropriateness is that March and Olsen (1989) with this theory openly oppose the explanations found in RCI, thus framing them as rivaling theories. The justification for looking at imitation is that this approach has been studied mainly from the organizational perspective while studies on imitation at the individual level are scarce (see argument in Villadsen, Hansen, & Mols, 2010). Analysis at the individual level thus contributes to the understanding of imitation. Most importantly, however, imitation has proven to be an important explanatory factor in previous research (see, e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Mizruchi & Fein, 1999; Scott, 2008; Grob & Benn, 2014; Martínez-Ferrero & García-Sánchez, 2017).

In their work on the logic of appropriateness, March and Olsen (1984; 1989) address a complex issue when establishing that some institutions influence individual behavior to conform to rules. Furthermore, these institutions exert both normative pressure on the individual as well as cultural values that are then internalized. The relationship between various rules and norms as well as their ambiguity must be taken into account in order to understand political and institutional phenomena. Individuals are prone to follow rules rather than act based on self-interest, and compliance occurs even in situations when it opposes individual preferences. The individual simply acts according to what is perceived as appropriate. This perception is based on how the environment is interpreted and stems from both personal and institutional (perceived) expectations. Choices are therefore based on the individual’s effort to pair a specific situation with the suitable behavior and
not, as in the case of RCI, on identifying the alternative that has the best consequences for the individual (March & Olsen, 1989).

March and Olsen (1989) illustrate the differences between two decision-making logics found in RCI and SI, respectively, by comparing differences in how individuals reason. The logic of calculus (i.e., the logic connected with bounded rationality) occurs from the following reasoning: 1. What are my alternatives? 2. What are my values and preferences? 3. What are the consequences of the alternatives based on my values and preferences? 4. Choose the alternative with the best consequences. The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, follows a different type of reasoning: 1. What kind of situation am I in? 2. What is my role? 3. How appropriate are different alternatives for action in regards to my role? 4. Do what is the most appropriate thing to do.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explored why different organizations in the same field, composed of different individuals, tend to become strikingly similar. They concluded that it is a result of isomorphism, which is the processes of imitation when acting under the same constraints, i.e., the same institutions. Isomorphism can work in several ways, where mimetic processes, i.e., imitation due to uncertainty, are one significant path (the other path is isomorphism via coercive processes, which are cultural expectations from society, and normative processes, which stem from professionalization; see DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; 1991).

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1991), as well as Scott (2008), mimetic processes occur in situations of uncertainty when individuals and organizations mimic other individuals or organizations that are perceived to be successful in performing. The mimicking is assumed to be cognitively based, meaning that it is largely an automated process and not a result of reasoned deliberation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; 1991). The emphasis on imitation in regard to institutions is in line with the importance given to imitation when explaining behavior in psychology. According to Carlson et al. (2000), one of the most powerful social influences on people’s behavior is other people’s behavior. When we see others around us do something, we tend to perform the same action in the same way. We imitate. Previous research, at the organizational level, has suggested that imitating behavior is more common in governmental organizations than in, for example, private companies (see Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004).

To sum up, the RCI explanation is mainly focused on how individuals act when faced with certain rules and practices and emphasizes bounded rational,
calculative individuals who know their preferences and try to make choices according to these (see North, 1990; Ostrom, 2005). In contrast, SI oppose this calculative individual with an individual who seeks meaning and cannot calculate objective implications free from the influence of institutional values and norms (see March & Olsen, 1989; Scott, 2008). Consequently, SI is more focused on culture and how culture shapes interactions, whereas RCI instead focuses on individuals and how these individuals in a rational way reach conclusions. This difference motivates the categorization of new institutional approaches into one RCI direction, with calculative explanations for how individuals and institutions interact, and one SI direction, with cultural explanations for this interaction.

The exogenous or endogenous character of individual preferences in relation to institutions in both RCI and SI is worth emphasizing. This is an important difference in how institutions are treated by the two approaches. RCI holds that the preferences of the individual entering an institutional context are persistent, i.e., individuals merely calculate how to make decisions according to their preferences in relation to what is promoted and sanctioned by the institution. SI, on the other hand, strictly points out that individuals and organizations acting in an institutional context are socialized by the institutional rules and practices, and hence intertwines institutional values and individual preferences. This phenomenon is often referred to as institutionalization, where actors adapt and internalize institutional ideas. These ideas are then reinforced, reinterpreted and imitated by the actors (see Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008).

2.4.1. RCI and SI explanations – rivaling, complementary, or a matter of conditionality?
There has been, and still is, an ongoing discussion on whether RCI and SI should be considered to be rivals or complementary in the study of institutions. March and Olsen (1989) and Hay and Wincott (1998) emphasize the rivaling nature of how the two approaches explain social phenomena. Hay and Wincott (1998) build their argument mainly on ontological aspects. They argue that RCI and SI are incompatible due to fundamental differences in their view on what constitutes the social world and on the ability to reach objective knowledge free from normativity about this social world and its objects.

With the rise of the third wave of institutionalism, these differences and the distances between the two approaches have been downplayed. As
emphasized by Lowndes and Roberts (2013), the distance between the competing approaches is small and even decreasing. They see institutions and the actors who operate within their realm as multi-faceted. There are different modes of constraints and actors have mixed motivations. Hence, institutions and actors are not as “pure” and consistent as the philosophical ontological positions argue that they are.

I base my research on the third wave of institutionalism and agree with Lowndes and Roberts (2013) in their conclusion that the conditionality is important to acknowledge and emphasize in empirical research. RCI and SI are different schools of thought and provide different explanations for institutional phenomena, and in my view, the explanations derived from RCI and SI can be considered complementary empirically. It is the context that matters. RCI may provide more accurate explanations under one condition, whereas SI may be more accurate under another. In some contexts, they may both have empirical support. Institutional scholars should further explore this conditionality.

Similar thoughts have been proposed by Müller (2004), who argues that the logics in RCI and SI work under different conditions and that actors shift orientation depending on conditions and contexts. Schimmelfennning and Sedelmeier (2002), too, argue for a complementary view of the approaches and focus on in which contexts each of them provides plausible explanations.

There are a variety of contexts where decisions are made by public decision-makers (such as elected parliaments at various levels), administrative bodies (public authorities), and collaborative management settings (consisting of both public and private actors), to name a few. When the reasoning above is applied to public decision-makers, their behavior and decisions in these contexts can be explained using ideas derived from both RCI and SI.

2.4.2. The addition of personal values to RCI and SI ideas regarding how institutions affect public decision-makers

Personal values have been shown to be a significant determinant of individual decision-making. They are important to address and explore in relation to the institutional/individual interplay for a couple of reasons. One significant reason is their direct influence on individual choices (see Schwartz, 2010, and below). By incorporating the role of personal values in the analytical framework I am able to investigate the role of personal values for how public
decision-makers make decisions, i.e., whether certain personal values are more related to decision-making in line with RCI or SI.

Personal values are individual level-factors that are stable and lasting over time. Exploring them from an institutional perspective in regard to public decision-making helps evaluate to what extent what the public decision-makers bring with them in, in this case the personal values, really matter for this decision-making. Further, since personal values are serve as guiding principles and motives action (see Schwartz, 2010), there is a connection between personal values and the logic of calculus mentioned earlier.

As March and Olsen (1989) highlight, the logic of calculus indicates a reasoning where alternatives are weighed toward the values and preferences, and then choosing the alternative with the best consequences in relation to these values and preferences. The logic of appropriateness instead emphasizes the role of acting in line with the perceived role, regardless of personal preferences or values. Hence, personal values should be a significant driver of behavior in line with the logic of calculus, whereas they should play a lesser role in relation to the logic of appropriateness.

For these reasons, in this dissertation I complement the exploration of how institutions affect the decisions of public decision-makers with an examination of the influence of their personal values. Values are transsituational goals serving as guiding principles in a person’s life (Schwartz, 1992). Values are held by individuals but are also prevalent in cultures when they are shared with other people. They are also a significant factor influencing individuals’ prioritization between competing goals (see Almond & Verba, 1963; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987; Schwartz, 1992; 2010).

Schwartz’s value theory (1992) is often used when conceptualizing and using personal values in social scientific, as well as psychological, studies. This value theory includes ten values, all of which are considered universal; they are present across cultures in various combinations and strengths. The ten values are presented in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Restraint of actions, impulses, and inclinations likely to harm or upset others and to violate social norms or expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Acceptance, commitment, and respect of ideas provided by one’s religion or culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Enhancing and preserving the welfare of people one has frequent contact with at a personal level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>Protection, understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of nature and the welfare of all people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>Independent action and thought in regard to choosing, creating, and exploring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation</td>
<td>Challenge, as well as excitement and novelty, in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism</td>
<td>Seeking of pleasure and gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Personal success, demonstrated through competence according to social standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Status, prestige, as well as control or dominance over other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Stability, safety, and harmony of relationships, self and society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some values in the table above are complementary to each other, whereas others are in stark conflict. For example, benevolence and conformity tend to interact to motivate pro-social behavior (such as helping others), whereas security and power instead tend to inhibit such behavior (see Schwartz, 2010). Previous studies on environmental behavior have also found that hedonism, the value of seeking pleasure and gratification, is negatively connected with environmental behavior. Other values, on the other hand, promote pro-environmental behavior. Universalism and appreciating nature and the welfare of others are examples of such values.

The values in Schwartz’s value system interact and can be thought of as opposing value systems. The relationships between competing values are conceptualized in two bipolar dimensions (Schwartz, 2010). Conservation and openness to change mark the opposite ends of one dimension. This dimension emphasizes the conflict between values that promote order, preservation and self-restriction (security, conformity, and tradition, Table 2) and those that promote thought, independence of action, and readiness to change (the values of self-direction, hedonism, and stimulation, Table 2).

The opposite ends of the other dimension are self-enhancement and self-transcendence. The conflict here lies between values related to the pursuit of
self-interest (achievement and power, Table 2) and values that regard the welfare and well-being of others (universalism and benevolence, Table 2). These dimensions are important to acknowledge when discussing the implications of decision-making behavior (Schwartz, 2010).

In addition to the what is mentioned above for how personal values guide preferences and how this can be related to the logic of calculus, there is another reason why personal values are interesting to study in relation to public decision-makers and institutionalism. Earlier research has shown that the value dimensions (conservation – openness to change; self-enhancement – self-transcendence) differ in how they affect rule compliance (see Lönnqvist et al., 2009; Myyry et al., 2009). Since institutions are conceptualized as just rules, the value dimensions are connected to the compliance with institutions. The value dimensions can thus help to explain why public decision-makers differ in the way they comply with institutions.

2.5. Analytical framework and research questions
In this final section of the chapter, I sum up the theoretical parts and arguments presented above in an analytical framework that will guide the exploration of what decision-making logics – differing in terms of how institutions influence individuals – are applied by public decision-makers and how this varies with decision-making context and personal values. The framework serves as a guide for my analysis and highlights what aspects need to be operationalized in the coming section on research design and methods.

In order to explain why public decision-makers make the decisions they make using institutionalism, it is important to focus on the relationship between institutions and individuals. The main ideas about how this relationship works, and the broad range of analytical approaches in institutionalism, can be placed in either RCI or SI.

The RCI category consists of the idea of bounded rationality, with its foundation in rational choice theory and the assumption about bounded self-interested individuals. The wide array of cultural explanations found in SI are concerned with how individuals create meaning in relation to the surrounding institutions. The two ideas of primarily concern in this dissertation are the logic of appropriateness and the imitation.

As promoted by the third wave of institutionalism, the decision-making logics are context-dependent and conditional. They can be seen as both rivals and complementary, and the context is what determines this relationship. In
certain contexts, explanations derived from bounded rationality may be better for understanding the behavior and decisions of the public decision-makers, whereas in other contexts imitation is a better predictor. It is therefore important to explore these ideas about decision-making in different contexts and see whether, and if so how, the conditionality shines through. The details of the contexts chosen for the research in this dissertation are elaborated on further in the upcoming chapter on research design and methods.

The role of personal values for understanding public decision-makers and the presence of different decision-making logics are added to the theoretical perspective of this dissertation. Personal values have shown to be a significant factor for understanding individuals’ behavior in general and decision-making in particular. Exploring their impact contributes to the understanding of whether what the public decision-maker brings into the decision-making situation, in this case personal values, affects the way they make their decisions. Further, the connection between personal values and rule compliance, as well as the role of personal values in guiding preferences (connected to the logic of calculus), add to the need for exploring the role of personal values in regard to institutionalism. The above discussion is summarized in the analytical framework illustrated in Figure 1 below.

![Analytical framework for the doctoral dissertation](image)

**Figure 1. Analytical framework for the doctoral dissertation.**
In light of the aim of this dissertation, and based on the analytical framework, the following two research questions are asked:

I) *Do hypotheses derived from bounded rationality, norms, and imitation explain decisions made by public decision-makers? And if so, in which contexts?* The conditionality and context dependency of the two new institutional approaches will be explored by first deriving hypotheses based on bounded rationality, norms, and imitation and second by investigating them in different decision-making settings.

II) *Do personal values influence whether public decision-makers act according to the logic of calculus or the logic of appropriateness? And if so, how?* By examining this question, and looking deeper into the role of values, it will be possible to explore whether personal values can explain decision-making from the new institutional perspective. The ambition is to determine whether the personal values that the individuals bring into the decision-making context matter.
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter presents and discusses the research design, in light of the dissertation’s aim and research questions. The first part, however, starts where all work of science begins, implicitly or explicitly, namely with philosophy of science. I will elaborate on ontological and epistemological questions and present my view on the nature of the world and what I believe we can know about it and its objects. Others may argue that the assumptions on these matters are easily read between the lines in the texts and articles and that, since they are philosophical, they are better left for the philosophers to discuss. In contrast, I feel the need to be explicit regarding where I come from, and what knowledge this positioning generates, when conducting scientific research.

By taking a stand on ontological and epistemological issues, we open up for discussions related to the stated standpoints and can hopefully avoid misunderstandings resulting from speaking different “languages”. Further, it reveals the implausibility of conducting research free from any type of normativity. All scientists make normative philosophical assumptions regarding ontology and epistemology, which inevitably have significant impacts on the studies we perform.

The final parts of the chapter present the chosen methods, where focus is on the use of and motivations for quantitative methods and survey data to answer the research questions. The use of qualitative methods as a complement to the statistical analysis is then discussed, followed by a presentation of the empirical cases and a discussion on the particular context in which they are embedded. The chapter ends with a summarizing table presenting the articles in this dissertation.

3.1. Ontological and epistemological foundations

Every work of science is based on philosophical assumptions concerning the world and how knowledge of this world, natural as well as social, can be obtained. These assumptions are often implicit, but nonetheless significant for how scientists are oriented toward their objects of study. In the social sciences, as pointed out by Furlong and Marsh (2010), these assumptions
3.1.1. Ontology
Ontology is the study of the very nature of being and is closely associated with metaphysics (Molander, 2003). Furlong and Marsh (2010) divide ontology into two broad positions: foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. The foundationalism position includes objectivist and realist claims about the world, where the common denominator is that there exist objects with properties that are independent of who is observing or researching them. The existence, or being, of the world is independent of our knowledge and understanding of it. Different strands of foundationalism disagree on the epistemological claims of whether we can know anything about this real world, but they all agree that it exists on its own, and not just as a manifestation of our senses and interpretations.

The anti-foundationalism position challenges these claims of a world of objects existing beyond the interpretation of our understanding of them. The anti-foundationalism position does not contend that there are material objects, such as mountains or tables, but it does oppose the idea that these objects have no social role/causal power free from an agent’s, group’s or society’s constructed understanding of them (Furlong & Marsh, 2010).

Reality is seen as local and specific, and the comprehension of it varies across individuals and groups. The nature of the studied objects is not discovered but rather socially constructed, and the distinction between ontology and epistemology is blurred. As this social construction occurs, political, social, and cultural processes are shaping the way individuals construct and reflect upon the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).
3.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and the essence of knowledge (Molander, 2003). Epistemology discusses the relation between reality and knowledge of reality, between the objects of our world and the knowledge of these objects. The concept of epistemology is not the same as methodology, although they touch upon similar issues. The difference lies in that epistemology focuses on the philosophical question of how possible it is to know anything regarding the particular object studied, whereas methodology focuses on the way to study the selected object (Larsson, 2011).

Furlong and Marsh (2010) distinguish between three broad epistemological positions: positivism, realism, and interpretivism. The positivist and realist position share the same ontological position, i.e., foundationalism, while interpretivists differ by taking an anti-foundational ontological stance. **Positivism** is characterized by not only seeing the world and objects as existing independently of our knowledge of them, but also by claiming that it is possible to reach objective knowledge of these objects. It is just a matter of using valid and reliable methods. Strong emphasis lies on hypothesis testing, direct observation, and determination of causal laws and statements. The natural and social sciences are analogous and the way of conducting research should therefore coincide. The positivism research philosophy highlight that the aim of the social sciences also is to make causal statements and there is no problem in separating objective, empirical research from normative research (Furlong & Marsh, 2010).

**Realism** shares many of the positivist claims but differs on some crucial points. Both realism and positivism seek to find causal relationships and see social phenomena as explainable by scientific laws as natural scientific phenomena. Further, this shared view is based on the ontological position of foundationalism. However, realists do not agree with the positivist claim that all social phenomena, as well as the relationship between them, are possible to observe directly. There exist such things as deep structures, which are unobservable yet significant in affecting social phenomena, and a focus on only the observable will give a false picture of both the relevance of these structures and the understanding of the social world (Furlong & Marsh, 2010).

Even though social phenomena exist independently of how we understand them, our understandings and interpretations still affect the outcome of our actions related to these social phenomena. According to realists, structures are not deterministic; rather, they facilitate and constrain our actions and since we cannot know everything about the world, our
knowledge becomes based on theory. To explain relationships between social phenomena, we need to both understand and explain the world as it is as well as how we socially construct and relate to it (Furlong & Marsh, 2010).

The interpretivist position can be illustrated as the antagonist of positivism. It consists of several orientations revolving around the ontological position of anti-foundationalism, and thus is the most diverse of the three epistemological positions. The core feature, which also is the reason this position can be seen as an objection to positivism, is the view that social phenomena cannot be understood independently of how we interpret them. Our knowledge of the world is socially constructed and, therefore, the crucial task for science is to study our interpretations of the world. The natural and social sciences should be kept separated since the objective ambition of the natural sciences is seen as unattainable for social scientists. Knowledge is theoretically or discursively based and the social world can only be understood within contexts, traditions, or discourses (Furlong & Marsh, 2010).

3.1.3. Ontology and epistemology – a summary
To sum up, the ontological views of the world and its objects can be categorized into two broad positions: foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. The epistemological views on what we can learn about this world and its objects can be categorized into three broad positions: positivism, realism, and interpretivism. These positions are closely linked to methodology and the choice of methods for conducting research.

Because of the focus on hypothesis testing, establishing causal laws, and generalizability, positivism favors the use of quantitative methods when conducting social research. Realism partly agrees on this usage of quantitative methods but is also prone to use qualitative methods for understanding social structures that are not directly observable. Interpretivism, on the other hand, tends to see quantitative methods as blunt instruments that can produce misleading data and instead favors qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups (Furlong & Marsh, 2010). The connection between ontology, epistemology, and methodology is shown in Table 3 below.
TABLE 3. The connection between ontology, epistemology, and methodology.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Foundationalism</th>
<th>Anti-foundationalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td>Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Quantitatively focused</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² According to Furlong and Marsh (2010)

3.1.4. My position on the philosophy of science

What then is my humble position regarding the nature of the world and how we can know anything about it? Epistemologically, it is reasonable to guess that I am not a strict positivist, since I am writing a dissertation on institutions that are clearly socially constructed and difficult (if at all possible) to directly observe (see Schmidt, 2010).

Ontologically, both realist and interpretivist positions are prevalent in the new institutional scientific literature (see, e.g., North, 1990; Schmidt, 2010; Peters, 2012). I lean more toward foundationalism, suggesting that a world exists independent of our understanding of it and its objects. However, especially when focusing on institutions as I conceptualize them, the existence of institutions is seemingly dependent on us socially constructing them. The important question is then whether we can, as proposed by Immanuel Kant (see Molander, 2003), study social constructions objectively and if the perception of socially constructed entities can be explained by scientific laws and generalizations. Drawing on this question, institutional scholars can thus epistemologically be divided into realists and interpretivists.

In terms of epistemology, I position myself more toward a realist view, in that I see structures and institutions not as deterministic but as facilitating and constraining our actions. I do think it is possible to say something about how institutions affect us and the effects we have on them, free from my understanding of them. Thus, I lean more toward the realist dimension while still acknowledging that the issue is complicated and that scientific methods may be criticized as being dependent on whoever conducts the research.
In my research, I derive and explore hypotheses derived from bounded rationality, norms, and imitation in my search for contexts where some of them are more prevalent than others (as more than a product of my own choices and conceptualizations). An interpretivist position would have other implications for the scope of the doctoral dissertation and for the choice of data collection methods, with a more qualitative methodological focus on the social construction of institutions. I do not, in any way, oppose such an approach, but hope to show here with my positioning why I am conducting my research the way I do.

3.2. Choice of data collection methods – mainly quantitative but with qualitative elements

The realist epistemological approach opens up for the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative studies have the benefit of reaching many units of analysis and have the strength of statistical generalization. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, are better at dealing with complex social phenomena and issues but suffer from a lack of statistical generalizability and are harder to use for analysis of large samples (due to the massive amount of data it would produce; see Yin, 2014).

What method is suitable for exploring what decision-making logics are applied by public decision-makers and how this varies with decision-making context and personal values? There are benefits of using quantitative methods. There are sophisticated quantitative tools that can compare data between groups, within groups, for correlations as well as causality (see Hair et al., 2008). This allows for an understanding of to what extent, as well as inferring reasons why, there is a difference between certain contexts. Further, the statistical tools also provide probability measures for this understanding. This is one of the reasons quantitative methods are the primary methods used in my research (see Halperin & Heath, 2012).

The conditionality of new institutional ideas and theories were discussed in the theory section. Some ideas and theories are seen as more prevalent than others in a given context (see, e.g., Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2002). However, empirical explorations of this notion are scarce and studies examining rivaling explanations lacking. Because of this scarcity, large samples and statistical analysis of quantitative data provide a suitable springboard for trying to grasp this and get an initial impression of the prevalence of RCI and SI ideas in different contexts.
3.2.1. Surveys

The quantitative analyses are based on material from mailed surveys and questions where the respondents report decision-making. A survey method combine the old, traditional method of obtaining information by asking questions with procedures of having a sample of people represent a larger population. Combined with statistical analysis, these types of surveys provide empirical foundations for theory testing and thus, generate more generalizable understandings than many other methods, such as qualitative interviews (Halperin & Heath, 2012).

There are, however, aspects of survey methods that can be seen as problematic and important to highlight. The response rate is one such issue. Mailed surveys tend to have a rather low response rate, which endangers the generalizability of the findings (see Johnson & Reynolds, 2015). Compared with interviews, mailed surveys cannot ask for clarifications or follow-up questions, which sometimes are beneficial for ensuring correct interpretations. Mailed surveys contain merely what is written in them, which makes it important to carefully construct the questions. One of the more prominent hazards with surveys is that the reported answers may misrepresent the behavior and attitudes of the respondents (Halperin & Heath, 2012).

This latter aspect is important to discuss further, since I rely on self-reports of decision-making behavior and not direct observations of the same behavior. The validity of self-reported behavior in surveys has indeed been questioned. Behaviors that are socially desirable as well as behaviors that are socially undesirable tend to imply self-report biases. There are ways to overcome these biases, however, for example by offering anonymity, which has been proven to increase the correlations between reported and performed behavior (see Halperin & Heath, 2012).

Yet, the most important point is that correlations between reported and performed behavior have generally been found to be significant, as long as the behavior in question is not too unspecified or occurred too far back in time for the respondents to recall correctly (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). It is important to take this correlation into account when constructing research questions and thus formulate questions related more to specific behavior and not asking respondents to recall events from a long time ago. For example, self-reported decisions on which party voters have voted for or intend to vote for are generally valid (see Granberg & Holmberg, 1991; Andersson & Granberg, 1997; Blumenstiel & Plischke, 2015). There are also other ways to tackle the potential disadvantages, such as low response rates, of surveys. For the two
surveys used in the four articles of this dissertation, several reminders were sent to the respondents and as a result the response rate in both cases exceeded 50 percent (for more information about the response rates, see the articles).

Surveys are, at times, even preferred over direct observation in studies of decision-making behavior, as surveys can reach more respondents and the external validity is much stronger. Direct observation can also be problematic in terms of getting access to the setting. Further, whether a particular behavior has been performed or not can be difficult to assess with direct observation (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) exemplify this problem by illustrating direct observation at the opera. We can observe that people are there, but we do not really know if they have been listening. While direct observations of outcomes of decision-making are possible, observation of the process of decision-making is not.

According to Bryman (2002), surveys are preferred over qualitative interviews for several reasons. First, there is a lower likelihood of the interviewer influencing the respondent, i.e., the interviewer effect. Moreover, surveys are more adaptable to the needs of the respondents, for example since they can be answered whenever the respondents feel they have the time and need to do so. They also reduce the need for administration. Interviews need to be transcribed and are harder to conduct with a large sample, which is another reason surveys are the main method used for the four research articles in my dissertation.

Although my dissertation primarily relies on quantitative methods, qualitative methods are used in one article (see below). When answering complex research questions, a mixed methods design can provide a stronger array of evidence than merely relying on quantitative data. One advantage of using mixed methods is that you have more than one method for measuring something, which enables you to increase the reliability of your study (see Yin, 2014).

3.2.2. Qualitative interviews
The main qualitative method used in this dissertation is interviews. The purpose of the interview is to acquire information about the respondent’s views and perceptions through conversation and by asking questions. The interview is a particularly useful tool for capturing the respondent’s
experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Dalen, 2007). Other strengths of using qualitative interviews are that they are open for unexpected answers and provide an understanding of respondents’ perceptions of their social world. The method is also beneficial when exploring new fields and concepts, as well as for theory development (Esaiasson et al., 2012).

Compared with surveys, there are several upsides of using interviews (Bryman, 2002). First, there is room for the interviewer to assist the respondents with clarifications if they do not understand the questions. There is also room for follow-up questions and the interviewer can verify the interpretation of the answers with the respondents. Moreover, interviews allow for more open questions where the respondents themselves can formulate and elaborate on the answers they provide, and they usually have better response rates than surveys and can go deeper into the reasoning behind the answers.

Bryman (2002) also points at pros and cons of performing interviews either in person or by telephone. Interviewing in person allows for non-verbal communication, such as face expressions, nods, etc. Telephone interviews lack this aspect and risk causing a social distance between the interviewer and the respondents and thus also miscommunication. On the other hand, because of this distance, telephone interviews are not as prone to the interviewer effect described above and are also more time- and resource efficient. In this dissertation, I have used telephone interviews because of the reasons mentioned above.

Qualitative interviews can both deepen and contrast the findings of the quantitative methods in my study of decision-making logics among public decision-makers. This method is especially good as a complement to the statistical findings when attempting to understand how these individuals impose meaning on their social surrounding (a key theoretical component found in theories belonging to the sociological new institutional approach; see, e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Scott, 2008). Hence, interviews are used to give more depth to, and complement, the statistical analyses of the survey data.

3.2.3. Selection of cases and units of analysis
Following Yin (2014), the research questions should guide the selection of case(s) and unit(s) of analysis. The cases of this dissertation represent two different contexts for decision-making in the same national setting:
parliaments and collaborative management arenas in Sweden. These two cases were chosen for a couple of reasons. First, parliaments and collaborative management are very different forms of decision-making arenas. Parliaments are traditional decision-making bodies, whereas collaborative management, i.e., an emerging model for public decision-making where both public and private actors take part in the policy process, is characterized by nested structures of actors and high levels of pluralism, and is also subject to other governing challenges than parliaments (see, e.g., Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Lubell, 2004; Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004; Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Bryson, Crosby, & Middleton Stone, 2006).

Moreover, there is a difference in actor composition between the two contexts: one has a homogeneous (parliaments) and one has a heterogeneous (collaborative management) set of actors. By keeping both contexts in the same national setting, Sweden, it is also easier to ensure that the results do not stem from competing explanations not controlled for, such as political culture (see Hague & Harrop, 2010) or differences in party systems (see Dallas, 2008).

A random sample of units of analysis is often argued as preferable when conducting social scientific research (Esaiasson et al., 2012; Halperin & Heath, 2012). However, strategic and even purposive sampling may be preferable to random sampling on certain occasions due to the importance of having the appropriate type of population that defines the appropriate set of entities from which the research sample may be drawn (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014). The selection of units of analysis for this dissertation is based on the following criteria: a) the selected individuals have to have some degree of decision-making power, b) the selected individuals must be part of decision-making in one of the two above-mentioned cases for public decision-making, and c) the selected individuals have to be affected by the same kind of rule, practice, or convention, i.e. institution. The last criterion is included to enable an empirical analysis of how decision-makers relate to the same institution in different contexts.

The units of analysis for the cases in this dissertation are Swedish politicians in local parliaments and members of Swedish wildlife conservation committees (WCCs), which consist of both politicians and interest organization representatives who act as public officials. More precisely, WCCs consist of the respective county governor (who sits as chairperson), five politicians, one person representing the police, and representatives from interest organizations for each of the following interests: nature conservation,
outdoor recreation, agriculture, local trade and industry, commercial fishing, hunting, seasonal foraging, reindeer owners, one representative elected by the Sami parliament and forestry. WCC members are appointed by the respective county administrative board based on suggestions from the interest organizations and the regional council (see SFS 2009:1474; SOU 2012:22).

The criteria for selection of units of analysis (described above) are chosen for a couple of reasons. First, both politicians in local parliaments and members of the WCCs have decision-making powers. The members of the Swedish WCCs have decision-making power over guidelines for wildlife management and hunting, carnivore management plans, and suggested minimum levels of certain large carnivores, such as bear and lynx rejuvenation (see Bill 2012/13:191).

Second, the chosen units of analysis work within the two contexts for public decision-making chosen as cases. Third, both the elected politicians at the local level and the WCC members are affected by a certain institution, namely the informal rule of following party or organizational standpoint when making decisions, i.e., the rule of representation. Regarding the local politicians, this is reflected by the strong party principle in Sweden (see Esaiasson & Holmberg, 1996; Skoog, 2011). The main representative principle in Sweden among politicians is to follow the will of the party, rather than the will of voters or one’s personal opinion, and this institutional pressure is rather strong compared with other countries (ibid.).

The organizational representatives in the WCCs also emphasize that their main task is to act in line with the view of the organizations they represent (see Duit & Löf, 2012) and that they are expected to follow these views when making decisions. The informal rule (i.e., the institution about representation) is thus the same for all actors in both cases.

Even though the selected actors share this informal rule, parliaments and collaborative management arenas differ on a key feature, which further justifies the use of these particular individuals as units of analysis. Members of local parliaments, which are long established entities in Sweden, earn their seats through elections and represent political parties. The composition of actors in the WCCs, on the other hand, is rather heterogeneous with both politicians and interest organization representatives, as well as representatives from the police and the county administration. Finally, the WCCs are a relatively new type of entity, established in 2010 (Bill 2012/13:191). Table 4 on the next page gives a summary of the selected cases, primary units of analysis, and composition of actors for the four research articles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article (context)</th>
<th>Case study (field)</th>
<th>Composition Method</th>
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**TABLE 4. Summary of selected cases with units of analysis, institutions, composition of actors, and methods.**
3.3. Presentation of the papers

The first article, *Local Political Decision-making – A Case of Rationality or Appropriateness?*, explores two hypotheses on decisions-making derived from bounded rationality (RI) and norms (SI in the form of the logic of appropriateness) in the context of Swedish local parliaments. Bounded rationality and norms were chosen because they are often framed as rivaling explanations of how decisions are made in new institutionalism (see March & Olsen, 1989). The empirical analysis was framed using two theoretical concepts describing different representation principles, namely the party principle and the trustee principle. The party principle is related to a representation style where the politician is primarily loyal to the party, rather than to the voters or their own beliefs. The trustee principle instead relates to the politician as a trusted elected representative capable of making the right decisions based on her/his own beliefs rather than party loyalty. The party principle has been the dominating representation style when politicians make decisions in Sweden.

The study is conducted among local politicians in Sweden, and their decision-making on two policy issues differing in political relevance is explored in a large-N survey. The two issues studied are tax level and an organizational change in the municipal administration. The reason for choosing these two policy issues is that they vary in the degree of how they are regulated by the political parties. Tax level is considered a crucial issue, and as such the pressure on the politician to conform to the party standpoint is higher compared with the issue of organizational change, an issue not as prioritized by the political parties and not as consistent in terms of the position the parties hold on the issue. Consequently, the pressure to conform to party standpoint is higher when deciding on tax level than on the organizational change in the municipal administration.

The questionnaire asked if the politicians followed the party line (the party principle) or their own beliefs (the trustee principle) when deciding on these issues at times when their personal view conflicted with that of the party. The hypotheses derived from bounded rationality and logic of appropriateness predict differences between the two policy issues regarding how the politicians claim to make decisions. Due to the higher cost of deviating from the party principle when deciding on tax levels, the bounded rationality hypothesis predicts that the politicians are more inclined to follow the party principle when deciding on this issue than when deciding on an organizational change.
Thus, decision-makers will alternate between the two representation principles depending on the cost of diverging from the party standpoint. In contrast, the hypothesis derived from the logic of appropriateness predicts that there is no significant difference between how politicians make decisions on the two issues. More specifically, the political representatives are expected to follow the party principle when deciding on both issues, since doing so is in the role of Swedish politicians and the most appropriate way to act. Statistical variance analysis was used to evaluate the survey responses in relation to the predictions of the hypotheses.

The second article, Personal preferences or organizational standpoint? Exploring how participants in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives, also explores hypotheses for decision-making derived from bounded rationality and the logic of appropriateness. This time the two decision-making logics are explored in the context of collaborative management and by investigating decision-making in regional wildlife conservation committees in Sweden (WCCs). The WCCs were introduced in 2010 as a regional reform to resolve conflicts regarding, and increase the legitimacy of, carnivore policies.

As in the first article, we were interested in examining to what extent, and in what situations, the members follow personal preference or organizational standpoint when they differ, as well as what logic (bounded rationality or logic of appropriateness) guides their behavior. We also set out to explore whether there is a difference in how the two major groups in the WCCs, i.e., the political party representatives and the interest organization representatives, make decisions. The following research questions were asked in the paper: a) Do WCC members follow their personal preference or the organizational standpoint in cases of divergence between the two? b) Do WCC members decide differently when dealing with contested and non-contested policy issues? c) Is there a difference between political party and interest organization representatives (in regard to questions [a] and [b])?

The first part of the paper outlines what policy issues on the WCCs agenda could be considered contested and non-contested. This was done through a document analysis of WCC meeting minutes defining issues where disagreements had and had not been reported. The policy issue of carnivore rejuvenation was found to be the most contested issue, and zones for carnivore hunting the least contested issue (since there was no sign of conflict among the members on zoning). A survey was then constructed and sent to the WCC members asking whether they follow personal preference or
party/organizational standpoint (in cases of a conflict between the two) when making decisions on these issues.

The bounded rationality hypothesis predicts following party or organizational standpoint more when deciding on the contested issue (carnivore rejuvenation) than on the non-contested issue (zones for predatory hunting). The logic of appropriateness hypothesis predicts that the WCC members follow party or organizational standpoint on both issues, since this is in line with their role as representatives for their political party or organization. The data was split into the two main groups of the WCCs, and statistical variance analysis was used to evaluate the survey answers in relation to the predictions. Moreover, telephone interviews were conducted to deepen and complete the information from the statistical analysis.

The third article, When do politicians follow good examples? – Imitation and decision-making at the local level, once again turns the scope toward the local parliamentary context. This time, hypotheses derived from the SI idea of imitation are explored in relation to parliamentary decision-making. Imitation has been studied at the municipal level (see Villadsen, Hansen, & Mols, 2010). Once again, decision-making on two different policy issues, i.e., tax levels and an organizational change in the municipal administration, is compared and the respondents were asked whether they look at successful examples in other municipalities (imitate) or rely on the municipality to find its own solution when making decisions on these issues.

Based on SI theory, the hypothesis is that the politicians will imitate successful examples in other municipalities more when making decisions on an issue surrounded by high uncertainty than when making decisions on issues with low uncertainty. Further hypotheses, on what factors matter for imitation, were also developed from SI theory. Earlier research has shown that holding certain political positions, e.g., being a mayor, being a professional politician, or belonging to a certain party, affects the degree of imitation. These additional aspects are also explored in the paper.

A survey was sent to all politicians in local parliaments in Sweden. The responses were analyzed through statistical variance analysis to explore the presence of imitation in relation to the studied policy issues. To evaluate the effect of the additional factors (party affiliation, position as mayor, and being a professional politician) on imitation, a multiple regression analysis was performed, controlling for age, gender, and education.

Finally, the fourth article, The effect of values on decision-making logics: a case of natural resource governance, explores the role of personal values in decision-
making and, again, we turn to collaborative management arenas in the form of Swedish WCCs. The article explores two decision-making logics derived from bounded rationality and the logic of appropriateness. While Articles 1–3 acknowledge under which circumstances the two logics appear, the underlying reasons for their application remain understudied. By exploring how personal values affect how actors apply either the logic of calculus or the logic of appropriateness, the fourth article sets out to fill this gap. Furthermore, the article explores whether what the individuals brings with them into the institutional context, in this case their personal values, affects how they make decisions. Earlier research has shown that the value dimension of conservation has been positively related to rule compliance, which is tested in the empirical analysis.

The article makes use of a survey sent out to all members of the Swedish WCCs. Survey questions were constructed based on Schwartz’s (2010) value theory and used to tap the decision-makers’ personal values. A binary dependent variable was created based on the two decision-making logics. The dependent variable was predicted from the independent variables of personal values, as well as the control values of representation, year of birth, gender, and education. A logistic regression was performed to achieve the aim and answer the paper’s research questions. The chapter that follows presents the results of the four research articles in relation to the aim and research questions of the dissertation.
4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the four articles are presented and related to the two research questions. The results are then discussed in relation to the aim of the dissertation and, finally, implications for further research are suggested.

4.1. The first research question

Research question I: Do hypotheses derived from bounded rationality, norms, and imitation explain decisions made by public decision-makers? And if so, in which contexts?

I study two contexts in my dissertation: parliaments, in the form of Swedish local parliaments, and collaborative management, in the form of Swedish wildlife conservation committees. Hypotheses derived from the RCI idea of bounded rationality and the SI idea of norms, i.e. the logic of appropriateness, and imitation have been empirically examined.

4.1.1. Bounded rationality and imitation in local parliaments

In the parliamentary context, the results show that the politicians altered their decision-making between following the party standpoint and following their own standpoint depending on the level of pressure and sanctions associated with the policy issue. In the more sanctioned policy issue, tax-levels, politicians reported that they follow the party standpoint rather than their own preferences (when the two views diverge). They also reported that they do so to a significantly higher degree than when deciding on the policy characterized by a lower level of contestation, i.e., an organizational change in the municipal administration. This result implies a calculated behavior in line with the RCI idea of bounded rationality. The hypothesis derived from the logic of appropriateness, that the politicians should follow the party principle when deciding on both policy issues and to the same extent, did not find support in the empirical analysis.

Rational explanations have been frequently applied to parliamentary decision-making in previous research (see, e.g., Kiewet & McCubbins, 1991; Sieberer, Müller, & Heller, 2011). The results from Article 1 concur with
previous applications, since bounded rationality seems prevalent in the decisions made by the public decision-makers under these conditions. The results also strengthen the claim that Swedish politicians generally follow the party principle, in line with the rule of representation (see Skoog, 2011), but to varying degrees depending on the policy issue being decided on.

However, it seems as if bounded rationality is not the only new institutionalism-oriented idea on how institutions affect public decision-makers that is prevalent in this context. The SI idea of imitation was also present in the empirical study presented in Article 3, and particularly so in relation to decisions on issues surrounded by high degrees of uncertainty. The local politicians reported that they imitate successful examples in other municipalities to a higher degree when deciding on the issue of organizational change in the municipal administration (an issue characterized by more uncertainty due to weaker party positions) than when deciding on tax levels (characterized by a low degree of uncertainty).

These results indicate that the imitation prediction derived from the SI is an essential and valid explanation under these conditions. Furthermore, the results show that two factors, i.e., being a professional politician (or not) and party affiliation, significantly affected the degree of imitation in the decision-making. Seemingly, imitation does occur and does influence public decision-making. Thus, it is an important factor for understanding why local politicians in Sweden make the decisions they make.

4.1.2. The role of norms in the wildlife conservation committees
Turning the attention to the other context studied in the dissertation, collaborative management in the form of the Swedish WCCs, the overall results in Article 2 point in a different direction than those in Article 1 and the parliamentary context. The analysis shows an interesting pattern between the two groups of actors (i.e., political and organizational representatives). Neither the hypothesis on bounded rationality nor the one on norms found support among the political representatives. Among the interest organization representatives, however, the hypotheses derived from the SI idea of norms could not be falsified. Combined with the results from the conducted interviews, it was concluded that the interest organization representatives indeed seem to act according to the logic of appropriateness when making decisions in this context.
The organizational representatives were more inclined to follow the organizational standpoint than their own preferences (in cases of disagreements between the two) regardless of what policy issue was on the agenda. Results from the interviews show how they perceive their role as WCC members. One interesting empirical finding from the qualitative data is that the politicians in the WCCs, despite the strong party principle in Sweden, varied in how they viewed their representation in the collaborative arena. Some emphasized the ties to the party whereas others highlighted their role as representatives of the citizens in the region. If parliaments are more of a classic case of rational explanations, the collaborative management arena is not, and this was also shown in the results of the study, as they failed to support the RCI hypothesis and instead supporting the SI ideas derived from norms on how institutions affect public decision-makers.

4.1.3. Answer to the first research question
To answer the research question more explicitly: Do hypotheses derived from bounded rationality, norms, and imitation explain decisions made by public decision-makers? Yes, they all do. In which contexts, then? Bounded rationality and imitation seem to be prevalent when elected politicians make decisions in the parliamentary context, whereas this rationality of political representatives was not found in the collaborative decision-making arena. Bounded rationality found no support in the collaborative management context. Instead, decision-making of the organizational representatives was explained from the perspective of norms, following the logic of appropriateness.

4.2. Answer to the second research question
Research question II: Do personal values influence whether public decision-makers act according to the logic of calculus or the logic of appropriateness? And if so, how?
Returning to the context of collaborative management in the Swedish WCCs in the fourth article, the exploration went one step further to see whether the personal values held by decision-makers could influence the RCI and SI logics on how institutions affect the behavior and decisions of public decision-makers. The empirical study indicates that values, often argued to be significant for guiding choices (see Schwartz, 1992; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010),
are prevalent in explaining the presence of the two decision-making logics scrutinized in Articles 1, 2, and 3.

The results show that the specific value dimension of self-enhancement (values connected to wealth, success, and power) versus self-transcendence (values connected to universalism and the welfare of others) affected the logic of decision-making. The more self-enhanced the actor, the more likely the actor is to act according to the logic of appropriateness when deciding on issues in the WCCs. This finding is a bit surprising, since earlier research emphasizes that the value dimension of conservation, rather than self-enhancement, is positively related to rule compliance. In contrast, conservation was not found to be related to decision-making logic in my analysis.

The perhaps most interesting result in Article 4 is that personal values were found to influence the decision-making logic derived from the logic of appropriateness, rather than the logic derived from bounded rationality. According to March and Olsen (1989), values and preferences are more connected to the rational logic than to the logic of appropriateness. However, the results of Article 4 indicate that in the case of the WCCs the opposite is more likely. There is a stronger link between personal values and the likelihood of applying the logic of appropriateness for respondents who score high on the personal value of self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is thus a value that helps explain why public decision-makers do what they perceive is the most appropriate thing to do in the collaborative management case.

If we connect this finding to the theoretical reasoning regarding whether the preferences and the personal values that public decision-makers bring with them into the context matter, the results become even more interesting. As mentioned in Chapter 2, personal values can be expected to have a bigger effect on the likelihood of applying the RCI decision-making logic than the logic of appropriateness, but instead the opposite was found in the results. The concept and idea of values also seems connected to SI and future studies should delve deeper into the conditionality of this connection.

To answer the research question more explicitly: Yes, personal values influence decision-making logic. Further, the personal value of self-enhancement promotes the application of a logic of appropriateness among the public decision-makers.
4.3. Methodological issues in regard to my studies

Methodologically, the survey method used for the purpose of this dissertation has been good for the external validity of the studies, by capturing a majority of the respondents and by providing the possibility to perform statistical analysis (statistical t-tests and regression analyses). The response rates were satisfactory (for the local politicians, reaching almost 90 percent). Of course, the internal validity suffers with the survey and quantitative method since it is harder to control that the factors investigated are the factors at work. This could be improved in future research by conducting studies with an experimental design. The mixed methods approach used in Article 2 is another way improve the internal validity, and further studies would benefit from making use of this methodology, perhaps by conducting more in-depth case studies.

A methodological issue that needs to be highlighted is the use of data not entirely and purposely collected and designed to answer my research questions alone. The survey questions used in all my articles were part of larger surveys, conducted together with several other researchers and in two different research projects. The main benefits of this include pooling of resources and the ability to collect comprehensive data and work together to increase response rates.

However, it should also be pointed out that large, comprehensive surveys may lead to respondent fatigue, which in turn may result in more accurate and thought-through answers to the questions early in the questionnaire and less focused, or even a loss of, answers to questions asked toward the end. The questions used for my studies were all placed in the second half of the surveys. This issue is something to consider for future projects, since more is not always better. The response rates for the studies were still good, especially for the local politicians, but a more focused approach could possibly have increased the response rates for the WCC respondents.

The analysis of missing respondents is also important to address. When analyzing the missing survey responses, no pattern was found for the political respondents. This is probably explained by that fact that the response rate was so high for this group and that the missing answers can be attributed to stochastic reasons.

The WCC members, however, showed some interesting trends in missing responses. Respondents belonging to most of the represented interests had a response rate of about 60 percent, and hunters and nature conservation representatives had particularly high response rates. Respondents representing
reindeer owners, fishery, and tourism, on the other hand, differed in that they had lower response rates than the other interest representatives. Most of the studied WCCs had similar response rates (roughly 50–60 percent), with Norrbotten standing out with a particularly high figure (only one missing response). Three WCCs, namely those in Värmland, Västmanland, and Östergötland, had lower response rates (only about 40 percent).

### 4.4. Implications of the results

The aim of this dissertation was to explore what decision-making logics – differing in terms of how institutions influence individuals – are applied by public decision-makers and how this varies with decision-making context and personal values. Theoretically, the results presented above indicate that the ambition put forth by this aim does have some bearing. By exploring the RCI and SI ideas in two different contexts, a context sensitivity and conditionality of these ideas are seemingly evident. Personal values also affect how these decision-making logics are applied; in particular values of self-enhancement promote decision-making in line with the logic of appropriateness.

To put it straight, the theoretical explanations for how public decision-makers relate to and are affected by institutions seem to depend on the context in which they make their decisions, and thus, future theoretical modeling would benefit from taking this notion into consideration. I am aware of the fact that many RCI and SI ideas were not explored in my articles, such as the role of sense-making (see Weick, 1995) and cognition (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Eysenck, 2001), which opens up for further research. Perhaps decision-making in accordance with these theoretical ideas could be found in the two studied contexts and hence deepen the understanding of them. Furthermore, it would be interesting to include a broader set of SI assumptions in studies in the same national environment, i.e., Sweden, but also to design comparative studies of different countries. Such studies could validate or challenge the results of my studies, as well as broaden them to include other institutions, explanations, and empirical contexts.

The inclusion and exploration of personal values for understanding RCI and SI ideas and decision-making logics is another theoretical contribution of this dissertation. Personal values do play a role for the decision-making, but further examinations of how, and to what extent, are needed to gain a fuller understanding of the complexity of the interaction between institutions and public decision-makers.
It seemingly matters what the public decision-maker brings into the institutional context and the perhaps most interesting finding in my dissertation is that it matters more for the approach least focused on, namely SI. Institutions shape individual perceptions, but the personal values also matter for decision-making in an institutional context, and it is surprising that it does for the likelihood of applying the logic of appropriateness among the public decision-makers. Of course, the findings should be interpreted with caution, since they are based on a single-case study, but the results imply that this link indeed needs to be studied further. Will the link between values and the logic of appropriateness remain under other circumstances and other conditions?

It is also interesting that a surprising personal value, self-enhancement, mattered for the decision-making, while the value emphasized in earlier research on rule compliance, i.e. conservation, did not. The question is why this is. Why would public decision-makers who score high on self-enhancement act more in line with the logic of appropriateness when making decisions? Perhaps it is because doing what is appropriate enables career advancement due to being loyal to the party or organization, which may be connected to values such as achievement and power. This is just a hypothesis I derive from the results, but it seems worth looking deeper into in further research.

Regarding the empirical contexts, the results suggest that there is a difference in how individuals make decisions in relation to institutions and that the specific contexts for public decision-making seem to have significant impacts on this relation. Based on these results, we can now try to predict the decision-making on similar issues in these contexts. The ways public decision-makers are affected by the institution of representation in a local parliament differ from how public decision-makers are affected in a collaborative management arena, and thus it is not reasonable to expect similar outcomes.

Further, my studies imply that although there are some general patterns in the results, there is variation across individuals. The institutions affect the public decision-makers differently and I hope I have shown that scholars need to have this in mind when conducting research. Not all individuals relate to the same institution in the same way, which has been emphasized earlier by for example Schmidt (2010) and Lowndes and Roberts (2013), and further exploration of this individual variation would benefit the understanding of institutional phenomena.
Regarding the local parliaments, as pointed out in Article 1, the results of this dissertation largely confirm previous research. My study confirms that the party principle is the dominant representation style of Swedish politicians and that RCI, i.e. calculative, explanations indeed are valid for the understanding of their decision-making. Since both the bounded rationality and the imitation hypotheses found support in this context, the conditional aspects of new institutionalism raised by Lowndes and Roberts (2013) among others seem prevalent under these circumstances.

The failure to find support for the RCI explanation in the collaborative management context again highlights the role of the rule of representation, i.e., the institution in focus for my analysis. In this arena, the politicians are appointed in a different way than those in local parliaments, and this difference in representation may produce different decision-making. The party principle is still strong in Sweden, but the ability for both the political parties and the voters to control how the politicians in the WCCs act and evaluate this in regard to policy stances is not as easy as it is in local parliaments. Also, not all political parties value wildlife policies as high as for example tax policies, and this may also contribute to the explanation of the outcome. It is significant to point out that more research on these new collaborative arenas is indeed needed.

I have not been able to cover the full complexity of local parliaments or collaborative management in the WCCs in my studies. Other policy issues, as well as other institutions and in other countries, need to be scrutinized to further strengthen the generalizability of my results. The results from my articles can be used as stepping stones for deeper exploration.

The statistical analyses of survey data used in my articles were suitable for mapping out the larger trends in the material. As previously stated, the literature and earlier research provide good insight into when and in which contexts certain theories and assumptions under the new institutionalism umbrella are more preferable than others. However, studies deriving and testing hypotheses for how these ideas actually perform are not as prevalent and one of the main contributions of my dissertation.

One recurring conclusion in my articles is that although the statistical analyses and survey method give important insights, there is a need to delve deeper into both the cases and the implications of the results. Many quandaries that the statistical data simply have problems providing much insight about arise. One is the role of party culture, which is suggested for further research in Articles 1 and 3. There is a need for further exploration, and even though
combining methods implies a risk of measurement errors (if they fail to measure the same phenomenon), the benefits are more profitable.

Knowledge of the thoughts, perception and feelings of the respondents is better achieved via qualitative interviews and extensive qualitative document analyses than through statistical analyses. Using a mixed methods approach to studying decision-making seems promising (see, e.g., Schulenberg, 2007), and I do believe it is important to use this approach when exploring the results from my articles further. The use of surveys and statistical analysis of the data is not problem-free, and the combination with other methods to acquire a better understanding of what is at work is thus suggested for the future.

However, the operationalizing of RCI and SI decision-making logics using survey questions and statistical variance analysis, presented in the four articles of this dissertation, still shows how RCI and SI hypotheses can be examined in certain empirical contexts. Operationalizing and exploring both rivaling and complementary new institutional explanations for how individuals relate to, and are affected by, institutions are rare but needed for theory development within the field. I hope to have contributed to a step in this direction.

Further, operationalizing the effect of institutions at the individual level is another methodological contribution of this dissertation. As Peters (2012) emphasizes, institutions need to affect the behavior of individuals, such as public decision-makers, and measuring this impact at the individual level is rare in new institutionalism (as also pointed out by Villadsen, Hansen, & Mols, 2010). I acknowledge that this has by far been the toughest challenge. At the same time, I do believe that my attempt to capture this relationship is a primary, although humble, contribution of my dissertation. It is clear that a lot more needs to be done on this subject. I have contributed by taking a small step toward finding ways to explore the validity of these new institutional ideas and how their strengths may vary depending on context and values – a task that is important to the further development of both new institutional theories and the empirical puzzles they are applied to.
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Local Political Decision-Making: A Case of Rationality or Appropriateness?

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ABSTRACT The party and trustee principles are two representational styles used to describe how politicians make decisions. Swedish politicians have historically relied more on the party principle than the trustee principle. This article studies the decision-making practices of local Swedish politicians by exploring to what extent they rely on these principles when making decisions on two issues that diverge in political dignity: tax level and organisational change in the municipal administration. The study draws on new institutional theory, in which theories from rational choice and sociological institutionalism were used for modelling and performing a large study. The results indicate that, although Swedish politicians still rely on the party principle when making decisions, there is a significant difference as to what extent they do so in regard to the two policy issues. The trustee principle is more frequently used when deciding on organisational change than on tax levels. This result is valid for all Swedish parties, except for a relatively new political party at the extreme right of the ideological spectrum. Future research of the two decision-making principles in relation to other policy issues, as well as research that delves deeper into the deviant results of the different political parties, is encouraged.

KEY WORDS: Party principle, trustee principle, decision-making, new institutionalism

Introduction
Who do elected politicians follow when making political decisions – the party or their own preferences? The answer to this question varies between countries and decision-making institutions and sometimes also between policy issues. When it comes to Sweden, politicians have been prone to follow the party principle in parliamentary voting, rather than the trustee principle (Esiassion and Holmberg 1996; Mattson 2005).

The party principle is related to a representation style in which the elected politicians’ loyalty is primarily to the party he or she represents, rather than to the voters or their own beliefs. Following the party principle thus indicates that the politician follows the party standpoint when making decisions regarding different
policy issues. The trustee principle, on the other hand, is related to a representational style in which the politician is seen as a trusted elected capable of making the right decisions according to own personal beliefs and preferences (Bäck, 2000).

Institutional changes in the Swedish system may suggest a weakened loyalty to the party, but the strength of the party principle in Sweden remains (Mattson 2005). For example, it has been argued that the increase in personal voting would decrease the loyalty to the party when making decisions (see Skoog 2011), but previous research shows that is not the case (see Nielsen 2007). On the contrary, the party cohesion in decision-making in Sweden has increased. A significant factor that has been highlighted to explain this culture is the collective benefit of portraying the picture of a cohesive party to the voters. A unified party, with consistent voting in line with the party standpoint, offers transparency for the voters by providing them with information on how the party and its members of parliament (MPs) act if elected. Party cohesion, rather than fragmentation, increases an individual MP to remain in parliament (Mattson 2005).

There is, however, significant variation in how and when an MP follows the party and trustee principles. First, there is a difference among the Swedish parties in which MPs in parties to the left (the Left Party and the Social Democratic Party) and the Conservative Party tend to follow the party principle more than MPs in other political parties (Esiassion and Holmberg 1996), which might be explained by differences in party cultures (see Barrling-Hermansson 2004). Second, Swedish politicians tend to rely on the party principle more than the trustee principle in situations related to crucial policy issues, such as taxation, and especially so on the local level (Karlsson 2011; Bäck and Larsson 2008).

Empirical studies on voting behaviour reveal that Swedish politicians primarily make decisions in line with the party standpoint rather than the trustee principle (Karlsson and Gilljam 2014a). Even so, when asked about their decision-making, Swedish politicians, at the local level, refer to both principles. There is thus a discrepancy between how the politicians state that they want to conduct their political work and how they actually do. To understand this paradox, one must explore, explain and compare the compliance to the party and trustee principles further. In particular, one needs to examine how the party and trustee principles play out in different decision-making contexts regarding different policy issues.

New institutional theories have proven to successfully explain political decision-making (see e.g. Kiewet and McCubbins 1991; Lewis 2005; Pollack 2007), and some of these can be connected to the party and trustee principles in their explanations (see e.g. Karlsson 2012).

Sociological institutional theories suggest that individuals, such as politicians, act in accordance with what is appropriate in their roles as decision makers rather than their own personal beliefs (see March and Olsen 1984, 1989). Such explanations can, at least in the Swedish case, be linked to the party principle. Decision-making is explained as a product of politicians doing what they consider as appropriate; that is, to do as the party says.
Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI), on the other hand, perceives individuals as rational decision makers who act according to their own preferences when making these decisions, except when the sanctions for doing so are too high (see e.g. North 1990; Hindmoor 2006). The perspective can thus be linked to the trustee principle and the understanding of the representative making accountable decisions in line with the personal opinion, rather than someone else’s opinion. However, when the sanctions for following the trustee principle are high, it is rational for the individuals (i.e. the politicians) to abandon the trustee principle and instead follow the party principle due to high personal costs (such as conflicts within the party, exclusion, etc.).

Institutions are structures that affect the behavior of actors in collective units (see Goldmann, Pedersen, and Østerud 1997; Åström 2011). This definition relates to Peter’s (2012) characterisation of institutions as a structural feature of society, being relatively stable over time and affecting individual behaviour. The RCI and Sociological Institutionalism (SI) have different positions on the scale between agency and structure. RCI emphasises agency more than SI does, but they both do share the overall structure focus that is prominent in new institutionalism in general. Following this, the party principle and trustee principle can be perceived as two competing institutions that are closely related to the notions proposed by RCI and SI, respectively. This makes the case for political decision-making appropriate for the purpose of applying and testing institutional theories.

The aim of this article is to explain local Swedish politicians’ decision-making by exploring to what extent they rely on the party principle and the trustee principle when making decisions on two issues that diverge in political dignity: tax levels/activity fees and organisational change in the municipal administration.

A large N study of politicians at the local level in Sweden, with surveys sent out to all Swedish politicians on this level, was conducted to answer two research questions: (1) Is there a difference in how politicians follow the party and the trustee principles when deciding on tax levels/activity fees and organisational change, respectively? This question explores and tests whether previous assumptions about local politicians being more prone to follow the party when deciding on important policy issues are supported. Furthermore, the empirical study tests and validates the institutional theories’ predictions in this particular decision-making case.

Previous research has, as mentioned above, shown that MPs belonging to the Left, the Social Democratic and the Conservative Parties follow the party principle more than politicians in other Swedish parties. Therefore, the second question reads thusly: (2) Is there a difference between parties in how politicians
follow the party and trustee principles when deciding on tax levels/activity fees and organisational change, respectively?

This large empirical material \((N = 8,523)\) enables us to explore the results of previous studies on an extensive empirical material on elected politicians at the local level in Sweden. Explaining and comparing the party and trustee principles in regard to the two policy issues will contribute to our understanding of how these important principles (or rules in the terminology of new institutionalism) are applied in different situations and enable us to assess the results of previous studies mentioned above. The application of the new institutional theories will contribute to the understanding of how these theories can be used to explain different decision-making phenomena. Thus, the study will provide both empirical and theoretical contributions.

The next section outlines how new institutional theory can be used to explain the representation principles. Here also is included the operationalisation regarding decision-making hypotheses. This is then followed by the methods section, in which methodological considerations on how to test the decision-making hypotheses are presented, mainly in the form of non-parametric variance analysis. The results are finally presented and discussed in relation to the two aforementioned research questions in the article’s concluding section.

A new institutional framework for explaining the representation principles

There are several new institutional approaches that differ in the way they view the social world (Peters 2012). Two of the more prominent of these new institutional approaches are RCI and SI.\(^2\) RCI models its explanations of institutional phenomena from the perspective of rational actors who are goal oriented and follow their personal preferences in order to obtain utility when facing a decision-making situation (North 1990). SI, on the other hand, explains decision-making by emphasising the cognitive way actors internalise their institutional surroundings and ascribe their meaning, which becomes the foundation for their actions (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

Both of these approaches have generated theories that successfully explain the decision-making of politicians in legislature, such as the theories used by Strom, Müller, and Bergman (2003) in their study of delegation and accountability in parliamentary democracies from an RCI perspective, as well as Goetze and Rittberger’s (2010) sociological analysis of the European Parliament. While these studies differ from each other in how they explain what drives human decision-making and action, as described briefly above, they also differ, as Peters (2012) points out, with regard to one fundamental issue in institutional theory: how actors and institutions relate to each other.

RCI sees institutions as exogenous to the actors. This means that institutions do not shape the preferences of the actors but merely provide them with incentives to a behaviour that will result in a certain utility within a specific institutional setting. Institutions serve as structural guidelines for the actor to act upon, but the preferences are not changed and thus remain rather intact. SI, on
the other hand, sees institutions as endogenous to the actors, which means that the actor internalises the institutions and the meaning ascribed to them. This results in preferences shaped not only by the actor’s values and beliefs but also by institutions (Peters 2012).

The theoretical roots of RCI can be found in rational choice theory (RCT). According to Monroe (2001), the traditional economic concept of rationality found in RCT and the bounded rationality found in RCI share the following four fundamental assumptions: (1) individual action, (2) goal-orientation, (3) conscious choice and (4) self-interest. Individual action draws on methodological individualism; that is, the claim that social scientific explanations must contain statements of individual actions. Societies or groups cannot act as such on their own without consideration for and analysis of the individuals who form these societies and groups (Rothstein 2003).

Goal-orientation refers to the individual’s knowledge of her/his goals and the according act to fulfill them (Riker 1995). Conscious choice refers to the assumptions upon which individuals make decisions based on obtained information and in line with their own preferences. This eliminates choice based on emotions, frustration, routine or any other non-rational factor (Johnston 1991). Self-interest indicates that the individual knows what his/her preferences are and behaves consistently with these preferences. Hence, the individual strives to obtain utility based on these preferences (Ostrom and Ostrom 1971).

According to the RCI perspective, institutions are structures that lower the transaction costs for these rational actors to reach agreements and thus get the most out of their own maximising of utility in the long run. Institutions ease the process of making consistent decisions and therefore also maximise personal utility. They provide decision-making individuals with information on available alternatives (however, this does not mean all possible alternatives) and incentive structures for the individual preferences that are suitable to maximise the particular institutional surroundings (North 1990).

If we rely on the RCI we should predict that individuals act in such way that they benefit themselves, to gain some kind of reward or to avoid sanction, depending on the incentives provided by the institution. If the preferences of the individual decision maker conflict with the constraints of the institution, we should expect the individual to make decisions in accordance with the individual preference when the cost of doing so is low. Furthermore, the individual should be expected to make decisions in line with the incentives provided by the institution when the cost of following the individual preference is high. When the cost for following preferences is low, individuals make decisions in line with their individual preferences, and when the cost for following preferences is high, individuals make decisions in line with the incentives provided by the institution.

The most prominent feature of SI, on the other hand, is the role culture is ascribed when explaining and understanding institutions; it places no focus on the rational calculations of individuals. Instead, SI highlights that institutional forms and procedures are culture-specific practices, which are taken for granted and provide the individuals with meaning. The individuals assimilate these
culture-specific practices through processes that are not necessarily means-end efficient (as stated by RCI) but culturally bound. The way institutions affect decision-making behaviour is primarily cognitively explained through SI. Automatised schemas, scripts, routines and classifications of the individual internalise the institutional surroundings (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

Individuals act not upon their self-interests, but on what they perceive as being appropriate in the role they see themselves having. March and Olsen (1984, 1989) addressed this as part of the logic of appropriateness. When making decisions, the individual tries to pair a situation with the action that is perceived as eligible in their role. What that role is, as well as what constitutes appropriate action for that role, is formed by institutions and is socialised by the individual (March and Olsen 1989). Because of this logic, the impact of rules, and especially norms, are important factors in understanding the interaction between institutions and individuals. Norms in terms of decision-making describe how the individual acts according to what’s perceived to be appropriate in her/his role, regardless of personal preferences.

Since several types of different norms may influence behaviour (see Kashima and Lewis 2000), further clarification of norms is necessary. In this article, I refer to norms as social norms (cf. personal norms, see Schwartz and Howard 1980) and as such also as injunctive social norms. Injunctive norms are ‘perceptions concerning what should or ought to be done with respect to performing a given behavior’ (Fishbein and Ajzen 2010, 131). Individuals make decisions according to the institutional rules that have been internalised as appropriate for the specific role they identify themselves as having.

How do RCI and SI assumptions on how institutions affect individual behaviour differ in their predictions when applied to decision-making in the case of Swedish politicians? The answer to this question can be found in whether the institution of party pressure, following the party principle when making decisions, is internalised or not. Before this is outlined, the two policy questions have to be examined further.

The two policy issues differ in the way they are regulated by Swedish political parties, and thus the pressure for the local politicians to conform to party standpoint varies. Tax levels/activity fees are correlated with party positions on the economic left-right scale and a policy issue where Swedish parties have strongly stipulated positions (Pettersson-Lidbom 2008). The left-right position is thus strong in Sweden and, as such, is one of the strongest variables in predicting which political party Swedish citizens vote for in elections (Holmberg 2002). Hence, the party pressure on the politician belonging to the party is strong and so also is the pressure to follow the party principle rather than the trustee principle when making decisions in these matters.

Organisational change in the municipal administration, on the other hand, as well as political organisation in general is not an issue that correlates with party position on the economic left-right scale and does not define the left-right position cleavage between Swedish political parties (see Holmberg 2002; Karlsson 2010). Furthermore, the parties themselves do not hold clear and
consistent positions in this policy area across the different municipals and regions in Sweden (see e.g. Lidström 2009). Hence, the Swedish parties do not as strongly regulate this policy issue and the pressure to conform to the party standpoint when making decisions in these matters is thus substantially weaker than in the case of tax levels/activity fees.

If the politicians do not internalise the institutional rules and if institutions are entities exogenous to these actors, as assumed in RCI, we should expect the degree to which the politicians follow the party principle to create more variation. When applying RCI logic, Swedish politicians should only do as the party says when there is either a high benefit for following the party standpoint or a high cost for not following the party standpoint (cf. rational arguments in Hindmoor 2006).

Consequently, there should be a difference in how the politicians act when making decisions about tax levels/activity fees, since this policy issue is more regulated by the party. The act of following the trustee principle, when it conflicts with the party standpoint, would therefore also be more sanctioned than in the situation of making decisions regarding organisational change in the municipal administration. Based on this, the following hypothesis emerges:

**Hypothesis 1:** At times when the party standpoint conflicts with their own preferences, Swedish politicians follow the party principle more when they make decisions on tax levels/activity fees than in decisions on organisational change in the municipal administration.

The role of Swedish politicians is to follow the party principle rather than the trustee principle, and they do so more than politicians in other countries (Barrling-Hermansson 2004). If we apply SI logic, we should expect that Swedish politicians should internalise the institution of the party principle (a social norm) rather than the trustee principle. If the politicians internalise the informal institution of the party principle, as predicted when applying SI assumptions of appropriateness, there should be no significant difference in how these politicians act when making decisions in the two policy issues. They should follow the party principle, even when it conflicts with their own personal views and even when the pressure to conform to party views is low. The role of Swedish politicians is to follow the party principle (as pointed out by Barrling-Hermansson 2004) and doing what is appropriate to follow this social norm.

In situations in which there is no official party standpoint, the politicians should also turn to the party for advice, if we follow SI assumptions. These situations have a high degree of uncertainty, and as DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 1991) have pointed out, times of uncertainty result in mimicking behaviour in which individuals and organisations do as those who are important and successful others in the same field do. In the case of Swedish politicians at the local level, we can predict that, if we follow the SI assumptions, politicians turn to the party when making decisions on questions characterised by uncertainty, since they mimic the behaviour of important others (i.e. their party colleagues). When
related to decision-making in the two policy issues examined here, the following hypothesis can thus be drawn from the SI explanations above:

**Hypothesis 2:** At times when the party standpoint conflicts with their own preferences, Swedish politicians follow the party principle to the same extent when they make decisions on tax levels/activity fees as in decisions on an organisational change in the municipal administration.

There is a debate in SI regarding whether it is possible to make predictive claims. I agree with the modelling of, for example, Villadsen, Rosenberg Hansen, and Mols (2010) that such predictive claims can be made. From these two hypotheses we can see that the assumptions of RCI and SI lead to different predictions when applied to the chosen case. A summary of the decision-making predictions drawn from RCI and SI is presented in Table 1.

**Methods**

A questionnaire methodology was used to collect data. The questionnaire was sent out to all 9,725 Swedish politicians at the local level; that is to every member of a municipal council (in Swedish: kommunnfullmäktige) in Sweden. The number of respondents that answered both questions in the questionnaire was 8,523 out of 9,725, which equals a response percentage of about 88%.

Constructs of self-interest and norms were operationalised by relating the questions of decision-making to the perceived party pressure of the respondents. Here, answers through which respondents report that they will follow the party principle in a policy issue, even though they personally don’t agree with this position, were calculated as conforming to party pressure norms. Likewise, answers through which respondents report that they will make decisions according to the trustee principle, even when their opinion conflicts with the party’s position in a policy issue, were calculated as self-interest. In the questionnaire, these two alternatives were operationalised as opposite extremes on the same scale for the respective questions of organisational change in the municipal administration and municipal tax levels/activity fees. The scale was a four-grade ordinal scale, and the respondents were informed to report which of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party pressure</th>
<th>Self-interest (RCI)</th>
<th>Social norms (SI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Follow party principle</td>
<td>Follow party principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Follow trustee principle</td>
<td>Follow party principle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Decision-making predictions for behavioural assumptions of self-interest and social norms in relation to the party and the trustee principles
two statements they agree with more when asked how they make decisions in a policy issue, as shown in the Appendix.

Frequencies were calculated to determine to what extent the Swedish politicians reported that they make decisions according to the party in these matters. To see if there was a significant difference, variance analysis was conducted in the form of a non-parametric pair-sampled test, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (see Greene and D’Oliveira 1999). We used the Wilcoxon test in the light of the ordinal quality as well as the range of only four grades of the questionnaire. The results from these calculations were then compared to the hypotheses of the study.

To explore the second research question, whether there is a difference among political parties in how their representatives relate to the party and the trustee principles, the sample was split by party affiliation, and the frequencies and the variance analysis were performed on this split sample.

At this point, a few things are important to consider. First, the issue of whether there is a difference between the decision-making in the two policy matters is not the only important result. Since the scale is constructed as presenting opposite extremes, with self-interest on the lower end and norms on the higher end of the scale, it is also important to notice and analyse what the respondents answered. By doing so and examining the distribution of the answers, we can see to what degree the politicians tend to follow the party principle (their party principle) or the trustee principle (the social norm) when making decisions, something that is not possible by only looking at differences between the two conditions in the Wilcoxon test.

Second, there was a possibility that the results would support neither RCI nor SI because of the scale. A result in that direction would indicate that neither of the presented theories may be suitable for explaining this decision-making or that the party pressure would be unimportant when making these decisions.

A valid point to discuss is that the questionnaire only measured politicians’ reports on their decision-making behaviour. Self-reported behaviour can be problematic, since discrepancies may arise between how respondents describe their actions and how they actually act. Still, reported behaviour and actual behaviour have proven to correlate when asking about more specific behaviour, and not only general behaviour (see Fishbein and Ajzen 2010). The questions are directed towards two specific policy issues to strengthen the validity of findings.

**Results**

First, frequencies were calculated for both questions regarding the two policy issues in order to determine to what extent the Swedish politicians at the local level follow the party and the trustee principles. For the question on decision-making concerning organisational change in the municipal administration, 10.3% of the respondents answered that they totally agreed with statement A; that is, they follow the party’s standpoint when making these decisions in cases of conflict between party standpoint and personal preference. Furthermore, 44.1%
answered that they partly agreed with this statement. On the other side of the spectrum, 36% of the respondents reported that they partly agree with statement B, that they follow their personal preference when making these decisions when there is a conflict between party standpoint and personal preference. Finally, 9.6% of the respondents answered that they totally agree with statement B.

For the question on decision-making concerning municipal tax levels/activity fees, 19.1% of the respondents answered that they totally agreed with statement A, that they follow the party’s standpoint when making these decisions when there is a conflict between party standpoint and personal preference. Furthermore, 43.6% answered that they partly agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 29.3% of the respondents reported that they partly agreed with statement B, that they followed their personal preference when making these decisions when there is a conflict between party standpoint and personal preference. Finally, 8% of the respondents answered that they totally agree with statement B. These results are shown, together with the frequencies for each policy issue, in Table 2.

A Wilcoxon test was conducted to evaluate whether there is a significant difference in the way the Swedish politicians at the local level followed the party standpoint or their own preferences when making decisions about different issues. The results indicated a significant difference, $z = -22.711, p < .001$. The mean of the ranks in favour of following your own preferences, if it conflicts with the party standpoint when making decisions on organisational change in the municipal administration, was 1536.69, while the mean of the ranks in favour of following your own preferences, if it conflicts with the party standpoint, when making decisions on municipal tax levels and activity fees, was 1485.60.

The answers regarding decision-making in the two policy issues were also split by party affiliation to determine whether the results were coherent for all Swedish parties represented in the municipal councils that also have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>An organisational change in the municipal administration</th>
<th>Tax levels/activity fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>880 3,780 3,090 826 8,576 1,149 9,725</td>
<td>1,629 3,714 2,496 684 8,523 1,202 9,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents per cent</td>
<td>10.3 44.1 36.0 9.6</td>
<td>19.1 43.6 29.3 8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>10.3 54.4 90.4 100.0</td>
<td>19.1 62.7 92.0 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2. Frequencies of respondents’ answers about decision-making concerning organisational change in the municipal administration and municipal tax levels/activity fees.
representation in the national parliament. Parties having representation in municipal councils but no representation in the national parliament were excluded from the analysis. The results are shown in Table 3.

The results show that all parties, except the Swedish Democrats, follow the same pattern, since the politicians report that they tend to follow the party standpoint more often when making decisions on tax levels and activity fees than on organisational changes in the municipal administration. To further test this, Wilcoxon tests were calculated for the respondents’ answers, split by party affiliation. The results show that there is a significant difference in the way the politicians report that they make decisions in the two policy issues for all parties, except the Swedish Democrats. Furthermore, the results for all parties except the Swedish Democrats showed greater mean ranks and the sum of ranks in favour of following their own preferences, if it conflicts with the party standpoint, when making decisions on organisational change in the municipal administration compared to making decisions on tax levels and activity fees. The full results of the Wilcoxon tests are shown in Table 4.

Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this article is to explain local Swedish politicians’ decision-making by exploring to what extent they rely on the party principle and the trustee principle when making decisions on two issues that diverge in political dignity: tax levels/activity fees and organisational change in the municipal administration. By conducting this study, insights into previous research on the relation between political parties and their representatives, regarding institutional theory as well as to the particular case of decision-making of Swedish local politicians in regard to different policy issues, are provided. Several conclusions can be deduced based on the empirical findings.

In line with previous research, the results of this study indicate that Swedish politicians on the local level do follow the party principle to a larger extent than the trustee principle when making decisions. Moreover, the party principle is followed significantly more often when making decisions on important policy issues in this case illustrated by tax levels/activity fees, than on less crucial policy issues, such as an organisational change in the municipal administrations. The assumed difference between the two policy issues is thus prominent, as shown in the variance analysis.

The party discipline in Sweden when deciding on taxes is strong and, as such, is manifested in local politicians’ reports that they follow the party principle rather than the trustee principle. The result of Karlsson and Gilljam (2014a), emphasising the importance of the party principle in actual behaviour, can thus be complemented by the results of this study stating that the more important the policy issue is, the more inclined the politicians are to conform to the party standpoint, regardless of their representation style.

It is also interesting to note that a majority of the politicians, across different political parties, still follow the party principle rather than the trustee principle also when making decisions on a policy issue that is considered less important and less
Table 3. Frequencies of respondents’ answers, split by party affiliation, about decision-making in the policy issues of organisational change in the municipal administration and tax levels/activity fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Decision-making on organisational change</th>
<th>Decision-making on tax levels/activity fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totally agree with A</td>
<td>Partly agree with A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left party</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social democratic party</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>1,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green party</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centre party</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian democratic party</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liberal party</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 3. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Decision-making on organisational change</th>
<th>Decision-making on tax levels/activity fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totally agree with A</td>
<td>Partly agree with A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative party</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>203  877  675  180  1,935  271  2,206</td>
<td>382  818  547  174  1,921  285  2,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>10.5  45.3  34.9  9.3</td>
<td>19.9  42.6  28.5  9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>10.5  55.8  90.7  100.0</td>
<td>19.9  62.5  90.9  100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish democrats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>42  105  95  24  266  57  323</td>
<td>44  103  89  31  267  56  323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per cent of respondents</td>
<td>15.8  39.5  35.7  9.0</td>
<td>16.5  38.6  33.3  11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative per cent</td>
<td>15.8  55.3  91.0  100.0</td>
<td>16.5  55.1  88.4  100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Results from Wilcoxon tests, split by party affiliation, when making decisions concerning organisational change in the municipal administration and tax levels/activity fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Left party</th>
<th>Social democratic Party</th>
<th>Green party</th>
<th>Centre party</th>
<th>Christian democratic Party</th>
<th>Liberal party</th>
<th>Conservative party</th>
<th>Swedish democrats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean of negative ranks</td>
<td>88.39</td>
<td>551.39</td>
<td>84.15</td>
<td>163.58</td>
<td>63.50</td>
<td>99.77</td>
<td>336.67</td>
<td>40.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean of positive ranks</td>
<td>95.65</td>
<td>561.37</td>
<td>90.15</td>
<td>172.25</td>
<td>59.79</td>
<td>114.65</td>
<td>348.06</td>
<td>38.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of negative ranks</td>
<td>4,861.50</td>
<td>176,997.50</td>
<td>2,861</td>
<td>14,395</td>
<td>2,597.50</td>
<td>4,689</td>
<td>72,383.50</td>
<td>1701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of positive ranks</td>
<td>12,529.50</td>
<td>446,288.50</td>
<td>12,892</td>
<td>43,235</td>
<td>4,783.50</td>
<td>20,064</td>
<td>164,632.50</td>
<td>1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>-5.619&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-13.585&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-7.991&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-8.710&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-3.088&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-8.663&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-9.537&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.877&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;0.001</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Based on negative ranks.  
<sup>b</sup>Based on positive ranks.
constrained by party pressure. According to previous research (see Esiassion and Holmberg 1996), members of the Left, Social Democratic and Conservative Parties are more inclined to follow the party principle than members of other Swedish parties. The results of this study indicate that this pattern is still robust for the Social Democratic and the Conservative Parties, whose local politicians stand out as being particularly loyal to the party standpoint. The results for the Left party, however, show no signs of leftish representatives being more loyal to the party than others. The Swedish Democrats, a relatively new party in the parliament, stands out as having politicians that follow the party principle to the same extent as the Conservative Party, when deciding on tax levels/activity fees.

Compared to the results of Esiassion and Holmberg (1996), this study shows that there is a large increase in the overall tendency to follow the party principle rather than the trustee principle, when the personal preference conflicts with the party’s preference. The reason the Left Party does not distinguish itself as being particularly party loyal is mainly because other political parties show stronger party discipline than the Left Party does.

An interesting question to explore for further research is thus: why have the Left Party’s politicians seemingly not increased their compliance to the party principle when politicians belonging to other parties have? Here, studies on political culture and institutional theory, for example, may provide interesting answers. Has the party culture in the Left Party changed? Are there institutional changes in the Left Party, which have contributed to a strengthening of the trustee principle?

The result of the variance analysis, when splitting the sample by party affiliation, showed the same significant difference between the decision-making on tax levels/activity fees and an organisational change in the municipal administration, except for politicians belonging to the Swedish Democrats. A majority of the politicians representing this party followed the party standpoint to almost the same extent when making decisions regarding both policy issues. This may be the result of the politicians representing the Swedish Democrats having internalised their role as politicians more than politicians from other Swedish parties. Another explanation may be that the Swedish Democrat party puts more pressure on their representatives to conform than other Swedish parties do. However, the empirical results show that the politicians from the Social Democratic and Conservative Parties follow the party principle to a larger extent in both policy issues than those of the Swedish Democrats, so the aforementioned explanation is not likely. Perhaps the Swedish Democrats being relatively new to the political setting have an influence on their decision-making behaviour. Further research should benefit from delving deeper into explaining this deviation when compared to the other political parties.

This study shows that the party principle can still be considered as the dominant representation style for Swedish politicians at the local level. Consequently, this study validates much of previous research results on representation styles, but also offers insights and explanations to how and when the pressure to conform to the party standpoint varies. A next step for further research is to examine decision-making behaviour in regard to other policy issues.
and in different contexts for the purpose of exploring the robustness of, and further refine, the results. For example, are the results of this study consistent over time? Regarding what other policy issues are there significant differences in how Swedish politicians at the local level make decisions?

The study contributes also to the theoretical field of new institutionalism. To start with, the study illustrates how new institutional theories can be applied to frame political decision-making and emphasise the structural constraints surrounding the individual decision maker in this process. Moreover, the study contributes to the field by showing how different theoretical assumptions about the individual, and the individual–institution interaction, can be operationalised and empirically measured. Finally, the study contributes to new institutionalism by examining the accuracy of the predictions put forward by the RCI and SI.

According to the empirical results, in this article, the RCI is a more appropriate framework when predicting how local politicians make their decisions. A significant difference in how the local politicians made decisions in the two policy issues was found. The rational hypotheses could not be falsified, and this raises interesting implications for further research. Exploring whether this is just the case for these types of policy issues or for the Swedish political context (with a strong informal institution of following the party principle) can facilitate both validation and falsification of these findings. Identifying contexts in which local politicians make decisions both according to RCI and SI predictions is important for further research, since it may vary between different contexts and policy issues. It is also important to point out that there are more theories in SI than the logic of appropriateness that was used in this study, such as DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) institutional isomorphism. Perhaps additional perspectives can provide insights into the decision-making regarding other issues.

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Notes on contributor
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Notes

1. There is also the delegate principle. This principle emphasises that politicians should make decisions in line with voters’ preferences in policy issues. For more on this representational principle, see Bäck (2000).

2. Two other prominent new institutional approaches are Historical Institutionalism and Constructive Institutionalism. Constructive institutionalism especially differs epistemologically from both RCI and much of SI, and this epistemological difference is important to note for institutional studies. However, since this epistemological debate is not central to the aim of this study, I recommend reading Peters (2012) for further study regarding these differences.

3. The main difference between RCT and RCI lies in the assumptions of information processing. RCT assumes that individuals have access to full information about the surrounding world when making decisions, which makes structural beings, such as institutions, redundant (Hall and Taylor 1996). Contrary to RCT, RCI assumes that the rationality for making decisions is bounded and the individual is not cognitively capable of processing full information. All available information cannot be taken into account by the individual when making decisions, but evaluation and behaviour stemming from the information they have obtained is still rational and according to their preferences. This is referred to as bounded rationality (see Simon 1957). The assumptions of benefit maximising also differ between RCI and RCT. Whereas RCT assumes that individuals strive to maximise benefit, RCI on the other hand tends to shy away from assumptions of individual maximising of benefit and simply states that individuals strive to obtain benefit, which does not necessarily mean the same as the best marginal utility (North 1990).

4. The questionnaire is for a project based at the Gothenburg School of Public Administration, where several questions on a variety of subjects are asked among Swedish politicians at both the local and the regional levels. For more on this project, see Karlsson and Gilljam (2014b).

References


Skoog, L. 2011. *Alla följer partilinjen - en studie om hur kommunpolitiker tolkar sitt mandat i praktiken [Everyone follows the party line - A study on how local politicians interpret their mandate in practice]*. Gothenburg: School of Public Administration/Förvaltningshögskolan.


**Appendix**

**Questionnaire questions**

Below are a few questions on decision-making in the municipal political body of which you are a member.

**Question 1.**

The questions are constructed as opposites (A and B). To which extent do you agree with A or B when you decide on proposals about an organisational change in the municipal administration?

A: I always follow the party’s standpoint, even when it is contrary to my own opinion.

B: I always follow my own opinion, even when it is contrary to the party’s standpoint.

Totally agree with A ☐ Partly agree with A ☐ Partly agree with B ☐ Totally agree with B ☐
Question 2.
The questions are constructed as opposites (A and B). To which extent do you agree with A or B when you decide on proposals about municipal tax levels and activity fees?

A: I always follow the party’s standpoint, even when it is contrary to my own opinion.
B: I always follow my own opinion, even when it is contrary to the party’s standpoint.

Totally agree with A ☐ Partly agree with A ☐ Partly agree with B ☐ Totally agree with B ☐
Personal preferences or organizational standpoint? Exploring how participants in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives

Jens Nilsson, Luleå University of Technology
Annica Sandström, Luleå University of Technology

Abstract
This study focuses on the relationship between decision-makers who are part of collaborative arenas and the organizations they represent. The aim of the paper is to explore and explain how participants in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives. We examine to what extent, and in what situations, they follow personal preferences or organizational standpoint and what logic guides their behavior. The logics of calculus and appropriateness are adopted to develop rival assumptions that we examine in the context of Swedish wildlife conservation committees. The results identify a difference between political party representatives and representatives from organized interests. The latter group is primarily driven by the logic of appropriateness, since they consistently follow the organizational standpoint, while neither assumption found support in the group of politicians, who are largely guided by personal preferences. The study contributes to our understanding of collaborative management bodies that evidently encompass different decision-making logics.

Keywords: Decision-making, environmental management, wildlife, New institutionalism, collaborative management

Introduction
Collaborative management is a broad concept encompassing decision-making models where both public and private actors, e.g., interest organizations and other private stakeholders, take part in the public policy process (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Carlsson and
Berkes, 2005; Dudau, 2009; Zachrisson, 2009). We see a strong development of various institutional models toward collaborative, or participatory, management (Fung, 2006), particularly in environmental governance (Driessen et al., 2012) since such models are believed to hold problem-solving potential and a capacity to increase legitimacy in policy sectors characterized by conflict and polarization (Armitage et al., 2009; Berkes, 2009; Emerson et al., 2012; Reed, 2008; Zurba et al., 2012).

Collaborative decision-making bodies diverge from traditional policy-making structures in several respects and are, accordingly, subject to other types of governance challenges (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton Stone, 2006; Irvin and Stansbury, 2004; Lubell, 2004). Our knowledge about these bodies – i.e. about the characteristics of well-functioning collaboration and its prerequisites – is still limited (Cheng et al., 2012). In the present study, we acknowledge the implications of the actor heterogeneity that collaborative management models bring, and investigate the relationships between decision-makers in the collaborative arena and the organizations they represent. More specifically, we address how actors in collaborative management relate to their roles as representatives.

Traditional decision-making bodies generally involve either politicians or bureaucrats and constitute rather homogenous units, whereas collaborative management arenas are highly pluralistic and nested structures involving a diverse set of actors (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; Plummer and Fitzgibbon, 2004). The characteristics of the constituencies, i.e., whom the decision-makers represent, vary considerably depending on whether the actor is a politician, a member of an interest organization, a bureaucrat, or a private actor (collaborative arenas diverge considerably in regard to who the participating actors are). Compared with traditional decision-making bodies, collaborative settings are surrounded by diversity and uncertainty with regard to established rules and procedures for decision-making (e.g., Page, Stone, Bryson, and Crosby, 2015). Our understanding of how individual decision-makers behave in collaborative management is limited and so is our knowledge regarding how they act in situations where their personal standpoint and the standpoint of their organization differ.
New institutional theory can help us explore and explain the logic behind different ways of relating to the role of being a representative in collaborative arenas. We make use of new institutional theory and the concepts of logic of calculus and logic of appropriateness, which are developed from rational choice and sociological institutionalism, respectively (March and Olsen, 1989; North, 1990; Hindmoor, 2006; Lowndes, 2010). These two strands of institutional theory give rise to rival predictions on how decision-makers behave in regard to the organizational rule of representation. The logic of calculus predicts behavior depending on cost and benefit reasoning related to personal preferences in a given decision-making situation, while the logic of appropriateness suggests that the actors consistently will act according to the role and, thus, follow the organizational standpoint (further developed in the theory section).

The aim of this paper is to explore and explain how decision-makers in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives. We examine to what extent, and in what situations, they follow personal preferences or organizational standpoint when there is a divergence between the two. Two research questions guides our study: 1. Which of the two assumptions – logic of calculus and logic of appropriateness – more effectively predicts how actors in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives? 2. Do different logics apply to different groups of actors?

These questions are investigated in the case of wildlife collaborative management, exploring decision-making in Swedish wildlife conservation committees (WCCs). The WCCs are state-designed regional administrative bodies consisting of members from the public and the private sector, mainly political party and interest organization representatives (as specified in Government Bill 2012/13:191). Political party and interest organization representatives have traditionally fulfilled important, yet different, functions in society (Bäck and Möller, 2002; Erlingsson et al., 2005) and, as previously mentioned, decision-making bodies generally incorporate either of the two groups. All of the above makes it interesting to study, and compare, how these two groups of actors behave in the collaborative arena and how they relate to their role as representatives. A mixed method design comprising quantitative analysis of survey responses and qualitative semi-
structured interviews with WCC participants is adopted to examine the research questions.

The study contributes to our understanding of collaborative decision-making models, which are a growing phenomenon in contemporary public administration (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; Ansell and Gash, 2008). The way that representatives in these new settings relate to their organizations, as well as the logic they base their decisions on, can have significant influence on the prospects of deliberation and learning and, hence, on the legitimacy of both process and outcomes (for a discussion on deliberation, learning, and legitimacy, see Lundmark and Matti, 2015; Robertson and Choi, 2012). Moreover, the study contributes to new institutional theory by assessing and comparing the relevance of two competing behavioral assumptions about the interplay between individuals and rules in the same empirical setting (the WCCs) and in a context that differs from traditional public/administrative contexts (and such studies are rare, see Hall and Taylor, 1996; Lane, 2003; Peters, 2012). Before moving on to the theory section, in which the analytical framework is developed, the empirical case of the WCCs is described more thoroughly.

Case description

Swedish wildlife management is a conflicted field. The increase in the number of large carnivores such as bear, wolf, and lynx in recent years has resulted in polarization of views and deficits in policy legitimacy (Cinque, 2008; Sandström and Ericsson, 2009). In response to this problem, the Swedish government has implemented a new institutional model for wildlife management based on regional responsibility and stakeholder participation (Swedish Department of Environment, 2009), namely wildlife conservation committees (WCCs).

Twenty-one WCCs were introduced in February 2010 (Government Bill 2012/13:191), one for each county in Sweden. The committees have formalized decision-making power over guidelines for wildlife management and hunting; they are in charge of carnivore management plans and of suggested minimum levels of bear and lynx
rejuvenation (and recently for some counties also wolf). In accordance with the bill (2012/13:191), WCCs comprise the respective county governor (who sits as chairperson) and one representative from each of the following interests: hunting, nature conservation, local trade and industry, forestry, outdoor recreation, agriculture, commercial fishing, seasonal foraging, reindeer owners, and reindeer owners elected by the Sami parliament. The other WCC members consist of five political party representatives (county level) and a representative from the police (SFS 2009:1474). The county administration board (CAB) appoints the WCC members. These appointments are in turn based on suggestions from the interest organizations and the regional councils. The WCC members who represent political parties and interest organizations (excluding the police and the county governor) are the subjects for this study and the main emphasis is on how they relate to their role as representatives in relation to the respective organizations they represent.

**Literature overview and theoretical foundations**

Institutions are rules or codes of conduct that constrain the behavior of actors in collective units (North, 1990; Ostrom, 2005). The WCC members are appointed as representatives to express the standpoints of their respective organizations in the collaborative arena (Government Bill 2012/13:191); thus, there is an institutional rule stipulating that the members should represent their organization and they are strongly expected to act accordingly when making decisions.

This study draws on two veins of new institutional theory to develop testable predictions of different ways to relate to the rule of representation. We work with two logics – the *logic of calculus* and the *logic of appropriateness* – that stem from rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism, respectively. The logics differ in

---

1 Each committee meets about 2–5 times a year and decisions are made by majority vote, with the stipulation that a minimum of two-thirds of the members must be present (SFS 2009:1474).
2 The four latter interests are only represented if they are present in the region. For example, regions that lack reindeer owners do not have a representative for this interest in the WCCs.
several respects when it comes to the relationship between individuals and the institution (rule) in which they are embedded (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Monroe, 2001; Peters, 2012). The reasons for exploring these two logics, and not other strands of new institutionalism, are, first, that the assumptions of the logics of calculus and appropriateness are in stark contrast to one another (cf. March and Olsen, 1989), which makes it possible to consider them as competing theories and formulate rival assumptions. Second, the inclusion of further assumptions would add complexity and make it more difficult to form discrete predictions, since some of the assumptions are intertwined (for example, see arguments in Mizruchi and Fein, 1999).

When applying the two logics to the decision-making in the WCCs, they predict different behavior from the members in relation to the rule of representation. Seen through the lens of logic of calculus, institutions are collections of rules and incentives that constrain people’s possibility to maximize utility (Peters, 2012). Assumptions of rationality are central to the logic of calculus. Individuals evaluate costs and benefits of every action in line with their preferences and in relation to the incentives provided by the rule. It is easier for the individual to diverge from the rule in situations when the costs (sanctions) of doing so are low (e.g., when dealing with non-significant or non-contested policy issues) than in situations when they are high (e.g., for highly contested issues when the stakes are high). According to the logic of calculus, institutions shape the behavior of individuals, but they do not change the individuals’ preferences per se; thus, the costs and benefits associated with different lines of action have a significant influence on their behavior.

In contrast, the logic of appropriateness belongs to a vein of research that perceives institutions as internalized by the individuals, providing meaning and sense-making and ensuring legitimacy of actions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Hall and Taylor, 1996; March and Olsen, 1989). March and Olsen (1989) launched the theory of appropriateness by

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3 For other strands of institutionalism, see Lowndes (2010) and Peters (2012).
4 There is no consensus in sociological institutionalism on whether institutions must shape people’s behavior or it is enough to only shape people’s cultural understandings in order to be manifested as institutions.
questioning the idea of rational behavior. According to this view, individuals do what they perceive as appropriate according to their role rather than strive to maximize utility according to personal preferences. This perceived appropriateness shapes the preferences of the individuals regarding what action is deemed appropriate. The appropriateness logic explains the relationship between the individual and the institution as an internalization of the rule by the participants. This means that the costs and benefits of following, or diverging from, the organizational rule are not as important when predicting differences in behavior, as long as the role of the individual remains the same (see March and Olsen, 1984; 1989).

Thus, the two logics discussed above differ in whether they see institutions (such as the rule of representation) as internalized by the participants or as external frames of reference (see DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; North, 1990; Peters, 2012). In order to determine which logic more effectively predicts how actors in collaborative management relate to the role as representatives, we need to develop predictions that can be empirically examined in the WCCs (see Table 1).

Table 1. Predictions of WCC members’ decisions in situations of disagreements between personal preference and the standpoint of the organization

- Insert Table 1 here -

Following Table 1, the logic of calculus suggests that the WCC members will behave differently depending on the type of policy issue discussed (see Nilsson, 2015). There is a higher cost attached to deviant behavior, i.e., acting contrary to the organization’s position, when deciding on contested issues. Therefore, if the logic of calculus prediction is valid, the committee members will alternate between acting based on personal preference and

(Peters, 2012). This article will, however, have the same point of departure as Giddens (1979) in the claim that institutions must shape the behavior of the individuals in order to be conceptualized as institutions.
acting based on organizational standpoint in situations when there is a disagreement between the two (left column, Table 1). In contrast, the appropriateness assumption predicts no impact of the type of issue, since the role of the members is to represent and decide according to the standpoint of their organization/party, consistently and regardless of policy issue (right column, Table 1).

Thus, to fulfill the aim of this study – and to establish which logic applies – we need to examine how the WCC members act as representatives when dealing with different types of policy issues. The forthcoming empirical analysis will be organized in accordance with three more empirically oriented sub-questions:

a. Do WCC members follow their personal preference or the organizational standpoint in cases of divergences between the two?

b. Do WCC members act differently when dealing with contested and non-contested policy issues?

c. Is there a difference between political party and interest organization representatives (in regard to Questions a and b)?

Methods

To identify which policy issues on the WCC agendas can be described as contested and non-contested (see Question b above), respectively, we performed a document study. The study encompassed meeting minutes from 15 of the 21 WCCs, covering the period from 2010 to spring 2014 (meeting minutes for the other WCCs were not officially published). The decisions that resulted in dissents (in Swedish, avvikande mening) registered by one or more WCC members were defined as contested and we counted the number of dissents for different types of policy issues to distinguish contested from non-contested issues (see Appendix 1 for a full list). By doing so, we obtained a robust empirical measure of which policy issue is more debated than others and, therefore, likely associated with higher sanctions in situations of rule-breaking behavior (i.e., when WCC members decisions diverge from the organizational standpoint). Likewise, we could identify a policy issue that is less controversial, and associated with lower sanctions, through this method.
The results of the document analysis showed that dissents were reported for a total of 28 decisions, 17 of which concerned the management of large carnivores. A total of 53 members reported dissents, of which 38 (about 72 percent) were related to decisions on large carnivore management. Thus, large carnivore management decisions, in particular those concerning intervals for rejuvenation, resulted in the highest number of dissents. We concluded that the issue of large carnivore rejuvenation is more contested than any other issue in wildlife management and it was therefore used in the survey (described below) to illustrate a contested policy issue associated with higher pressure and sanctions for deviating behavior, i.e., deciding against the organizational standpoint. We chose zones for carnivore hunting to represent a non-contested policy issue, since decisions on this topic had not given rise to any reported dissents.

A survey was used to identify how WCC members act in situations of conflict between personal and organizational standpoint (and to answer Questions a–c). The results from the document analysis informed the construction of two survey questions. One survey question mapped behavior in regard to large carnivore rejuvenation and the other in regard to zones for carnivore hunting. To exemplify, the question about large carnivore rejuvenation read: “To what extent do you agree with A [I always follow the organization’s standpoint, even when it is contrary to my own opinion] or B [I always follow my own opinion, even when it is contrary to the organization’s standpoint] when you decide on rejuvenation of any of the large Swedish carnivores?” The scale ranged from 1 to 6, where 1 reflected total agreement with alternative A and six total agreement with B (see Appendix 1). Thus, the existence of a conflict between the member’s own

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5 See Appendix 1 (Table 3) for detailed information about the dissents (total number of dissents, number of disagreeing WCC members, and specifications of decisions made).

6 Results from another survey question support the claim that the WCC members’ views regarding the current intervals for large carnivore rejuvenation are highly polarized. A small majority of the respondents reported that they want to decrease or totally abolish the minimum intervals (a total of 54.6 of the respondents), whereas the rest wanted to keep the current intervals or increase them (26.8 and 18.8 percent, respectively, were in favor of increasing them).
standpoint and the standpoint of the respective organization was integrated into the survey questions.

The mail-in survey was sent out to all 305 members of the Swedish WCCs, as part of a larger questionnaire. The response rate was 59 percent. The answers were split into two respondent categories, i.e., political party representatives and organized interest representatives, and descriptive statistics were used to describe their behavior and to answer Question a. Two paired sample t-test were performed (one for each respondent category) to determine whether WCC members act differently when dealing with contested and non-contested policy issues (Question b; for more on the use of t-test and its applications, see Hair et al., 1998). Finally, to answer Question c, the results of the statistics performed to answer the first two questions were compared and contrasted between the two respondent categories, i.e., political party representatives and interest organization representatives.

To deepen the empirical analysis, qualitative telephone interviews with a strategic sample of WCC members were conducted in the spring of 2013. The sample consisted of members from three regions that displayed a relatively high number of dissents to large carnivore management decisions. All 46 members of the chosen WCCs were contacted for the interview study, first through an information letter describing the study and then by telephone. A total of 23 WCC members were interviewed. The interviewees represented all organizations except forestry, reindeer owners, and seasonal foraging. The members from these organizations either responded they could not participate in the study or were simply not possible to reach despite multiple efforts. Even though this is a potential drawback, we believe that the gathered information is sufficient, since the purpose of the qualitative data is to supplement the quantitative analysis by providing deeper insight into, and possible explanations of, how committee members understand the rules constraining decision-making in the WCCs (further, all interest organizations were represented in the survey).

The survey questions are presented in Appendix 1.
The semi-structured interview questions asked the respondents about their role as representatives in the WCCs and their relation to the organization they represented (see Appendix 1 for a full list of interview questions). All interviews were recorded with the permission of the respondents and then transcribed. The analysis was carried out in the form of a qualitative content analysis of the transcriptions, categorizing the text units in two steps following a procedure promoted by Graneheim and Lundman (2004). First, meaning units, in this case quotes from the transcriptions, were condensed. Second, the condensed meaning units were coded into categories (see Table 6 in Appendix 1 for examples of condensation). The results of the content analysis were then compared and discussed in relation to the results of the quantitative analysis.

**Results**

Do WCC members follow their personal or organizational standpoint in case of divergence between the two? Our findings show that answers diverge significantly between the two groups. Politicians report that they make decisions more in line with their personal preferences than according to the opinions of the political parties they represent when these two standpoints are in conflict (see Table 2 below, upper half). The percent of politicians answering four or higher on the scale (which indicates following personal rather than the organization’s standpoint) is 64.2 when deciding on large carnivore rejuvenation and 70.1 when deciding on zones for carnivore hunting.

**Table 2.** Frequencies of survey responses of political party and interest organization representatives regarding decision-making in the WCCs

- Insert Table 2 here -

The opposite result is found for interest organization representatives who, as a group, report making decisions more in line with the organizational standpoint than their own personal preference (see Table 2 above, lower half). The percentage of interest
organization representatives who answered four or higher on the scale (which indicates following personal rather than the organization’s standpoint) is 41 for decisions on large carnivore rejuvenation and 42.1 for decisions on carnivore hunting.

Do WCC members act differently when dealing with contested and non-contested policy issues? Two paired sample t-tests (one for the group of politicians and the other for the interest organization representatives) were performed to find out whether the differences in the reported behavior between the two policy issues are statistically significant for each of the two groups. The result for the political party representatives, based on the data in Table 2 (upper half) was $t = -0.704, p < 0.484$ (df = 66). The result for the interest organization representatives, based on the data in Table 2 (lower half) was $t = -1.037, p < 0.302$ (df = 111). These results both indicate that the null hypothesis of no significant difference in behavior between contested and non-contested issues cannot be rejected for either of the two groups.

Is there a difference between political party and interest organization representatives? Based on Table 2 above, as well as the t-tests, we conclude that politicians generally lean toward their own preferences and the interest organization representatives toward their respective organization’s standpoint. Neither group, however, altered their behavior depending on the type of policy issue on the agenda.

The interview study highlighted several points regarding the role of WCC members and their relations with their respective organizations that can complement and provide a fuller understanding of the results. The WCC members were asked about the character of the role, its implications, and possible uncertainties regarding what is expected from WCC members. First, most members reported that they had discussed their roles with the other committee members when initially forming the WCCs. A majority of those members who had not participated in any discussions on this topic belonged to the group of politicians. As one politician put it: “We have not really discussed our roles.” On a general note, the interviews tell us that the interest organization representatives have discussed their roles with the organizations they represent to a larger extent than the political party
representatives. In the words of a respondent from one of the interest organizations: “Yes, and I have a clear mandate from the organizations. They trust what I say and do.”

A majority of the WCC members reported that the roles do function as they were intended to. Many members expressed a satisfaction both with how the roles had been discussed and how they were carried out in practice. For example, a respondent from one of the represented interests said: “Yes, I think they [the roles] work well overall. Of course, initially there were several members who did not understand the roles fully, like who was supposed to do what and so on. I think this has improved a lot in the last few years.” About 22 percent of the respondents reported to have experienced uncertainties regarding their role in relation to their organization. Thus, it seems like the encountered uncertainties have decreased over time but still remain among some WCC members.

The WCC members were also asked about their organizations’ carnivore and wildlife policies. The responses show that some organizations have more strongly formulated and clearly expressed views on wildlife than others. Committee members representing hunting, nature conservation, forestry, commercial fishing, and agriculture interests expressed that their organizations have clearly articulated policies on these matters. This aspect seemingly influences the mandate of the representatives since members belonging to organizations with less developed standpoints also perceived to have a higher degree of discretion and freedom when making decisions. In the words of a politician: “I feel that I have a rather free mandate here… I often follow my own conscience and reason based on that. These issues are not that big within the party organization, at least not in ours.”

Thus, the organizations involved in collaborative management diverge when it comes to level of attention given to wildlife policy and this affects the relation between the organization and the WCC member. However, there is no clear difference between the two respondent categories, i.e., political party and interest organization representatives, when it comes to these matters.

Finally, we asked the participants to describe the features characterizing the role as a WCC member. A majority of the interviewed committee members emphasized their role as
representatives of the group they were affiliated with, whereas the politicians, together with members representing commercial fishing, expressed a different view. Political actors, more than the other actors, often regarded themselves as representing the general (or regional) public rather than their political party. As one politician put it: “I represent the regional citizens and from the perspectives of those citizens who do not hunt or are organized in nature conservation… my role is to represent those who otherwise are not represented.” The quote emphasizes those citizens who are not engaged in hunting or nature conservation. Another politician highlights representation of those “who are affected the most by carnivore policies.”

In sum, the interview data points to differences between the two respondent categories in the sense that interest organization representatives generally shared similar views on their mandate, whereas the views among the group of political party representatives were considerably more varied.

Discussion
Which of the two assumptions – logic of calculus and logic of appropriateness – more effectively predicts how actors in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives? Do different logics apply to different groups of actors? The results of the variance analysis show that there is no significant difference in how they make decisions on the two policy issues, regardless of how contested the issue is. The members follow the same standpoint regardless of the type of policy issue and, consequently, the logic of calculus cannot be confirmed. Does this mean that the appropriateness assumption more effectively predicts how decision-makers in collaborative management behave and thus offers a more plausible explanation?

The answer to the above question depends on whom the WCC member represents. For the politicians, the appropriateness prediction cannot be confirmed either, since these members are not primarily guided by the role as representatives for their organization. Returning to Table 2, we can see that when making decisions on large carnivore rejuvenation, a minority of the politicians (about 36 percent) follows the organizational
standpoint when the views of the party and the personal stance clash. We see a similar pattern in regard to decisions on hunting zones as only about 30 percent of the political representatives report to follow the party standpoint on this matter. Had the appropriateness assumption been a sufficient explanation, a larger proportion of political party representatives would have reported decision-making according to the organizational standpoint for both issues (see Table 1 for the predictions). This leads to the conclusion that neither the logic of calculus nor the logic of appropriateness captures how the politicians relate to their role as representatives in these collaborative arenas. We will return to the ambiguities found in this group later in this section.

Turning the attention to the interest organization representatives, the appropriateness prediction offers a valid explanation for their behavior. A majority of this group reported that they follow the organizational standpoint rather than their own personal preferences. The results were almost identical for both policy issues, as 58 and 59 percent reported compliance with the organizational standpoint when asked about decisions regarding large carnivore rejuvenation and hunting zones, respectively. Very few, 5.1 and 5.4 percent, totally agreed with the statement “I always follow my own opinion, even when it is contrary to my organization’s standpoint” (see Table 2). The results imply that the interest organization representatives are guided by the logic of appropriateness; it is part of their role to represent their organization and a majority of actors within this group indeed do so.

Based on the statistical findings, we conclude that there is a great deal of variance in how the two groups of WCC members behave in relation to their organization’s standpoint, which suggests that there are important differences in how they relate to their role as representatives in the collaborative management setting. How can the qualitative information enhance our understanding of these results and, if possible, help us disentangle the ambiguous results found in the group of politicians? We propose that uncertainties related to the role and the existence of divergent interpretations of the role, particularly expressed by the political party representatives, can offer a possible explanation for the results. The political party representatives distinguished themselves by exhibiting greater in-group variation in regard to these matters as well as a broader interpretation of the role.
These circumstances might have complicated the task of determining which of the two logics explains their behavior, and therefore call for further research on this group of actors.

Other strands of institutional theory can possibly be applied to reveal what is obscured (for examples of such institutional theories, see, e.g. Scott, 2008; Schmidt, 2010; Peters, 2012). Such studies can go beyond the two assumptions examined in the present study and thus provide other lenses, such as sense-making and mimetic behavior, to further understand the decision-making processes (see DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Weick, 1995). Moreover, the ambiguous results regarding the studied politicians’ relation to the role of representation call for more in-depth studies of political representatives in different types of decision-making structures. What happens to the rules, or codes of conduct, when politicians make decisions in collaborative management settings, and how do these situations differ from traditional settings (such as parliamentary decision-making, e.g., Kiewet and McCubbins, 1991)? Such studies could make important contributions to institutional theory and to studies of political decision-making.

The empirical results of this study underline the initial assumption that the extensive actor heterogeneity and pluralism in collaborative management inevitably bring diversity, and add complexity, in several respects (Plummer and Fitzgibbon, 2004). Collaborative arenas evidently comprise a variety of competing decision-making logics. The possible implications of this situation, for the collaborative process and for the quality of outcomes, remain unknown and need to be further researched. It could tentatively be suggested, for example, that the characteristics of the role, and the decision-making logic at play, can have a significant impact on the prospects of deliberation and policy learning and, thereby, on the possibilities of enhanced legitimacy in collaborative management. Deliberation rests on the notion of enlightened discussions and the power of good arguments (Chambers, 2003; Meadowcroft, 2004), and policy learning occurs when actors revise their views based on new information, knowledge, or experience (Henry, 2009; Weible and Sabatier, 2009). Even if actors do indeed change their views as a consequence of deliberation within
the collaborative arena, those who have a closed mandate cannot act (in this case, make decisions) according to their altered beliefs (cf. Lundmark and Matti, 2015).

Thus, it can be questioned whether deliberative processes and the positive expectations of learning are compatible with a closed mandate. On the other hand, what would happen to legitimacy if participants in collaboration failed to represent, and act as representatives of, their respective organizations? The message to researchers and policy makers engaged in the endeavor to understand, and design, collaborative management arenas is to acknowledge the great actor heterogeneity and associated uncertainties – in regard to the rules of the game – that influence these new modes of decision-making. Collaborative arenas comprise a variety of actors considering their interests, influence, and relations to other stakeholders (Reed et al., 2009). As a result of this study, competing decision-making logics, and various ways of relating to the role as representatives, can be added to the list.

Conclusion
In this paper we have explored and explained how participants in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives. The main findings show that interest organization representatives are primarily governed by the logic of appropriateness, as they consistently follow the organizational standpoint, while neither the appropriateness nor the calculus assumption found support in the group of political party representatives.

The present study contributes to both institutional theory and collaborative management research. The implication for theory is that the prediction that decisions are made based on the logic of appropriateness – rather than calculus – gained support in the empirical analysis (cf. Nilsson, 2015). Studies testing rival assumptions in the same context are rare and have, to our knowledge, never been conducted in the area of collaborative decision-making (see discussions regarding falsification in Steinmo, 2008; Peters, 2012).

This study thus contributes to the exploration of these theoretical dilemmas and provides an effort to test the two rival assumptions in a case of decision-making clearly
affected by the institutional setting. The study shows significant variation in how members in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives. Compared with traditional decision-making structures, for example parliamentary voting (see cf. Carey, 2006), most cases of collaborative management, such as the WCCs, are considerably more fragmented. The empirical analysis performed in this study underlines this fact.

While the study gives rise to questions for further research, it has a key message: collaborative management opens up to several different codes of conduct for representation and this aspect must be acknowledged as important in future studies on collaborative management and its capacity for problem-solving and legitimacy-building.

References


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Table 1. Predictions of WCC members’ decisions in situations of disagreements between personal preference and the standpoint of the organization

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Logic of calculus</th>
<th>Logic of appropriateness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contested issue</td>
<td>Organizational standpoint</td>
<td>Organizational standpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contested issue</td>
<td>Personal preferences</td>
<td>Organizational standpoint</td>
</tr>
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Table 2. Frequencies of survey responses of political party and interest organization representatives regarding decision-making in the WCCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politics party representatives</th>
<th>Decisions on rejuvenation of any of the large Swedish carnivores</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>105</td>
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<td>Percent of respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35.8</td>
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<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumulative percent</td>
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### Table 3. Dissents in WCC decision-making, according to meeting minutes. Number of dissents in parentheses

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<tr>
<th>Large carnivore decisions: 17(38)</th>
<th>Other decisions: 9(15)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Minimum level of bear rejuvenation (3)</td>
<td>- Hunting times for moose (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Minimum level of bear rejuvenation (3)</td>
<td>- Hunting times for moose (1)</td>
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<td>- Guidelines for large carnivore culling (3)</td>
<td>- Trap charge for moose (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lynx trapping (2)</td>
<td>- Draft decision on distribution of moose management areas (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Motor vehicle lynx hunting (2)</td>
<td>- Distribution of moose management areas (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Minimum level of lynx rejuvenation (1)</td>
<td>- Distribution of moose management areas (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Minimum level of lynx rejuvenation (3)</td>
<td>- Change of moose management areas (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Minimum level of lynx rejuvenation (2)</td>
<td>- Change of wild boar policy (1)</td>
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<td>- Minimum level of lynx rejuvenation (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Overall guidelines for licensed lynx hunting (1)</td>
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<td>- Overall guidelines for licensed lynx hunting (2)</td>
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<td>- Draft decision for lynx population development (2)</td>
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<td>- Decision on two geographical areas for wolf deployment (5)</td>
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<td>- Designation of wolf territory for deployment of wolf puppy (1)</td>
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<td>- Draft decision on area for deployment of adult wolves (2)</td>
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<td>- Guidelines for regional large carnivore management (1)</td>
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<td><strong>Management plan for large carnivores (2)</strong></td>
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Table 4. WCC members’ reported roles within the WCCs

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<th>Interest affiliation</th>
<th>Discussed roles</th>
<th>Role of members</th>
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<td>Political party</td>
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<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Political party</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Make decisions based on material provided by WCC</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Make management plans</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Manage what government and SEPA have decided</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Provide information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature conservation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local trade and industry</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local trade and industry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial fishing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Have a dialogue on overall guidelines for wildlife</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial fishing</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Make decisions as employed by the regional county</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5. Relationship with represented organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest affiliation</th>
<th>View on mandate</th>
<th>Perceived uncertainty</th>
<th>Clear WCC-related policies</th>
<th>Degree of discretion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent general public</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent regional public</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent regional public</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent general public and party</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent party</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent party</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party</td>
<td>Represent party</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature conservation</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature conservation</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature conservation</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreation</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreation</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local trade and industry</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local trade and industry</td>
<td>Represent specific local company</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial fishing</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial fishing</td>
<td>Represent regional public</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Represent interest</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Examples of how transcribed interview answers regarding degree of discretion were coded into categories of low, medium, and high levels of discretion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning unit</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
<th>Coded degree of discretion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I have a discussion with the organizations I represent before every meeting. Together we reach a joint decision.”</td>
<td>Joint decision with organization</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I check with the organization on issues, I need to check with them. What are our views on that issue and so on. Before we vote, I check with the organization to ensure that we have the same view, but I still have rather free mandate to act”</td>
<td>Relatively free mandate to act, but checks regarding important issues</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Because the public interest can be very broad, I feel like I have a very free mandate”</td>
<td>Very free mandate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1

Survey questions:
Below are a few questions on decision-making in the municipal political body of which you are a member.

Question 1.
The questions are constructed as opposites (A and B). To what extent do you agree with A or B when you decide on rejuvenation of any of the large Swedish carnivores?
A: I always follow the standpoint of the organization I represent, even when it is contrary to my personal opinion
B: I always follow my personal opinion, even when it is contrary to my organization’s standpoint
Totally agree with A 1 2 3 4 5 6 Totally agree with B

Question 2.
The questions are constructed as opposites (A and B). To what extent do you agree with A or B when you decide on zones for carnivore hunting?
A: I always follow the standpoint of the organization I represent even when it is contrary to my personal opinion
B: I always follow my personal opinion, even when it is contrary to my organization’s standpoint
Totally agree with A 1 2 3 4 5 6 Totally agree with B

Interview questions:
- Have you discussed your roles in your WCC?
  - If yes, how have you discussed your roles?
  - What is the role of the WCC members?
Do the roles function as you have discussed and decided when initially forming the WCCs?

- How do you view your mandate as a member of the WCC? Who, or what, do you represent?
  - Have you perceived uncertainty in your mandate regarding your work in the WCC?
  - Does your organization have clear policies regarding the issues you discuss and decide on in the WCC?
  - What is the extent of your decision-making discretion in relation to the organization you represent?

Dissents in the meetings minutes:

**Table 3.** Dissents in WCC decision-making, according to meeting minutes. Number of dissents in parentheses

- Insert Table 3 here -

Interview results (tables):

**Table 4.** WCC members’ reported roles within the WCCs

- Insert Table 4 here -

**Table 5.** Relationship with represented organization

- Insert Table 5 here -
**Table 6.** Examples of how transcribed interview answers regarding degree of discretion were coded into categories of low, medium, and high levels of discretion

- Insert Table 6 here -
When do politicians follow good examples? — Imitation and decision-making at the local level

Jens Nilsson, Luleå University of Technology

Abstract

The aim of this article is to explore the phenomenon of imitation in Swedish municipalities. Do local politicians imitate successful examples when making decisions? Does their behavior change depending on a) the degree of uncertainty surrounding the issue, b) type of post held by the decision-maker and c) party affiliation? Two hypotheses are developed and tested by means of a large-N study sent out to all Swedish politicians at the local level. The results show that issues surrounded by high uncertainty are more likely to be dealt with by means of a mimicking approach. The analysis also shows that party affiliation and being a professional (salaried) politician significantly predicted imitation in the decision-making. The findings tell us that local politicians do imitate when faced with uncertainty, but to different degrees and depending on their party affiliation and their post. This study contributes to research by taking on an individual-centered focus on the role of imitation and by investigating an underexplored group operating in an underexplored setting: Swedish politicians at the local level. Further research into the decision-making of politicians from different parties, with different party cultures, is encouraged.

Keywords: Imitation, local government, decision making, new institutionalism, organizational theory

Introduction

Understanding and explaining politician’s decision-making is essential for understanding the exercise of power in democracies. A significant factor influencing the politicians’ behavior, and consequently their decision-making, is imitation (see Pasquino 2011). According to Carlson et al. (2000), other people’s behavior is probably the most powerful social influence on one’s own behavior. When we see others perform or refrain from a certain action, we tend to act in the same way. In other words, we imitate. Imitation is more common in governmental organizations,
and among the actors who constitute them, than in, for instance private companies (see Frumkin and Galaskiewicz 2004).

Imitation, or mimetic processes as it is referred to in new institutionalism (see DiMaggio and Powell 1983), explains how public organizations and politicians, primarily at the national level, tend to imitate successful public organizations and politicians to gain acceptance from their surroundings (see, e.g., Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Scott et al. 2000; Villadsen et al. 2010; Scott 2014). Uncertainty is a powerful force in explaining imitation. When we struggle to identify appropriate behavior, we are prone to imitating successful others (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Thus, uncertainty in a decision-making situation increases the likelihood of imitation (e.g., Powell and DiMaggio 1991).

At the local level, other factors besides uncertainty (see, e.g., Villadsen et al. 2010) have been found to influence mimicking and explain why organizations such as local governments tend to both look and act similarly (e.g., in local school politics; see Zhang and Yang 2008). Party affiliation is one example (see Villadsen, Hansen, and Mols 2010). The type of post held also influences the tendency to look for best practices when making decisions. Villadsen (2011) showed that mimicking is more frequent among mayors, and mimicking is also affected by a politician’s professionalism (see arguments in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), for example by working as a politician professionally and as such, receive a salary (see Bäck, Heinelt, and Magnier 2006).

Although imitation and mimetic processes have explained numerous social phenomena from an institutional perspective, especially in organizational theory, the individual-level approaches to the ways in which uncertainty and imitation occur in decision-making contexts remain understudied and poorly understood. The individual level is particularly worthy of study, since uncertainty is cognitively bound to the individual and not the organization per se (Villadsen et al. 2010).

Villadsen et al. (2010) used an individual-level approach to study how public managers in Danish municipalities imitate each other but pointed out that more of these micro-level approach studies are needed to understand how imitation affects the decision-making of actors, such as local politicians.

The present study responds to this call by exploring how uncertainty, party affiliation, and type of post held (being a mayor or professional politician) affect imitation in Sweden’s local politics. The Swedish political context differs from that in
many other Western countries, which makes it an interesting case. Party cohesion is stronger in Sweden than in many other countries and so is the left-right division (see Dalton 2008; Holmberg 2002; Karlsson and Gilljam 2014), both of which affect ideological differences among local decision-makers. Ideology is still stronger in Sweden than in many other countries. Left-right positioning still guides party stances on important issues and explains why voters prefer a certain political party. For example, it is hard to explain why Swedish voters change their voting preferences without looking into the left-right scale (see Oscarsson 2016). Because of strong party cohesion and the left-right dichotomy, the decision-making of Swedish politicians is interesting to explore in relation to imitation, since party affiliation has been shown to matter for imitating decisions (see Villadsen, 2011).

Aim
The aim of the present article is twofold: (1) to explore the extent to which local Swedish politicians imitate successful examples when making decisions and (2) to find out whether factors known to influence imitation in earlier research—uncertainty, party affiliation, and post held—also affect imitation here. Do local politicians imitate successful examples in other municipalities when making decisions? Does their behavior change based on a) the degree of uncertainty surrounding the issue, b) the type of post held by the decision-maker and c) party affiliation?

A large-N study encompassing all local politicians in Sweden was performed to answer the research questions. The next section outlines the theoretical foundations of imitation and mimetic processes and presents a set of theoretical hypotheses. The methods section outlines the large-N survey study and explains how the hypotheses are examined using statistical variance analysis. The article concludes by presenting the results from the statistical analysis and discussing them in relation to theory.

Theory and hypotheses
Imitation as an explanatory factor has its roots in organizational theory (see Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2014), where a central question has been what causes organizations of the same type to resemble each other, regardless of where they are located and which individuals constitute them. The answer to this question, according to organizational theorists, is institutional
isomorphism. *Isomorphism* occurs when organizations adjust to societal pressures to gain acceptance (Boxenbaum and Jonsson 2008).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identify three mechanisms that drive institutional isomorphism. *Coercive isomorphism* is the result of formal and informal pressure on the organization from other organizations that it depends on, and of cultural expectations from society. Such isomorphism may occur in response to, for instance governmental pressures. *Normative isomorphism* refers to pressures on the organization stemming from professionalization. Professionalization is the struggle of members of an occupation to institute methods and work conditions that will compel others to accept their professional autonomy. Such normative pressures stem from, for example, university training in a professional field.

The third mechanism of institutional isomorphism was mentioned in the introduction to this article: *mimetic isomorphism*. The force that encourages imitation is, according to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), uncertainty. Imitation occurs when goals are ambiguous, when organizational technologies are poorly understood, or when uncertainty is a product of the environment. Mimetic isomorphism focuses on the role that uncertainty has for imitation and as such, is important for fulfilling the aim of this article.

People and organizations resort to imitation in the midst of uncertainty is to gain acceptance from society. By imitating others who have been successful, they show that they too can be successful, resulting in homogeneity. This explains why new organizational forms are adopted (see Lee and Pennings 2002) in the apparent absence of normative or coercive pressure to do so. The three isomorphic mechanisms can also be seen as different directions of pressure. Coercive and mimetic isomorphism originate from horizontal positions, like peer organizations or groups. In contrast, normative isomorphism originates from above: the state (Boxenbaum and Jonsson 2008).

*The need for micro-level studies focusing on the individual*

Isomorphic studies of homogenization have been prominent in organizational studies (see, e.g., Mizuruchi and Fein 1999; Peters 2012; Scott 2014), but they have also been criticized for not acknowledging the variation in ideas and actors when exploring the social and temporal aspects of imitation. There has been insufficient attention to how and why ideas are widespread and to how individuals translate those ideas (Sahlin and
Wedlin 2008). In response to this need, the Scandinavian school of institutionalism (see Brunsson 1989; Czarniawska and Sevón 1996; Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall 2002) has studied how ideas are transferred and imitated in qualitative case studies of individual decision-making processes.

According to the Scandinavian school, the diffusion of ideas and its consequences for both institutional change and stability have shown to be important in understanding the imitation process by bringing the focus more to micro-level studies. There is a need to study institutional phenomena not only at the structural level, but also by exploring individual processes (Sahlin and Wedlin 2008).

For example, there is variation in how likely actors are to imitate and in who is imitated, both of which is a product of self-identification. We imitate those who we identify with, not merely people who are successful in our field. In some cases, imitation is also motivated by a desire to distinguish oneself from others. By imitating certain people, one can also distinguish oneself by showing how these people are different. Imitation is a performative (cf. passive) process that translates, shapes, and changes ideas. These thoughts by the Scandinavian school have brought the focus to individual processes and decision-making in institutional studies of imitation.

The Scandinavian school’s emphasis on individual imitation is closely connected to the psychological research on imitation as a significant mechanism for explaining behavior. Development psychologists such as Piaget (1962) and Bandura (see, e.g., Bandura and Barab 1971) have emphasized the role of imitation in human development. In social learning theory, imitation has explained several psychological phenomena, including aggressive and pro-social behavior, in addition to gender roles and self-regulation (Crain 2000). In social psychology, imitation is an important factor for understanding the role of, among others, descriptive norms in behavioral conformity. We observe how others act and then act accordingly in many situations (Aronson et al. 2005).

Although both the Scandinavian school and psychology have studied the impact of individual-level imitation, isomorphism still lacks studies on this level of analysis (see arguments in Villadsen et al., 2010). In my case, when studying mimetic isomorphism, it therefore becomes worthwhile to study the impact of uncertainty on individual politicians’ tendency to imitate.

The topic of imitation has been frequently addressed in comparative political studies, especially on policy diffusion, and mainly at the structural level (see, e.g.,
Berry and Berry 1990; Balla 2001; Berry and Baybeck 2005). Policy diffusion takes place when another country’s policy innovation is adopted and imitated because of pressures from outside the adopting polity (see Shiplan and Volden 2008).

Although a policy diffusion approach offers valuable insights, it is problematic to use as a theoretical foundation. It is limited in explaining the extent to which Sweden’s local politicians resort to imitation when making decisions. The diffusion of ideas in comparative political studies has some similarities with the diffusion of ideas discussed in the Scandinavian school, yet emphasizes neither the role of uncertainty nor the individual level of analysis. Consequently, the policy diffusion approach does not offer understanding or explanation of how uncertainty affects the decision-making of individual local politicians.

**Factors driving mimetic processes: uncertainty, posts held and party affiliation**

Uncertainty has been identified as a primary factor behind imitation, but uncertainty has several definitions. This article draws on Milliken’s (1987) interpretation, which focuses on uncertainty in the politician’s external environment.

Milliken (1987) identifies three types of environmental uncertainty: state, effect, and response. State uncertainty occurs when decision-makers perceive the organizational environment, or part of it, as unpredictable. Effect uncertainty results from the inability to predict the effect that decisions may have on the decision-maker’s organization. Response uncertainty is due to the inability to predict the consequences of response choices (Milliken 1987). The uncertainty facing the politicians in this article is state uncertainty, which arises from a party’s lack of a clear position on an issue.

Other factors drive imitation and mimetic isomorphism at the local level. Villadsen (2011) found that one such factor was mayors’ relational network capacity of the mayors. At the local level, mayors are generally the politicians with the biggest networks and are thus also the most likely to imitate. The reason for this imitation is their larger exposure to alternative solutions, because of their relational network, to municipal problems and to successful examples in other municipalities, and thereby also what is seen as socially legitimate in regard to certain policies.

Being a professional politician is another basis for isomorphism at the local level. As DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have pointed out, professionalization generates standards, routines, and practices that tend to result in similar actions and
Dense relational networks and leadership of local governments and political parties have led to the de-bureaucratization of local agencies in the United States (see Frumkin and Galaskiewicz 2004). Villadsen (2011) had noted how mayors, indeed all professional politicians, are prone to mimetic isomorphism. It is thus reasonable to expect that other professional politicians are more prone to mimicking behavior those who are not, due to professionalization and larger relational networks (both of which influence isomorphism).

Party affiliation also affects the likelihood of imitation at the local level. Villadsen, Hansen, and Mols (2010) found that when making decisions, Danish mayors who were affiliated with the two dominant parties -- the Liberals and the Social Democrats -- imitated more than mayors affiliated with other parties. A reason for looking into the effect of party affiliation on imitation is that the left-right positioning and ideological orientation is among the most important factors in political attitudes and behavior (see e.g. Jost, 2006; Treier and Hillygus, 2009; Harring and Sohlberg, 2017). The strong party cohesion in Sweden (see Mattson 2005) further motivates such analyses.

To conclude, imitation is a strong factor for understanding behavior such as decision-making and there is a need for micro-level studies, particularly in the context of political decision-making. New institutional theories highlight the tendency to mimic behavior in situations of uncertainty, and factors such as type of post held and party affiliation are seemingly important drivers of imitation.

**Imitation in decision-making among local politicians in Sweden: a set of hypotheses**

Based on the theoretical literature, what hypotheses can be derived regarding the behavior of Swedish local politicians? Based on the new institutional literature, we can expect a difference in the inclination to imitate depending on the degree of uncertainty. In this study, uncertainty is indicated by the absence of a clear party standpoint, and this aspect is, following Nilsson (2015), investigated by studying decision-making in regards to two types of issue: 1) organizational change; and 2) tax levels/activity fees. Tax level/activity fee preferences are strongly correlated with party position on Sweden’s left-right scale (see Pettersson-Lidbom 2008). Swedish politicians, especially at the local level, tend follow the party position on crucial issues such as taxation (see Karlsson 2011; Bäck and Larsson 2008). The level of uncertainty when deciding on these issues can therefore be seen as low.
In contrast, organizational change in the municipal administration does not correlate with position on the left-right scale (see Karlsson 2010; Holmberg 2002) and political parties do not regulate the views on these issues as strongly. The level of uncertainty is thus presumed to be higher when local politicians must take a stand on these issues. Previous research supports this stance; adoption of a new organizational form has been shown to stem from imitation (see Lee and Pennings 2002). The resulting hypothesis is consequently as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Swedish politicians imitate politicians in other municipalities more often when deciding on an organizational change in the municipal administration than when deciding on tax levels/activity fees.

Previous research also suggests that being a mayor or a professional politician, and party affiliation will influence mimetic behavior among local politicians. It is therefore interesting to explore whether these factors also drive imitation when politicians much make decisions pertaining to the two issues explored in this study. Thus, the following hypotheses can be derived:

Hypothesis 2a: Mayors are more prone than other local politicians to look at examples in other municipalities when making decisions.

Hypothesis 2b: Professional politicians are more prone than politicians not receiving a salary for their work to look at examples in other municipalities when making decisions.

Hypothesis 2c: Party affiliation will influence the degree to which local politicians look at politicians in other municipalities when making decisions.

The next section outlines how these hypotheses are operationalized and the method used for the empirical analysis.

Methods
A large-N survey study was conducted to collect the data. The questions used for this paper were part of a questionnaire sent to all local and regional Swedish politicians.
in the autumns of 2012 and 2013. Out of the 9,725 contacted politicians, 8,518 responded to the questions’ used for this article, yielding a response rate of about 87.5 percent. Table 1 describes the respondents’ age, gender and level of education.

TABLE 1. Respondent statistics.

-Insert Table 1 here -

The questionnaire measured local politicians’ self-reported decision-making behavior. A common criticism of using this type of measure is that there may be a discrepancy between reported and actual behavior. However, as Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) showed, reported behavior has proven to correlate well with actual behavior when a specific behavior is asked about. Thus, to strengthen the validity of the findings, the survey questions concerned two specific issues (organizational change and tax levels/activity fees). The survey method used helps to increase the external validity of the study because of the large-N sample with a high response rate, which strengthens the statistical analysis and the generalizability of the results. Consequently, it is fair to assume that the external validity is robust for all Swedish politicians at the local level.

The questions were inspired by survey questions used to map ex-ante mimetic decision-making in Villadsen et al. (2010). Respondents were asked whether they base their decisions in relation to the two issues on successful examples in other municipalities or rely more on finding their own solutions. The two alternatives were presented as opposite extremes on the same scale. Respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale which of the two statements they agreed with more. Basing the decision on successful examples in other municipalities was situated at the low end of the scale and basing the decision on finding their own solutions was at the high end.

Along with frequencies, a non-parametric pair-sampled Wilcoxon signed-rank test (see Greene and D’Oliveira 1999) was used to examine and test hypothesis 1. To answer hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c, multiple linear regression was performed. The dependent variable of the regression was constructed by multiplying the respondents’ answers for the two issues (the answers on the two four-point scales), resulting in a scale ranging from one to 16. The multiplying is motivated to include both issues and to produce more variance on the dependent variable, which is important when performing multiple linear regression (see Hair et al. 2006).
The independent variable for hypothesis 2a, being a mayor, was operationalized by constructing a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent was chairman of the municipal executive committee, since this position is comparable to being a mayor in Sweden.

The independent variable for hypothesis 2b, being a professional politician, was operationalized as a dummy variable indicating whether the politicians were paid a full- or part-time salary. Paying local politicians is a consequence of professionalization in Sweden (see Bäck 2005).

The independent variables for hypothesis 2c, party affiliation, consist of dummy variables for each political party, using the Social Democrats as a benchmark. The Social Democrats were chosen it is the biggest political party in Sweden. Further, when looking at the responses of the politicians from this party, they tend to be in the middle of the scale (both mean and median).

Lastly, education, age, and gender were added as independent control variables. Two OLS regressions were performed, one with and one without the control variables, to explore the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The regression equation used for the full model including controls was

\[ Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \beta_{10} X_{10} + \beta_{11} X_{11} + \beta_{12} X_{12} + e, \]

where \( Y \) denotes reported imitation in decision-making, \( a \) intercept, \( X_1 \) mayor (kommunalråd), \( X_2 \) professional politician, \( X_3 \) the Left Party, \( X_4 \) the Green Party, \( X_5 \) the Centre Party, \( X_6 \) the Christian Democrats, \( X_7 \) the Liberals, \( X_8 \) the Moderates, \( X_9 \) the Sweden Democrats, \( X_{10} \) education, \( X_{11} \) age, \( X_{12} \) gender, and \( e \) error.

**Results**

Frequencies for both issues were calculated to explore the extent to which Swedish local politicians reported emulating successful examples in other municipalities or finding their own solution. When asked about making decisions on an organizational change in the municipal administration, most the respondents claimed to agree totally or partly with statement A (18.4 and 50.9 percent, respectively). In other words they follow successful examples in other municipalities rather than rely on their own municipality to find a solution (statement B). When asked about decision-making on
municipal tax levels/activity fees, a majority of the respondents claimed to agree totally or partly with statement B (27.4 and 32.4 percent, respectively), meaning that they rely on the municipality to find its own solution. These results, along with frequencies and sample size, are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Response frequencies regarding decisions on organizational change in the municipal administration and municipal tax levels/activity fees.

To test whether the difference in how Swedish local politicians make decisions on the two issues is statistically significant, a Wilcoxon test revealed a significant difference, \( z = -48.895, p < .001 \). The mean of the ranks in favor of relying on the municipality to find its own solutions when deciding on an organizational change in the municipal administration was 1,778.25, whereas the mean of the ranks in favor of relying on the municipality to find its own solutions when deciding on tax levels/activity fees was 2,293.54.

Two multiple linear regressions were calculated to predict imitation based on the independent variables of being a mayor and being a professional politician, as well as the dummy variables for belonging to the Left Party, the Green Party, the Centre Party, the Christian Democrats, the Liberals, the Moderates (Conservative), and the Sweden Democrats. (The Social Democrats received no dummy variable since they serve as the benchmark.) The first model, without control variables, found a significant regression equation \( (F = 9.425, p < .001) \) with an \( R^2 \) of 0.010. Belonging to the Centre Party \( (p < .01) \), the Moderates \( (p < .001) \), and the Sweden Democrats \( (p < .001) \), as well as being a professional politician \( (p < .001) \), were significant predictors of imitation in decision-making.

The second multiple linear regression was calculated including the control variables of education, age, and gender. This second model found a significant regression equation \( (F = 375.620, p < .001) \) with an \( R^2 \) of 0.036. Belonging to the Left Party \( (p < .05) \), the Centre Party \( (p < .05) \), the Moderates \( (p < .05) \), and the Sweden Democrats \( (p < .01) \), as well as the three control variables education \( (p < .01) \), age \( (p < .01) \), and gender \( (p < .01) \), were significant predictors of imitation. The results of the two models are shown in Table 3.
Concluding discussion

Do local politicians imitate successful examples when making decisions? Does their behavior change depending on a) the degree of uncertainty surrounding the issue, b) type of post held by the decision-maker and c) party affiliation? The empirical analysis shows a significant difference between how the politicians claimed to make decisions on organizational change and how they claimed to make decisions on tax levels/activity fees. The observed difference is in line with the proposed hypothesis (H1), that Swedish local politicians imitate successful examples in other municipalities more often when deciding on an organizational change in the municipal administration than when deciding on tax levels/activity fees. Thus, the assumption about uncertainty being a driving force behind imitation was verified.

The micro-level approach of this study therefore helps to strengthen the theoretical foundation for understanding imitation from an institutional perspective. Uncertainty matters for politicians’ decision-making and does result in imitation. One implication of these results is that both policymakers and the public should expect that modeling the municipal administration after what is seen in other municipalities is a more common strategy than finding an administrative solution based on the municipal context itself. A next step would be to explore whether such modeling is indeed more appropriate: whether it is easy and effective to implement an organizational feature from another municipality or if it comes with implementation problems due to contextual differences (see, e.g., Lidström 2007, who discusses regional contexts in Sweden).

The weaker party discipline in organizational change decisions increases the uncertainty and results in more imitation compared with decisions on tax level/activity fees. However, around 40 percent of the respondents still reported that they follow successful examples in other municipalities when deciding on tax levels/activity fees. Evidently, less uncertainty is prevalent when deciding on this
issue, but because of the rather large share of respondents still reporting imitation, this variation is of interest for further studies.

By delving more deeply into the complexity of party discipline, municipality differences, and uncertainty, in-depth case studies (such as those used by the Scandinavian school of institutionalism, e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges 2007) would help explore which ideas compete with each other and which ideas lead to imitation. Are there, for example, ideas pertaining to tax levels/activity fees that are seen as more successful and therefore also are perceived as worth mimicking, even though there is a clear direction not to do so from the party? Are there cases where the direction from the party is unclear and thus imitation is encouraged? Further research should explore why this is the case. Are there differences between the parties’ politicians (both within a party and along the party lines) in how they perceive their respective party stances on the two policy issues?

The results of the regression analysis also highlight some anomalies in regard to previous research. For instance, the $R^2$ values of both regressions are low, indicating that although some factors were significant predictors of imitation, other factors might explain much more of this reported behavior of the Swedish politicians than type of post held and party affiliation.

Villadsen’s (2011) finding that mayors imitate more than other politicians could not be confirmed. Thus, the null hypothesis of Hypothesis 2a cannot be rejected. However, Swedish politicians at the local level and the context in which they make decisions differ in many ways from the way in which local politicians in other countries do, and this may account for the difference in findings.

Although the $R^2$ values were low, the regressions can still be used to evaluate theories in regard to this empirical case (see the discussion regarding small $R^2$ and theory exploration in the social sciences in Moksony 1990). Being a professional politician was significant in explaining imitation before controls were added to the analysis. When controls were added, the probability was $p = 0.078$ and thus not far from the 0.05 significance threshold. The main reason for this is that the professional politicians are older than their non-professional counterparts (more than 50 percent are 50 years or older) and have more years of education, which explains why the effect of the first model drops. This indicates that we cannot fully reject Hypothesis 2b, and the role of working as a professional politician is therefore worth
exploring in future research, although with more variation in age and education among the local politicians.

The predictive power of party affiliation on imitation is also interesting. The politicians who showed a tendency to imitate significantly more than politicians from the Social Democrats when making decisions belonged to political parties to the right of the Social Democrats, namely the Centre Party and the Moderates. The Left Party, whose representatives seem to look more for their own solutions than their Social Democratic counterparts do, are more to the left.

The politicians representing the Sweden Democrats were the least likely to base their decision-making on imitation, which deviates from this left-right tendency, since it is a party that falls on the political right. The explanation of this deviation may be because the Swedish Democrats are a nationalist/populist party that attracts voters who are more on the authoritarianism/libertarianism scale than on the traditional left-right economic scale (see Oskarsson and Demker, 2015). The party closest to the Sweden Democrats’ percentage is the Left Party, where about 63 percent report they mimic, a difference of more than 10 percentage points. This result was supported by the regression analysis, where politicians belonging to the Swedish Democrats showed the highest beta value at the most probable significant level (p < 0.01).

Seemingly, left-right placement and ideological differences matter when politicians imitate successful others. Thus, party affiliation and to some extent being a professional politician influence the prominence of mimetic behavior. Consequently, Hypothesis 2c, stating that party affiliation influences the degree to which the local politicians look at examples in other municipalities when deciding on both issues, cannot be rejected. Again, here it would be fruitful to explore the results further through deeper case studies of the political parties at the local level, especially the Sweden Democrats. Why were they more likely than the other parties to report trying to find their own solutions? Perhaps some party cultures point their politicians in different directions when making decisions (see e.g. Barrling-Hermansson, 2004).

It is evident that uncertainty and mimicking do play a significant role in the decision-making of Swedish local politicians, at least when deciding on the two issues discussed here. Further, the politician’s party affiliation is important. As I have shown in this paper, institutional imitation does occur, and the next step will therefore be to unravel the details and complexity of this issue. Local politicians do engage in imitation when there us a high level of uncertainty in the decision-making situation.
Further research should explore who these politicians imitate and what ideas underlie their perceptions of successful others.

Notes
1. Descriptive norms are, as defined by Aronson et al. (2005, p. 270), “[p]eople’s perceptions of how people actually behave in given situations, regardless of whether the behavior is approved or disapproved of by others.”
2. In Sweden, the term mayor is not used. The chairman of the municipal executive committee, kommunalråd in Swedish, is the comparable position. However, since the post and responsibilities are similar, I here use the term mayor, since it is more recognized outside of Sweden.
3. The questions were sent out as part of a larger survey produced within a research project based at the Gothenburg School of Public Administration and focusing on Swedish politicians at the regional and local levels. Questions outside the scope of this article were also asked, regarding, e.g., legitimacy, representational style, trust, and views on specific policies. For more information on this project, see Karlsson and Gilljam (2014).
4. For detailed information on the questions, see Appendix.

References


### TABLE 1. Respondent statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background factor</th>
<th>Percent of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–49</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–64</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65–80</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest level of education:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education (grundskola)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education (gymnasium)</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/university</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>
TABLE 2. Response frequencies regarding decisions on organizational change in the municipal administration and municipal tax levels/activity fees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An organizational change in the municipal administration</th>
<th>Totally agree with A</th>
<th>Partly agree with A</th>
<th>Partly agree with B</th>
<th>Totally agree with B</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>4,379</td>
<td>2,009</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>8,598</td>
<td>1,127</td>
<td>9,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative percent</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax levels/activity fees</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>2,648</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative percent</td>
<td>2,759</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22
TABLE 3. OLS Regression, dependent variable is constructed from imitation in both policies, beta coefficients are presented for independent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>6.651 ***</td>
<td>4.408 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party affiliation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Left Party</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.028 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green Party</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Centre Party</td>
<td>-0.032 ***</td>
<td>-0.028 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christian Democrats</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Liberals</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Moderates</td>
<td>-0.057 ***</td>
<td>-0.042 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sweden Democrats</td>
<td>0.052 ***</td>
<td>0.062 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other experimental variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>-0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional politician</td>
<td>-0.040 ***</td>
<td>-0.020 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.061 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.145 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.047 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>8362</td>
<td>8340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance levels:
* p<0.1
** p<0.05
*** p<0.01
Appendix

Questionnaire questions

Below are a couple of questions on decision-making in the municipal political body of which you are a member.

**Question 1.**
The questions are constructed as opposites (A and B). To which extent do you agree with A or B when you decide on proposals about *an organizational change in the municipal administration*?

A: I follow successful examples in other municipalities  
B: I rely on the municipality to find its own solution

Totally agree with A ☐ Partly agree with A ☐ Partly agree with B ☐ Totally agree with B ☐

**Question 2.**
The questions are constructed as opposites (A and B). To which extent do you agree with A or B when you decide on proposals about *tax levels and activity fees*?

A: I follow successful examples in other municipalities  
B: I rely on the municipality to find its own solution

Totally agree with A ☐ Partly agree with A ☐ Partly agree with B ☐ Totally agree with B ☐
The effect of values on decision-making logic: a case of natural resource governance

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Carina Lundmark, Luleå University of Technology

Abstract
The logic of calculus and the logic of appropriateness are two types of decision-making logic connected to new institutional theory. They provide different predictions on how individuals relate to institutions—i.e., the rules of the game—when making decisions. Although it has been determined under which circumstances the two logics are applied, the underlying reasons for their application remain understudied. By exploring how personal values affect how actors apply either the logic of calculus or the logic of appropriateness, this article aims to fill this gap. A logistic regression was performed based on survey data from respondents active in Swedish wildlife conservation committees (WCCs). Independent variables, in the form of Schwartz’s value orientations, as well as four control factors, predicted the application of either of the two logics in a binary dependent variable. The results showed that the value orientation of self-enhancement, contrary to the hypothesis derived from earlier research, positively affected the application of the logic of appropriateness among respondents when they make decisions. Further, the control factor of age was found to positively affect the same logic. The implication of these results is that the link from actors to institutions cannot be ignored in gaining a full understanding of the rules of the game and the effect of institutions; part of this link is explained by personal values.

Keywords: Values, logic of calculus, logic of appropriateness, wildlife, governance, natural resource

Introduction and aim
Institutions are the formal and informal rules of society that set the framework for human interaction by presenting restrictions and opportunities, and awarding certain types of behaviour and sanctioning others (North, 1990). In the 1990s, social science gained a renewed interest in institutional studies, which gave rise to what is currently
called new institutionalism. New institutionalism encompasses several different theories, such as rational choice, sociological and historical intuitionism, with different understandings about the nature of institutions and how they influence individuals (Peters, 2012). Among these theories, two rival assumptions about the interplay between institutions and individuals can be distinguished: the logic of calculus and the logic of appropriateness (e.g. March and Olsen, 1989; North, 1990). The two logics provide different predictions on how individuals relate to institutions—i.e., the rules of the game—in any given decision-making situation.

The logic of calculus is rooted in rational choice theory (Hay, 2004) and perceives institutions as rules of the games that affect goal-pursuing and self-interested actors by providing benefits or costs for certain actions (Monroe, 2001). Thus, individuals take institutions into consideration when pursuing their goals (North, 1990). The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, is based on a sociological view of institutions and emphasizes action according to predefined roles. Instead of calculating the benefits and sanctions for certain actions in relation to self-interested goals, individuals pair situations with what action is perceived appropriate in relation to the particular role they hold (March and Olsen, 1984). Thus, while the logic of calculus perceives institutions as external frames that influence people’s estimations, the logic of appropriateness perceives institutions as internalized frames that define appropriate actions.

The logic of calculus occurs from the following reasoning: 1. What are my alternatives? 2. What are my values and preferences? 3. What are the consequences of the alternatives based on my values and preferences? 4. Choose the alternative with the best consequences. The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, follows a different line of reasoning: 1. What kind of situation am I in? 2. What is my role? 3. How appropriate are different alternatives for action in regards to my role? 4. Do what is most appropriate (March and Olsen, 1989).

The explanatory power of the two logics has been investigated in various decision-making processes, at different political/administrative levels, and within various contexts, such as parliaments and social dilemmas (see e.g. Ostrom, 1990; Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991; Hall and Taylor, 1996; Cameron, 2000; Ostrom et al., 2002; Weber, Kopelman and Messick, 2004; Tenbrunsel and Northcraft, 2010; Bergman and Strøm, 2011). These previous scientific studies lend support to both decision-making logics, although to varying extent. A recent study in the context of
collaborative natural resource management—arenas involving both private and public actors (Nilsson and Sandström, in review)—suggests that the two logics co-exist within the same decision-making arena, and that the choice of logic can be determined by whom the decision-maker represents—for example, an interest organization or a political party. The study confirmed the conditionality of the two logics that had been suggested in previous research (e.g., Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier, 2002; Müller, 2004).

An important research question that remains to be addressed is why actors act according to different decision-making logics. One possible answer to this question is that it depends on the decision-makers’ personal values—the transsituational goals that serve as guiding principles in a person’s life (see Schwartz, 1992). Values have been shown to be a significant determinant of decision-making in earlier research, for instance in environmental governance (see e.g. Stern, 2000; Steg and Vlek, 2009; Sagiv, Sverdlik and Schwarz, 2011; Steg et al., 2012; Jagers, Martinsson and Matti, 2016). However, studies exploring if, and how, values affect decision-making logic are, to our knowledge, both lacking and needed.

The aim of the present article is to explore the connection between personal values and decision-making logic. To this end, we need a study object, or a decision-making arena, that involves decision-makers guided by different decision-making logics. We know from previous studies that Swedish wildlife conservation committees (WCCs) meet this criterion. The WCCs are state-initiated collaborative governance arenas involving organized interests and political parties in formal decision-making processes on wildlife issues. Previous studies have shown how these committees involve actors with conflicting values and beliefs (Matti and Sandström, 2011; 2013), as well as competing logics for decision-making (Nilsson and Sandström, in review).

Our study contributes to institutional theory by exploring the link between personal values and decision-making logic, which has implications for the understanding of how individuals relate to and are affected by the rules of the game, the institutions. By using a micro-level approach to understanding this relation (cf. Villadsen, Hansen and Mols, 2010), the assumptions behind the institutional theories in question are explored and evaluated, rather than treated as mere assumptions (as usually is the case in contemporary institutional research). Finally, the study provides
empirical insights into the role of values for decision-making behaviour in natural resource governance and collaborative arenas.

Theory

Values are commonly defined as the transsituational goals serving as guiding principles in a person’s life, and they play a significant role in understanding social phenomena of various kinds, at both the micro and macro levels (see Schwartz, 1992; van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995). Values are relatively stable and enduring (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987); they are ultimately held by individuals but constitute cultures when shared with other people (cf. Almond and Verba, 1963; Inglehart, 1990). Further, and of particular importance in this study, values play a major role when prioritizing competing goals (see Schwartz, 1992; 2010; Steg et al., 2012). This study departs from Schwartz’s value theory (1992), which includes ten values that are universal and present across all cultures. Schwartz’s value theory is one of the most commonly used sets of values in social science research, most notably in studies explaining various forms of environmental behaviour (see e.g. Stern and Dietz, 1994; Karp, 1996; Stern, 2000; Nordlund and Garvill, 2003; Matti, 2009; Steg et al., 2012; van der Werff and Steg, 2016). The ten values, as well as their definitions, are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Universal values (based on Schwartz, 2010)

- Insert Table 1 here -

The values in Table 1 constitute a value system where some values are complementary to each other while others are in stark conflict. For example, benevolence and conformity (first and third row in Table 1) often interact to promote pro-social behaviour (such as helping others). On the other hand, security and power (the last two rows in Table 1) tend to inhibit such pro-social behaviour (Schwartz, 2010). Further, previous studies on environmental behaviour have found that hedonism (seeking pleasure and gratification) correlates negatively with environmental behaviour, in contrast to values such as universalism, which encompasses appreciation of nature and the welfare of others. Accordingly, hedonism constitutes an important factor to consider when exploring barriers to a behavioural
change towards, for instance, more environmentally benevolent behaviour (cf. Steg et al., 2012).

From the above, it is clear that the values in Schwartz’s value system interact and can be thought of as opposing clusters. The relationships between competing value clusters are demonstrated in two bi-polar dimensions (Schwartz, 2010). The first dimension contrasts conservation and openness to change. This dimension highlights the conflict between values that promote order, preservation, and self-restriction (security, conformity, and tradition, Table 1), and those that promote thought, independence of action, and readiness to change (the values of self-direction, hedonism, and stimulation, Table 1). The other dimension contrasts self-enhancement and self-transcendence. The main conflict here lies between values that concern the welfare and well-being of others (universalism and benevolence, Table 1), and those that are related to the pursuit of self-interest (achievement and power, Table 1). It is thus important to acknowledge how the values are related to each other on these two dimensions in order to explore how values influence decision-making behaviour.

The role of values has also been acknowledged in new institutional studies. For example, Scott (2003, p. 18) stresses that values are part of any social grouping of individuals as “the criteria employed in selecting goals of behavior”. Simon (1997) shares a similar view, and describes values as assumptions of what ends are desirable or preferred when making decisions. Values have not, however, been addressed in studies on the interplay between institutions and individuals, nor examined in relation to the two decision-making logics (logic of calculus and logic of appropriateness) in focus in the present article. There are several reasons why it is a worthy pursuit to examine this link further, especially in regard to Schwartz’s (1992) value dimensions. Treading this path, we summarize the arguments and present an analytical framework below (Figure 1).

- Insert Figure 1 here -

**Figure 1.** Analytical framework: value dimensions and decision-making logics

Earlier research has shown that the two value dimensions (conservation – openness to change; self-enhancement – self-transcendence) differ in how they affect rule compliance. For example, previous studies have shown that conservation values
correlate positively with compliance with social norms (see Lönnqvist, Walkowitz, Wichardt, Lindemann and Verkasalo, 2009), whereas its antagonist, openness to change, is negatively related (see Myyry et al., 2009). Since the logic of appropriateness emphasizes rule compliance—complying with the role you have been assigned—we can, from the earlier research described above, derive the following hypothesis for our study:

**Hypothesis 1:** The value orientation of conservation has a positive effect on using the logic of appropriateness when making decisions.

Further, experiments of social dilemmas and scenarios promoting behaviour similar to those of rationality (as is found in the logic of calculus), have shown that the value orientation of self-enhancement correlates positively with the logic of calculus when making decisions (see Sagiv, Sverdlik and Schwarz, 2011). Derived from this earlier research, we end up with the following hypothesis for our study:

**Hypothesis 2:** The value orientation of self-enhancement has a positive effect on using the logic of calculus when making decisions.

Consequently, it is reasonable to go further and investigate whether these two value dimensions also affect the execution of the two decision-making logics. As mentioned before, the two logics have been thoroughly researched, but the role of personal values for these logics has not been explored. By investigating how the two value dimensions affect decision making in the WCCs, we want to fill parts of this knowledge gap. The next section describes how we operationalize our study to fulfil its aim.

**Methods**

**The Case**

To fulfil the aim of the study, the link between personal values and decision-making logics among participants in Swedish wildlife conservation committees (WCCs) will be examined. The WCCs represent regional collaborative decision-making arenas initiated by the state in 2010, to increase the low legitimacy of Swedish wildlife policies in general and large carnivore policy in particular (Swedish Department of
Environment, 2009; Lundmark and Matti, 2015). The WCCs involve representatives from political parties and relevant interest organizations, and decide on guidelines for hunting and wildlife management. They also submit proposals for minimum levels of bear and lynx (and recently, wolf, for some counties) rejuvenation, as well as comment on management plans (Government Bill 2012/13:191; SOU 2012:22).

Data collection

Data was collected through a survey distributed to all permanent members of the 21 Swedish WCCs. Previous research regarding the impact of values has leaned heavily towards a survey-method approach (see e.g. Lindemann and Verksalo, 2005; Steg et al., 2012; van der Werff and Steg, 2016; van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995). The respondents from the WCC of Gotland were later excluded due to an absence of large carnivores in that region (the existence of large carnivores was crucial for the survey questions and analysis of them). This resulted in a total of 291 useful responses and a response rate of about 56 percent. The year of birth among the respondents ranged from 1932 to 1983, with a majority being born in 1954 or earlier. Respondents were 35.4 percent women, and 64.6 percent men. A majority of the respondents, about 40.3 percent, had a bachelor degree or higher.

Measures

To measure Schwartz’s universal values, we used 20 items (suggested by Matti, 2009) with the addition of a measurement for hedonism (suggested by Steg et al., 2012). The respondents were provided a list of values, including brief descriptions, and were asked how important each value item was to them as a guiding principle in life (see Table 2 below). The scale used to measure the importance of each item varied from -1 (indicating contrary to one’s values) to 7 (of utmost importance).

Table 2. Items used to measure Schwartz’s universal values

- Insert Table 2 here -

To measure the dependent variable, we draw on Nilsson (2015), who determined what decision-making logic was used among members of local parliaments by examining how they related to the “rule of representation”. The members of the WCCs are
appointed to represent their respective political parties or interest organizations (see Government Bill 2012/13:191), and should consequently make decisions in line with the party/organization view. Thus, the rule—the institution—is to follow the party or organizational standpoint when making decisions. The two logics predict different behaviour in relation to this rule in situations where there is a conflict between a member’s personal standpoint and the party/organizational standpoint. According to the logic of calculus, the rule of representation constitutes the frame for calculated behaviour by the individual. The decision-maker will weigh costs and benefits associated with breaking the rule, and we can expect decisions in line with the personal standpoint, rather than the organizational standpoint, in situations where the sanctions for deviating behaviour is low, and decisions in line with the organizational standpoint in situations when sanctions are high. The logic of appropriateness, on the other hand, predicts that the decision-maker will disregard the magnitude of sanction and consistently follow the party or organizational standpoint since this behaviour is consistent with “the role” of serving as a representative.

The validity of these assumptions was examined by analysing how the WCC members acted, i.e. what standpoint they pursued in situations of conflict between their own standpoint and that of their respective organizations, under different degrees of sanctions. In general, large carnivore policy issues, such as rejuvenation of wolf and lynx, have been the most infected and contested topics (see Government Bill 2012/13:191; Swedish Department of Environment, 2009), and have therefore exerted strong pressures on representatives to conform with the views of their respective parties/organizations. Other issues, such as guidelines for moose management, are generally uncontested, and thus do not generate the same pressure to conform. Table 3 illustrates the behaviour that is predicted by the two decision-making logics when deciding on contested and non-contested issues.

Table 3. Logic of calculus and logic of appropriateness predictions, by policy issue

- Insert Table 3 here -

Two survey questions were asked to measure the degree to which the respondents follow the party/organizational standpoint when it differs from their own view when deciding on each of the two policy issues (large carnivore rejuvenation and guidelines
for management of moose). The response scale ranged from 1 (“I follow the view of the organization I represent, even when it is contrary to my personal view”) to 6 (“I follow my personal view, even when it is contrary to the view of the organization I represent”).

Data analysis
The respondents’ responses regarding the importance of Schwartz’s universal values were used as independent variables, along with the following control variables: year of birth, sex, education, and political party representative (the last control variable consists of a dichotomous scale where one and zero indicate being and not being a political representative, respectively). The last variable was included since previous studies have implied that political party representatives differ from other representatives in terms of how they perceive their discretion when making decisions (see Nilsson and Sandström, in review). Since the items are proxies for the ten universal values, which in turn are connected to the two bi-polar dimensions mentioned in the theory section, reliability tests were executed to ensure the items related to each other are responded to in the same way. The items and values were grouped and indexed according to their positions on the two dimensions, which resulted in four value orientations that serve as independent variables: conservation (security, conformity, tradition), openness to change (self-direction, hedonism, stimulation), self-enhancement (achievement, power) and self-transcendence (universalism, benevolence).

First, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for each of the four orientations. Three of the four orientations (conservation, $\alpha = 0.628$; openness to change, $\alpha = 0.645$; self-enhancement, $\alpha = 0.699$) scored between 0.60 and 0.70, which is the lower limit of acceptability (see Hair et al., 1998). Self-transcendence ($\alpha = 0.592$) scored just below these critical values, indicating reliability problems. To explore these issues further, a factor analysis was performed for a fixed number of four factors (one for each orientation).

The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant at $p<0.001$ (Chi-square = 919.7, df = 210), and the KMO test evaluating sampling adequacy was at an acceptable rate of 0.721 for the collective set. In general, the items showed correlations with the extracted factors, as presented in the theory section. However, when scrutinizing the pattern matrix, two items turned out to be problematic. The loyalty item related to
benevolence correlated highly \((r = 0.673)\) with the items in the conservation orientation, and not at all with the items related to the self-transcendence orientation \((r = 0.157)\). Further, the protect-the-environment item, which is also related to universalism, showed low correlation with the extracted factor for this orientation \((r = 0.239)\), and no correlation with any other orientation. A new Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for self-transcendence, now excluding these two items, and the new score was within the lower limit of acceptability \((\alpha = 0.610)\).

The dependent variable was constructed by combining the two survey questions described above (large carnivore rejuvenation and guidelines for management of moose) and transforming them into the binary scale of zero (using a logic of appropriateness) and one (using a logic of calculus). The construction relied on the predictions depicted in Table 3 and further elaborated on in Appendix 1.

We used logistic regression to test whether values (along with the control variables) affect the decision-making logic used, which is common practice when trying to predict a binary dependent variable (see Hair et al., 1998). The logistic regression equation used was

\[
Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + e,
\]

where \(Y\), denotes decision-making logic (logic of appropriateness or logic of calculus), \(X_1\) conservation, \(X_2\) openness to change, \(X_3\) self-enhancement, \(X_4\) self-transcendence, \(X_5\) year of birth, \(X_6\) sex, \(X_7\) education, \(X_8\) politician, and \(e\) error.

**Results**

The logistic regression predicts the probability of the respondents using either of the two logics in relation to the independent variables (including control variables). Table 4 presents the regression model. Our first analysis aims to examine the accuracy of the model. To this end, a chi-square statistic was calculated, and a Hosmer-Lemeshow test was performed. A good model fit is indicated when there is a significant model chi-square and an insignificant Hosmer-Lemeshow chi-square statistic (Hair et al., 1998). The chi-square statistic for the model was 18.043 \((df = 8, p = 0.021)\), and the Hosmer-Lemeshow chi-square was 3.936 \((df = 8, p = 0.863)\), indicating a good model fit for the experimental model.
The classification accuracy of the model is compared with that of the intercept-only model. The intercept-only model, in which all observations are placed into the largest group, had an overall accuracy percentage of 74.1. The present model including all of the independent variables had an overall accuracy percentage of 76.4, thus exceeding the intercept-only model.

After ensuring that the model has a good fit, we move on to examining the explanatory power of each variable. The Wald statistics indicate the significance of each estimated coefficient, thus revealing the importance of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable. The Wald statistics, as well as the full results of the model, are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Model coefficients

Two independent variables are found to be significant, i.e. the variable of self-enhancement values ($B = -0.895; p = 0.019$) and the control variable of year of birth ($B = -0.099; p = 0.018$). This result can be taken to mean that the more self-enhanced values among the respondents, the more they are guided by the logic of appropriateness. Further, the younger the respondents, the more they lean towards using the logic of appropriateness (note that the variable is year of birth and, thus, the higher the number, the younger the respondent). None of the other values (including control variables) had a significant impact on respondents’ decision making.

Discussion
The aim of the present article is to explore the connection between personal values and decision-making logic. The results of the statistical analysis suggest there is such a connection, even when controlling for other factors. However, only one value orientation, self-enhancement, proved significant, and indicates a certain direction. The stronger the reported importance of the values of achievement and power, the more likely the respondents were to apply the logic of appropriateness. Consequently, values tend to affect what logic is applied.

If we turn to our two hypotheses for the study, neither the hypothesis that the value orientation of conservation has a positive effect on using the logic of
appropriateness when making decisions (Hypothesis 1) nor the hypothesis that the value orientation of self-enhancement has a positive effect on using the logic of calculus when making decisions (Hypothesis 2) found support. What is perhaps most remarkable in regard to earlier research is that the results of this study point in a different direction than the latter of these two hypotheses. Instead of finding a positive effect of reporting a self-enhancement orientation on applying the logic of calculus when making decisions, we found a positive effect of reporting this orientation on applying the logic of appropriateness.

Why are this study’s respondents who put more weight on self-enhancement than on self-transcendence more likely to do what is deemed appropriate? One explanation is related to the ability to advance and improve one’s political position. One is more likely to earn future political position in Sweden if the representative is loyal to his or her organization and follows the party principle (see e.g. Esaiasson and Holmberg, 1996; Skoog, 2011). Those who want to exert and achieve power as political representatives in Sweden need to be loyal to the party, at least in the long run. This argument also seems applicable to interest organization representatives. Nilsson and Sandström (in review) indicate that the organizational representatives in the WCCs are even less likely than their politician counterparts to deviate from the standpoint of their respective organizations when deciding on wildlife policy issues.

Year of birth was also significant in predicting decision-making logic. Our findings show that younger participants act more in line with the logic appropriateness, while older participants act more according to the logic of calculus. These results, suggesting a difference depending on personal values and generation, may have implications for our understandings of policy and management. When constructing administrative settings such as the Swedish WCCs, we can expect the composition of personal values and age of these groups to affect decision-making behavior. Groups, like the WCCs, consisting of older representatives are less prone to act according to their role as representatives and do what is seen as a duty or obligation. An interesting point for further research is to delve deeper into the processes of socialization involved here. Are younger people perhaps socialized into their representation role in another fashion than the older individuals?

This study suggests that values seem to matter for decision-making related to the institutional frame. The claims by March and Olsen (1989) that values play a
significant role for decisions related to institutions are supported by the results of the present study.

What is perhaps most interesting regarding the logic of appropriateness and the claim by March and Olsen (1989) is that while March and Olsen emphasized the role of values for logic of calculus, values also seem to matter to the logic of appropriateness. The present paper contributes to March and Olsen’s theory by stretching the role of values for appropriateness as well, and to what individuals frame as being appropriate.

Actors with certain values may indeed act more appropriate than others, more in line with that they perceive their role is, which is also an important lesson for the understanding of Swedish WCCs. Heterogeneity in interests and goals, as well as in basic values, seemingly influences how decision-makers behave and relate to the rules of the game, which should be taken into account when predicting the products of collaborative management settings such as these. Drawing on these results, collaborative management arenas seem to be even more complex than earlier expected, as not only the composition and background of the actors are important for understanding these arenas, so too are the personal values of the actors involved.

Values matter not only for the institutionalization of actors, but also for how actors relate and react to institutions, which this article has shown. To understand the rules of the game and the effect of institutions, the link from actors to institutions cannot be ignored. Part of this link is explained by personal values. The next step is to explore what other factors contribute to this link and to the complex nature of institutions.

Notes
1. The role of values has, for instance, been studied successfully in relation to environmental contexts (see e.g. Schwartz, 1992; van Deth and Scarbrough, 1995; Matti, 2009; Brugnach et al., 2011).
2. It is important to distinguish between values and beliefs, since the two concepts share some basic features and tend to be linked. A common way to separate the two is to think of values as more fundamental and general in character, whereas beliefs are more empirically oriented (see e.g. Matti, 2009).
References


Nilsson, J. and Sandström, A. ‘Personal preferences or organizational standpoint? Exploring and explaining how participants in collaborative management relate to their role as representatives’, in review.


Skoog, L. 2011. *Alla följer partilinjen - en studie om hur kommunpolitiker tolkar sitt mandat i praktiken* [Everyone follows the party line - A study on how local politicians
interpret their mandate in practice]. Gothenburg: School of Public Administration/Förvaltningshögskolan.


**Table 1.** Universal values (based on Schwartz, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Restraint of actions, impulses and inclinations likely to harm or upset others, and to violate social norms or expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Acceptance, commitment, and respect of ideas provided by one’s religion or culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Enhancing and preserving the welfare of people with whom one has frequent contact at a personal level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>Protection, understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of nature and of the welfare of all people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>Independent action and thought in regards to choosing, creating, and exploring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation</td>
<td>Challenge in life, as well as excitement and novelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism</td>
<td>Seeking of pleasure and gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Personal success, demonstrated through competence according to social standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Status, prestige, as well as control or dominance over other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Stability, safety, and harmony of relationship, self, and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Respect for tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>Broad-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protect environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation</td>
<td>A varied life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism</td>
<td>Enjoy life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Social order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logic of calculus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contested issue</td>
<td>Party or organizational standpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contested issue</td>
<td>Personal preferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Model coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (p)</th>
<th>Exp ($B$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>-0.164</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.664</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to change</td>
<td>0.478</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>1.846</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>1.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancement</td>
<td>-0.895</td>
<td>0.383</td>
<td>5.457</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-transcendence</td>
<td>-0.245</td>
<td>0.355</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>0.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of birth</td>
<td>-0.099</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>5.557</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-0.241</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>0.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.323</td>
<td>0.472</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.493</td>
<td>0.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>1.902</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>2.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>194.119</td>
<td>61.769</td>
<td>5.636</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>2.018E+84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5.** Description of how the logic predictions from Table 3 have been operationalized and coded as the dependent binary variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer on survey scale</th>
<th>0 to 3</th>
<th>4 to 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contested issue:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large carnivore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rejuvenation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party or organizational standpoint:</td>
<td>Both logics (coded as 1)</td>
<td>None of the logics (coded as 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal preference:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contested issue:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management of moose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party or organizational standpoint:</td>
<td>Logic of appropriateness (coded as 0)</td>
<td>Logic of calculus (coded as 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Theoretical model: value dimensions and decision-making logics
Appendix 1

Operationalization of dependent variable

Since both the logic of calculus and the logic of appropriateness predict compliance with the party/organizational standpoint for the contested issue (large carnivore rejuvenation), responses of three or lower on the six-grade scale were coded as “1 – both logics”, since respondents answering three or less report to follow the party/organizational standpoint to some extent when it conflicts with their personal views on this matter. Responses of four or higher (about 50 percent of the respondents) were excluded from the analysis, since none of the logics predicts following one’s personal view rather than the party/organizational standpoint on the contested issue.

The predictions from the two logics differ regarding the non-contested issue (guidelines for management of moose), where the logic of calculus predicts following one’s personal view rather than the party/organizational standpoint, and the logic of appropriateness predicts the opposite. Consequently, the responses of three or lower were coded as “0 – logic of appropriateness”, and the responses of four or higher as “1 – logic of calculus”. The newly coded questions were then combined and multiplied with each other, which created the binary dependent variable of zero (logic of appropriateness) to one (logic of calculus). To clarify, the construction of the binary dependent variable in relation to the predictions of Table 3 is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Description of how the logic predictions from Table 3 have been operationalized and coded as the dependent binary variable.

- Insert Table 5 here -