Managing social work

Organisational conditions and everyday work for managers in the Swedish social services

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To David, Nora and Harriet.
Förord

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1. Introduction

What is social work management? This is a central question, not only in this thesis, but also in a recent text by the oft-cited scholar Yeheskel Hasenfeld. He also posits an answer:

What exactly is human services management? On the one hand, the field is bounded by the common mission to meet the social welfare needs of vulnerable populations, reduce social inequality and advocate for social rights. On the other hand, it is awash with practice principles and models imported from business administration and New Public Management (NPM). /…/ I argue that it is inescapable that the logics that guide these two respective fields—human services for meeting common human needs and advancing social rights, and management practices for revenue optimization, efficiency and organizational growth—are in conflict with each other (Hasenfeld 2015, p. 1).

In trying to define human service management, Hasenfeld draws attention to a development that is believed to have had a large impact on social work and other human service organisations (HSOs) during recent decades, namely the implementation of new public management (NPM) inspired reforms and ideals. In the quote it is suggested that this development has had great consequences for the management of these organisations.

One of the central tenets of NPM is that the public sector has become ineffective and unaffordable and would benefit from importing managerial ideals and techniques from the private sector. This recipe for public sector success is not new; on the contrary it predates the NPM movement, although it has been greatly fuelled by the advent of NPM (Boyne 2002). While advocates of the adoption of private sector models assume that there are no fundamental differences between the public and the private sector, critics have argued that public sector and private sector differ in several important ways, which makes implementation of private sector models fruitless and perhaps also counterproductive (e.g. Appleby 1949; Allison 1986).

In Hasenfeld’s quote, it is not the possible mismatch between private sector models and public sector organisations in general that is highlighted; rather, the quote points to the perceived incompatibility between NPM and certain kinds of public sector organisations; namely human service organisations. Fundamental to this standpoint is the view that the values and commitments of HSOs differentiate them not only from commercial businesses but also from other public sector organisations, making private sector models...
particularly unsuitable. Despite this, there is research that suggests that HSOs have been more receptive to the influence of NPM than other public sector organisations (Healy 2009; Björk et al. 2011). With this potential paradox as a background, the consequences of NPM for the management in the personal social services (i.e. the organisations that administer large parts of the public social work in Sweden, see below) will be discussed in this thesis.

Albeit important, the implementation of NPM reforms is just one feature among many that constitute the conditions for managerial work in the personal social services. Therefore, this thesis will address also the impact of other aspects. One such aspect is the increased specialisation which, like NPM, is assumed to have changed the conditions for management during recent decades. Another important aspect is the proximity to, and influence of, local politicians. Due to the fact that politicians are involved not only in policymaking but also in decisions regarding individual cases (Höjer et al. 2014), the influence of politicians is more extensive in the personal social services than in other public sector organisations. This also differentiates social work from other, non-public sector professions. The relation between politics and administration in the public sector has historically received much attention. A traditional way of thinking about it is that the two fields should be separated, but today researchers tend to describe this dichotomy as a theoretical construct, not as a description of how the actual relations are shaped (Svara 1998; Lennqvist Lindén 2010).

With this background, together with the generally increased level of interest in management/leadership – which may be understood as partly a result of the influence of NPM/managerialism and also as a reflection on the growth of individualisation (Lawler 2008) – it is surprising that research on social work management still is relatively scarce. For example, such research in Sweden is more or less absent. There is more domestic research regarding managers in eldercare, but as there are significant differences between management in eldercare and management in the personal social services, the inferences from in the former cannot be directly applied to the latter. International research on social work management is more extensive, originating mainly from the UK and the USA. In that research, the functions of social work management as well as the consequences of NPM for social work are touched upon. However, a number of perspectives are lacking, which brings us back to the question posed initially: “What is social work management?” This question has not yet been fully answered in the previous research. To mention one shortcoming, we know very little about what such work actually entails on an everyday basis. The answer Hasenfeld suggested in the initial quote was more concerned with what such management should or should not be. Although these normative contributions are important, I believe that it is also essential to empirically investigate what management in social work is, as described and understood by social work managers themselves. This includes an exploration of the managers’ own descriptions about their every-
day work as well as their perceptions of the organisational conditions in politically governed organisations where the influences of NPM supposedly have had a large impact. These are important issues, not only because they shed light on the managers, but also because it may be assumed that the managers’ values and conditions have consequences for the social work organisations, the social workers, and in the end also for the clients.

Later in this thesis, I shall also return to the question of what social work management should or should not be. Then, at that point, this may be discussed in the light of the findings conveying what social work management is.

Aim

The aim of the thesis is to analyse the organisational conditions and everyday content of social work management in the Swedish personal social services. The analysis will focus on the managers’ perceptions of the conditions for management and its’ organisational base in an era which has seen considerable changes due to increasing specialisation and reforms caused by managerialism/NPM. The aspiration is to combine an individual perspective that focuses on the managers themselves and their managerial work with a structural focus on how social work management is affected by organisational conditions and changes. The thesis will answer the following main questions:

- What are the individual characteristics and organisational affiliations of the managers in the personal social services, and how do the managers understand their path to management and their acquisition of managerial competences?
- How do managers on different levels describe the contents of and conditions for everyday managerial work, and how are the consequences of the recent organisational changes understood?
- How do managers describe the conditions for management in a human service organisation that is politically governed, and how do managers on different levels appreciate their own and other groups’ levels of influence in such organisation?
- How can the managers’ work conditions and their descriptions of them be interpreted against the background of changes in organisational conditions, NPM related reforms and the fact that they work in politically governed organisations?

As very little is known about the managers in the Swedish personal social services, both basic and in-depth knowledge is of interest. For example, we do not know who the managers are, how they have acquired management
positions or how they have learnt to be managers, and thus the first empirical chapters will concentrate on these issues. The question of management succession and education has received international attention, not least in the light of managerialist influence, and hence it is interesting to compare the situation in Sweden with that of other countries. Following this, the personal social service managers’ perceptions of their everyday work will be explored. This is an issue that to my knowledge has not been researched before, although managerial work has received interest in other fields. After this, the managers’ understanding of the changes related to NPM/managerialism will be investigated. Although there is a body of literature on the consequences of NPM on social work and the social services, the managers’ own perspectives on this have not been much investigated. Finally, in the last empirical chapter, the conditions for management in politically governed social work organisations will be discussed. As the proximity to local politicians is quite unique for the Swedish context, this is an issue that cannot be captured by research from other countries. Together with the indications of a mismatch between human service ideals and NPM, the likely contradictions between political governance and NPM ideals also forms an interesting background for discussion.

Some clarifications

There are a few concepts that already have been used, despite not having been properly introduced. These concepts are of importance throughout the thesis, which is why they deserve an introductory presentation, even if some of them will be elaborated on in the following chapter. The first concept; “personal social services” is used to describe the type of organisation in which the managers in focus have their employment. Both the usage of the concept and the structure of the actual organisations will be described below. The usage of the concepts “NPM” and “managerialism” also need to be briefly explained, even if an in-depth description will follow in chapter two. The possible distinction between the concepts “management” and “leadership” – and to some extent also “administration” and “supervision” – have been discussed in previous literature, and it is of importance to illuminate why management is the concept of choice in this thesis. This section will end with a discussion regarding this issue.

The personal social services

Welfare provision in Sweden is to a large extent a public sector responsibility, and welfare services such as the social services, child care and primary and secondary education are to a large extent provided by the municipalities. The provision of welfare services is regulated by law (the Local Government
Act, in combination with legislation covering specific areas, e.g., Social Services Act), but the municipalities have a considerable degree of autonomy to organise the services in accordance with the local context.

The municipalities are governed by politically elected representatives. Each municipality has a municipal council (“kommunfullmäktige”), which appoints the municipal executive board (“kommunstyrelsen”) and decides which municipal boards (“nämnder”) the municipality should have. Each board is responsible for specific elements of the municipalities’ services. Until 1992, certain boards were compulsory (e.g. the social welfare board and the local education board) but with the introduction of the Local Government Act 1992, the municipalities have obtained greater leeway in determining their internal organisation and can now appoint whatever boards they see fit (Fernler 1996). Despite the autonomy to decide which boards to have, most municipalities have a social welfare board (“socialnämnd”) which is responsible for the social services (Johansson 2012). In larger municipalities it is common for the social welfare board to appoint a working committee (“sociala utskottet”) with fewer delegates. When such a working committee exists, it is often delegated responsibility for decisions that concern individuals (Liljegren et al. 2014).

Also the internal organisational structures of the social services administration may differ between municipalities. Nevertheless, child welfare, substance abuse treatment for adults and social assistance (i.e. a means-tested cash benefit which in Sweden is administered by trained social workers) are often seen as the three core fields of Swedish public social work, and are often referred to as the personal social services (Stranz et al. 2016; Perlinski et al. 2013; Stranz & Wiklund 2013; Bergmark & Lundström 2007). In some municipalities, mental health units also have their organisational affiliation within the personal social services. Together with social work concerning disabled persons and the elderly, these fields generally make up the social services in the Swedish municipalities.

In this thesis, it is the managers in the personal social services that are in focus, meaning that the domains of social work with the elderly or disabled persons are not subject to investigation here. The majority of the investigated managers’ work within the three core fields of social work, but in some municipalities, mental health units are organised together with units for substance abuse treatment for adults or have their organisational affiliation within the personal social services, and in these cases the managers of these units are also included.

1 In Swedish this sector is called “individ- och familjeomsorgen” (a direct translation would be “the individual and family care”).
NPM and managerialism

Of great importance in this thesis, as may already have been noted, is the influence of the movement or trend that often is referred to as New Public Management. As will be discussed in chapter two, this concept is broad and used to describe quite a few different doctrines and reforms. For a simple introductory explanation it may be said that NPM rests on two ideological foundations – managerialism and new institutional economics (NIE). While managerialism mainly is concerned with the management of the organisation and the grounds for managerial practice, NIE is more concerned with the introduction of market incentives and mechanisms.

In this thesis the main focus is on managerialism, and how the managers in the personal social services perceive reforms connected to this ideology. However, as NPM and managerialism are closely connected (the concept of NPM includes both NIE/marketisation and managerialism) and as it often is difficult to distinguish exactly which of the ideological foundations that have led to which reform, the concept NPM is used in this thesis unless it is apparent that the phenomena described is linked primarily to the ideology of managerialism.

Management, leadership, administration and supervision

Management and leadership are often discussed in the literature. Several scholars differentiate between the two concepts but do not necessarily use the same distinctions. Over time and in different writings, there have been different conceptualisations of the proposed differences between management and leadership. For example, they have been portrayed as deriving from different types of personalities or traits (Zaleznik 1977) and as different functions/activities (Kotter 2001). There has also been literature that has sought to deconstruct the concepts (Learmonth 2005), and literature that questions if a distinction is at all meaningful (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2014).

Where leadership is concerned, it appears to be almost impossible to find a common definition, and as a result there are almost as many definitions as there are writers on the topic (Bargal 2000). Often, the concept is associated with things like influence, motivation, change and followers (Hagström 1990; Henning 2000). Management on the other hand, seems in a broad sense to be associated with efficiency, regulation, bureaucratic processes and administrative duties. It is often discussed in relation to certain positions in an organisation (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2014; Lundström & Shanks 2015). By the way management and leadership often are depicted, leadership appears as something attractive and desirable, while management appears less so; associated as it is with routine administrative duties.
Apart from these two concepts, there is another concept that is of interest in this context, namely ‘administration’/‘administrator’. Until sometime during the late 70s, people in leading positions in social work organisations (as in other public sector organisations) in English speaking countries were referred to as administrators (Learmonth 2005; Harris & White 2009). The distinction between public sector administration and private sector business management was made as a result of the assumption that there were important differences between the sectors affecting their governance (Harris & White 2009). With the influence of NPM, this assumption was to a large extent dismissed, and the term administration started to be regarded as inferior to management (Learmonth 2005). Interestingly, it appears as if the term management (in the management/leadership discussion) now has taken over many of the connotations formerly associated with administration. In the Swedish language, the term administrator has not been commonly used for public sector executives in the same way as it has in the English language, and therefore the described development is not directly applicable to Swedish circumstances. The distinction between the two terms manager (chef) and leader (ledare) has nevertheless been very apparent.

As the Swedish language lacks a directly corresponding term for administrator, this term will not be used in this thesis. Instead, the terms manager and management (chef/chefskap) will be used. There are several reasons for this; the most important being that it is the holders of certain positions in certain organisations that are in focus, which makes the terms leader and leadership inappropriate. The respondents and interviewees are chosen as a result of their management positions in the personal social services. Also, I share the opinion of e.g. Sveningsson and Alvesson (2014) that the distinction between management and leadership is problematic, partly as a result of the often necessary connection between leadership and a formal (management-) position, and partly as a result of the seemingly loose connection between the term leadership and a distinct phenomenon. However, it will become clear that some managers in the personal social services in some instances express an aspiration to lead rather than to manage. This means that it at least is important to have some idea of what the managers may be implying with such statements (i.e. an idea of leadership connotations).

Lastly, before leaving the rather complex terminology related to managers, another term that to some extent is related to those described above needs to be discussed; namely supervision. Supervision as a phenomenon has a long tradition in social work and is associated with professional guidance, as opposed to managerial governance (Noble & Irwin 2009). Kadushin (2002) identifies three functions of supervision; administrative (including components such as coordinating, delegating and monitoring work), educational (including components like training and development) and supportive (such as personal support and stress management). Managers in social work are often involved in supervision, at least those on lower levels, and at least
according to some definitions of supervision. Therefore, this concept is also of importance in the thesis.
2. Contextual factors for social work management and research on managerial work

Although there is relatively little research focusing on managers in the personal social services, there is a reasonable amount of research concerning related fields. It is with the aid of this research (and that described in the following chapter) that many of the results presented in the empirical chapters may be interpreted and understood. The first part of this chapter is concerned with the changes that public sector organisations and social work organisations have gone through during recent decades. These changes have had a significant impact on managers and staff alike. In the second part of the chapter, some research produced within the managerial work tradition will be presented and the relevance of such findings for public sector management will be discussed. Finally, the (rather scarce) research on social work management will be presented.

Organisational trends affecting the everyday work of the managers in the Swedish personal social services

As indicated, the public sector has during recent decades undergone several changes. The traditional way of organising and governing the public sector has been criticised and it has been thought that the public sector would benefit from being more business-like in its organisation and management. These ideas have affected the personal social services and its management. However, an adaptation to the ideas of NPM is not the only organisational change that has taken place in the personal social services; increasing specialisation has also caused reorganisations and new conditions for managers and social workers alike.

New Public Management

Starting with NPM, the set of ideas and following reforms connected to this movement are believed to have caused changes to public sector in many Western nations, although in various forms and to varying extent. In some countries, for example the UK, NPM has caused extensive change, but also Sweden, traditionally a strong welfare state, has undoubtedly been influ-
enced by NPM (Hood 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Some scholars argue that the change caused by NPM is so extensive that it can be described as a paradigm shift (Lane 2001), while others see the NPM movement not so much as a paradigm shift as a continuation of previous reforms and historical trends in public administration (see Page 2005). However, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) emphasise that there are differences between public sector reforms from the 50s and 60s and later ones, partly because of the international character of the latter. The reforms that took place from the late 70s and onwards emanated partly from the idea that western welfare states had become ineffective, unaffordable and overly constraining (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). It is these later reforms that we often summarise under the term NPM.

NPM is used to describe a broad range of changes that have been introduced in many different countries, and therefore there is no real consensus on what the term actually entails. However, several scholars have tried to summarise the characteristics of it. Themes like disaggregation of the public sector organisations, enhanced competition, use of management practices from the private sector, increased focus on cost-effectiveness, more responsibility and discretion for managers, and an emphasis on treating clients or patients as customers are often mentioned (Hood 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) illustrate NPM as a two level phenomenon; on a higher level it is a doctrine stating that the public sector can be improved by the use of concepts, techniques and values imported from business, and on a lower level it consists of a number of methods and practices that are implemented within public sector organisations.

NPM has been described as a reform movement with weak theoretical and philosophical foundations. Nevertheless, it has been influenced by a rather wide range of theoretical and ideological currents (Boston 2011). The two most prominent sources of inspiration have been identified as managerialism and ‘new institutional economics’ (NIE) (Hood 1991; Boston 2011). Managerialism can be described as an ideology which assumes that good management, rather than policy, technologies etc., determines the success of organisations. Management is from this point of view seen as a profession in itself, and managerial skills are considered more important than professional expertise (Hood 1991; Pollitt 1998). The other important source of NPM ideas, NIE, builds upon notions from agency theory, transaction cost economics and rational choice theory (Hood 1991; Boston 2011). Apart from these two building blocks, the NPM reforms are also influenced by the ideological movement termed neo-liberalism (Boston 2011).

It is demanding task to identify which intellectual origins that have influenced the different reforms and/or policies associated with NPM. Nevertheless, Hood (1995) and Boston (2011) have made an attempt. According to their texts, managerialism’s main contribution is an increased focus on management practices and a tendency to view private sector managerial methods
as superior. Neo-liberalism and NIE appear to have contributed with ideas like user choice, contestability, privatisation and a preference for contracting out (Hood 1995; Boston 2011).\(^2\) In this thesis, it is mainly the influence of the former ideas (managerialism) that will be discussed, as it is managers and their conditions that are in focus. However, aspects of marketisation (e.g. the introduction of market mechanisms) will also be touched upon as it affects the managerial conditions and results in new tasks for the managers to handle.

**The reception of NPM in Sweden**

There is no doubt that ideas associated with NPM have been adopted in the Swedish public sector, but it is difficult to know exactly to what extent. In an influential article published 1995, Hood placed Sweden in the ”high NPM group in the OECD countries” (p. 99), together with for example Great Britain and Canada (Hood 1995). In contrast, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) characterise Sweden as a moderniser rather than a marketiser and argue that Sweden was less enthusiastic in implementing NPM reforms compared to for example Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Hansen (2011) indicates that this more moderate interest for NPM may have changed to a more intense one in later years.

Despite the somewhat different views of Sweden’s current position in the NPM-league, it appears that many observers agree that compared to for example Great Britain, the implementation of NPM has been less harsh in Sweden. According to Hasselbladh and Bejerot (2008) the British government motivated the changes to the public sector with threats of disaster, and the changes were brought about in a way that was fraught with conflict. In Sweden the reforms were instead presented using words with positive connotations, making them seem like a necessary modernisation of the public sector. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) identifies two strands within NPM which appears to be in line with this; one ‘tough’ type where the focus lies on rational systems of control, performance indicators and punishment – “make the managers manage” (s. 10), and one ‘softer’ type that emphasizes a creative and encouraging leadership, customer focus and quality – “let the managers manage” (s. 10). It shall however be noted that both strands entail that control is shifted from the professionals to the managers. Drawing on the arguments of Hasselbladh and Bejerot (2008), the implementation of NPM in Sweden appears to be more like the softer strand than the harsher. This, in combination with a less apparent downsizing of the public sector, may explain why professionals in Sweden have not to the same extent as their British colleagues protested against the reforms. Some professional groups have instead, through their unions, taken a stand in favour of some of

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\(^2\) For a more comprehensive analysis see Boston (2011).
the changes that have been inspired by NPM (Hasselbladh & Bejerot 2008; Harlow et al. 2013).

**NPM in the personal social services, nationally and internationally**

A rather large number of international studies have investigated the effects of NPM on social service organisations. Generally, these studies have a structural approach and focus on the general consequences of NPM in social work settings. It is often the changed conditions for social workers that are given most attention, but some studies describe changes that affect both managers and frontline staff. In these studies, it is reported that both managers and social workers have experienced an expansion of administrative and budgetary responsibilities as well as an increase in performance management and proceduralisation (Harlow 2003; Harris 2003; Kirkpatrick et al. 2005).

Some researchers argue that there is a risk that the NPM reforms may change the core values that guide social work practice. For example, Healy (2002) is concerned that the under-representation of social workers in managerial positions can cause a loss of focus on the fundamental values of social work and Harlow (2003) fears that managerialism with its emphasis on rationality, technology and fragmentation, may undermine the importance of relationships and care in the social work practice. Furthermore, it is indicated that an increasing influence of managerialism creates tension between professionals and managers (Lymbery 2001).

In Sweden, research concerning the NPM inspired reforms and changes that have affected the personal social services has often concerned the increasing privatisation of residential care for children and youth (e.g. Sallnäs 2005; Wiklund 2011; Meagher et al. 2015). This privatisation has indeed been extensive, and today a majority of the residential care units for children and youth are run by private companies in a care market (Wiklund 2011). As a result of the radically increased privatisation of care, the personal social services have had to reorganise in order to facilitate the relations with the care providers. The introduction of procurement with general agreements is one example of such arrangement (Höjer & Forkby 2010). Another arrangement that has rendered some interest among researchers is purchaser-provider models. However, the number of organisations with genuine purchaser-provider models appears to be moderate, and those that have attempted such an implementation appear to have had difficulties in establishing the model in practice (Blom 1998; Wiklund 2005). There has also been some research which has linked NPM related features (downsizing, streamlining, decentralisation of responsibilities and an increased focus on value for money) to increasingly adverse working conditions for social workers (Astvik et al. 2014).

All in all, much of the literature on the influence of NPM in the personal social services discusses the difficulties of applying market-rationales and practices from the private sector to social work practice. How these practices...
are experienced by the social work managers in Sweden has yet to be explored. In the international literature some studies have focused on this (see Aronson & Smith 2011; Evans 2011; Berg et al. 2008), even if the bulk of both Swedish and international studies are mostly concerned with the structural changes of the organisations or the effects on the social workers.

**Social work organisations – particularly receptive to NPM reforms?**

The possibility for an organisation to resist NPM influence (or if one wants, the possibility of NPM ideas to influence an organisation) may vary depending on a number of factors. Some studies have indicated that so called welfare professions are more susceptible to the influence of NPM than other professions. This has been understood as a result of a lack of a strong technical knowledgebase. Also the gendered character of social welfare organisations, the societal ambivalence towards welfare professions and the relatively weak professional identity among welfare professionals have been discussed as possible explanations (Healy 2009; Björk et al. 2011).

The increased privatisation in the field of social work has been linked both to professionalisation and de-professionalisation. With regards to the increased privatisation in the field of child welfare, the high degree of private actors has been related to low levels of professionalisation and an absence of gate-keeping (Sallnäs 2005). On the other hand, Dellgran and Höjer (2005c) demonstrate that there is also evidence of a profession-driven privatisation. Self-employed social workers (mainly involved in activities like supervision and therapy) are generally more professionalised than their public sector colleagues judging by a number of indicators (e.g. experience, education, research orientation). Also the motives and driving forces behind self-employment (e.g. desire for more control and autonomy, possibility of specialisation etc.) indicate that privatisation can be profession-driven.

**Is the influence of NPM exaggerated?**

Much of the literature discussed above establishes and exemplifies the influence of NPM on the public sector and the field of social work. There is however also literature that to a varying extent warns against exaggerating the significance of NPM. Some literature relates this risk to the difference between rhetoric and practice. There may be differences between what is described in written documents (programs for change) within the public sector and the reforms that actually have taken place (Hasselblad & Bejerot 2008, Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). There may also be a risk that other models and ideas that may have affected the public sector are overlooked, or that all these ideas are bundled under the NPM label. One might also (wrongly) get the idea that the influence of NPM has eliminated all other principles that traditionally have governed the public sector (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). Hasselblad (2008) describes this risk in terms of colonialism, and argues that
much of the literature on NPM depicts the movement as an invader that has managed to erase all other practices and ideas.

Notwithstanding the risk of exaggerating the significance of NPM, there is after all a wide consensus that the movement has inspired many changes in the public sector in several countries (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2011). There is also, as has been shown above, a large amount of international and Swedish research that demonstrates the effects of NPM.

Increasing specialisation within the Swedish personal social services

Apart from the trend of increasing NPM influence on the personal social services, there is another trend that is perhaps even more prominent, namely that of increasing specialisation. This trend has during the last decades had a great impact on the personal social services throughout the entire nation.

Traditionally, the three core fields of practice (child welfare, substance abuse treatment for adults and social assistance administration) were to a greater extent addressed within the same organisational body. However, due to the trend of increasing specialisation, the three traditional fields are now not only disaggregated into separate units, but often also divided into even smaller, more specialised subunits. Lundgren et al. (2009) identifies two main types of specialisations within the Swedish personal social services; 1) specialisation based on problem or client category (e.g. treatment of substance abusers, social assistance and/or child welfare) and 2) specialisation based on function (e.g. specialised units for assessment, treatment and intake). Specialisation based on problem is most common and by 2008, around 90 % of the personal social services were specialised on this basis. Often, this type of specialisation is built around the three traditional fields of social work in Sweden, i.e. treatment of substance abusers, social assistance and child welfare. Some municipalities (16 %, mainly the larger cities) are what Lundgren et al. (2009) call multi-specialised, meaning that they combine problem and function based specialisation.

While specialisation based on problem today is the standard way of organising the personal social services, research also indicates that there is a substantial variation between different municipalities regarding further specialisation. The size of the municipality is one important factor to determine the degree of specialisation. The smaller municipalities are generally more integrated, and the larger ones are more specialised. This is not surprising considering that specialisation requires a reasonably large number of employees, which in itself co-varies strongly with specialisation (Bergmark & Lundström 2007; Lundgren et al. 2009).

Interesting to note is perhaps that this trend towards greater specialisation has been at odds with the intention of the legislation that regulates social
work in Sweden. The legislature emphasizes generic social work, but social work practice has over time gone in the opposite direction (Bergmark & Lundström 2007). This readiness for specialisation may be understood in different ways. It could be interpreted as means of trying to increase productivity and cost effectiveness. It may also be seen as a strategy for professionalisation, as a tool for the formation and monopolisation of expertise, and as a way of increasing the status of the profession (Bergmark & Lundström 2007; Bergmark & Lundström 2008). However, specialisation can also be linked to NPM. For example, there have been legal changes that have made it possible to introduce different types of market mechanisms which in turn have contributed to the development of purchaser-provider models in some municipalities (Lundgren et al. 2009). Also, one of the characteristics of NPM is disaggregation of public sector organisations into smaller, separately managed units (Hood 1995; Christensen & Lægreid 2011).

Today, most municipalities have separate units for treatment of substance abusers, social assistance and/or child welfare which means that a majority of social workers within the personal social services work exclusively within one of these fields. According to data obtained 2006, the largest field of social work was child welfare, which employed almost half of all social workers (47 %). Social assistance employed 21 % and substance abuse 12 % of the social workers. The remaining 18 % either worked with combinations of these fields or with other tasks (such as mental health, family law etc.) (Bergmark & Lundström 2008). It is likely that specialisation has had an effect on the conditions for management, although there is little empirical research on the subject. It is for example quite probable that the specialisation is connected to the increased number of managers in the public sector (Ivarsson Westerberg 2013).  

In the first empirical chapter (chapter five), we shall see that the majority of managers in the personal social services are responsible exclusively for one field of social work, meaning that most managers work in specialised units.

Managerial work

Given the recent popular focus on management and managers, it is no surprise that there is an abundance of (normative) management/leadership literature containing (good?) advice on how to exceed in leadership skills. Management/leadership is often considered to be the most important factor for the success of an organisation and leaders in popular management literature are sometimes described as people with extraordinary (almost heroic) dispo-

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3 Between 2000 and 2010, the number of managers in the public sector increased by 38 %. The total number of employees increased by 1,5 % during the same time (Ivarsson Westerberg 2013)
sitions (Sveningsson et al. 2012). However, the actual work of managers, as described in empirical studies, often differs from the popular ideas of leadership (Tengblad 2012; Sveningsson et al. 2012; Antonsson 2013).

There is quite a large amount of empirical research that intends to describe the actual work of managers, not least within the managerial work tradition (Carlson 1951; Tengblad 2012). This literature has a generic perspective on management and the lion’s share of the studies concern private sector management. Here, the work of managers is portrayed as fragmented, pressed and reactive (Mintzberg 2009; Tengblad 2012). In the early managerial work literature as well as in the later, it is pointed out that managers spend a lot of time on reactive operational and administrative work, meaning that a large part of their workload consists of unpredicted tasks. Furthermore, it is shown that there is little time for undisturbed, deliberate work, and that the managers experience a heavy workload (Mintzberg 2009; Tengblad 2012; Antonsson 2013). Through the conclusions within this literature, it becomes evident that the actual tasks of the managers bear little resemblance with popular ideas on what management should be. It is also quite different from the rational ideas of management depicted in classic management studies (e.g. Fayol and Taylor) (see Tengblad 2012 for a discussion on this). This discrepancy between popular management ideals and the actual tasks that managers perform is also highlighted by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2010; 2014). They show that managers speak of visionary, strategic leadership but get trapped in administrative and operational duties.

Managerial work in public sector management

The main portion of the research on leadership/management concerns the private sector, but there are also several studies that focus on management in the public sector (e.g. Holmberg 2003; Antonsson 2013). Many researchers emphasise the differences between the sectors, highlighting for example the different motives behind their origin and existence. Most obvious and important are perhaps the democratic foundations of the public sector (Lundquist 1999; Holmberg 2003; Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013, more on this in next chapter). As previously noted, recent decades have seen considerable criticism of public sector management and a general belief that private sector management is superior. Without acknowledging the contextual differences, it has been suggested that public sector management should become more like management in business (Lundquist 1998; Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013). There are several problems with this conception, some of which will be discussed in this thesis. For now though, it is enough to state that the idealising of for-profit leadership (much like the idealising of leadership in general) is generally not based on empirical research regarding what the private sector managers actually do at work,
but instead reflects the popular ideas of what such management should be like (Holmberg 2003; Tullberg 2003).

When it comes to the actual work of managers, there are studies that have underlined similarities between the managerial practices in different sectors. For example, Antonsson (2013) found that in some respects, the managerial practices of eldercare managers are similar to those of other (private sector) managers. The everyday work of the eldercare managers was considered to have a lot in common with managers in other fields, even if the political governance and legal matters surrounding eldercare resulted in different organisational conditions. Ivarsson Westerberg (2013) depicts the contradictions regarding differences and similarities between public sector management and other kinds of management by differentiating between ‘rhetoric’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice’. In popular rhetoric regarding public sector management, generic managerial competences are underlined and expert knowledge is considered to be of lesser importance (examples of this will be further discussed below). In theory (i.e. research concerning public sector management) the specific conditions for public sector management are emphasised. In practice, as for example Antonsson (2013) has shown, it seems as if there are several similarities, such as that both public and private sector management are more fragmented and reactive and much less strategic than desired.

All in all, the similarities found between public and private sector management regarding practice indicates that some of the conclusions from the managerial work tradition could be relevant also for the managers in this study. As we shall see in chapter seven, some of the difficulties with management highlighted by the managerial work scholars are relevant also for the managers in the personal social services. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to keep in mind the differences between the sectors that have been highlighted in writings on the public sector and in writings on HSOs and social work. This is important not least when the public sector organisations during recent times have undergone vast changes due to initiatives trying to make them more business-like.

Research on management/leadership in social work

Management in social work is still an unexhausted field of research, and empirical studies on social work managers are reasonably few (Preston 2008; Lawler 2007; Menefee 2000). However, there are some important studies to take into account.

Nationally…

In Sweden, scholars have shown a great deal of interest for the organisation of social work (Johansson 2003; Lundström & Sunesson 2006; Grape et al.
2006; Johansson et al. 2015), and in later years the effects of privatisation (e.g. Sallnäs 2005; Höjer & Forkby 2010; Wiklund 2011), but there are few empirical studies on social work management. The exception is the area of eldercare, where the conditions for management have gained more attention.

Although few and far between, there are some Swedish studies in which the subject of managers within the personal social services is touched upon. Some of these studies discuss management in connection to NPM. In one such study – which focus on how managers perceive some of the changes – it is demonstrated that social work is becoming increasingly budget led and that budget is becoming an increasingly important part of managers’ workload. It is also stated that managers actually are comfortable dealing with budgets and that the more generalised knowledge of management following the influence of managerialism is appreciated among the managers as it is thought to open new career opportunities (Berg et al. 2008). Wiklund (2005) analyses the consequences of a purchaser-provider division and indicates that the role for managers is affected. The managers are thought to have gotten more administrative duties and less time for supervision. Johansson (2012) has studied politicians’, managers’ and social workers’ perceptions of their own and other actors influence over central areas of the personal social services. Indications of a pronounced degree of managerial influence over policy and organisational issues were found, suggesting that the influence of NPM may have changed the distribution of power (Johansson 2012). Whereas most studies on management in the Swedish personal social services have focused on contextual or organisational conditions, there is also a group of researchers that have attempted to analyse the effect of transformational leadership (a leadership model focused on leaders’ ability to drive change and development through inspiration and charisma) in these organisations. The conclusion of this study was that transformational leadership had a positive effect on role clarity and commitment (Tafvelin et al. 2012).

The research on managers within eldercare is in Sweden considerably more extensive than that on managers within the personal social service. For example, during recent years a number of Swedish theses focusing on the conditions for management within this field have been published (e.g. Wolmesjö 2005; Larsson 2008; Forsberg Kankkunen 2009; Keisu 2009; Österlind 2013; Antonsson 2013; Björk 2013; Regnö 2013). While there are several similarities between the management of personal social services and eldercare (e.g. both are political organisations within the municipal social services, both have a workforce which is dominated by women and both could be characterised as HSOs), the areas also differ in important ways. Within the personal social services, the workforce consists almost exclusively of social workers, whereas the frontline work in eldercare often is undertaken by individuals with other types of training. Furthermore, managers within eldercare often manage rather large groups of staff, while the managers within the personal social services manage considerably smaller groups.
Also, social workers and managers within personal social services work relatively close together, while the managers in eldercare are more likely to manage from a distance. Lastly, there are differences in the managers’ education and in the recruitment practices. The managers in the personal social services traditionally come from the profession (and often have many years of social work experience). The education that they have undertaken is to a large extent directed towards practical social work rather than managerial work. The education for managers in eldercare is to a somewhat larger degree aimed at management, and the managers may be recruited to management positions directly upon graduation. Inevitably, these differences mean that research from one field cannot be uncritically transferred to the other. Nevertheless, the similarities mean that conclusions from management research within eldercare should not be overlooked.

Eldercare management (sometimes together with other types of local government management) have in Sweden received interest from several different disciplines, such as business administration (e.g. Antonsson 2013), social work (Wolmesjö 2005), sociology (Keisu 2009; Forsberg Kankkunen 2009), sociology of work (Björk 2013), economics (Regnö 2013) and psychology (Österlind 2013). The perspectives on the subject differ; some have an explicit gender perspective, while others are focused on managerial work and/or general organisational/contextual conditions.

Even though the research on eldercare management comes from different disciplines and the starting points may differ, some of the conclusions are similar. For example, both Antonsson (2013) and Wolmesjö (2005) found that management in eldercare is a function with an increasingly administrative character, and they both connect this to the influence of NPM. Antonsson (2013) found that good leadership was emphasised among the managers, but that it was administrative work that took most of their time. Also, the managers faced opposing demands, with economic pressures on one hand and the logics of care on the other. Wolmesjö (2005) suggests that the role of the eldercare manager has changed from being focused on communication (leading the employees) to become more focused on effectivity, entailing responsibility for budget, organisation and staff. Also Wolmesjö notes the complex situation (with opposing demands) of the frontline managers. The described predicaments for eldercare managers bear a great resemblance to those of the managers in the personal social services (cf. Kirkpatrick et al. 2005; Shanks et al. 2014).

While the gender issue is touched upon in several works, some have a more explicit gender perspective. For example, Forsberg Kankkunen (2009) explored the conditions for management in different public service organisations; female dominated social care/education and male dominated technical services. She found that the managerial work was shaped not by the gender of the manager but by the gendered organisations, leading to different patterns, resources and organisational prerequisites for management in the dif-
different organisations. Also Björk (2013) has compared female dominated (elder-care) and male dominated (technical department) managerial work in local government organisations. She found, like Forsberg Kankkunen, that the female dominated fields had less favourable organisational prerequisites. Also, she found that NPM practices had taken a greater hold of the eldercare departments than the technical departments. Björk interprets the differences in organisational prerequisites as a result of the complexity and responsibility in female dominated areas not being valued as highly as the complexity and responsibility in male dominated areas. She also concludes that even if some measures have been taken to equalise wages etc., the subordination of female activities remains and generates poorer managerial conditions for both male and female managers within the female dominated areas. Similarly, Regnö (2013) highlights the paradox that eldercare managers (i.e. managers in female dominated areas) have extensive areas of responsibility, but lower salaries than managers within male-dominated areas (both in the local government and in the private sector). She identifies a discourse of misogyny which she suggests contributes to devaluing women’s work. However, she also found evidence of resistance.

As indicated in many of the above described theses, the influence of NPM has caused extensive changes in the eldercare sector. In a recent publication, the marketisation of eldercare in the Nordic countries has been explored and compared (Meagher & Szebehely 2013). The eldercare in all Nordic countries has seen changes due to the influence of NPM ideals. Market mechanisms such as purchaser-provider models, competitive tendering and outsourcing, introduction of choice models, etc. have been introduced. As within other public sector fields, the rationales behind marketisation of eldercare has been to reduce public spending, to give the users a choice between different providers and to enhance quality by introducing competition.

…and internationally

The international (read Anglo-Saxon) research on social work management is more extensive than the Swedish. While it is difficult to distinguish a coherent research front, two main areas of focus can be outlined. One line of empirical studies focuses on the nature of social work management and analyses managerial patterns and competences. These studies often have a North American basis. The other line of research is more focused on the changed conditions due to the increasing influence of managerialism. In this literature, which often has a British basis, the consequences of NPM are examined. Although this categorisation of the research into two separate groups naturally leads to simplifications, it also gives a rather comprehensible picture of the most prominent questions discussed by scholars in the field.
**Changed conditions as a result of NPM**

As described above, one line of studies that empirically addresses the managers’ conditions focuses on the consequences/experiences of working in a context shaped by NPM reforms. These studies are relatively few in number given that most studies on NPM and the personal social services focus on revised organisational structures or the consequences for frontline social workers.

Only a few empirical studies discuss the managers’ operational realities in a more explicit manner. Those that do, examine themes such as the managers’ professional commitments, loyalties and identifications. In the perhaps first study of its kind, Lawler and Hearn (1997) investigated the experiences of third tier social work managers. In their study, a fragmentation among the managers in terms of experiences and attitudes towards management was found. Furthermore, it was noted that managerial orientation and professional orientation were not mutually exclusive categories, meaning that managers could define themselves as both managers and professionals at the same time. It was however also found that managers with social work backgrounds primarily regarded their professional experience as a way of gaining credibility among the social workers, but of little relevance otherwise. In a much later study, Evans (2011) highlights the remaining importance of professionalism and professional commitment among managers in the social services in the United Kingdom. However, Evans’ results also indicate that there could be a discrepancy between managers on higher and lower levels; managers on lower levels were found to be committed to professionalism while higher level managers were thought to be more oriented towards managerialism (Evans 2011). In the light of his findings, Evans challenges the idea that the impact of managerialism has caused a complete break between professionals and managers. Instead of seeing managerialism as the domination of managers (who are thought to be loyal only to the organisation and mainly interested in economy, efficiency and effectiveness), managerialism may also be considered as an on-going process to which different managers and professionals have varying attitudes.

Other studies have highlighted the possibility for social work managers to counter the impact of managerialism. In studies from Canada and Australia, managers who were perceived as progressive were interviewed, and from these results it was concluded that social work leadership can promote professional values and practice, and resist managerialist influence (Healy 2002; Aronson & Smith 2011).

**Managerial patterns and competences**

Generally, the North American scholars give less attention to the structural effects of NPM. Instead, they tend to focus on the individual managers’ and their competences, skills and duties. Concerns regarding the current state of
social work management are often expressed, and the researchers aspire to provide results that can enhance current and future managers’ skills and competences.

A general inference in the North American literature is that management in social work has become continuously more complex over the last two or three decades.\textsuperscript{4} Due to contextual challenges, such as fiscal stress, more complicated social problems, increased demand for services and difficulties retaining staff, it is agreed that the managers of today need a wider range of managerial skills (Preston 2008; Menefee 2000; Hopkins & Hyde 2002; Rank and Hutchinson 2000). However, when identifying the areas in which managers in social work are thought to benefit from more knowledge, the scholars emphasise different aspects. Some argue that managers need more externally oriented functions, such as strategic skills, in order to meet the challenges from the complex environment (Menefee & Thompson 1994; Hopkins & Hyde 2002). Others maintain that internally oriented functions or people skills (e.g. conflict resolution, group dynamics etc.) are most important (Hoefer 2003). Schmid (2010) relates the need for different functions to different organisations and stages in the organisation’s cycle. He contrasts task orientation to people orientation, and internal orientation to external orientation, and argues that the patterns of management should vary in accordance with the changing situations and conditions for the organisation. One of the most influential works on core competences and roles for managers has been that of Menefee and Thompson (1994), in which a number of managerial roles were postulated. These roles included communicator, boundary spanner, innovator, organizer, resource administrator, evaluator, policy practitioner, advocator, supervisor, facilitator and team builder. Since then, this work (and following works from the same researcher) has been frequently cited (see for example Hoefer 2003; Patti 2003; Preston 2004; 2008; Austin et al. 2013; Knee 2014).

Finally, management succession has also received attention from American scholars. Apprehensions regarding the tradition of promoting social workers to managers without providing them with additional training have been raised. The difficulties with the transition from direct practice to management are highlighted, and it is argued that promoted social workers may continue to use skills relevant for clinical social work in their managerial role, where these skills may be inappropriate (Patti et al. 1979; Patti 2000; Knee & Folsom 2012; Austin et al. 2013; Knee 2014). Due to the assumption that more formal education for social work managers is needed, there has been an increase in Master’s level graduate programs aimed at future administrators in social work in the US (Hoefer 2003). However, the interest

\textsuperscript{4} This viewpoint is shared by the researchers focused the changed conditions due to the influence of managerialism, but here the increasing complexity is not generally explicitly connected to NPM.
among social work master’s students has been rather low, and increasing number of organisations are employing managers with master’s degrees in public administration or business administration instead of social work.

Also the recruitment of managers from outside the field of social work has raised concerns among researchers (Wuenschel 2006; Knee & Folsom 2012). These concerns can be seen as a result of the basic assumption that social work management is distinct from management in other organisations. This assumption is shared and firmly stressed by several American scholars (e.g. Patti 2000; Rank & Hutchison 2000).

Managerial levels

Before summarising the content of this chapter, it is appropriate to present some thoughts on managerial levels. This issue has not received much attention in the international literature – quite the opposite – empirical studies examining managerial levels in social work are scarce. However, in writings where this is discussed (often indirectly), it is indicated that it is common with three managerial levels in social work organisations. For example, in Evans’ (2011) analysis of discretion in adult social services, he distinguishes between strategic management and local management. In this case, local management consists of middle managers and supervisors. In a report on social service managers in Scotland, von Zwanenberg (2003) distinguishes between three managerial levels: chief social work officers, senior managers and first line/middle managers. In an American anthology on management in human services, Patti (2009) discusses managerial levels with a starting point in the work of Thompson (1967). He concludes that organisations generally have at least three levels of management: executive, middle and supervisory management. According to this distinction, the managers on the executive level are responsible for the entire organisation or a large portion thereof, and make strategic decisions (in line with the policies set by the board of directors) on behalf of the organisation. Middle managers often manage major subunits of the organisation and are responsible for translating organisational goals into practice. They are also generally trusted with devising budgets within their units. The supervisory level consists of managers who are responsible for the operations of the smallest units of the organisation and who work directly above the social workers.

Apart from pointing out that three managerial levels are common, some differences between the levels have been suggested. Evans’ (2011) study highlights differences regarding commitment to the social work profession, and von Zwanenberg (2003) implies that there may be differences regarding what skills managers on different levels find to be most important. Other research has highlighted that sex correlates with managerial level – the proportion of men increases higher up the hierarchy (Hafford-Letchfield 2008; Berg et al. 2008).
Summary

Domestically, there is surprisingly little research about managers of the personal social services. We have little information on who the managers are and where they work. Neither do we know much about the conditions for, or contents of, this type of management. Fortunately, there is research from adjacent fields and other countries that can aid the understanding of management in the Swedish personal social services. However, while the combined insights from this research offer a frame for understanding, there are several questions that remain unanswered.

For example, the managerial work research has provided interesting insights about the work of managers and has highlighted the discrepancy between actual managerial work and popular ideas of leadership. This research is relevant for the understanding of the everyday work of social work managers that will be explored in chapter seven. However, as the ambition of the managerial work tradition is to describe managerial tasks and behaviour, it provides little understanding of other aspects (e.g. loyalties). Furthermore, it needs to be combined with knowledge about organisational and contextual circumstances that influence social work in Sweden.

The contextual circumstances of particular interest here (NPM/managerialism and specialisation), have been previously explored in research. Knowledge about these phenomena and their effects on social work organisations is essential for the understanding of the social work managers’ conditions. There is however little empirical research that investigates the managers experiences in relation to these circumstances. The few studies that do are either from other countries or focus on eldercare management. These studies have however raised questions that are of interest for this thesis. One such question is whether or not the increasing influence of managerialism has caused decreasing commitment to professional values among managers. Several writings have also suggested an increasingly administrative role for managers as well as increasing budget responsibility. The relevance of these questions and findings for managers in the Swedish personal social services will be further explored.

In the (international) literature that focuses on the individual social work manager rather than contextual factors, a number of managerial functions have been suggested. The conclusions from these studies, together with conclusions from the managerial work literature, have provided inspiration for the exploration of managers’ tasks and assignments. The indicated differences between managerial levels provides an interesting background for exploring the possible differences between levels regarding both aspects like the characteristics of managers and their assignments, as well as the managers’ loyalties and identities.

Some studies have suggested that social work management is different from other types of management. This is an interesting viewpoint with im-
lications for how and where management should be learned and taught. Related to this is the literature about management succession and the education of future managers, which has relevance for this study’s exploration of how the current managers have come into their positions and gained managerial competences. However, despite the individual focus in these studies, the managers’ own reasoning about their way to management, training or everyday work is rarely explicitly discussed. Neither is the in-service training that is so common in Sweden.

All in all, there is quite a lot of knowledge that contributes to the understanding of social work management. Yet, as demonstrated, there are also several things we do not yet know. In this thesis, the phenomena highlighted above will be explored. However, before presenting the empirical results, the background picture painted in this chapter will be complemented with some theoretical concepts that aim to determine the ‘nature’ of personal social service organisations.
3. Perspectives on social work organisations and the social work profession

This chapter will present a few concepts from organisational theory and research on professional groups. Although the personal social services can be described with help of several different concepts and perspectives, a few concepts that particularly well provide a foundation for understanding the following empirics have been chosen. Each concept presented aids the understanding of some aspect of the personal social services, but none covers all aspects. For this reason, the concepts complement each other and together they give a reasonably comprehensive picture of the organisations in focus.

The first aspect considered below is that the personal social services fall into the category of public sector organisations. This means for example democratic foundations and political governance, which of course is of great relevance for management. However, there are many types of public sector organisations, and although they all have circumstances in common, there are also many things that differentiate them from each other. For example, public sector organisations may be organised under the state, the counties or – as with the personal social services – under the municipalities. Also, they may include different types of services, for example infrastructure, defence, public transport and social services. These differences are likely to cause different prerequisites for managers and staff. Therefore, the picture needs to be completed. Human service organisation (HSO) is a concept that aims to describe the specific features of organisations working with people (Hasenfeld 1983). This concept is often used to describe social work organisations, but it includes also other organisations (e.g. universities and police), and organisations that do not belong to the public sector (which the personal social services do). In addition, two concepts that aim to describe organisations that are dependent of professional staff will be considered. One of these concepts is the often used ‘professional bureaucracy’, originating from Mintzberg’s (1993) theory on organisational structure. Derived from this concept is the ‘bureau-professional regime’, which is a concept that has been used frequently by social work researchers to describe social work as it was before the managerialist changes. Lastly, two concepts that aim to describe professionalism in the social welfare are included (‘occupational professionalism’ and ‘organisational professionalism’, Evetts 2009). Together with the concepts describing organisations that are dependent on professionals, these
concepts add to the understanding of the interdependence between organisations and professionals. All concepts presented below are in one way or another also discussed in relation to the changes following NPM.

Personal social services are public sector organisations

As mentioned, there are important features of public sector organisations that differentiate them from other types of organisations; e.g. political governance and democratic foundations. These differences have, according to several scholars, consequences for the conditions for and content of management in all public sector organisation, hence also in the personal social services (Lundquist 1998; Boyne 2002; Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013).

The rather complicated relationship between politics and administration in public sector organisations has been highlighted in research. The traditional description of this relation is that the role of politicians is to formulate goals, while civil servants should prepare and implement political decisions. However, many argue that in practice, the division of responsibilities is much more muddled (Lundquist 1991; Svara 1998; Montin 2007; Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013). Both the actual relationship between politicians and civil servants, and the public view of what this relationship should be like, has seen considerable changes over the years. From the 70s and onwards the change has included increased delegation of decisions and responsibilities from politicians to professionals. These changes are in line with the ideals of NPM, where management is preferred over politics (Montin 2007). Whether or not these changes have meant increased power to the civil servants (e.g. managers) may be debatable. Although managers and professionals now have economic responsibility, the operational responsibilities have increased, the actual economic resources have become scarcer, and managers (and other employees) may find it difficult to adjust the levels of ambition to the budgetary resources (a.a.).

In social work, research has indicated that politicians may play a larger role compared to many other areas (Höjer et al. 2014). This is because the social welfare boards (or similar) are responsible for – and cannot delegate – not only policy matters (i.e. “goal, focus, scope or quality of activities”, KL 6:34), but also some decisions concerning individual clients (for example decisions to take coercive action) (Forkby et al. 2016; Forkby et al. 2015; Liljegren et al. 2014). The constant presence of – and closeness to – the politicians is likely to have very concrete bearing on the conditions for managers (and staff) in the personal social services. Some of these conditions will be empirically explored in this thesis.

When it comes to democratic foundations, the consequences are perhaps a bit less concrete, but nevertheless existent. It has been argued that work in
democratically founded organisations comes with certain obligations. The idea of certain normative values that should guide those working in the public sector has been discussed for example by Lundquist (1998). He has, with a basis in normative theory, formulated the concept ‘our public ethos’ which is a set of values – economic and democratic – that are reconstructed from central writings such as the Swedish law. The economic values are not specific for the public sector, but the democratic values (political democracy, public ethos and the legal rights of individuals) are. In a time of increasing influence of NPM, Lundquist argues that the focus has come to lay on the economic values and therefore, he aims to call attention to the democratic values. According to Lundquist, people working in the public sector (managers and staff alike) should always take into account our public ethos, and act as ‘guardians of democracy’. This includes controlling that the values are always followed and an obligation to act if they are not (Lundquist 1998).

So, the personal social services belong to the public sector. This circumstance comes with certain conditions and, as Lundquist (1998) suggests, perhaps obligations. However, it is insufficient to describe the personal social services solely as a public sector organisation. The personal social services also have other characteristics affecting their management (and staff); for example being organisations whose work is concentrated on people.

**Personal social services are human service organisations**

Human service organisation is a concept that is used with great frequency for describing social work (and other) organisations that work with people. The concept is often associated with Yeheskel Hasenfeld (although it was introduced by others before him, see Stein 1981) who published extensive work on the subject during the 70s and 80s. In Hasenfeld’s work, HSOS is used as a way to describe organisations whose raw material is people, whose work is moral, often gendered and whose primary task is to process, sustain or change people (Hasenfeld 1983). Human services are described by Hasenfeld as the archetypes of ‘institutionalized organisations’ (Hasenfeld 1992, s. 10), meaning that their survival and legitimacy depend more on conformity to institutionalised rules than technical skills. This idea is shared by many researchers (Johansson et al. 2015). In this thesis however, the neo-institutional theory will not play a leading role, as the aim is not to describe the organisations relation to their surroundings or to explain the personal social services adaptation to NPM (and vice versa) etc., but rather to describe the managers’ perceptions of their conditions in such environment and their influence within their organisations.

The HSO-concept is of great value for understanding and describing organisations such as the personal social services. However, as the concept was originally developed in North America, it is based on a context which is
quite different to the Swedish. In Sweden, a group of researchers recently published work that aims to adjust the HSO-concept to fit the Swedish conditions. They offer a customised description of the characteristics of HSOs, which in addition to the attributes described by Hasenfeld, also includes a description of the organisations as e.g. politically governed and regulated by law and bureaucracy (Johansson et al. 2015). These additions are very much applicable to the personal social services in Sweden.

Although the HSO-concept has shed light over characteristics of organisations focusing on people, there are some problems with the concept. One is its base in a North American context which calls for adjustments like the ones mentioned above. Another problem is the concept’s broadness and rather unclear limits. HSO includes for example schools, universities, hospitals, and prisons as well as social services organisations. These organisations may have several characteristics in common (see defining attributes above), but they are also likely to possess differences that could affect the conditions for both staff and managers. Despite the possible problems with HSO as a theoretical concept, the attributes described by Hasenfeld and the additions provided by the Swedish researchers serves well to contrast HSOs to for example commercial businesses, and also to differentiate HSOs to other public sector organisations which do not have people as ‘raw material’. In times of increased influence of managerialism and NPM (with a starting assumption that all organisations can be managed the same way) this is important.

Interdependence between professionals and organisations

Many public sector organisations (and HSOs) are dependent on professionals. Likewise, many professional groups are dependent on these organisations for the possibility to exercise their profession (Dellgran 2015; Svensson 2011; Bergmark & Lundström 2008b). Social work is indeed a profession which is dependent on public sector organisations, and the personal social services are dependent on social workers.

Organisations that are dependent on professionals

There are several theoretical concepts that could be used to describe organisations that are dependent on professional staff. One often cited work in this context is Mintzberg’s (1993) theory on organisational structures. His concept ‘professional bureaucracy’ intends to describe an organisational structure which is common in social work organisations, hospitals, schools etc. The concept is widely used in research on the structure of social work organ-
isations (e.g. Lawler 2015; Munro 2004). The professional bureaucracy is described as an organisation dependent on the skills and knowledge of the operating core (in this case the professionals). As a result of the complexity of the work in professional bureaucracies, coordination through standardisation of work is difficult. Also, the possibility of direct control is limited. Therefore, the coordination of the professional bureaucracy is based on standardisation of the knowledge and skills of the workforce. The strong operational core has considerable discretion, and managers have little insight of the daily work (Mintzberg 1993).

A related concept, building on e.g. Mintzberg’s theory, is bureau-professional regimes (Newman & Clarke 1994). This concept is used for describing the organisation of social welfare in Britain; at least as it was before changes in line with managerialist influence (Clarke & Newman 1997; Harris 1998; Evans & Harris 2004). Like Mintzberg, scholars writing about the bureau-professional regime emphasise the necessity of professional discretion (within bureaucratic boundaries) (Clarke & Newman 1997). However, it has been argued that mistrust towards both professionalism and bureaucracy has caused a possible break with the bureau-professional regime within social work organisations (Harris 1998). It is suggested that the influence of managerialism with its focus on managerial control etc. has meant decreasing professional discretion, although it is debated how much it has decreased (Evans & Harris 2004). The same change has been described with Mintzberg’s concepts. Lawler (2015) suggests that the social services have gone from being professional bureaucracies to becoming increasingly like machine bureaucracies, with increasing standardisation of work processes. In some texts discussing the increasing managerialism in social work organisations, there are tendencies to glorify the past era of bureau-professionalism and perhaps in some cases also to exaggerate the curtailment of discretion and the managers’ control. Evans (2009) has proposed that managerialism has not caused a complete break with the bureau-professional regime. Instead managerialism could be viewed as additional organisational layer that has been added to the existing one of bureau-professionalism. Perhaps this is also a fitting way to describe the Swedish circumstances.

Professionals that are dependent on public sector organisations

In the same way as there are several ways to describe organisations that are dependent on professional staff, there are also several ways to describe the occupations/professions that are dependent on public sector organisations (see e.g. Brante 2014). For example, social work has, due to its close connection to the formation of the welfare state, been described as a ‘new profession’ or a ‘welfare profession’ (Dellgran 2015; Brante 2014). Welfare professions are often compared to ‘classic professions’ (doctors, architects, engineers etc.) which are found to have certain characteristics that welfare
professions have not (publicly accepted scientific knowledge, more discretion in relation to their organisations etc.) (Brante 2014).

Instead of trying to find a definition of the concept profession, which has proved to be difficult, some research on professional groups has focused on professionalism (as an occupational/normative value or as a discourse). Evetts (2009) has presented much used theoretical concepts to analyse professionalism as a discourse, namely ‘occupational professionalism’ and ‘organisational professionalism’. These two ideal-types have been used for analysing the changes that the public sector has undergone during recent decades. Occupational professionalism is described as constructed within the professional group, and its legitimacy is built on education, ethical values etc. Control is operationalised by the professionals themselves, guided by professional ethos etc. Organisational professionalism on the other hand may be seen as organisationally defined. The organisational objectives regulate the professionals’ control and limit their discretion (a.a.). In the public sector organisations of today, it is suggested that organisational professionalism has become the dominant form, as changes in accordance with NPM/managerialism have caused a decline of occupational professionalism (Evetts 2009).

It is easy to see the parallels between the theoretical concepts deriving from organisational theory and the concepts developed by Evetts (2009). Occupational professionalism would be the type of professionalism implied to prevail in professional bureaucracies or in bureau-professional regimes, while organisational professionalism may be seen as the type of professionalism that would remain after the changes implemented due to managerialist influence. In the personal social services, and surely other forms of public sector organisations and HSOs, there is naturally a tension between the organisational or financial conditions/objectives on the one side, and professional/civil servants’ commitments or ethos on the other (Dellgran 2015). As described by scholars both within the field of organisational research and research on professional groups, development during later decades appears to have brought an increased focus on organisational/economic values, at the expense of democratic or professional values and discretion (cf. Lundquist 1998; Harris 1998; Evetts 2009).

In certain studies with relevance for social work, it has been argued that managers have a tendency show commitment to the organisation rather than the profession (c.f. organisational professionalism rather than occupational professionalism) (e.g. Lipsky 2010), and when the increasing influence of managerialism is discussed, the managers sometimes get demonised. As mentioned before, several scholars have protested against this, and have noted continued professional commitment among (at least frontline) managers (Collins 2015; Evans 2011; Lawler & Hearn 1997). The question of prevailing professionalism among managers is interesting and will be discussed further in this thesis.
Relevance for social work management

So, what consequences do the described organisational and professional features have for the social work managers? It has been indicated above that management in a public sector organisation (here the personal social services) means closeness to politicians and a need to comply with political decisions. This is naturally of huge relevance for the managers. The democratic foundation of the municipalities may also, as suggested by Lundquist (1998), have other consequences than merely the presence of elected representatives, namely commitment to certain ethical values. As well as being a public sector organisation, the personal social services has been classified as a HSO, which means that the managers are responsible for staff that has direct interaction with clients, whose work is moral, gendered and whose technologies are not highly determinate. Furthermore, managing in a professional bureaucracy means that the managers are responsible for staff that have a reasonably large amount of discretion and whose daily work cannot be easily monitored.

But when the features included in the described concepts have been scrutinised, are there any characteristics of social work management that have been overlooked? Several social work researchers have tried to outline a number of aspects that differentiate social work management from other types of management. In this context, moral choices, a systemic perspective, a participatory leadership style, a concern for the public image of the profession, advocacy for disadvantaged groups and commitment to certain ethical values have been mentioned (Patti 2000; Rank & Hutchison 2000). Obviously, some of these aspects are shared with other organisations and described above. Perhaps these functions should be seen as a way of distinguishing social work management from management in the commercial sector, rather than as a way to distinguish it from management within other HSOs. Noticeable is also that these aspects are derived from a context in which social work management in non-governmental organisations is included, meaning that certain aspects that are important for management in the personal social services in Sweden are missing. Political governance, the fact that the social services are regulated by law and the exercise of public authority are for example not mentioned by the cited social work researchers.

However, there are a few aspects mentioned by the social work researchers that are overlooked in the other perspectives described above; namely the commitment to a specific code of ethics for social workers5 (Rank & Hutchison 2000), the advocacy for disadvantaged groups (Patti 2000) and

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5 The commitment to a code is of course not specific for social work (compare to our public ethos or the Hippocratic Oath), but there are social work specific codes (see e.g. SSRs Etisk kod för socialarbetare; IFSWs Statement of Ethical Principles; NASW Code of Ethics and BASWs The Code of Ethics for Social Work).
supervision (i.e. professional guidance) (Kadushin 2002). As we shall see, these aspects are of some importance for the social work managers in this thesis.

All in all, the personal social services have features in common with other organisations within the public sector, with other HSOs, and with other social work organisations (even outside the public sector). However, while there are differences between the personal social services and other such organisations, the differences between the personal social services and commercial businesses/industries in the private sector are bigger. This has consequences for management and governance, meaning that not all management ideologies and technologies (e.g. those suggested by NPM proponents) or managers (e.g. with degrees in other disciplines) can be directly incorporated in the personal social services.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter and in the former, different organisational and contextual aspects that are thought to affect management within the personal social services have been discussed. In line with the ambition to combine an individual perspective with a structural, the thesis can be said to have two main themes. One is to describe the managers and to capture their perceptions of everyday work. The other is to contextualise some of their experiences and relate them to organisational theories and changes affecting the public services. Below, the most relevant analytical concepts will be summarised, and a brief explanation of how they aid the understanding of these two themes will be provided.

In terms of the first theme, namely the managers’ descriptions of their everyday work, the managerial work tradition has provided several valuable concepts. Two that were introduced briefly in the previous chapter and that have been particularly useful are deliberate and reactive management. These provide understanding of the perceived reality of social service management and make it possible relate this reality to current ideals of leadership etc. However, the managers also describe changes in relation to their everyday work, which brings us to the second theme. For the understanding of these changes, the concepts NPM and managerialism are vital. With help of some of the concepts described in this chapter, organisational/occupational professionalism and professional ethos/our public ethos, less concrete consequences of NPM-influence can also be discussed, for example what the changes and conditions mean for the managers’ loyalties and professional identities. Additionally, with the understanding of the social services organisations as at the same time public sector and human service organisations – which is taken to mean requiring specific prerequisites for management – it is possible to suggest that reforms in line with NPM ideals may be ill suited
for such organisations. The consequences of the implementations of such reforms have in British social work research been regarded as a change from a *bureau-professional regime* to a managerial. To what extent this is the case in the Swedish personal social services may be discussed with these concepts as starting points.

Finally, in previous research, there have been indications of the significance of *managerial level* – both regarding individual characteristics and everyday work as well as in terms of loyalties. If there are such differences between levels in the personal social services is investigated in this thesis. It is also examined whether or not NPM has affected the levels in different ways. Another idea is that there may also be differences between the *fields of social work* (i.e. child welfare, social assistance and substance abuse). Most managers work in organisations that are specialised on the basis of problem (client category), and as the fields differ in terms of assignment, staff education and professionalisation (Bergmark & Lundström 2002), it appears relevant to investigate if there are any differences also regarding the managers/management in the different fields.
4. Data and methods

As is evident by this stage, the population of this study consists of social work managers. The included managers are those that have low or middle positions in the personal social services, i.e. from frontline managerial positions to the head of the personal social services (frontline, second tier and third tier). A common feature for all the included managers is that they have at least one superior (employed) manager. In some contexts, the definition of manager excludes those without budget and personnel responsibility. This is however not the case in this study. Here, these managers (supervisors, work managers etc.) are included. The managers have to different extents (depending on level) the personnel, fiscal and/or operative responsibility for child protection, social assistance and treatment of substance abusers within the Swedish municipalities. As the purpose is to generate knowledge about these managers both on an individual and a more general level, both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection has been used. The thesis is for this reason founded on a broad empirical base including qualitative interviews with twenty-four managers in different managerial positions in six municipalities, and 402 questionnaires distributed to managers around Sweden.

Combining qualitative and quantitative data

Combining different methods within one study has been called various things over the years. Some refer to it as a multimethod approach (Bakketieig 2012), others have called it triangulation. Others again have used the term mixed methods (Halcomb et al. 2009). The different terms might refer to different methodologies (for example different types of data being combined) but the common denominator is the combination of different methods. Many later Anglo-Saxon writings seem however to use the term mixed methods for the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell 2009).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is sometimes regarded as problematic. The ontological and epistemological standpoints associated with the methods are often seen as difficult – if not impossible – to combine. As a result, the mixed method approach has been criticised. Qualitative researchers have for example claimed that enthusiasts of mixed meth-
ods are post positivist scholars who have discovered the use of qualitative research. They argue for example that within mixed methods research, qualitative research is given an auxiliary role (Denzin 2010). In contrast, by its proponents, mixed methods are regarded as ‘the third methodological movement’ (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003). The approach is described as something more than the sum of its qualitative and quantitative components, namely a separate methodological orientation with its own worldview, terminology and techniques (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003). Additionally, the differences between the epistemological perspectives underlying the methods are downplayed, and the standpoints are instead suggested to be hetero- genic families which can contain a variety of views on epistemological matters (Bergman 2008).

During later decades, there has been an increased interest in formal mixed methods research, and the design has developed into a school of thought with a reasonably coherent terminology (see Creswell 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003; Andrew & Halcomb 2009). There is for example an extensive taxonomy of mixed methods designs, depending on four aspects, namely: 1) the timing of the qualitative and quantitative data collection; i.e. if the two types of data are collected sequentially or simultaneously, 2) the priority of the materials; i.e. if one of the materials is emphasised or are their weights regarded as equal, 3) the integration of the data; i.e. when and how does the researcher mix the two types of data; and 4) the theorising; i.e. to what extent a theoretical perspective is guiding the project (Bergman 2008; Creswell et al 2003; Creswell 2009).

Using the language of mixed methods, it can be stated that I have collected my data sequentially (e.g. collecting the qualitative data first). The procedure I used bears closest resemblance with what would be called an exploratory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell et al. 2003; Creswell 2014). This means that qualitative data is collected first and that the findings thereafter are used in the following quantitative phase. According to mixed methods literature, the intent of this design is to investigate whether data from a few individuals can be generalized to larger populations (Creswell 2014). In this respect, my approach differs from that of mixed methods. My intent was not to use the survey to generalise the findings from the interviews, but instead to highlight different aspects of management in social work using qualitative and quantitative data. Nevertheless, I was able to use experiences from the interviews when I constructed the questions for the survey. This, I believe, has made the questionnaire better adapted to capture the respondents’ views (cf. Widerberg 2002).

Considering the priority of the qualitative and quantitative data, I have tried to give them equal emphasis. However, the materials answer different questions. The first empirical chapter (chapter five), designated to describe and explore the individual characteristics and organisational affiliations of the managers, is for example exclusively based on the results from the sur-
vey and gives a picture of who the managers in the Swedish personal social services are. In contrast, for example the managers’ experiences of their way to management, their perceptions of tasks that are reactive and their ideas about differences between management in different organisations are depicted through the qualitative material. Other aspects (e.g. sources of managerial knowledge, activities in everyday work and influence of different groups in the organisation) are covered in both materials.

The data from the qualitative and quantitative material was to a large degree analysed separately, even if knowledge from the one material were used to better understand the other (cf. Widerberg 2002). In texts on exploratory sequential design, it is suggested that qualitative findings are reported first and that the quantitative findings are reported as the final outcome, much in line with the intent to generalise the qualitative themes (e.g. Creswell 2014). I have instead reported much of the data simultaneously, intending to use the different materials to depict different aspects.

To sum up, I have combined qualitative and quantitative materials in a way that has been inspired by the school of mixed methods. However, I have not followed the rigorous features of mixed methods, and I have a somewhat different idea about how to make most use of the (qualitative) data. By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods I have been able to gain broad knowledge of a scarcely researched area. This is one of many definite advantages of mixing data. However, mixing also includes extensive data collection, and a time intensive analysis (both qualitative and quantitative). Also, when two (or more) different methods are combined, there is always a risk for fragmentation (Silverman 2005; Bakketieg 2012). Naturally, had I decided to do a mono method study, I would have been able to spend more time on collecting and analysing the one material. However, what I may lose in depth, I hope to be able to gain in breadth.

The interviews

The selection of municipalities

During the first phase of the relatively extensive data collection, qualitative interviews with twenty-four managers (interviewees) were conducted. The choice of managers started with a selection of six municipalities. The intention was to select municipalities that were reasonably varied in terms of size, location, political governance and costs for the personal social services. For

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6 i.e. the theoretically estimated cost per inhabitant for the personal social services considering certain structural characteristics of the municipality (Kommundatabasens nyckeltal, IFO’s standardkostnad). The measure may also be described as the cost that a particular municipality would have if it operated with an average level of ambition and effectiveness considering
reasons of accessibility, the municipalities had to be situated within reasonable traveling distance from Stockholm. To avoid the very smallest communities, which generally have small social services organisations and few managers, it was decided that the included municipalities should have at least 25000 inhabitants. A total of forty one municipalities met those two requirements.

With cost for personal social services as a basis, the identified forty one municipalities were divided into three groups. From each of the three groups, two municipalities were selected. Consequently, two municipalities were selected from the group with a rather low cost per inhabitant, two from the middle group and finally two from the group with a comparatively high cost per inhabitant. When selecting these municipalities, the type of municipality was taken into consideration, as was the governing political party/parties and the municipality’s location. This procedure resulted in six municipalities (Table 1) with reasonably different characteristics, which was hoped to also yield a variation in organisational conditions for the interviewed managers.

Table 1. The municipalities; type of municipality, number of inhabitants, cost for the personal social services (PSS) and political governance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality 1</th>
<th>Municipality 2</th>
<th>Municipality 3</th>
<th>Municipality 4</th>
<th>Municipality 5</th>
<th>Municipality 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suburban municipality</td>
<td>Metropolitan municipality</td>
<td>Suburban municipality</td>
<td>Municipality in densely populated region</td>
<td>Large city</td>
<td>Manufacturing municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ca 30000 inhabitants</td>
<td>&gt;100000 inhabitants</td>
<td>Ca 70000 inhabitants</td>
<td>Ca 30000 inhabitants</td>
<td>Ca 55000 inhabitants</td>
<td>Ca 25000 inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low cost for PSS</td>
<td>High cost for PSS</td>
<td>High cost for PSS</td>
<td>Middle-range cost for PSS</td>
<td>Middle-range cost for PSS</td>
<td>Low cost for PSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition of centre-right parties</td>
<td>Coalition of centre-right parties</td>
<td>Coalition of left-wing parties</td>
<td>Social democratic government</td>
<td>Coalition of centre-right parties</td>
<td>Social democratic government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

certain structural characteristics. Here, the measure is taken to say something about the strain on the personal social services. A municipality with a high estimated cost per inhabitant is expected to be somewhat more strained than a municipality with a low cost per inhabitant.

7 I.e. the municipalities had to be situated in Stockholms län, Uppsala län, Södermanlands län, Gävleborgs län, Örebro län, Östergötland, Dalarna or Västmanlands län.

8 Swedish municipalities are classified into ten groups by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The classifications are based by structural parameters such as population, commuting patterns, tourism and travel industry and economic structure.
Municipality 1

Municipality 1 was a suburban municipality with a low cost per inhabitant for the personal social services. It had a bit over 30000 inhabitants, and was at the time governed by a coalition of centre-right parties. At the time of the interviews, the personal social services in this municipality were specialised on the basis of problem (Lundgren et al. 2009). More specifically, the personal social services were divided into six units. Four units were dedicated to different aspects of child welfare (i.e. family law, foster care placement, child welfare for children aged 0-12 and youth care for children/youth aged 13-20), one unit dealt with social assistance and one unit with treatment of substance abusers. The municipality had three managerial levels; head of the personal social services (third tier), service/unit managers (second tier) and supervisors/team leaders (frontline). In this municipality, five managers were interviewed. All managers interviewed in this municipality were women, and all of them were qualified social workers. They had all been social workers prior to their managerial assignment.

Municipality 2

Municipality 2 was a metropolitan municipality (more than 100 000 inhabitants), and had a high cost per inhabitant for the personal social services. At the time of the interviews, the municipality was governed by a coalition of centre-right parties. Due to the size of this municipality, it was divided into several districts, each with separate social services departments (stadsdelsförvaltningar). This being the case, one district was chosen to represent the municipality. The selected district was considered to be reasonably representative for the city as a whole as it consisted of both wealthy residential areas where people lived in owned property, and less wealthy areas where the majority of people lived in rented accommodation. It also had a slightly higher than average percentage of people in need of social assistance, which to some extent is an indication of strain on the social services.

The district had a high degree of specialisation, and could be defined as multi-specialised (Lundgren et al. 2009). As well as having specialised units for child welfare, treatment of substance abusers, mental health⁹ and social assistance, it also had special units for intake (within child welfare and social assistance) and separate units for assessment and treatment (within child welfare, treatment of substance abusers and mental health). Like municipality 1, the district had three managerial levels. Four managers were chosen for the interviews. All participating managers from this municipality were women and all were qualified social workers. The managers in municipality 2

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⁹ Units for mental health are sometimes a part of the personal social services. If they are not, they may instead be organised under units for eldercare or care for persons with functional disabilities.
were, as shown in Table 2, all experienced managers, who had worked as social workers prior to their managerial positions.

**Municipality 3**
Municipality 3 was a suburban municipality with approximately 70 000 inhabitants and a high cost per inhabitant for the personal social services. The municipal executive board consisted of a coalition of left-wing parties. Municipality 3 could also be defined as multi-specialised (Lundgren 2009). It had five large separate units: one for social assistance, one for treatment of substance abusers, one for housing and two units for child welfare (one unit for assessment and one for treatment). These five larger units also had a number of sub-units. The treatment unit for child welfare was for example divided into three sub-units (one for preventative work and two for treatment), and both the social assistance unit and the unit for treatment of substance abusers had separate assessment and provider units. Like the previously described organisations, this municipality had three managerial levels. Four managers from this municipality were interviewed – three women and one man. All managers were qualified social workers and had experience of social work prior to their managerial assignment.

**Municipality 4**
Municipality 4 was classified as a municipality in densely populated region and had slightly more than 30 000 inhabitants. Its’ cost for the personal social services was middle-range, and its’ government social democratic. The organisation of the personal social services in this municipality was somewhat different compared to the other municipalities, even if it perhaps would be best described as multi-specialised (Lundgren 2009). However, the principal basis for specialisation was in this municipality based on function rather than problem. Apart from a separate unit for social assistance, the municipality had one treatment unit (for treatment of all categories of clients) and a unit for assessment (for all categories of clients). The treatment unit and the assessment unit were however divided into sub-groups based on client categories.

The third tier manager in this municipality was responsible for the entire social services (including eldercare and care for persons with functional disabilities). Apart from this manager each unit had a service manager and some sub-units also had a supervisor/team leader. Four managers from this municipality participated in the study, whereof one was male. Unlike the other municipalities, two of the managers from this municipality lacked formal qualifications as social workers (M16 and M17). All of the managers had worked within the field of social work prior to their managerial assignment. One of the two managers who lacked formal social work qualifications had experiences of working within the personal social services and at residential care unit, and the other manager who lacked formal social work qual-
ifications had experience from a residential care unit for youth and an outpatient care unit for youth.

**Municipality 5**

Municipality 5 was classified as a large city, had 55 000 inhabitants and, like municipality number four, it had a middle-range cost per inhabitant for the personal social services. At the time of the interviews, the municipality was governed by a coalition of centre-right parties.

The personal social services in municipality 5 were also to some extent multi-specialised (Lundgren et al. 2009). It was divided into 3 major units with a number of sub-units. Unlike the other municipalities, care for persons with functional disabilities was included in the personal social services and constituted one of the three major units. The other two were child welfare and adult services. Each of the major units had one manager who was responsible for the sub-units and their managers. Four managers were selected from this municipality, all women. Two of the managers (those who worked in the mental health units) had a bachelor’s degree in social care, directed towards leadership and care of the elderly and people with disabilities, whereas the other two were qualified social workers. The two managers with degrees in social work had worked as social workers prior to their managerial degree. The two managers who worked in the mental health units had no experience of social work in the personal social services before entering their managerial positions. Instead, before they attained their formal qualifications, they had worked as nursing assistants.

**Municipality 6**

The last municipality was classified as a manufacturing municipality, had about 25000 inhabitants and a low cost per inhabitant for the personal social services. It was governed by a social democratic government. The personal social services was specialised on basis of problem and divided into three units: Social assistance, child welfare and treatment of substance abusers. Three female managers from this municipality participated in the interviews; all qualified social workers who had worked as social workers before their managerial positions.

**The selection of managers**

When the selection of municipalities was completed, a letter with brief information about the study was sent to the managers responsible for the personal social services in each municipality. After a few days the managers were contacted by telephone and asked whether or not the organisation was interested in participating in the study. All six municipalities agreed to participate and during this first contact, some general information about the managers in the organisation was obtained. This basic information on the
organisational structure was used as a base for deciding which managers should be invited to participate in the study. The basic principles for the selection of managers were that both different fields of social work (child welfare, social assistance and treatment of substance abusers) and managerial levels should be covered. In some municipalities, I was allowed to choose which managers to interview, in others the third tier manager informed the subordinate managers about the study, and managers who wanted to participate announced their interest. The total number of managers in each of the municipalities (including all three levels) varied between five and around twenty. Table 2 provides some basic information about the twenty four managers that agreed to participate in the study.
Table 2. The interviewed managers, field of social work, managerial level and years as manager. n=24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager n=24</th>
<th>Field of social work</th>
<th>Managerial level</th>
<th>Years as manager</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipality 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
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<td>Substance abuse</td>
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</tr>
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<td>M4</td>
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<td>M24</td>
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12.0 (mean) (sd=7.8)

Conducting and analysing the interviews

The interviews with the managers were conducted in late autumn 2008 and spring 2009, and took place in the workplaces of the managers, either in their offices or in an assembly room. The managers were given the option of giv-
ing the interviews outside their office, but found it more convenient to be interviewed at their workplaces. The interviews, which all were conducted by me, took approximately one hour to one hour and fifteen minutes. Before the actual interviews started, all of the managers were informed that the published material would not contain information about which municipalities that were included in the study, nor which managers that were interviewed. Before the collection of data started, the interview guide was pre-tested on two managers, which lead to some revisions and improvements.

The themes in the semi-structured interview guide were inspired by previous research and theoretical considerations, but also by identified knowledge gaps such as the limited knowledge regarding managers own experiences of their everyday work. The guide thereby covered themes such as the managers’ ways to management, their views on management/leadership and everyday work, their relations to other levels within the organisation and their ideas about the possibilities to exert influence. The managers were also asked to elaborate on whether the managerial role had changed during their time in the personal social services (see interview guide in Appendix 2).

All of the interviews were taped and afterwards transcribed verbatim. The coding was aided by the software program Nvivo (9.0), designed to assist analysis and management of qualitative data. In the analysis, focus was put on the content of the interviewees’ statements rather than how the conversation took shape. Concepts from organisational theory and research on NPM and specialisation (see p. 43) were used as ‘sensitising concepts’, meaning that they guided the attention and were used as frames for theoretical understanding of the data (Bowen 2006). However, although these concepts were used as points of reference, some new themes emerged during the process of analysis, and others were found to be of greater importance than what was initially expected. For example, the influence of factors associated with NPM on the managers’ everyday professional life is an example of a theme that was found to be more prominent than anticipated, and the reactiveness of the managers’ work was a theme that emerged through the data and afterwards was conceptualised theoretically.

The survey
A total of 900 questionnaires were distributed to a representative selection of managers (respondents) in the personal social services in Sweden. The managers were identified through the Union for Professionals (akademikerförbundet SSR), which organized 80% of the employed Swedish social workers. The majority of SSR’s members were social workers, and almost all of them had a bachelor’s degree in social work (Bergmark & Lundström 2008).
A large proportion of the remaining social workers belong to another trade union (Vision).10

The managers who took part in the survey were registered in SSR’s list of members as middle managers within the personal social services. The total number of managers who met these criteria was 1414. From this population a random sample of 900 managers was selected, and during spring 2010 the questionnaire was send to these managers’ homes. After reminders, 644 respondents answered the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 71.5 %. However, of those who answered the questionnaire, 242 respondents did not meet the criteria (i.e. did not work as managers within the personal social services). As a consequence of this, the results are based on 402 questionnaires (i.e. the remaining number of completed questionnaires, excluding the questionnaires from the respondents who did not meet the criteria).11 The present sampling strategy means that the results cannot be generalised to managers who are members of other trade unions or those who do not belong to any trade union, and it also means that the managers in this study may be more likely to have taken a bachelor degree in social work compared to the rest of the managers. Despite the possible disadvantages of using SSRs list of members, it also has its advantages. It is the only list of its kind and it covers the entire nation, which means that it is an effective way of getting hold of a large number of managers. This sampling strategy has previously been used by Bergmark and Lundström (2008) as well as Dellgran and Höjer (2005) in studies on social workers.

The content of the questionnaire is based partly on experience gained from prior studies (see Bergmark & Lundström 2008; Bergmark & Lundström 2002 and 2005), but more importantly also from experiences and findings from the qualitative interviews. Apart from questions on background variables, the questionnaire treated areas like education, managerial training, organisational structure, attitudes to managerial knowledge, contacts with others within and outside the organisation, perceived influence, everyday work, working conditions and attitudes to management (see Appendix 1). Before the questionnaire was posted, it was tested on a small number of managers within the personal social services.

The data was analysed with aid of the software program SPSS 22 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Apart from descriptive statistics, bi- and multivariate analyses were used to explore the data. In table 7, the results of

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10 SSR is a union that represents university graduates, whereas Vision represents also employees without academic qualification.

11 The trade union had no possibility to separate managers who worked within the personal social services from managers who worked within, for example, care for persons with functional disabilities. As a result of this the questionnaire was also sent to managers who did not meet my criteria. Furthermore, the list of members was not completely updated, meaning that some members who were registered as managers within the personal social services had retired or moved on to other positions.
a logistic regression are presented. Other tables present either descriptive statistics or the results of chi square and/or analysis of variance, which were used to assess possible differences between managerial levels with regards to different aspects such as individual characteristics and attitudes. The same analyses were used to assess possible differences between managers in different fields of social work, but these results are only presented in the text (not in tables), as much fewer such differences were found.

Categorisations of managerial levels and fields of social work

There are considerable variations in the organisational structures of the personal social services. This is a result partly of the municipalities’ extensive autonomy regarding the provision of social services, partly of the differences in municipal size and degrees of specialisation.

In many municipalities, there are three managerial levels within the personal social services. Nevertheless, other organisations, often found in smaller municipalities, may have only one or two managerial levels. Hence, in a small municipality, the head of the personal social services may be directly superior to the social workers, whereas in another municipality, someone with the same title may have two managerial levels beneath her/him.

Even if number of managerial levels varies as a result of differences in municipal size/degree of specialisation/preference, information from interviews and survey points towards the existence of three managerial levels – frontline, second tier and third tier. To ensure that the managers from the survey were placed in the most suitable category, the following questions have been taken into consideration:

- What is your title?
- What is the title of your closest superior manager?
- Do you have subordinate managers?
- What is the title of your closest subordinate manager?
- How many people are subordinated to you (staff/managers)
- Which field of social work do you work in (child welfare, social assistance, substance abuse, other, two areas, or all areas)?

A typical frontline manager would, in accordance with the line of argument above, have a title that indicates that she/he works close to the social workers, e.g. supervisor, team leader (‘första socialsekreterare, gruppledare, biträdande enhetschef’), have no subordinate managers and few subordinate staff. She/he would also often work within one specific field of social work (i.e. child welfare, social assistance or substance abuse). A second tier manager would also often work within one specific area of social work, but have a title like service manager (‘enhetschef’ etc. He/she would be responsible for one or more frontline managers, and their associated social workers. Fi-
ally, a third tier manager would be titled head of personal social services (‘IFO-chef’). He/she would be responsible for service managers and all their associated staff and often have the overall responsibility for all fields of social work within the personal social services (i.e. child welfare, social assistance and substance abuse).

However, as has been indicated, the managerial levels are not always as distinct as the description above indicates. For example, in a small municipality, the third tier manager may perform the role of all three managerial levels, whereas a larger municipality may have managers at all levels with more specialised managerial roles (see also chapter five). Despite these circumstances, the categorisation into three managerial levels is believed to serve its purpose in the analysis of managerial work, and the distinctions of managerial levels in previous literature resemble those of this study (see chapter two).

The categorisation of field of social work was more straightforward; the respondents were asked to indicate which field of social work they mainly worked within (see Appendix 1, question 11), and the categorisation was consequently based on their indications.

**Ethical considerations**

This study concerns the social work managers’ work situation and is not considered to contain sensitive information. However, the interviewees were invited to participate on the basis of informed consent, and it was agreed that quotes should be anonymised.
5. Managers in the personal social services

As has been shown in the previous chapters, the basic knowledge about the managers in the Swedish personal social services is scarce. We know little about who the managers are, where they work, what experience they have etc. In the following chapter, individual characteristics and organisational affiliations of the managers in the personal social services will be explored. Also, the characteristics of the interviewed managers will be briefly compared to those of the respondents from the survey. The chapter is mainly descriptive and based on the empirical results from the survey. It serves as an introduction to the following chapters.

Who are the managers?

In Table 3, some background information regarding the managers is presented. A theoretical assumption was that there would be certain differences between managerial levels regarding things like sex and experience (Berg et al. 2008). This proved also to be the case. Another hypothesis was that there could be some differences also between managers working within different fields of social work (i.e. child welfare, social assistance and substance abuse). As we shall see below, one such difference was found. However, in all other aspects the managers working in different fields appeared to have similar individual characteristics and organisational affiliations.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{12}\) Managers who stated that they worked within two areas or more or those who stated that they worked in another field were excluded from this analysis.
Table 3. Sample characteristics, respondents in the survey, n=391–402 (per cent/mean).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Frontline</th>
<th>Second tier</th>
<th>Third tier</th>
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<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td></td>
<td>54-66</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>Two areas or more</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>19.2</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
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<td>(sd=9.8)</td>
<td>(sd=10.9)</td>
<td>(sd=10.7)</td>
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* = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001. n.s. = non-significant (p > 0.05).
Sex, age and university education

The majority of managers who responded to this survey were women. This was the case in all managerial positions, but there was a higher percentage of men in senior management positions (i.e. second and third tier) compared to frontline management positions. The overrepresentation of women in managerial positions is consistent with the fact that social work is a heavily female-dominated professional field (Bergmark & Lundström 2008). Previous research has indicated that the proportion of men increases higher up the hierarchy (Hafford-Letchfield 2008; Berg et al. 2008). However, it has been shown that in Sweden, unlike in other countries, women continue to be in the majority (although not to the same extent) even in higher managerial positions within the field of social work (Kullberg 2013). An analysis regarding the proportion of men and women managers in the three traditional fields of social work showed that child welfare had the smallest proportion of men (15 %, compared to 21 % within social assistance and 32 % in substance abuse, p < 0.05, not in table). This was the only significant difference identified between the three fields in this analysis.

The average age of the managers was 51 years (sd. 8.2), indicating that they, on average, were slightly older than their staff. Unsurprisingly, age corresponded with managerial level: third tier managers had an average age of 53 years (sd.=8.90), second tier managers of 52 years (sd.=7.4) and frontline managers of 50 years (sd.=8.4) (not in table). The vast majority of managers had a Bachelors’ degree of social work, and no statistically significant differences between managerial levels could be found. Regarding the managers’ university education, it is worth recalling that the managers were identified through the union for trained social workers (SSR), which means that it is expected that a great majority have a social work education.

Managerial levels and number of subordinates

As expected, the majority of respondents (57 %) could be classified as frontline managers. None of the frontline managers had subordinate managers, indicating that they did work on the frontline (i.e. closest to the social workers). However, when it came to responsibilities, there was some variation between the managers in this group. For example, both managers with and without budgetary responsibility were included in this group, giving two types of frontline managers – those responsible only for the immediate su-

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13 Bergmark and Lundström (2008) found that the average age for the personnel in the personal social services was 43.5 years.
14 One-way ANOVA analysis with a post-hoc tukey test shows that there are significant differences between frontline managers and second tier managers (p < 0.05) and between frontline managers and third tier managers (p < 0.05).
pervision of social workers (47 %), and those responsible both for supervision and budget (53 %) (see Table 9).

Unsurprisingly, there were fewer second tier managers than frontline managers. The majority of respondents that were classified as second tier managers (by their own title and the title of their superior manager) stated in the questionnaire that they had subordinate managers. Nevertheless, 17 % did not, yet they specified the total number of subordinate personnel to be 20 or more. Due to this large amount of subordinate personnel, it has been considered likely that these managers had some sort of subordinate supervisors etc. (cf. frontline managers without budget responsibility), and hence suit this category.¹⁵ Virtually all second tier managers have budget responsibility (see Table 9).

In total, about one in ten of the managers was classified as third tier. The majority of these managers had subordinate managers (30 of 43) and were responsible for all three fields of social work (38 of 43). Their superior managers were the directors of the entire social services or, in some cases the directors of the municipalities. However, there were also third tier managers (typically from small municipalities) who had no subordinate managers (13 of 43). Like other third tier managers, these managers worked immediately under the directors of the social services (or the directors of the municipalities), and were responsible for all three fields of social work. These managers were found in small municipalities with fewer managerial levels and appeared to have responsibilities normally associated with third tier managers, and were therefore categorised as such. All third tier managers had budgetary responsibility (typically for the entire personal social services).

Naturally, the total number of subordinate staff was related to managerial level. Looking at the number of subordinates of the frontline managers it appeared as if these managers were directly responsible for between 2 and 35 staff, with an average of 12 (median 12).¹⁶ Previous research has indicated that municipal services with a large proportion of women (e.g. social care and education) generally have a higher ratio of subordinate staff to managers than organisations that are dominated by men. For example, Forsberg Kankkunen et al. (2014) found in a recent study that operative managers¹⁷ in eldercare had an average of 33 subordinate staff while managers in technical services had 14. It may be stated that the personal social services, which also is an organisation dominated by women, does not really fit this picture as the

¹⁵ In some contexts, the definition of “manager” excludes supervisors etc. without budget and personnel responsibility.
¹⁶ The average number of subordinate staff for the entire group of managers (i.e. all three levels) was 24 (median 27, ranging from 2-250).
¹⁷ In that study, operative manager is taken to mean frontline and second tier managers. The average number of subordinate staff for all managers in the personal social services (frontline, second tier and third tier) is lower than that of operative managers in eldercare.
average number of subordinates is lower in these organisations than it is in the other female dominated municipal services.

Organisational affiliation and experience

Most of the 290 municipalities in Sweden are rather small, and only 47 have more than 50,000 inhabitants. Yet it is within these 47 municipalities that more than half of the managers have stated that they have their employment. This is of course due to the size of the personal social services in larger municipalities, and is also linked to the degree of specialisation (Bergmark & Lundström 2007). Nevertheless, a substantial number of managers from small municipalities are included in the study, giving a good representation of all municipality types. Of the frontline and second tier managers, the majority (65% and 66% respectively) stated that they worked in larger municipalities (with more than 50,000 inhabitants), while the majority (79%) of third tier managers worked in the smaller municipalities (with less than 50,000 inhabitants). This is most likely a result of the fact that smaller municipalities have fewer managerial levels.

The greatest proportion of managers in this survey worked within child welfare (44%), whilst 14 and 15% of the managers worked within substance abuse and social assistance respectively. This is consistent with the number of personnel within the different fields of practice. Child welfare employs almost as many social workers as social assistance and substance abuse put together (Bergmark & Lundström 2007). Naturally, the majority of third tier managers worked with two areas or more. However, few managers in frontline and second tier positions were responsible for more than one field of social work. Given the high degree of specialisation based on problem in the Swedish social work departments (see chapter two), this is to be expected. When third tier managers were excluded from the analysis, there were no significant differences between which field of social work that the frontline and second tier managers worked within (not in table).

Most managerial positions were held by experienced people; on average the managers in this material have worked for 21 years within the personal social services. The two higher levels of managers had longer experience than the frontline. Furthermore, the respondents had been on managerial positions for an average of almost 10 years. As can be expected, frontline managers had the shortest experience of managerial work, on average 8 years. Second tier and third tier managers had on average 12.5 and 13 years of experience respectively. It appears also as if the managers were loyal to their municipalities, having worked for an average of 15 years within the current municipality. In comparison to the non-managerial personnel in the personal social services, the managers had in general more experience. According to Bergmark and Lundström’s study (2007), social workers have on average worked within the personal social services for 11.6 years.
In both international and national research it has been discussed how adverse working conditions have affected social work and social workers in child welfare. For example, problems with turnover and recruitment have led to high proportions of newly qualified social workers who, without proper introduction, have had to handle difficult cases (Healy et al. 2009: Tham 2014). In this context it is interesting to note that where managers are concerned, the picture appears to look different. In general, managers must be seen as very experienced and loyal to their workplaces. This result does not exclude the possibility that certain municipalities may have large problems with turnover of managers, but the general picture is that managers remain in their workplaces for many years.

The interviewees
The characteristics of the interviewed managers (interviewees) resemble those of the managers in the survey (respondents). In both groups, the overwhelming majority of managers were women. Both respondents and interviewees had worked as social workers for many years and on average, both respondents and interviewees were experienced managers (having worked as managers for 9.9 and 12.0 years respectively). In both groups of studied managers, the frontline managers had least managerial experience. It was also the frontline managerial level that was most frequent in both groups of managers, followed by the second tier position. With regards to specialisation, it may be stated that most interviewed managers (similar to the respondents) worked in specialised organisations (see Table 2 for interviewees and Table 3 for respondents).

Summary
This chapter has given an introductory picture of who the managers in the personal social services are in terms of sex, age and experience. It has also given some ideas about the managers’ positions and within which fields of social work they have their employment. This data corresponds with the research question regarding individual characteristics and organisational affiliations, and serves as a basis for the following chapters.

To sum up the results, most managers in the personal social services were women with extensive social work experience. On average, the managers also had quite a few years of experience as managers. The amount of years that the managers had worked in the current municipalities indicated that they in general were loyal to their workplaces, although it is quite possible that they have had different positions within the municipality. Most managers had frontline positions, meaning that they remained close to social work
practice. The largest field of practice, both in terms of number of managers and personnel, was child welfare. Most managers in frontline and second tier positions were responsible for a single field of social work, indicating that they worked in organisations with a high degree of problem based specialisation. In general, there were several differences regarding individual characteristics between the managerial levels, but few in relation to the three traditional fields of social work. In fact, the only identified difference with regards to characteristics was that child welfare had a smaller proportion of male managers.

As far as statistical data on the characteristics of the interviewees can express, they resemble the respondents from the survey. They too had extensive experience of social work, had on average been in managerial positions for several years, and the majority of them were women.

To contextualise some of the results, i.e. to relate them to some of the concepts presented in the previous chapters and some empirics in the following, a couple of points may be highlighted. Firstly, it may be noted that the personal social services in Sweden, like many other HSOs, has a predominance of women workers. As suggested in chapter two, the gendered character of HSOs may have consequences both for the receptiveness for NPM influence (Healy 2009; Björk et al. 2011) and for managerial prerequisites (Forsberg Kankkunen 2009; Björk 2013). With regards to managerial prerequisites however, it has been shown that compared to eldercare managers, managers in the personal social services appear in general to have fewer subordinates (Dellve et al.). Secondly, and with relevance for the following chapter, it may be concluded that despite influence of NPM, managers in the personal social services in Sweden appear to be drawn from the ranks of practitioners and are not in general recruited from other disciplines (c.f. Healy 2002). However, it may be of importance once again to note that the managers were identified through the union for trained social workers (SSR), which means that there may be a somewhat higher probability that the managers in this study, compared to managers in general, are former social workers.
6. Becoming a social work manager – learning management

In this chapter, the focus will be turned towards how the Swedish social work managers perceive their promotion, post-qualifying training and how they rate the available sources of managerial knowledge. The presented data is based on empirical material gained from interviews and surveys and the results will be discussed in relation to challenges outlined in the international literature. Also, the view on management in social work that is revealed through the recruitment practices and training alternatives will be discussed in relation to some theoretical assumptions about social work organisations and their management.

In the international literature it has been noted that it is becoming more common among social work organisations in for example Australia and the USA to employ managers from other disciplines, such as business or public administration. This has been discussed as a challenge for the field of social work, as it may compromise the possibilities of professional leadership and decision-making in social work organisations (Patti 2000; Rank & Hutchinson 2000; Healy 2002; Wuenschel 2006). As data from the previous chapter indicates, Sweden has not (yet?) seen this development. However, also the common practise of promoting social workers who are skilled as practitioners has been criticised (Patti et al. 1979; Patti 2000; Knee & Folsom 2012). Social workers, it has been argued, who have been promoted as a result of their abilities as practitioners, may continue to use skills relevant for clinical social work in their managerial role, where these skills might be inapt. This risk is thought to be higher if they do not receive appropriate managerial training (Patti 2000; Knee & Folsom 2012). One may have different opinions regarding these challenges, but nevertheless it is clear that the recruitment of social work managers and their introduction into management have gained attention internationally. However, within the Swedish research this matter has so far received little notice and therefore, more attention is called for.

This chapter has a fairly chronological structure, beginning with the managers’ descriptions of how they came into management and their experiences of the transition from social worker to manager. This is followed by data on post-qualifying training, including both information on the proportion of managers who have undertaken such training and descriptions about what
the training entails. Thereafter follows an account of how the managers reason about acquiring managerial competences. Finally, the results are summarised and discussed.  

Becoming a manager – coincidence or choice?

When the interviewed managers were asked to describe how they first came into management, many used quite passive terms, describing the promotion as a result of circumstances rather than an active choice or a deliberate strategy (for Swedish translations of the quotes, see Appendix 3).

Yes, that is a good question. I never had any plans on becoming a manager /.../ I think it was a coincidence really, very much a coincidence, because I’ve never been particularly interested in becoming a manager. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

She [the superior manager] phoned one day and asked if I wanted to become one [a manager]. And then I said yes. (M4, second tier, social assistance)

Someone was going to have to do it, and there were five of us and then I did it /.../ So I was in two minds for a long time about becoming a manager. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

As the quotes reveal, some managers described that they were recruited by their superiors, like M4. Others described that they became managers by coincidence (M9), or because someone had to do it and no one else wanted to (M8). However, not all managers who described their promotion as a result of circumstances were altogether unwilling to become managers. Some of them spoke of being informal leaders prior to the promotion, and others expressed that they thought that they could do more good as managers.

Several managers also described that they aspired to become managers and actively sought management positions.

A frontline manager got another job and resigned, so I went directly to my manager and said: I heard that she is going to resign, so I wonder if you are going to advertise this [position], because I think that I would very much like to try it. (M11, second tier, child welfare)

Some of the quantitative results in this chapter, particularly the results in Table 4, 6 and 7 have previously been published and discussed in an article written by the author and colleagues: Shanks, E. Bergmark, Å. & Lundström, T. (2014). Embedded in practice? Swedish social work managers on sources of managerial knowledge. Human Service Organizations, Management, Leadership & Governance, 38(5), 435-447. However, in this chapter these results are developed and discussed in the light of the qualitative material.
Having tired of working with social assistance ... it was time to move. Then the unit manager took ill and I went for it, it was just a short, but the time went by and she never came back, and then I got the job and I got stuck there. (M6, third tier)

Some managers applied for management positions at their own workplaces as M11 describes, or in other municipalities. Others, like M6, gave explanations indicating that it was a feeling of discontent with the previous work rather than an actual wish to become a manager that drove them into seeking a management position. Others again described that they had functioned as informal leaders during their time as social workers and therefore aspired to a formal management position. A couple of managers spoke of their becoming managers as a result of some type of intrinsic aptitude.

In one way I have always had that behaviour, wherever I have been, from school and onwards I think ... I am sure that from preschool [I have] made decisions for my friends ... I often take that position in a group. (M14, second tier, social assistance)

These types of expressions were rare among the interviewees, but appear more common among other studied managers (e.g. Sveningsson & Alvesson 2014).

In her study on management/leadership within eldercare and people with disabilities, Wolmesjö (2005) asked managers a similar question (i.e. how did you become a manager). The answers resembled those given by the managers in this study, i.e. many managers described their promotion to managerial positions as a result of circumstances. Also in Berg’s (2000) study on managers within the public sector, the (women) managers described their promotions in a similar fashion. This caused her to question if the women’s descriptions of their careers were influenced and limited by a notion that it is somehow less legitimate for women than for men to seek out a career/be a careerist. In Wolmesjö’s material, a difference between men’s and women’s descriptions of their career paths were found; women were more likely to state that they had taken their families’ situations (e.g. childcare etc.) into consideration when deciding whether or not to accept an offer of promotion. In my material, no such considerations were revealed; however, both of the men in my study described their promotion as an active choice.

Transition

Considering that many managers described that they became managers as a consequence of circumstances, one may wonder how prepared they felt when entering their new assignment. As mentioned above, critical voices
have been raised concerning the practice of promoting social workers for managerial positions as a result of their capabilities as social workers (Patti et al. 1979; Patti 2000; Knee & Folsom 2012). Indications that the practice of promoting skilled social workers is prevalent in Sweden can be traced in the interviews; some interviewed managers described that it was their abilities as social workers that attained them a managerial position.

M1: He recruited the three of us because we were knowledgeable about practice. Not because we knew budget, and not because we knew anything else or had experience in managing. No, our competence was knowing practice. And then he taught us, one could say.
I: About the other things? Administration and such?
M1: Yes, about the other things. It was a very, very conscious thought from him. /.../ He was the head of the department, and before that he had been the HR manager of the municipality and later he became the head of the municipality, but /.../ he did not know the personal social services. Or, he did not know the craft [of social work]; he was not a specialist.
I: So he chose you because you were specialists; the best in the class or something like that?
M1: /.../ I came from the personal social services, as a craftsman. (M1, third tier)\textsuperscript{vii}

M1 described that she was recruited as a result of her professional knowledge, i.e. because she was considered to be a competent practitioner. She had no experience or knowledge about the administrative tasks that comes with being a manager, but she was taught to handle these things by the manager who recruited her. Other managers were however less fortunate in this respect. For example, the managers quoted below felt unprepared for their new role and described that they were left desiring both support and knowledge.

When I started two and a half years ago /.../ I just had to change my role somehow, I didn’t get any /.../ I was just expected to know everything and be able to do everything. I still don’t know everything, all my assignments but I tried a bit, I was about to have a burnout, or no, I shouldn’t say have a burnout because I don’t like that expression, but I felt that I kind of lost, I didn’t really know my role so to speak. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)\textsuperscript{viii}

M15: I was terrified and it took me a very long to find my role. And I think that the group had someone else in mind, someone that they had thought of from the beginning so, no it was really tough.
I: For how long was it tough do you think?
M15: A few years almost I must say, before I sort of felt at home /.../ But yes, it certainly took two years (M15, frontline, social assistance)\textsuperscript{ix}

Both M3 and M15 described that they became managers as a result of circumstances (M3 because no one else wanted to and M15 was recruited by her superior manager), which may be a contributory cause to their perceived
unpreparedness. Without support and introduction, the transition from social worker to manager may be difficult, which is indicated in M3’s quote. However, like M2 (quoted below) other managers described a smoother transition than those cited above.

No, I, it seemed like quite natural for me because /…/ I felt like I had quite a lot of responsibility and it seemed like a good thing that they formalised it. /…/ So that it became clear that I could do certain things. And, at that time, I thought that I had worked for such a long time that it was quite a natural step for me to gain more responsibility. I felt that it was as good for me and for the team. (M2, frontline, child welfare)

Although M2 described her promotion to a managerial position as a result of circumstances rather than a choice (she described that she was recruited by her manager), she appeared to have felt more prepared for her new role than those quoted above. The managers appeared to have felt different levels of confidence and preparedness when entering the new role. Several factors may contribute to this experience of preparedness. Support from superior managers and colleagues appear to be of importance and it is likely that prior experience and training also matters (cf. Elofsson et al.).

Learning management

Post-qualifying training

We saw in the previous chapter that virtually all managers in this study had a bachelor degree in social work. In Table 4, we can see that the most common type of post-qualifying training for managers within the personal social services appears to be non-academic in-service training facilitated by the local government administration.
Table 4. Proportion of managers who had participated in further training and read books on leadership/management, n=392–398 (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Frontline</th>
<th>Second tier</th>
<th>Third tier</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-service courses on leadership/management paid for by local government administration (≥ 1 day)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate courses on leadership/management given by university or college</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ one semester graduate courses (regardless of subject) given by university or college</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read any books on leadership/management</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001, n.s. = non-significant (p > 0.05).

As Table 4 shows, the majority of the managers who participated in the survey had undergone in-service training. It was somewhat less common among frontline managers to have participated in in-service training compared to second tier managers and third tier managers. Overall, one fourth of the managers had taken post graduate courses on leadership/management at university, but there were significant differences between managerial levels. It was considerably more common among higher levels of managers to have taken such courses. Only very few (3 %, not in table) managers stated that they had completed a Master’s degree in leadership/management. However, about one third of the managers had, after completing their degree, taken one semester or more of some sort (i.e. any subject) of graduate courses at university. It was also common among the managers to have read books on leadership/management; particularly among higher levels. No statistically significant differences could be found between managers in the different fields of social work (child welfare, social assistance and substance abuse) regarding any of the variables, indicating that managers in all fields of social work receive reasonably equal amounts of further training.

Even if the in-service training is organised by the local government administration, it is common to appoint private management consultants to deliver the training. In fact, it appears to be equally common for the managers to have undertaken in-service training held by the municipality itself (48
% as training held by private consultants (46 %).\textsuperscript{19} It appears rather uncommon to have partaken in training held by other organisations, such as the regional research and development units, the unions or the Swedish association of local authorities and regions (Sveriges kommuner och landsting) etc. (6 %).

Like the respondents from the survey, the majority of interviewees had undergone some sort of post-qualification training. When asked if they had attended any management/leadership courses, the answers revealed that all but two (frontline managers) had undertaken in-service training (i.e. training facilitated by the local government administration). Some managers also mentioned courses on management at university/college.

In-service training – administration and content

From the results of the survey, it is difficult to depict anything but a sketchy picture of the content of the in-service training. However, the questionnaire did contain an open question in which the managers were asked to specify the main theme of the latest training. The answers indicated a great variation of themes, although many answers suggested that the training was more focused on general leadership than public administration or social work administration specific knowledge. A number of managers specified the name of the received training program (for example, 44 managers mentioned UGL\textsuperscript{20}), which strengthens the impression that private management consultants deliver a substantial part of the training. However, notwithstanding the large amount of answers indicating that the managers had partaken in courses focusing on leadership, several managers also stated that they had undertaken courses focusing on specific administrative topics, such as labour legislation, rehabilitation and budgetary matters.

In the interviews, the managers were allowed to elaborate more on the subject, which resulted in a more detailed picture of the contents and administration of the post-qualifying training. As in-service training was more common than university/college studies, most statements concerned the for-

\textsuperscript{19} These numbers should be interpreted with caution as some managers may have stated that the training was held by the municipality even if it was held by private consultants but paid for by the municipality.

\textsuperscript{20} UGL (Utveckling av grupp och ledare) was established by the Swedish armed forces in the 80s and functioned initially as a part of the education for officers. From the late 80s the training became available for civilians, and since the mid-90s it has become increasingly more common among managers in the public as well as the private sector to undertake this training. Since 2000, the concept of UGL is owned by the Swedish defence university, even if other businesses/educators (who are authorised by the Swedish defence university) deliver the lion’s share of the training. The training is organised as a five day residential course in which managers from all types of organisations participate (http://www.fhs.se/sv/utbildning/-uppsutbildningar/ledarskap/ugl/ugl/).
mer. Several interviewees spoke of in-service training provided by private management consultants (e.g. UGL, Korsvägen from Gothenburg, Gothenburg management institute, Provins 5 and Svanbergs and partners).

**Administration of in-service training**

Two ways of administering in-service training emerged through the analysis of the interviews. Several interviewed managers described that the local authority had contracted consultants to provide an in-house managerial training for all managers in the local government (i.e. all public administrators, including both managers working within the social services and managers working with infrastructure, planning etc.):

But afterwards I have been allowed to participate in several courses, for example province 5. There were [managers] from the entire municipality, we were there together with other unit managers /.../ in my group there was someone from the environment-office, there were principals, managers from the disabled persons unit and substance abuse managers. (M19, frontline, child welfare)

[Name of Municipality] has had seven or eight [managerial courses]. And then all new managers, newly recruited managers from the last two-three years, and there have been [managers] from the environment-office and urban development /.../ Yes, it was some company [that held the training]. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

Other managers explained that they had been sent to (or allowed to participate in) external courses.

I participated in course afterwards, with Sandberg and Partners. A managerial course, but it was later, I wonder how much later it was, maybe I had been a manager for a year or something like that, before I went to that course. (M10, frontline, social assistance)

Some of these external courses were organised as live-in courses:

It’s a live-in training and you live together, and they put you through a lot of tests I was about to say, but no, team work and stuff. And then the leaders reflect on what you do in the teams. (M23, frontline, social assistance)

Managers from the personal social services appeared to have undertaken managerial training together with managers from a lot of different fields, both from within the municipality, but also with managers from the private sector. To be able to appeal to managers from different domains, it makes sense for the educators (management consultants) to have a generic approach to management.
**Content of in-service training**

In the interviews, the content of the in-service training was often described using terms that indicated a focus on general leadership or management skills (such as leadership, personal development, management development and group behaviour) rather than social work specific skills or public administration skills. The single specific course that was mentioned by the greatest number of managers was the UGL (cf. the respondents from the survey) which caters for public and private sectors alike and was described like this:

> It is the military that has developed this course, and it was people from the military that held it. They are good at leadership. /…/ We worked with group processes, to understand oneself in the group process. /…/ I think it was only me from the social services, almost. The others came from IT or from banks; different areas, doctors and [such]. It was managers from different [organisations], both private and state-owned and municipal. So it was great fun to see how similar it was and the benefits we had of each other. (M14, second tier, social assistance)xv (See also the quote above from M23)

Like the UGL, although under substantially different circumstances, the in-house training appeared often to focus on personal development and leadership.

M1: We have had a large management training here during recent years, organised by the municipality. It's more about personality development and leadership.
I: So it’s not social work specific then, but more general? More about relations and not about administration?
M1: No, about relations. But this management training package contains different parts. So we have the relation parts, which were quite extensive, and also quite a lot of working environment and now we are dealing with economy /…/ how to think smarter and cheaper. And it is all of the managers in the [municipality]. (M1, third tier)xvi

In the quote above, M1 referred to an in-house training, which was aimed at all managers in the local government and delivered by management consultants.

Some managers also spoke of in-service training that appeared to be more aimed towards public administration managers specifically. These courses seemed to be focused on single topics, such as labour legislation or budgetary matters.

I think, quite a lot of the training is about hands-on things, or how to work with certain issues. It can be about work environment, how to work with rehabilitation, labour issues. (M11, second-tier, child welfare)xvii

Overall, it may be stated that the managers in the interviews (and also in the survey) emphasised the relational, personal and leadership themes in the in-
service training they had been offered. There were fewer signs of social work (or even public administration) specific skills; although some practice oriented courses dealing with budget, work environment etc. were mentioned. In this context it is interesting to note that the budget course described by M1 (quoted above) was focused on how to reduce public spending, rather than how to handle budget responsibility. Noticeable is also that none of the managers’ spoke of ethics/democratic issues in relation to their managerial training (cf. Lundquist 1998).

The perceived usefulness of the training
Many interviewees (but not all) appeared satisfied with the managerial training. This is also true for the managers who participated in the survey. In the survey, the respondents were asked if the latest managerial training had been useful for their work as managers. All but one of the managers who had undertaken in-service managerial training answered the question, and as Table 5 shows, most respondents stated that the training had been useful. No statistically significant differences could be found between the different levels of managers or fields of social work.21

Table 5. Has the latest in-service managerial training been useful for you in your work as a manager? n=323 (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, absolutely</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to a large degree</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to some degree</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, not really</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, not at all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if the managers appeared satisfied with their managerial training, they often emphasised that other sources of knowledge had been important for gaining managerial competences. For example, several managers highlighted that experience, as in learning-by-doing, had been their main way of learning management.

Other sources of managerial competences
To get a more comprehensive understanding for how the managers reasoned about acquiring managerial competences, the interviewees were asked to describe how they had learned to be managers. The answers showed that the managers considered a great number of different sources of knowledge to have contributed to their current managerial competences. Naturally, mana-

21 The answers should be interpreted with caution as people may be inclined to answer these types of questions in a positive way.
eral training was mentioned (see above), as was experience, support from colleagues and superiors, managerial supervision and mentors.

**On-the-job learning**

Apart from post-qualifying training (about which the interviewed managers were asked specifically), the perhaps most mentioned source of knowledge was experience, or ‘learning-by-doing’. Several managers described that they had taught themselves to be managers, which according to some managers was a result of managerial training being provided too late. For most of the interviewed managers, the in-service training was provided after entering the managerial position rather than as a preparation for the new role. Some of the interviewed managers described that the training was provided after several years of management.

I have learned a lot, but I think I learned most things myself. /.../ There has been an investment in management [training] here in the [municipality]. And when did I participate in that? Perhaps two years ago. /.../ I had been a manager for many years then. Without a single day of [management] training. (M4, second tier, social assistance)

However, when I first started to work as a manager, I received no training. The introduction for managers is very poor, or at least in my case. I had to teach myself in some way, and learn to understand what it was that I was supposed to do. (M18, third tier, child welfare)

Other managers described training merely as one among several sources of managerial knowledge:

I have taken part in management training and such things over the years /.../ so I think I have thought myself a lot too, you learn from the mistakes you make, you learn from the things you do well and you gain experience from that. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

Support from colleagues and superiors were also mentioned by several managers.

There are three team leaders here, social assistance, child welfare and [me], and we meet. We talk about our roles compared to the roles of the social workers and perhaps also compared to our [superior] managers. In order to specify who we become, and also what needs we have. (M2, frontline, child welfare)

I have had [name of superior manager] as a manager ever since 95. /.../ I think she has been a good manager, present, I like her leadership. /.../ She and I have been working quite a lot in, supporting each other also in the actual management. Of course she has not always had the time, but I’ve been able to go to her if something was the matter. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)
As will be examined further in the discussion, one of the reasons for managers to highlight the importance of on-the-job learning (may it be through their own experience or through the knowledge passed on through colleagues/supervisors), may be the disparity between managerial training and managerial practice. This is not exclusively a problem for HSOs/social work management, but appears to be a problem for management in general (Tengblad 2012). However, it may also be that the social work managers need social work management/public administration specific knowledge that, at the moment, is easiest to obtain through the job.

**Supervision and mentors**

Some of the interviewed managers mentioned managerial supervision (i.e. external supervision with focus on leadership/management) when speaking about how they had learned to be managers. Mentorship was also mentioned by some interviewed managers in connection with acquiring managerial competences. Compared to supervision, it was less common among the interviewed managers to have a mentor with whom management/leadership could be discussed. Interestingly, the managers who had mentors described that they, on their own account and not through their workplace, had contacted mentors from other fields, both within the public sector and from the industry.

I have had a mentor who has been a private mentor, not a paid mentor. And we have also had supervision, so you learn from that I think. (M13, second-tier, mental health)

Well, firstly I had, when I became a supervisor I got myself a mentor, and I have kept in contact with him since 99. (M24, second tier, child welfare)

From the results of the survey, it is evident that managerial supervision is reasonably common among managers in the personal social services; 27% of the managers had been in managerial supervision. To have a mentor with whom management/leadership could be discussed was less common among the managers in the survey, yet 14% stated that they have or have had such a mentor. It was not elaborated in the survey whether or not the mentorship and the managerial supervision was used as a way to gain managerial competences. Judging from the interviews, some managers appeared to use supervision/mentorships in that fashion, but it is likely that other managers rather viewed it as a way to cope with the day-to-day work. However, this way of learning management may, as well as on-the-job learning, be seen as a complement to management training that may offer more operational competences.
Social work background

Connected to the discussion about how the managers have learned to manage is the question concerning the potential usefulness of a social work background. The interviewees were asked if they considered it important for a manager within the personal social services to have a background as a social worker. Most managers considered a social work background to be more or less essential. Some managers were more uncertain about the necessity of such background, and several of these stated that perhaps interest or knowledge about human behaviour and/or public services might suffice. For example, one manager said:

But I'm not sure that you need to have it [a social work background], but you need to have an interest /.../ I think when you trust the staff and /.../ trust that they have the specialist knowledge you do not need to have it as a manager. But I don’t know what it is like to be a manager without having it. / ... / I'm glad that I have worked as a social worker before, I think it has been good for me, but I'm not sure you need to have done it. (M9, frontline, child welfare)xxv

The ambivalent managers expressed uncertainty in similar ways as the manager quoted above. They did not seem to consider it more beneficial to employ managers from other disciplines, but they were not convinced that social work experience was essential either. Perhaps interesting to note is that all of the managers who expressed ambivalence regarding the essentialness of social work experience were frontline or second tier and not – as might have been expected – third tier managers. In previous research, it has been indicated that managers on higher levels value strategic competence rather than familiarity with the operational work (e.g. Wolmesjö 2005), and therefore the opposite case could have been expected.

The managers who appeared more convinced about the necessity of a social work background expressed a few different reasons for why this was desirable. Several spoke of social work experience as a way to gain legitimacy among the social workers and/or because such experience helped the managers to better understand the social workers’ situations.

You cannot be the expert, and you cannot be the best, because the knowledge ages, after a few years you feel that; oh dear, is this how it works today? I have not got a chance in the world to keep up with that. But I know roughly what it feels like, I know the dilemmas they face, what decisions they need to make. If they need to remove a child from its home environment for example, I know what that means, because I've done it a few times. And I think that on some level, you need to know what they are struggling with, that’s what I believe. (M6, third tier)xxvi

It's been an advantage to have worked as a social worker within the field. It makes me more confident in myself. And I think I can understand the unit managers better, what they have on their plate, and the staff also. /.../ I believe
that it would otherwise have taken longer to get into things and to get accepted as a manager. (M18, third tier, child welfare)  

Apart from social work experience giving legitimacy, some managers also mentioned that a social work background is needed as it provides knowledge about the legal system and its relation to the individual’s circumstances:

> We had a personnel coordinator here before, who thought we needed a manager more than we needed a social worker who worked as a manager. And I think that within our field it is impossible, it doesn’t work. You must know what the legal rights mean for the individual, you must know the law. (M22, third tier)  

Also, some managers stated that a social work background is needed to be able to advocate for vulnerable groups:

> There is a risk with employing, if we employ more lawyers and economists I think it is important for the people that we work with, they have no voice, they are not consumers in the same way as they could be in other organisations. And therefore I believe, that one becomes, as a manager, I become a part of their voice, as I have this education and as I have worked in [the field]. (M8, frontline, child welfare)  

There were also a few managers who merely stated that it was desirable for them to come from the social work field without giving specific reasons as to why this would be.

> Several international studies emphasize the perceived advantages of practice experience. For example in Healy’s (2002) study, managers underline the importance of understanding “the individual and structural conditions that contributed to social disadvantage” (p. 537), which is assumed to come with a background in human services. Lawler and Hearn (1997) found that managers with social work backgrounds regarded their professional experience as a way of gaining credibility among the social workers, which is also the opinion of several managers in this study.  

The respondents of the survey (see below) appear to have similar opinions regarding the usefulness of practice experience as the interviewees, as a large proportion of them have rated it (or rather “experiences from pre-managerial work”) as one of the three most important sources of knowledge for their current managerial role.

Practically derived vs. educationally derived knowledge?

Overall, from the statements in the interviews it may be concluded that the interviewees considered a number of sources to be important for obtaining managerial competences. Apart from post-qualifying training, on-the-job learning, managerial supervision and mentors were mentioned as important
for learning how to be a manager. Also, having social work background was highlighted as an important aspect.

In the survey, the respondents were asked to rate six given response alternatives (Table 6) which were inspired partly by the interviews and partly by previous research on knowledge in social work (see for example Bergmark & Lundström 2002). Unlike in the interviews, where the managers spoke relatively freely about the subject, the given alternatives in the survey were directed towards ‘practice oriented/tacit knowledge’ and ‘theoretical knowledge’ (Bergmark & Lundström 2002; Dellgran & Höjer 2005b).

To be more precise; the managers were asked to rate, from one to three, the alternatives that they regarded to be most applicable to their own conceptions of how they had gained their current managerial competences.

Table 6. The most important and useful competences I possess as a manager is a result of (ranked from one to three), n= 341 (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Knowledge</th>
<th>Rank 1</th>
<th>Rank 2</th>
<th>Rank 3</th>
<th>In total, i.e. rank 1, 2 or 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I have learned through my work as a manager</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences from jobs I have had before I became a manager</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have gained through colleagues/superior managers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have learned through management training (not in university/college)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I have learned through studies at University/College</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I learned through reading literature/research on leadership</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the results show that the respondents from the survey tended to view learning-by-doing as most important – 86 % ranked experiences acquired...
during their work as managers as one of the three most important sources of knowledge for their current managerial role. Experiences from pre-managerial work were also perceived as important, two thirds ranked this alternative as one of the three most important. Also, knowledge gained through colleagues or superior managers were regarded as important. However, this alternative was more likely to be ranked as number two or three.

The three statements that were ranked highest by the managers (i.e. “what I have learned through my work as a manager”, “experiences from jobs I have had before I became a manager” and “what I have gained through colleagues/superior managers”) can all be characterised as practice-derived, as they all refer to experiences gained from the managers’ work (either through their current or previous positions). The remaining statements refer to knowledge gained through education, and may be referred to as educational (or theoretical). Much fewer managers have ranked these sources of knowledge as most important.

**Practice orientation**

With starting point in the managers ratings of the most important sources of managerial knowledge (see Table 6), a group of managers who have rated exclusively practice oriented alternatives could be identified. As it turned out, this group consisted of 34 % of the managers. Interestingly, no manager ranked exclusively educationally oriented alternatives. Considering the proportion of managers who had undertaken in-service managerial/leadership training (80 %) and that practically all managers had a Bachelor’s degree in social work, it might be considered rather surprising that such a large proportion of managers ranked exclusively practice oriented alternatives.

To explore what factors could increase the odds of being exclusively practice oriented, the possible impact of nine independent variables was investigated with the help of logistic regression in a multivariate model (Table 7).\(^2\)

---

\(^2\) Dependent variable: 1=three practice oriented alternatives, 0=zero to two practice oriented alternatives.
Table 7. Determinants of being exclusively practice oriented (logistic regression).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95 % CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.71-2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second tier</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.49-1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third tier</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.30-3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field of practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child welfare</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.19-5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.50-3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two areas or more</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.26-2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.48-4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size of municipality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-25000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25000-50000</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>0.48-2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50000-100000</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.39-2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100000-</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.57-3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of years as manager</strong></td>
<td>_</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(continuous variable)</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.92-0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taken graduate courses on leadership/management given by university or college</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.25-0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taken in-service courses on leadership/management paid for by local government administration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.22-0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read any books on leadership/management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.27-0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OR = odds ratio. CI = confidence interval. Bold figures indicate statistical significance at least at the p < 0.05 level. n=316.
As Table 7 shows, five of the independent variables made statistically significant contributions to the model. Managers who worked with child welfare were more likely to have ranked exclusively practice oriented alternatives compared to managers who worked with social assistance, controlling for the other variables in the model. Managers with extensive managerial experience were less likely to have ranked exclusively practice oriented alternatives. The model also shows that managers, who had taken graduate courses at university/college, participated in in-service training or read books on leadership/management, were significantly less likely to have ranked exclusively practice oriented alternatives, controlling for the other variables. The strongest predictor among these three independent variables was having partaken in in-service training.

The results of this multivariate analysis offer some interesting information about the managers who could be described as the most practice oriented in a practice oriented bunch. It might be considered surprising that managers who worked within child welfare were more likely to have ranked exclusively practice oriented alternatives than managers within social assistance, not least since other studies have indicated that social workers within child welfare are more research oriented than social workers within other fields of practice (Dellgran & Höjer 2005). However, in this instance the question concerned managerial competences rather than social work knowledge. Possible explanations for the child welfare managers’ inclination towards practice orientation could therefore be that knowledge of social work praxis is valued higher than managerial skills among these managers or that the training they had undergone was unable to meet their needs.

It might also be considered surprising that managers who have had a managerial position for a long time were less likely to have ranked exclusively practice oriented alternatives. One possible reason is that even if participation in further training is controlled for in the model, data were not available to control for how much training the managers have had. Hence, it is possible that the managers who have been in managerial positions for a long time had undertaken more than one course, which could be a plausible explanation to the decreased likelihood to rank exclusively practice oriented alternatives.

The further information gained from this analysis was perhaps less surprising. It is not unexpected that managers who have partaken in further training, or who have read books on leadership/management were less likely to rank exclusively practice oriented alternatives.
Knowledge gaps

Finally, to get an indication of possible knowledge gaps, the interviewees were asked if there were any areas in which they felt that they required more knowledge. The answers touched upon a number of different aspects, spanning from general, relatively vague comments on the need for better understanding of leadership to more specific comments about the need for increased administrative or budgetary knowledge. Many answers concerned competences that may be categorised as leadership skills: “leadership in itself is important, power, who do I become in a power structure” M5, and ”develop a coaching role as manager” M11. Several managers also expressed a desire to “speak about what it is like to be a manager” M9. There was however also managers who believed that leadership skills were being taught to an acceptable degree, but felt that they were left wanting more practice oriented knowledge:

People with social work education are not economists. If you are going to have budgetary responsibility, you should study more economy. It’s strange with the social services actually /.../ the entire municipal sector is such /.../ they’re not used to handling large budgets, it’s millions of crowns. And at the same time, they should not use economists for it either, instead they would need to train people in economics /.../ You learn leadership/.../ but [not] the actual craft of handling economy, /.../ what is budgetary responsibility and also a bit of facts about the legislation. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

Overall, this question appears to have been reasonably difficult to answer in a concrete fashion, resulting in many vague answers. However, the quote above (M8) is very clear and concrete; the knowledge gap of social work managers indicated in international research, namely financial management (Healy 2002), appears to be existent also in a Swedish context. This frontline manager expressed a need for more training in how to handle a budget, which was neither provided in the social work education or in any further training that she had undergone. The other quotes presented above were more concerned with leadership skills. It appears as if – despite in-service courses that often focus on leadership – there is still a demand for more leadership knowledge.

Discussion

Whereas the previous chapter gave some background information on the managers in the personal social services, this chapter continued by discussing the managers’ way to management and their means of acquiring managerial competences.
To summarise the findings, it may be said that the interviewed managers often, but not always, described their promotion as a result of circumstances. The level of perceived preparedness for the new role appeared to vary; some managers described the transition to management as relatively smooth, others described it as very difficult. The majority of managers (both respondents and interviewees) had undergone some type of post-qualifying training; the most common type was in-service training. More extensive managerial education (i.e. postgraduate studies in parity with a Master’s degree) was however very rare among the managers. The in-service training that the managers had undergone was often provided by private management consultants and appeared to focus on generic managerial skills. The managers were generally pleased with the managerial training, but appeared to view other (practice oriented) sources of knowledge as more important for acquiring managerial competences. The interviewed managers identified some knowledge gaps, but there appeared to be little coherence concerning what type of knowledge they wanted more of.

The recruitment of social work managers – two challenges

As indicated, some countries, for example Australia and the USA, have seen an increased tendency among social work organisations to employ managers with Master’s degrees in business or public administration instead of social work (Healy 2002; Wuenschel 2006; Knee & Folsom 2012). This practice of recruiting graduates from other disciplines for social work management positions has been discussed as a challenge for the field of social work. This is of course related to the view that social work/HSOs have specific conditions that require a management adapted to those conditions (Hasenfeld 2010), and the view that social work administration is different from for-profit and other public administration (Patti 2000; Rank & Hutchinson 2000; Healy 2002).

There is little to suggest that social work professionals in Sweden (at the moment) have difficulties in asserting themselves compared to other professionals in the recruitment of managers within the personal social services. Instead, as stated above, all managers are former practitioners, and many have been recruited directly by their superiors or advanced in their own organisations. Therefore, one can wonder if the other challenge that is discussed in the literature on social work management (also mentioned in the introduction to this chapter) is more relevant for the Swedish situation. This challenge emanates from the practice of promoting social workers for managerial positions. It has been argued that social workers, who have been promoted as a result of their abilities as practitioners may continue to use skills relevant for social work practice in their managerial role, where these skills might be inapt. This risk is thought to be exacerbated if the promoted social workers do not receive appropriate managerial training (Patti 2000; Knee &
Folsom 2012). Whether or not this actually constitutes a risk (and in that case for what) within the personal services may be debated, and the results in the present study provide no comprehensive answer. The results indicate that several managers feel unprepared when entering their managerial positions. There appears to be little in the way of introduction to management and some interviewees have described the transition from social worker to manager as fraught. It appears uncommon for managers to undergo managerial training prior to promotion, and – in search for managerial competences – the managers rather turn to sources of knowledge that can be characterised as practice oriented than educational.

Embedded in practice?
The extent to which the respondents have stated that they prefer practice oriented sources of knowledge is perhaps a little surprising considering that, even if it is unusual for the managers to have undertaken more extensive managerial education (i.e. on Master’s level), almost all managers have a Bachelor’s degree in social work. There is also a widespread trend of attending in-service managerial training, and the majority of the respondents have stated that they found the courses useful. However, there may be a number of plausible reasons for this inclination towards practice orientation.

One possible explanation is that the sources of knowledge that the managers find most important, such as knowledge gained from experience and colleagues, also appear to be preferred by clinical social workers (Dellgran & Höjer 2005; Bergmark & Lundström 2002). Also, management itself has been described as an activity that is based on – or best learned through – experience (Mintzberg 2009; Tengblad 2012). Another possible explanation is that the managers’ ranking of the different sources of knowledge to a great extent is a result of how they have interpreted the concept of managerial competences (see Table 6). This concept can of course be interpreted in many different ways, which in turn might be linked to the managers’ positions and assignments. For some managers it can be taken to mean more generic leadership competences. For others it may be interpreted as the knowledge needed for the supervision of social workers, i.e. knowledge about social work practice. Considering that the managers in this study are former social workers and that most of them still work rather close to social work practice, it might be suspected that many of the managers take managerial competences to mean the latter, which could explain why practice oriented sources of knowledge are valued highly.

A third possible – and related – explanation could be that the undergraduate studies, as well as the managerial training that these managers have undertaken, have been unable to meet their needs. As for undergraduate studies, there are few courses focused on administration/management/leadership offered by the schools of social work in Sweden. Also, the academic post-
graduate courses on administration/management/leadership in social work are notably scarce. As a result, the managers are dependent on the in-service training. From the managers’ statements, it is clear that the in-service training generally is short, and that it is often provided by private management consultants who cater for all types of managers. Also, in most cases, it is provided to the managers after the promotion (sometimes several years after). It may be difficult in such settings to provide the social work managers with the competence and knowledge they require. The mismatch between everyday managerial work and managerial training/managerial ideology has been highlighted by several researchers (e.g. Tengblad 2012; Sveningsson & Alvesson 2014) and is not exclusively a social work phenomenon but a problem for management in most fields. In fact, Tengblad (2012) proposes that the disparity between managerial practice and managerial education is the main reason that managers find such education to be of little use, and instead need to rely on on-the-job learning.

Generic leadership skills for social work managers?
Managerial training that caters for all types of managers (i.e. managers from both the commercial and public sector) rests on an assumption that managerial skills are generic and transferable, meaning that management is (or should be) the same in all kinds of settings. This view on management is in line with the ideology of managerialism, where management is seen as a profession in itself and where managerial skills are considered more important than professional expertise (Hood 1991; Pollitt 1998).

As discussed in chapter two and three, researchers on public sector management as well as researchers on social work management argue that, contrary to the managerialist view, different organisations come with different conditions and needs for management. For example, public administration is performed under circumstances that are different from those of private sector management. The public sector has political governance that necessitates relations between politics and administration, and democratic foundations that call for commitment to democratic values (Allison 1986; Lundquist 1998). In accordance to this view, a common managerial training for municipal managers (which many of the managers describe) could be fitting. However, according to Lundquist (1998), the focus on economic values has influenced the management training for public sector managers, and as a result, the training lacks content related to political democracy and public ethos, which are the very things that differentiate the public sector from the private. In the managers’ statements, no such content was mentioned, indicating that Lindquist’s suggestion still may be correct. Furthermore, it may be argued that social work organisations have specific conditions that differentiate them from other public service organisations. Many writings on social work (and HSOs) highlight the specific conditions of such organisations and argue
for distinct management practices. In this study, the interviewees emphasised a social work background as valuable for management in the social services. Perhaps it could be expected of managers who are former social workers to underline the importance of having a social work background. However, the reasons the managers identified are in line with those recognised in theory and literature (e.g. understanding the social workers’ situations and the ability to advocate for vulnerable groups, see Patti 2000; Rank & Hutchison 2000). Also, for managers who work close to practice – like the majority of the participants in this study – the assignment involves supervision of social workers and decision-making in individual cases. For these managers, professional knowledge is perhaps more important than generic managerial skills, which could indicate that there is a mismatch between the provided in-service training (with focus on generic leadership) and the needs of the managers.

The results of this study do not allow any definite conclusions regarding to what extent the management in social work is/should be distinct from that of other fields. However, the arguments provided in both social work research (e.g. Patti 2000; Rank & Hutchison 2000; Healy 2002) and public sector theory/research (Allison 1986; Lundquist 1998), rather convincingly show that there, at the very least, should be differences between public and private sector management. Much of the managerial training that the managers in this study have described appear however not to be in line with this. It would perhaps be possible to argue that generic leadership training is what the Swedish social work managers need – as a complement to their professional background – to be able to stand up to the new challenges put on them as a result of the increasing influence of private sector ideals in the social services. However, while there are indications of a need for further managerial training – both in the literature (e.g. Healy 2002; Watson 2008; Knee & Folsom 2012) and in the present empirical material – the question is if the in-service courses provided are sufficient (or even suitable) in the light of the findings and the conclusions provided by the previous research.
7. Being a social work manager – everyday work

The empirical results from the previous chapters provided some background information about the managers within the Swedish social services, and described how the managers reason about their way to management and their acquirement of managerial competences. This chapter will turn the focus towards the everyday work of the managers.

The first part of this chapter will give an image of managerial work as it is depicted by the managers in the interviews and in the survey. To understand the managers’ practice, some ideas and concepts from the managerial work tradition will be used, mainly the two concepts ‘reactive’ and ‘deliberate’ management elucidated by Tengblad (2012). The purpose of these concepts is to depict actual managerial work, and to contrast it to popular ideas and ideologies about what management should be. The managerial work tradition is mainly concerned with aspects of management that are common for managers in many types of organisations, i.e. what Ivarsson Westerberg (2013) would term the managerial ‘practice’ (see chapter two). As I see it, these concepts are relevant for understanding managerial work in the personal social services, in the same way as they have proven relevant for understanding managerial work in the eldercare (see Antonsson 2013). However, it is important to note that beyond the managerial practices, there are many factors that may differentiate management in different organisations. These factors have been discussed in previous chapters (cf. ‘theory’, Ivarsson Westerberg 2013) and will be further explored in the next.

In the second part of this chapter, it will be discussed how managerial practices have changed during the managers’ time in the personal social services. The managers’ descriptions of the changes will be discussed in relation to research on changes that have affected the context for management within the public sector during the last decades. Many of these changes can be attributed to NPM/managerialism, but there are also indications of changes that are closer connected to increased specialisation. However, these changes may well be described as connected to each other. Naturally, there are also other changes that have thoroughly affected the personal social services. One of these is the strive for evidence based practice. The managers’ perception of this phenomenon is not within the scope of this thesis, but has been elaborated upon elsewhere (Lundström & Shanks 2013).
It’s fun, but…

Before the managers’ practice is analysed, and as an introduction to this chapter, some of the managers’ more general descriptions of their work will be presented. When the managers in the interviews were asked to describe what it was like to be a manager in their organisation, several begun their description by declaring that it was a fun job. However, having made that statement, the managers often continued to depict a hectic and difficult work situation.

It’s very, very fun. I like it. But it’s quite chaotic. I rarely have time to finish things. I have very little time to sit and write something that needs to be written and the inbox is for example overflowing so it’s impossible to send e-mails because I need to delete some first and I often do that on overtime. /.../ I constantly have a bad conscience for things that I have not done, or people that I have not phoned, or all the documents that come and the e-mails /.../. All the important documents that arrive, need to be read. No, everything lags behind. (M4, second tier, social assistance)

In this second tier manager’s quote, the difficulties in finding enough time were mentioned soon after the initial declaration that it was fun to be a social work manager. Despite a common perception of a hectic work situation, many managers appeared predominantly positive. However, there were also managers who were critical, like the second tier manager quoted below.

I: What is it like to work as a manager here, can you tell me a bit about your job?
M12: Well, it is fitting to talk about it now when I just have resigned, there are reasons for that you know /.../ I've always liked to work as a manager, I like the job and to have staff and budget and operational responsibility, and to work with development questions, that's why I have stayed./.../ But I don’t like to work as a manager in this organisation / ... / For one, I am not too fond of this purchaser provider model, I don’t think it is appropriate for personal social service work. /.../ Also, I'm not used to the way of governing that we have in this organisation, I think it is too top-down, too control oriented, it does not suit me, it’s not my style of leadership. I lead in a different way. (M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)

It was clear that this manager enjoyed being a social work manager but was discontented with both the changes that the organisation has gone through and the managerial approach of higher levels of management. Although it was rare among the interviewed managers to be so explicitly critical towards their organisation that they had decided to resign, several managers were critical regarding some recent changes.

These first two quotes give a brief introduction to some important questions that are to be discussed in this chapter. The first quote gives an idea of the tendency to describe social work management as reactive and the time as
insufficient. The second quote gives an indication of changes related to the influence of NPM. Both these issues will be developed below.

**Deliberate and reactive management**

In the interviews, the managers discussed both tasks that were unpredicted (e.g. interruptions and acute situations) and tasks that were planned. Often, the unpredicted tasks were depicted as taking a lot of time. Through findings from researchers within the managerial work tradition, Tengblad (2012) formulated a model in which he contrasts deliberate work (“intentionally driven activities”, p. 348) to reactive work (“work that arises from unintended events”, p. 348), and state that management often is more reactive than theory/general views on management would admit. Dividing the social work managers’ work into deliberate and reactive tasks appears to be a constructive way to highlight the social work managers’ situation, without departing too far from the empirics. This way of describing the managerial work in the personal social services also highlights some differences and similarities between managerial levels.

To get an idea of what the managers perceived that they did at work, the respondents of the survey were asked to rate which tasks they perceived that they spent most time on (Table 8).  

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23 The managers were asked to rate from one to three which tasks (from a number of alternatives) they spent most time on. The alternatives that the managers rated as number one (the activity they spent most of their working time doing) are reported.
Table 8. The activities that the managers perceived that they spent most time on, n=349 (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Frontline</th>
<th>Second tier</th>
<th>Third tier</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with/ supervision of social workers</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with other managers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic work/planning</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliental work</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with other organisations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal meetings politicians</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001, n.s. = non-significant (p > 0.05). The five last alternatives had too few respondents to allow chi2-tests.

Several of the activities listed in Table 8 could with Tengblad’s (2012) terminology be categorised as deliberate, including activities like administration, scheduled meetings, strategic work etc. In general, the more reactive activities are better captured by the interviews, yet some activities rated in Table 8 could be both deliberate and reactive. Meetings with and supervision of social workers is an example of such activity, as the respondents are likely to have had both scheduled and unplanned meetings in mind when rating this activity. This is also the activity that the managers in general perceived that they spent most time on. Unsurprisingly, a greater proportion of frontline managers rated this activity as number one compared to third and second tier managers. The same pattern was shown when managers who rated this activity as number one, two or three were taken into account. A significantly greater proportion of frontline managers (93 %) than second (63 %) or third tier (47 %) managers rated meetings with social workers as one of the three activities that they spent most time on (p < 0.001, not in table).  

In general, 78 % of the managers considered it to be one of the three tasks they spent most time on (not in table).
A reasonably large proportion of managers also rated administration as the activity they spent most time on. This activity is easier to categorise as deliberate according to Tengblad’s (2012) classifications, due to its foreseeable nature. It was much more common among second tier managers to have rated this as the most important activity compared to both frontline and third tier managers. When managers who rated administration as number one, two or three (not in table) were taken into account, the differences between the managerial levels disappeared, yet it became obvious that many managers considered this activity to be one of the most time-consuming. Of all managers, 76 % rated this as one of the three activities that they spent most time on (not in table).

Higher managerial levels appeared to more often rate meetings with other managers as the activity that they spent most time on. Again, it is difficult to know whether or not these meetings were planned or if they were perceived as acute/reactive. A qualified guess is however that these meetings more often than meetings with the social workers were planned/scheduled. The tendency among high levels of managers to rate this activity highest is perhaps a result of these managers leading the organisation through the lower levels, and being directly responsible for them. Looking at the proportion of managers who rated this activity as one, two or three however, it was more common among second tier managers to have rated this activity as one of the three activities that they spent most time on (63 % of second tier managers compared to 55 % of the third tier and 44 % of the frontline managers, p < 0.01, not in table). Also, it was more common among managers in child welfare to have rated this activity as one, two or three compared to managers in social assistance or substance abuse (59 % compared to 49 % and 38 %, p < 0.05 not in table). All in all, meetings with other managers appeared to be considered as an activity that the managers spent a lot of time on, although not an activity that would be ranked as number one by particularly large proportions.

Again, when it comes to strategic work, which can be categorised as a deliberate activity, it appeared more common among higher levels of managers to have rated this activity high. Considering the managers who rated this activity as number one, two or three, it appeared as if it was equally common among third and second tier managers (55 %) to do so, but less common among frontline managers (39 %) (not in table). Clearly, this activity was often ranked as number two or three.

Cliental work could probably be both deliberate and reactive, but was not an activity that managers on any level rated high, not even as one of the three most important (12 % of all managers rated this activity as number one, two or three, not in table). The remaining two activities (cooperation with other organisations and formal meetings with politicians) could be categorised as deliberate as they in most cases would be planned or scheduled. Cooperation with other organisations appeared to be an activity that few
managers ranked as number one (3 %). However, when managers who rated this activity as number one, two or three (not in table) were taken into account the picture looked different. Of all managers, 34 % rated this activity as one of the three most time consuming. There were statistically significant differences between managerial levels; a greater proportion of managers on high levels perceived that they spent much time on this activity (63 %, 37 %, and 27 % for third tier, second tier and frontline respectively, $p < 0.001$). Finally, no managers on any level rated meetings with politicians as the activity that they spent most time on, and only 0.8 % of managers rated it as number one, two or three.

While there were several differences between how managers on different levels rated the activities in Table 8, there were few differences between how the managers in the three different fields of social work rated them. Only one significant difference between the fields was found; it was more common among managers in child welfare to have rated meetings with other managers as one, two or three compared to other fields (see above). The obvious conclusion is therefore that managerial work on different levels has more differences than managerial work in different fields.

Scheduled meetings; management or disturbance?

The survey gave a limited picture of the managers’ (mainly deliberate) activities, but with help of the interviews a more detailed picture can be constructed. In the interviews, several managers expressed that a lot of their time was spent in meetings of different kinds. However, it may be of importance to note that what the interviewees spoke of as meetings appeared in fact to include many different activities in different settings and with different actors. Meetings between social workers and managers – which according to the results from the survey was an activity that many managers spent a lot of time on – could for example entail information spreading, supervision and decision-making. Meetings between managers were also described as containing several different activities, for example getting information from external actors and discussing staff issues. Meetings with representatives from other organisations could be described as networking or perhaps – to use a phrase from one of the third tier managers – as “foreign politics” (M6). Additionally, which is quite important to point out, meetings could be a forum in which the managers exercised management:

I go from one to the other, and I mean, you can say that you waste time on meetings, but meetings are my way to govern, I do that in dialogue, different dialogues, that’s how it is. (M6, third tier) xxxiii

In this quote, the third tier manager opposed the common idea that meetings are a waste of time; instead she pointed out that meetings were her way of
governing the organisation. However, several managers expressed that meetings took up a great proportion of their time and there were managers who perceived meetings as an activity that interfered with work rather than as a part of work itself:

There are a lot of meetings, you know, managerial meetings, and there are, there are terribly many meetings in the social services, I think. Too many meetings. Is it effective with all these meetings, I wonder? (M19, frontline, child welfare)

This managers’ statement forms a contrast to M6s’ quote above and clearly the value of meetings was perceived differently by different managers.

The meetings described above can be classified as deliberate activities, since they are scheduled and expected. The managers however also described a lot of encounters with the staff that were perceived as reactive and acute. These encounters will be discussed below, but before looking into the reactive aspects of the managers’ work, there are some other tasks that may be described as deliberate that need to be discussed.

**Administration and strategic work**

One deliberate activity that was emphasised by managers both in the survey and in the interviews was administration.

I: Yes, if you would describe an ordinary day / ... / what would it be like then?  
M24: / ... / Well, it's really hard to describe, it differs so much, but you come here in the morning, I arrive between a quarter past seven and seven thirty. I open the e-mails; I think that I have had a maximum of 67 e-mails in one day. So it takes a while to, to check your e-mails. /.../ We also attest invoices on the computer, and the entire personnel system is on the computer, so these tasks you try to handle, perhaps not every day but, yes, the e-mails every day, and the other tasks every second day. (M24, second tier, child welfare)

Administration may be interpreted as many different things, from e-mails to budgetary work etc. As has been discussed in previous research (Wolmesjö 2005; Antonsson 2013), this type of activity, whatever it may be, appears to have increased during later decades. This will be thoroughly discussed below.

Another type of work that, according to Tengblad (2012), can be categorised as deliberate is strategic work. In the interviews, it was indicated that strategic work can be difficult to prioritise:

M3: Far too little time to read and think and think strategically, things I also should do, because we have very much. There will be e-mails coming from higher up. Have this read by Tuesday and it’s a bundle this size.  
I: Ok, from higher up, what does that mean?
M3: Well, from the social service manager for instance. /*...*/ She usually sends a lot. It is often quite urgent, and then we are supposed to read it and I don’t really have the time.
I: So, what is it that she sends?
M3: Well, it can be a project or something. Often they want you to have opinions about strategic organisational changes, the budget or something like that. There are a lot of things you should have opinions about, and that’s pretty fun if you have the time, but you never have the time so. There is never enough time and I cannot, if I have ten minutes I cannot sit down in peace and quiet.

To define strategic work is difficult, and it is also difficult to know what the managers meant when they talked about this activity. However, a common experience appeared to be that there was too little time for it. M3, as several other managers, described a situation where she could not find enough time to engage the way she would have wanted to. This manager experienced that she even lacked time to read propositions from higher levels in the organisation, and other managers also described that they lacked time to keep updated with research, etc. This perceived lack of time for strategic work could also be seen in the results from the survey. In one question (not in table), the managers were asked if they were satisfied with how their time was distributed between different tasks. Of the 397 managers who answered this question, 67 % (n=265) of managers answered that they were not satisfied. In a following question, the managers who were not satisfied were asked to specify what they first and foremost did not have time for. Of the 256 managers who answered, 81 % specified that they did not have time for strategic work/development (sometimes in combination with other tasks).25 As we shall see, many managers coupled such time constraints to the reactive nature of social work management, and/or to recent changes in the organisation.

Constant interruptions and acute situations

It was mentioned above that the interviewed managers appeared to perceive that a lot of time was taken up by unpredicted activities. This is with Tengblad’s terminology to be considered as reactive work, and it consists of tasks that arise from unintended events and involves frequent interruptions and dealing with acute situations. From the interviews it is obvious that managers on all levels and in all fields of social work experienced that they

25 No statistically significant differences between managerial levels or fields of social work could be found. Neither regarding whether or not they were satisfied nor regarding the proportion that lacked time for strategic work. Managers who stated that they worked within two areas or more, or those who stated that they worked in another field, were excluded from this analysis.
had a lot of unpredicted tasks to deal with. One sort of reactive work is the constant interruptions. The quote below represents a situation that many managers spoke of.

I would definitely have to learn more about organising my day, to be much more systematic about it than I am /.../ As it is now, I am pulled from here to there. Sometimes, I’m pulled into difficulties that I have to solve, other times something fun can draw me away too. /.../ I do not have time to sit many minutes until someone is standing at the door. /.../ If I can answer quickly, I do that of course. Other people can close the door and put the occupied sign on /.../ but me, no, then I forget. So yes, there are a lot of things that go on in this job. (M6, third tier)³³vii

The quoted manager had a third tier position, but constant interruptions were mentioned by managers on all levels. For example, frontline managers described that social workers often came to them for advice on casework: “as soon as my door is open, the social workers come in and speak of acute things too” (M15, frontline, social assistance). In these cases, the activity could perhaps be understood as supervision of a reactive kind.

Apart from constant interruptions in the form of staff demanding supervision or advice, the managers also described the nature of social work as emergency-driven, entailing many acute situations that needed to be dealt with.

But I think that often, when you work in the social services, even though you try to have a plan, even if you want to work in a particular way, it's very much driven by acute events. That means that you may not always get where you want to be going. (M5, frontline, social assistance)³³viii

I: If you would describe an ordinary day, what would it look like?
M13: Well yes, what will I take, if we take today /.../ I had an emergency meeting about a situation that had arisen, so I called everybody that was involved to a mandatory meeting to try to manage the situation /.../ First I held a group meeting, and then I had individual talks with a few, to understand /.../ why things had gone out of control, and then I offered them individual counselling through the occupational health care, because I think they need it /.../ Well, that how my days are, I come to work and I never have a break. /.../ I try to have, to take the time for the strategic work, which is why I have three subordinate managers who are supposed to be more operational. /.../ It takes too much time to supervise them /.../ like with this conflict, or the situation this morning, it didn’t need that. (M13, second tier, mental health)³³xiv

The two managers quoted above spoke of acute situations that occurred either in the clients’ lives or in the meetings between clients and social workers. The recurrent need to deal with tasks that are unforeseen or (perceived as) acute interferes with plans and leaves little time for long-term planning. The situation with constant interruptions and significant unpredictability is not specific for social work managers. Numerous are the studies that have
concluded that managerial work is to a great extent reactive and much defined by tasks that are unpredicted (e.g. Mintzberg 2009; Holmberg & Tyrstrup 2012; Tengblad 2012; Antonsson 2013). However, as the actual practice in the personal social services involves dealing with acute situations (for example the need to take coercive action in child welfare or substance abuse, or the risk of encountering violence or threats of violence), it may add another dimension to the unpredictability of the managerial work which affects all three levels of managers.

It is difficult to say more about the balance between deliberate and reactive work than that many managers perceived the reactive part as significant. It appears as if the reactive work sometimes was perceived as a disturbance, as something coming in the way of some other kind of managerial work. It is interesting to speculate if ideas about what management ‘should be’ like (conveyed in management training, managerialism, classic theories and popular ideas about management), have influenced the managers’ own and the managers superiors’ ways of looking at their work. Perhaps the reality of management in social work is (and should be) to be available and supervise the social workers in acute cases etc. If the managers perceive an expectation that their work should be something else entirely (e.g. a strategic/dynamic force), it may result in feelings of stress and insufficiency. As discussed, it has been well established that there is a mismatch between leadership ideologies and management practice (Tengblad 2012; Sveningsson & Alvesson 2014), and perhaps the indications of reactive work being viewed as a disturbance may be interpreted as a consequence of this.

Managing in a changed landscape

It has been indicated that recent years have meant changed conditions for management in the personal social services due to the influences from NPM and specialisation. In chapter two and three, literature on NPM’s influence on social work/public sector and its management was discussed, and in chapter six it was proposed that ideas regarding suitable managerial training for social work managers have been influenced by managerialist ideals. Likewise, NPM has had considerable influence on the everyday work in social work organisations (Harlow 2003; Harris 2003; Kirkpatrick et al. 2005; Berg et al. 2008).

In the interviews, the managers were asked to speak of whether/how the role and practice of the manager had changed during their time as managers. Some managers chose to focus on their own development as managers, but most managers described changes that can be assumed to have been caused by changed organisational conditions. Several managers spoke of increased administrative duties, downsized administrative support, increased fiscal responsibilities, changes in the view on management, and the need to relate
to private companies providing care. These changes can relatively easily be
ascribed to the influence of NPM/managerialism (cf. Pollitt & Bouckaert
2011; Boston 2011). The managers also mention changes that are less clearly
connected to the influence of NPM, such as changes due to specialisation.
However, there are connections between NPM and specialisation which have
been discussed previously and will be discussed further below.

Downsizing of support functions and increased administration
In the previous section, it was shown that administrative tasks were viewed
as rather time consuming. When the managers were asked about changed
conditions, this task was again emphasised. Several interviewed managers
spoke of an increased administrative burden, which often was described as a
consequence of downsizing of administrative resources:

There have been cutbacks on the administrative support, so now managers do
these things too. We have very much administrative work that the assistants
did before. /.../ So I think that much of my working time goes to things that I
don’t really need to have a university degree for /.../There is much mail-
opening and sorting mail /.../. All these things transcribe and, yes. (M23,
frontline, social assistance)

The situation with downsized support functions is also noted in previous
literature (Björk 2013). As well as increased administrative chores, the man-
ger quoted above also depicted a situation in which, due to cutbacks on
administrative personnel, she found herself having to do tasks that used to be
someone else’s responsibility. The perception of having to perform “illegi-
mate tasks” has been lucidly described in research on managers in eldercare
(Björk et al. 2013). In the interview with M23, she continued to describe that
the more strategic aspects of her assignment suffered as a consequence of the
administrative duties. Other managers also noted that increased administra-
tive duties impinged on other tasks. The manager quoted below experienced
that they caused a distance between the managers and the operative social
work.

A lot has happened with management since I started as a manager /.../ Also a
second tier manager was at that time much more a supervisor in cliental work,
because back then, one had a large administration, I mean a personnel de-
partment who took care of it, and economy people who took care of it, but
now all this has been put on the second tier managers, so it has changed a lot.
(M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)

This manager, who at the time of the interview had been a manager for over
20 years, described how the second tier managers used to be more engaged
in supervision. Today, most of the supervision is performed by the frontline
managers. The tension between time with social workers and other tasks that
second tier managers experienced was also proposed above. Also noted above was that a larger proportion of second tier managers compared to other managerial levels had rated administration as the task they spent most time on (Table 8). Perhaps these experiences are connected with a change where particularly the second tier managerial positions are becoming increasingly administrative.

Be it strategic thinking, closeness to the practice or leadership that is perceived to suffer, it is clear that many managers experienced that the increased administrative duties and tasks that were perceived as extraneous to managerial responsibility took a lot of time. As noted in the previous section of the chapter, it was shown that a large proportion of the managers had rated administration as a task they spent much time on (Table 8). This says nothing about possible changes over the years, but it does imply that administration today is seen as a time consuming task.

Budget; decentralisation, increased control and focus on cost effectiveness

Another noticeable trend that has been described both in research (e.g. Harlow 2003; Kirkpatrick et al. 2005; Berg et al. 2008) and by the interviewed managers is the decentralisation of budget responsibility.

Many second tier (and some frontline) managers have gained fiscal responsibility, meaning that keeping budget has become a central responsibility of many managers. In Table 9 (below), we can see that at the time of the survey, 73% of all managers (almost all of the second and third tier managers and half of the frontline managers) had budget responsibility.\textsuperscript{26} During an interview, one manager described the decentralisation of budget responsibility like this:

I: You've been working as a manager for eleven years you said. Have you noticed any changes of the manager's role over this time?
M9: Yes I have, because there have been changes during this time, both with responsibility and authority. When I started we were, we were called team leaders I think, if I'm not wrong. And at that time, I had neither budget responsibility nor personnel responsibility. (M9, frontline, child welfare)\textsuperscript{xlii}

As well as the decentralisation of budget responsibility, several of the interviewed managers spoke of more frequent budget follow-ups and an increased focus on cost effectiveness. Even if indications of these types of

\textsuperscript{26} No statistically significant differences between the three fields of social work could be found, although there were indications that a smaller proportion on managers in social assistance had budget responsibility (59% compared to 72% of managers in both substance abuse and child welfare, not in table). Managers who stated that they worked within two areas or more or those who stated that they worked in another field were excluded from this analysis.
changes could be found in many managers’ statements, there appeared to be some differences between municipalities in how the managers spoke about budget. Managers from some municipalities emphasised budgetary constraints more than others, indicating perhaps that some municipalities had been hit harder by cutbacks. Below is a quote from a manager who worked in one of the municipalities in which managers appeared relatively optimistic regarding budgetary concerns:

I: Have the demands on management, on the managers changed over time?
M14: Yes, I think that in the social services the follow-ups; to be able to answer for the economy and to report, to provide exact statistics on the number of cases coming in and cases that are closed and how much the social assistance costs per month. So the follow-ups are constantly becoming more frequent. (M14, second tier, social assistance)

This manager has experienced what many other managers also have experienced, i.e. more frequent budget follow-ups and increased financial control. Yet her statement did not contain much criticism, but was more matter-of-fact. M12 (below) was considerably more critical regarding the budgetary constraints and the focus on cost effectiveness:

The budget is everything. And that’s the sad thing. I am not, I think that you should have control over the money and I think that money is important. But I have a problem with the line of argument that the overall task is: keep the budget, keep the budget, keep the budget, keep the budget /.../ Then I think that in order to keep the budget you have to have the prerequisites to keep the budget. And if you keep the budget it will have consequences for the quality. /.../ And that’s the hardest part of being a manager I think, when you find yourself in the situation when you need to save money but still see all the needs. And then I think that it’s really important to know where your limits are, because it’s easy to get sort of numb /.../ But if, if you like me are a social worker from the start, well then it’s my idea that if I find myself in a situation where I feel that I have to break the law, well I won’t do that. /.../ So, you have to have some idea of your own limits /.../ How much are you willing to compromise with your social worker’s conscience? (M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)

M12 (who worked in a municipality where all interviewed managers were quite outspoken and critical regarding the changes in the organisation) depicted a situation where she perceived the quality of the social work to be threatened by the tightened budget, and where the focus on keeping the budget in balance sometimes conflicted with professional ethos and possibly also the law. In this manager’s statement, it was indicated that there was a limit as to how much her “social worker conscience” could handle before she needed to take action. It was also this manager who had resigned as a result of her dissatisfaction with her organisation (see p. 89), which indicates that dissonance between professional (and/or civil servants’) commit-
ments/ethos and the organisational reality sometimes may cause the managers to take rather radical action.

Indications of an increased financial control can also be found in the results from the survey (Table 9) where 69 % of the managers agreed with the statement that “social work is increasingly governed by economy and cut-backs”. 27 Considering the possible tension between professional commitments and budgetary constraints, it might be suspected that budget responsibility to some extent could be valued in a negative manner by the managers. However, this does not seem to be the case. In Table 9, we can see that a majority of the managers who had budget responsibility agreed with the statements “budget responsibility gives clarity to my assignment”, 28 “budget responsibility gives increased influence” and “budget responsibility gives power” and merely 21 % thought that “budget responsibility gives no real influence”.

Also the interviewees indicated a positive attitude to having budget responsibility. Some managers were explicitly positive:

I also think that it has become better when you have budget responsibility and are responsible for your own budget follow-ups, it makes it clearer. But you can say that the downside is that it took more time, at least initially, and it probably does now as well, but it isn’t noticeable in the same way now. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

Others seemed to think of it more as a given circumstance: ”I have never really thought of it in positive or negative terms, I have sort of established that this is the way it is” (M10, frontline, social assistance). The relatively positive attitude to budget responsibility that can be observed is confirmed by Berg et al.’s (2008) research. In this study, it was indicated that the managers appreciated “the autonomy this affords them in their relationship with their subordinates” (Berg et al. 2008, p. 114).

In my study, even managers who in the interviews were explicitly critical of the increasing focus on budget/cost effectiveness expressed that they were positive to having budget responsibility, indicating that they liked the potential discretion associated with budget responsibility but were critical of the downsizing in the social services. However, in the survey as well as in the

27 No statistically significant differences between the three fields of social work could be found. Managers who stated that they worked within two areas or more or those who stated that they worked in another field were excluded from this analysis.

28 Unlike all the other statements regarding budget responsibility, there were statistically significant differences between the three fields of social work in this case. Managers in child welfare appeared to a greater extent than the other managers to think that budget responsibility gave clarity (90 % compared to 72 % of the managers within social assistance and 80 % of the managers within substance abuse) (not in table, p < 0.05). Managers who stated that they worked within two areas or more or those who stated that they worked in another field were excluded from this analysis.
interviews it was indicated that although the managers were positive regarding budget responsibility, they experienced that it took time. Just like increasing administrative duties took time from operative or strategic work, increasing budget responsibility may impinge on other responsibilities. In the survey more than half of the managers who stated that they had budget responsibility agreed to the statement that budget responsibility takes a lot of time, and half of the managers thought that it generated stress (Table 9). It seems as if budget and having budget responsibility can be viewed as a double edged sword – it may be both empowering and constraining. Several managers were positive about the (rather circumscribed) discretion, but also appeared to feel snared by the downsizing and frequent follow-ups. Also, particularly third tier managers, felt that the budget responsibility was a time consuming task.
Table 9. The managers’ attitudes regarding economic pressure and budget responsibility. Per cent having/agreeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Frontline</th>
<th>Second tier</th>
<th>Third tier</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work is increasingly governed by economy and cut backs</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have budget responsibility</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget responsibility gives no real influence</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget responsibility gives clarity to my assignment</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>95</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>84</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget responsibility gives power</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget responsibility takes a lot of time</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget responsibility generates stress</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* = p < 0.05, \** = p < 0.01, \*** = p < 0.001, n.s. = non-significant (p > 0.05).

Clearer assignment and increased demands

One general conclusion that may be drawn from the managers’ statements regarding both budget responsibility and the increased administration is that many perceive that the demands on the managers have increased. However, the increased demands are not necessarily perceived as negative:

The role has become clearer, and I mean everything has become sharpened and there are demands. But I like it because it also becomes clear: these are my tasks, these are the things I should do basically. (M19, frontline, child welfare)\textsuperscript{xvi}
Gaining fiscal responsibility has sometimes gone hand in hand with gaining personnel responsibility. This is an upgrading of the managerial role that several managers considered to be beneficial. Like M19 above, M9 described the upgrading of the managerial role in positive terms:

M9: When I started, we were, it was called team leader, I think if I'm not wrong. And then, at that time I had neither the budget responsibility nor personnel responsibility. But I still had responsibility for the staff, so it was quite complicated, I think. So that has changed. /.../
I: Has it changed for the better or for the worse?
M9: I think it is for the better. I think it is better with more clarity /.../ I thought that it was very difficult when I was a middle hand; you had no responsibility, but still you had responsibility. /.../ To present my own decisions, even if it is a difficult decision /.../ it is still easier, I think. In that way it has become better. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

Responsibilities that used to lie with the higher managerial levels have today landed on managers in second tier positions (and frontline managers in municipalities with fewer managerial levels). Increased demands that are a result of gaining budget and personnel responsibilities appear to be interpreted by several as making the managerial assignment clearer.

However, managers who have noticed an increased emphasis on the managerial role, but have not gained increased responsibilities (budget and personnel) may perceive the changes in a less positive manner:

The role of the manager has become clearer; the role of the manager is emphasized in a different way than before. Before it was more co-ordinator and work, even the words have changed. Now it's more: departments, managers, departmental managers, it is, so it has become much more, more square so to speak. It has become much more distinct, the manager's role has been strengthened. /.../ Before, a manager was more a voice for the team, now I need to have a remedy, I should know what to do /.../ No one spoke that way before, back then it was built on cooperation between levels and enabling of various things. Now it's more about delivering and providing remedies. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

This frontline manager described how the managerial role has become clearer, stronger and more demarcated, yet she appeared more ambiguous than the managers quoted above. This particular manager did not have budget or personnel responsibility which could be one explanation to her attitude. Conceivably she lacked the perception of (a limited) discretion that the other managers described, but still experienced the increased demands and pressures.

In general, a less positive consequence of increased responsibilities/demands, together with an increased amount of administrative duties and other tasks, is that gaining more responsibilities and more tasks must mean
either longer working hours or the need to prioritise some tasks over others. Perhaps, as indicated above, the changes have been particularly noticeable for second tier managers whose function appears to have become increasingly administrative. In many cases these managers have received budget responsibility and increased administrative duties, and they are no longer involved in supervision.

A changed view on management
Apart from the concrete changes described by the managers, the interviews gave indications of changes that sometimes had more to do with views on the assignment than the job itself. One manager described an increased focus on leadership:

M16: It has gone from being more authoritarian to more participatory, which for a while was quite fuzzy, everybody was supposed to decide as much, but now I think it will turn again.
I: To a style where the manager is supposed to decide more?
M16: Exactly, to be a more clear as a manager. It’s a lot of focus on leadership, and a lot of talk about leadership in all contexts, the leadership is supposed to be good /.../
I: What is causing these swings, do you think?
M16: Perhaps it is the zeitgeist. No, I don’t know, I suppose it is like that, everything has its cycles (M16, second tier, substance abuse)

The increased focus on leadership has been discussed several times in this thesis as a consequence of the influence of managerialism. There were also indications in the interviews of implementations of a specific management model, namely LEAN:

Then there are fashions, now it is LEAN that is in fashion. /.../ No, but I suppose that it is, there are different fashions, different fashions about leadership and what leadership should be. Well, for a while you were supposed to really be a manager, and for a while you were supposed to be a leader of the organisation, and after that you should be more of a coach. (M14, second tier, social assistance)

In fact, this manager mentioned two popular concepts; LEAN and coaching. Starting with LEAN production, it is a management model originating from auto-manufacturing (Toyota Motor Corporation) which has become very popular in many organisations, not least within the public sector (Thedvall 2015). LEAN production is sometimes marketed as something different from NPM; e.g. as a philosophy focusing on other ideals (including a bottom-up perspective) than those of managerialism. However, there are good indications that LEAN – which after all is a private sector management model designed to create efficient flows and eliminate waste that does not add to
customer value – can be viewed as yet another expression of managerialism, at least in several aspects. When it comes to the increasingly popular term coaching, it has also – among other things – been connected to neo-liberal influences and managerialism (Harlow et al. 2013). The way the interviewed managers used the concept, made it appear closely connected to supervision (“coach and help to make decisions and discuss cases and how to move forward”, M5, frontline, social assistance) and to aim to help the staff to make to their own decisions (“because they should come to a decision that they can stand for, and that I also can feel pleased with”, M15, frontline, social assistance). However, coaching is a term that has gained huge popularity in many fields, and it is not unlikely that the managers have picked up the term from the management consultants who have provided their managerial training.

Market relations
Another change that appears to have affected the managers and their work is the increasing marketisation of the social services. One aspect of this change is the establishment of internal markets, the so called purchaser-provider model. It is unknown how common this type of organisation is today, but research from the beginning of the millennium indicated that genuine purchaser-provider models were quite scarce (Wiklund 2005; Bergmark & Lundström 2005). Yet, as we shall see below, some managers’ statements bear witness to such models. The manager quoted below worked in a provider unit (mental health). The purchaser-provider model was introduced in her municipality about one year prior to the interview and when the interview was performed, it had been decided that the model would be further developed in accordance with customer choice ideas.

A money system based on freedom of choice is going to be introduced. Everybody is going to get their money to buy their own intervention /…/ They want more actors on the market, and the market is people who are supposed to buy social interventions. /…/ It will be interesting to see where people go with their money and who is making the choice. So the social workers job will change a lot more. (M13, second tier, mental health)\textsuperscript{li}

A related aspect is the increasing privatisation of residential care for children and youth (Sallnäs 2005; Wiklund 2011; Meagher et al. 2015). This change was noted in the interviews:

This is what I think; what do I get for the money? /…/ we pay for a place in an institution. What do we get? What can we demand of this institution? /…/ And not just me as a manager, but also as a social worker you think a lot about what we get for our money. And it’s become more /…/ with procurements, and it is a completely different system now. /…/ We could buy almost
anything when I started. Because we had not checked these institutions. (M2 frontline, child welfare)

The increasing privatisation has meant that managers and social workers have to handle relations with private businesses, as well as make sure that the companies deliver what has been promised. Previous research has shown that these tasks are new to many of the managers, who have no experience of doing business in a care market (Shanks et al. 2014). The increasing marketisation of the social services has been discussed to a lesser degree in this thesis compared to the changes related to the other building block of NPM, namely managerialism. The profound changes in the field of residential care for children and youth and their consequences have however been discussed elsewhere (e.g. Sallnäs 2005; Wiklund 2011; Höjer & Forkby 2010; Meagher et al. 2015).

Specialisation

It has been noted that apart from changes directly connected to the influence of NPM, there have also been substantial changes that are less clearly connected to this development. Yet, it is possible to establish a connection between increased specialisation and the influence of NPM. For one, as was noted above, legislative changes (inspired by NPM ideals) have made it possible to introduce various types of market mechanisms that have led to the development of so-called purchaser-provider models (Hollander 2005; Lundgren et al. 2009). Moreover, one often discussed feature of NPM is the breakdown of larger units to smaller, separately managed units. In the interviews this change was noted, for example by this frontline manager:

> It can be positive for the group to specialise /.../ but the downside that I see, my idea of social work is that we all have the same mission, but the top leaders do not see that because they say: you have your assignment and that is as the provider unit. The social assistance has its assignment. I say that we should all have the same mission, we work in the social services and we are supposed to make things possible for the clients, but that is of secondary importance now. My opinion is that it is for the worse but there are good things with it also /.../ The second tier managers [have the] complete budgetary responsibility which causes, /.../ they have the responsibility for their own part /.../ so they try to keep things away, if you do not do anything, you are really effective I think, you have not used a penny. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

In this quote, the manager described how she experienced the effects of specialisation. The advantage she experienced may be understood as an increased professionalisation within the units. The drawback of this type of specialisation is connected to managers getting budget responsibility for their own (separately managed) units which has, according to this frontline
manager, led to a tendency of avoiding costs by pushing clients or cost towards other units or organisations. This is naturally also connected to the economic cutbacks and the pressure on managers to keep the budget in balance (see above).

Discussion
The results presented in this chapter concern the everyday managerial work in the personal social services in the context of recent organisational changes. Whereas the first part of the chapter has been mainly concerned with the managers’ descriptions of their everyday activities, the second part has focused on the managers’ perceptions of the changes following NPM/managerialism and specialisation.

To sum up the results; most managers considered that their work was fun, or that was at least what that they wanted to convey in the interviews. Many interviewed managers described their work as reactive, consisting to a great extent of constant interruptions and acute situations. This reactive work was sometimes portrayed as coming in the way of other (more desirable?) managerial work, such as strategic planning. When the respondents from the survey rated which activities they perceived that they spent most time on, the two activities that the largest proportion of managers rated as most time consuming was meetings with/supervision of social workers, and administrative work. Strategic work was discussed as an activity that the managers wished they had more time for.

Furthermore, the interviewed managers’ statements bore witness to several changes that are related to NPM. They spoke of increased administrative duties, an increased focus on budget, decentralised budget responsibility, market relations and increased specialisation. Also, some statements regarding the managerial role indicated an increased focus on leadership and the implementation of new management models/ideas.

Tension between tasks
The managers’ activities were interpreted with help of the two concepts reactive work and deliberate work (Tengblad 2012). These concepts revealed important aspects of the managers’ situations, but there are also other ways to understand managerial work. As noted in chapter two, Schmid (2010) has presented a model in which he analyses the relations between task orientation, people orientation, internal orientation and external orientation. Viewed through this lens, the managers’ activities – at least as they appeared through the managers’ descriptions – may be described as mainly internally oriented (including activities such as administration, budget, meetings with staff/colleagues etc.). It may also be said that although the managers per-
ceived that people oriented activities took much time (e.g. meetings with social workers), they also felt forced by circumstances to embrace the shift towards more task orientation (see Schmid 2010). Also, although the main orientation among the managers appeared to be the internal, marketisation has contributed to an increasing demand for external orientation and a need for the managers to be able to handle relations with for-profit companies (for example with residential care units for children and youth) (Wiklund 2011). This was evident also in the interviews. Another type of external activity that the managers were a bit more accustomed to was the networking with external organisations. A substantial proportion of managers, particularly in higher positions, perceived that they spent quite a lot of time on this task, although it was rare that this task was viewed as the most time consuming (see also Shanks et al. 2014).

It may be interesting also to interpret the managers’ statements in view of the two much debated concepts of leadership and management (Lundström & Shanks 2015; see also introduction). As shown in this chapter, the assignment appears to have become increasingly administrative, not least for the managers in second tier positions. Some statements could be interpreted as if the managers aspired for leadership (taken to mean things like influence, motivation, coaching, visions, strategy etc.) but often perceived themselves to be stuck in managerial duties (e.g. administration and budgetary work).

No matter how the activities are described – as deliberate or reactive (Tengblad 2012), by help of Schmid’s (2010) model or as leadership versus management – it appears clear that the managers experience tensions between different tasks. Reactive activities may be viewed as impinging on the deliberate activities and the task oriented (management) activities may be perceived to take time from the people oriented (leadership) activities. These tensions may be experienced differently by managers in different organisations or by managers on different levels, both regarding the amount of tension and regarding which activities they feel that they lacked time for. However, on a general level the tension may be seen as a consequence of an experience of increasing amounts of tasks and expectations on the managers.

Strategic work?

Both the interviewed managers and the respondents from the survey appeared to have difficulties in finding time for strategic planning. This, it may be important to note, is by no means particular for social work management. On the contrary, it has been duly noted in research on managers in all sorts of organisations that managerial work to a great extent consists of unpredicted events and constant interruptions. To a much lesser degree is management about strategic planning and visionary work (Mintzberg 2009; Tengblad 2012; Sveningsson & Alvesson 2014). As well as pointing to this discrepan-
cy between management ideals and the reality of social work management, this chapter also raised the question if the prevailing ideals may cause the
managers to think that they are prioritising the wrong things when they are in
fact prioritising the very things that management is about, i.e. to supervise
the social workers in matters relating to operational work. All in all; man-
agement in social work (just like management elsewhere) is much about
trying to make sure that the organisation fulfils its primary objectives. The
idea of the manager as a ‘dynamic force’ appears not to be particularly com-
patible with the reality of social work management.

Resistance or adaptation to the changed landscape?

When it comes to the managers’ statements regarding the changes that the
social services have undergone, several must be described as rather critical.
Despite this, on a general basis it appears as if most managers have adapted
to the changes without much actual resistance. There is little talk of for ex-
ample attempts to alert the politicians or the public to possible negative con-
sequences.

The relative lack of resistance indicated in the interviews could of course
be related to the fact that the interviewees are managers. In some literature
on the effects of managerialism, managers are depicted as the champions; a
group that due to the changes have gained more power. Managers have ob-
tained ‘the right to manage’ and may be expected to enjoy the changed situa-
tion. However, in previous research on management in social work, it has
been shown that there are substantial differences between the top level (strat-
egic) management and the frontline (local) managers. While the top levels
of managers are depicted mainly as managerially oriented, the front level
managers are thought to be simultaneously managers and professionals, still
committed to professional values (Evans 2011; 2015). It is something similar
that the interviews convey. The managers, who are relatively close to prac-
tice, have gained additional responsibilities that may give them increased
(although circumscribed) power, but they still come across as mainly profes-
sionally oriented and often express that professional values are at odds with
some of the changes. Unlike in Evans’ study (2011), this appears to be the
case for all three levels of managers, which perhaps is a result of all manager-
ial levels in this study sharing professional background with the practition-
ers. The reasons for lack of resistance should probably therefore not be in-
terpreted as a result of the managers being loyal only to the organisation and
interested in efficiency and economy, but instead as a result of difficulties of
the managers in making themselves heard in the organisations, or fear of the
consequences of protest. Furthermore, on an individual basis, there is evi-
dence of managers who quite firmly have protested against the changes. For
example, there are examples of managers who have resigned from their posi-
tions due to dissatisfaction with changes and/or lack of reactions from higher
levels when problems have been brought to attention. Not many managers described that they had taken such drastic actions, but several managers spoke critically for example of the difficulties of combining the economic reality with professional (or civil servants) ethos, and several managers mentioned exit as a possibility. The general lack of resistance could perhaps also be understood partly as a result of the less harsh implementation of NPM reforms in combination with a less apparent downsizing of the public sector in Sweden compared to other countries (Hasselbladh & Bejerot 2008, described in chapter two), or as a result of the fact that NPM is not particularly new anymore, meaning that many managers have not experienced any other system.
8. Being a manager in a politically governed organisation – conditions for management in the personal social services

This is the last empirical chapter of this thesis. Here, the managers’ perceptions of management in a politically governed human service organisation will be explored. This will include the managers’ ideas about differences between their management and management in the private sector, appreciations of their own and other groups’ levels of influence and their experiences of the relationships with higher levels in the organisation.

Several times in this thesis it has been noted that the organisational base plays a large role for how management is (or should be) exercised (e.g. Allison 1986, Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013; Hasenfeld 2015). For example, as discussed in chapter three, research focusing on the public sector suggests that several organisational factors differentiate public sector management from management in the private sector, e.g. democratic foundation and political governance (Lundquist 1998). Additionally, several researchers whose focus is social work management have proposed that social work management (or human service management) have different conditions compared to other types of management (Forsberg Kankkunen 2009). Contrary to these ideas of management being coupled to its’ organisational base, NPM/managerialism sees management as generic and transferable. These ideas were discussed in relation to managerial training in chapter six, and here the contradicting views will give an interesting background for exploring how the managers in the personal social services perceive and speak of possible differences and similarities between their management and management in the private sector. The first part of this chapter will focus on this issue. The second part of the chapter will focus on how the managers in the personal social services perceive and speak about their own and other groups’ possibilities to influence decisions. Also the managers’ descriptions of how they go about exerting influence will be discussed. In the third and final part, the managers’ views on the interaction between themselves and higher organisational levels will be explored.
What’s the difference? – ideas about management in public and private sectors

Connecting to the discussion on possible differences and similarities between managerial work in the public sector (here the personal social services) and in the private sector, the managers were asked to elaborate on what they thought the difference was between being a manager in the personal social services and being a manager in the private sector. Few managers have worked in the private sector which means that the answers reflect their ideas regarding these issues rather than experiences.

The phrasing of the question may have caused the managers to think of features specific for management in the personal social services in relation to that of the private sector (business). Hence, several managers spoke of social work specific characteristics/HSO specific characteristics. For example, several managers mentioned the focus on human relations, the specific laws and the difficulties measuring results. One manager highlighted the specific conditions of being a manager in an organisation in which the staff work directly with people:

Spontaneously, I think that that there is a difference /.../ I think that you work a lot, works with yourself as a tool. So it is important to take care of that [tool]. In a company, for example in an IT company, you work with the computer. Here we work with ourselves as tools and we need to take care of ourselves /.../ So you have people who feel bad, or it gets tough for example. And then you have to fix that. Take care of it. So I think there is a huge difference.

(M3, frontline, substance abuse)

In HSO-literature, the client-worker relations are described as the actual core of HSOs (Hasenfeld 2010). The manager quoted above stated that social workers “work with themselves as tools”. In Hasenfeld’s writings, the relationships between workers and clients are described as “the primary vehicle through which workers carry out their work” (p. 21). This situation, with staff and their relations with clients being the tools or vehicles, creates specific conditions for management. In M3’s statement it was indicated that this circumstance created need for what could be understood as supportive supervision (cf. Kadushin 2002). Another manager spoke of other ways in which the caring qualities of social work may affect the management:

Perhaps one is a bit more straight forward [in the private sector]; it is like this, and if you can’t handle it we will find you another job in the organisation for example. /.../ I think when you work with vulnerable people and you always have to be so very kind and caring, it feels like you have to be very caring here [as a manager] too. /.../. And then I think that there are both advantages and disadvantages with that. /.../ I think that you have learned, since you work with this and have been educated in this, you might also have a greater under-
standing of why it is like this or that, compared to in other organisations. (M5, frontline, social assistance)\textsuperscript{lv}

This manager indicated that the caring nature of social work spills over into management. This was described as possibly problematic if staff were not fulfilling expectations, but also as fruitful since the social work education/experience provided the managers with an insight into staff’s behaviour.

Many statements also concerned circumstances that may be shared by managers in other types of public sector organisations. In these statements, a number of ideas about the different sectors emerged. Several managers pointed at differences related to the foundations of the public sector, for example that municipalities are politically governed and have democratic foundations, are not-for-profit, provide services, should be guided by the rule of law etc. As one second tier manager expressed it: “our employers are in fact politicians who in their turn represent the people” (M11, second tier, child welfare). Some statements concerned the managers’ ideas about the pros and cons of both sectors. Notions about private sector management were that ”there are shorter paths to decisions” (M15, frontline, social assistance) and ”the [managers] can make more decisions on their own” (M20, second tier, mental health). However, the private sector was also thought to have a ”tougher climate” (M19, frontline, child welfare) and the managers needed to have ”sharper elbows” (M19). Management in the municipalities was considered to be influenced by “short sightedness” (M13, second-tier, mental health) and working in a politically governed organisation was considered by one manager as ”municipal coma” with ”questions that need to go [up] to the political level and down again” (M24, second tier, child welfare). One manager described the consequences of political governance like this:

Since we are politically governed, we sometimes don’t have the mandate do the things we feel are necessary. And the political decisions get very short-sighted, we would be able to plan much better if, if we could decide for ourselves. ... So, we’re definitely a much more sluggish organisation, and a more divided organisation as the managers’ mandates are on a second hand level. (M22, third tier)\textsuperscript{lvi}

This managers’ quote contains criticism regarding the political governance. The political decisions are described as short-sighted, and the managers’ influence is seen as limited regarding the long term planning for the organisation. There were however also some positive statements; one manager expressed that: ”our employers have more confidence in us ” (M7, third tier).

Some managers spoke about similarities between the management in social work and management in the private sector. One manager stated that:

How to deal with colleagues, and how to manage, be towards the clients, and how to look at, it’s the same, the same. It’s all about relationships and creating a good working climate. (M1, third tier)\textsuperscript{lvi}
This manager spoke of tasks that may be connected practice, or even more precise perhaps to ‘leadership’ in a general sense (referring to relations with the staff). Several managers mentioned similarities in this aspect, so did the manager quoted below. However, this manager was also concerned with social services becoming more business-like also in other aspects:

The social services are becoming more and more like private companies /.../ and that is a bit illogical /.../ They cannot be compared but, but there is some sort of strive in that direction, and I'm not particularly fond of it because I think it is stupid thinking. There are good things that have come from the private, I mean this quality development work, it came from the private side from the beginning /.../ But it is obvious that there are differences. At the same time I think that if you're going to talk about leadership styles, and research about what distinguishes good leadership qualities, I do not think it differs very much. But I do not think you can apply the private entrepreneurship on the public sector, I think it’s done too much these days. (M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)\textsuperscript{viii}

The manager quoted above gave a clear account regarding her view of the similarities and differences between private and public sector management; while the leadership may be similar, the type of work carried out in HSOs and the particular ’raw material’ of these organisations call for specific ways of governing and/or organising.

In general, it may be noted that many managers appeared to believe that the organisational conditions for management differed between either social work organisations or public sector organisations, and business. However, some aspects of practice (in this case leadership) were thought to be similar.

**Views on influence and organisation**

In the statements above it can be noted that several managers spoke of differences in the possibilities to exert influence. Some statements may be interpreted as relatively critical towards political government (see e.g. M22, above) and it appears as if some managers perceived their own possibilities to influence decisions to be too circumscribed by organisational factors. Below, it will be explored how the managers describe their own, and other groups possibilities to exert influence.

The influence of different groups according to the respondents…

Respondents of the survey were asked how they appreciated the level of influence of different groups in the municipality (including their own group, i.e. managers in the personal social services). More precisely, they were asked to indicate whether different groups should have more influence, less
influence or whether they thought that the level of influence was right (Table 10).

Table 10. Views on the influence of different groups, n=377-387 (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Should have less influence</th>
<th>Have the right amount of influence</th>
<th>Should have more influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local politicians</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the municipality</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the social services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers in the PSS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers in the PSS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the respondents’ answers (Table 10), the majority viewed the level of influence of most groups to be appropriate, except from that of clients. However, a reasonably large proportion of managers thought that politicians should have less influence. Also the top level management in the municipality was perceived by some managers to have too much influence. Few managers thought that social workers, citizens or clients should have less influence. Instead, these groups were perceived by quite large proportions to have too little influence. Although the majority was content with the level of influence of the managers of the social services, as much as 40% thought that their own managerial level (PSS) should have more influence, and almost one in four thought that the head of the social services should have more influence. To investigate whether or not there were any differences in attitudes between either managerial levels or the three field of social work, the variables presented in Table 10 were made dichotomous.

29 “What do you think of following persons’/groups’ level of influence over the personal social services in your municipality?”

30 Noteworthy in this context is that 43% of the managers perceive the influence of the citizens as too low, while only 7% perceive the influence of politicians to be too low. This is somewhat contradictory, if one considers that according to the democratic system it is through the elected representatives that the citizens are supposed to gain influence.
The analysis showed no significant differences between the three fields of social work, but larger proportions of lower levels of managers compared to higher levels appeared to perceive that social workers should have more influence.

Related to the question of different groups’ influence are the managers’ views of their own possibilities to influence decisions and their views on the organisations’ governance. In the survey, the managers were asked to respond to statements regarding these issues by choosing: disagree totally, disagree to some extent, neutral, agree to some extent or agree totally. In Table 11, the proportions of those agreeing (totally or to some extent) to the statements are presented.

Table 11. Possibilities to influence decisions and the level of confidence in the governance of the organisation. Per cent agreeing to the statements, n=396.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All n=228</th>
<th>Frontline n=125</th>
<th>Second tier n=125</th>
<th>Third tier n=43</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good possibilities to influence decisions</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High confidence in the governance of the organisation</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001, n.s. = non-significant (p > 0.05).

Although the majority of managers did agree to the statements, there were reasonably large proportions that did not. As could be expected, there were significant differences between managerial levels regarding the perception of their possibilities to influence decisions; the higher levels of managers experienced more such influence. Only about half of the managers had high confidence in the government of the organisation, but it is impossible to know whether the managers have the politicians, the top level management, or both in mind when responding to the statement. No significant differences between the three fields of social work could be found regarding any of the variables.

The relative dissatisfaction with the very top level of local government displayed by some managers may be understood as a measure of experienced pressure from the highest levels in the organisation. In a recent article, we concluded that ‘high strained’ managers were more likely than others to rate

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31 i.e. the proportion of managers on different levels/in different fields who stated that politicians/head of municipality/head of social services etc. should have more influence was compared.

32 45 % of the frontline managers compared to 33 % of the second tier and 23 % of the third tier managers thought that the social workers should have more influence.
the influence of politicians and higher levels of managers as too high. The high strained managers were also significantly less likely to have high confidence in the government of the organisation. This confirms the assumption that dissatisfaction to some extent could be a measure of experienced pressure (Elofsson et al. 2015).

…and according to the interviewees

When the interviewed managers were asked questions regarding their own and theirs superiors’ influence, complex pictures were depicted. Regarding the influence of politicians, some managers described a rather conventional distribution of power:

I: What do the politicians decide?
M7: Well, they formulate the goals and it is of course wrong to say that they decide what we should do because we have a very clear legislation /…/ But I say that because the politicians know that, and it's their assignment too, to make sure that we do a good job in line with the legislation. So they formulate goals, they give us the resources, they allocate resources, they follow up our work and make sure that we do what we are meant to do, and that is about it. (M7, third tier)\textsuperscript{lx}

In this quote, M7 described that the politicians formulate goals, allocate resources and follow up the work of the civil servants. Here, the distribution of tasks and influence appears to be much in accordance with the legislation, the ideals of management by objectives and the common view of what it should be like (Montin 2007). However, other quotes show that the relation between the politicians’ and the professionals’ assignments sometimes, or in some municipalities, may be more complicated:

They have difficulties understanding that they are politicians and not civil servants every now and then. /…/ No, they have not really understood that they cannot go down and talk to the social workers about what the social welfare board will do, to precede decisions, or gossip. That’s not good, it messes things up. (M22, third tier)\textsuperscript{lx}

It has happened that they mix up their roles, it happens quite often. Maybe they work in our organisation in some way and they mix up the roles and use the fact that they are politicians in the social welfare board. And maybe, at times social workers have almost been, not threatened, but: I will take this up with… I am actually a politician on the board. (M23, frontline, social assistance)\textsuperscript{lxii}

Judging from these quotes, it appears as if the politicians – according to these managers – sometimes intruded on the professional role, or overstepped boundaries in an undesired manner.
Regarding the influence of higher levels of managers, there were also variations in how it was described. In one municipality, several managers appeared to be of the opinion that their current social service manager (the manager above the third tier manager) was rather prominent:

And then the social manager is a very, very driven social service manager here with a lot thoughts and ideas, who have made big changes here too. / ... / And I think, my view is that most of the things she does are perceived very positively. (M5, frontline, social assistance)

Another manager described her superior manager (in this case a third tier manager on a position equivalent to the one of the social service manager described above) as squeezed between the lower levels of managers and the district manager:

She decides, it is a bit unclear /.../ there are so many demands coming from [name], the administration director, and her role is just to make sure that it gets done. So sometimes I wonder what those poor personal social services managers get themselves into, in this hierarchy. (M13, second tier, mental health)

Judging from the managers’ statements, how much influence the superior managers are considered to have varies. The municipality that M13 worked in was for example described as “top-down governed” by M12 (see p. 89) and – judging from the quote above – it was probably not the third tier manager that M12 had in mind, but rather higher managerial levels.

Regarding the interviewed managers own possibilities to influence decisions, there appeared to be some differences between managerial levels, but also between managers on the same levels. In general, no managers stated that they had zero possibilities to influence, but there were some differences in the degree as to which they felt that they could make themselves heard. Also, as will be described below, there were variations in the managers’ levels of influence based on what type of question it concerned. It can be concluded that there was dissatisfaction among the managers regarding their own influence and the influence of top levels (mainly politicians). From the results of the interviews it may also be concluded that the distribution of power and the relationships between different levels were less clear cut than what might have been expected judging from legislation and common ideas about politics and administration (i.e. politicians formulate goals and civil servants neutrally put the goals into practice, Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013).
Influence in organisational changes and working procedures

It has been suggested in literature that the possibility for different groups in the personal social services to exert influence depends on the nature of the question concerned (Johansson 2012). In this study the respondents of the survey were asked which group that came up with the ideas for the latest changes in organisational structure and regarding the introduction of new methods/ways of working (Table 12).\(^{33}\)

Table 12. From whom came the idea for the latest organisational and/or methodological change? (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Organisational change (n=256)</th>
<th>New methods (n=309)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local politicians</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top level management</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other managers in the PSS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers in the PSS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others/do not know/etc.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 shows that the initiatives for organisational changes were perceived to a large degree as coming from higher levels in the organisation (i.e. politicians, top level management and to some extent other managers in the personal social services), whereas the initiatives for changes regarding operational matters to a much larger degree were perceived to come from lower levels (other managers in the personal social services, the managers themselves and the social workers). Most of the groups in this analysis were too small to allow tests to investigate possible differences between managerial levels and/or field of social work. However, there was one significant difference regarding who came up with the idea for a new method. It appears as if second (36 %) and third tier managers (35 %) were more likely to perceive that they came up with the idea than frontline managers (20 %, p < 0.01, not

\(^{33}\) In this context it may be of interest first to note that 65 % (n=260) of the managers had experienced thorough organisational changes during their time as managers and 78 % (n=313) had experienced the introduction of new methods/ways of working during the last three years. It is these managers’ answers (i.e. the ones who answered the follow-on question) that the analysis is based on.
in table). No significant differences between fields of social work were found.

In a follow-up question the respondents were asked if they themselves were able to influence the changes.\textsuperscript{34} In table 13, the proportion of managers who answered that they had no possibility (no not really and no not at all) to influence is presented.

Table 13. Proportion of managers that had no possibility to influence the latest change, (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Frontline</th>
<th>Second tier</th>
<th>Third tier</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational change (n=257)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New method (n=308)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* = p < 0.05, \*\* = p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001, n.s. = non-significant (p > 0.05).

A substantially smaller proportion of the third tier of managers perceived themselves to have no ability to influence organisational changes compared to second tier and frontline managers, but no significant differences between the three fields of social work could be found. Regarding possibilities to exert influence over the introduction of operational matters (methods/ways of working) much fewer managers on all levels perceived themselves to have no possibilities to influence. Here, it is interesting to note that a larger proportion of managers within child welfare (26 \%) perceived themselves to be unable to influence the introduction of new methods/ways of working compared to managers within social assistance (8 \%) and substance abuse (11 \%) (p < 0.05, not in table). It is impossible to say with certainty why this is, but it may be linked to the great pressure from external organisations to use/implement certain methods or ways of working in child welfare (Lundström & Shanks 2013).

It is perhaps also interesting to note that the managers’ attitudes regarding the advantages of the latest changes differ quite a lot between the two types of changes (not in table). While 90 \% of the managers thought that the new method/ways of working meant a change for the better for their unit, only 52 \% of the managers thought that the latest organisational change was for the better.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{34} The managers were given five alternatives: yes absolutely, yes to a large extent, yes to some extent, no not really and no not at all.

\textsuperscript{35} No significant differences between managerial levels or field of social work could be found.
Indications of variations

The interviewed managers were also asked questions regarding changes in organisational structure and the introduction of new methods/ways of working. Their answers appeared to be in line with the information gained from the survey. However, in the interviews more subtle variations could be detected. Regarding comprehensive organisational changes, many managers viewed the role of politicians (and top level managers) as important, whereas the changes in methods/new ways of working more often were seen as initiated by staff or managers. However, smaller internal organisational changes also seemed to be possible for the managers themselves to influence. This is how a third tier manager described the roles of different actors in her organisation:

I think that they [the politicians] set the tone; it has, with the coalition of centre-right parties, become very clear with the purchaser-provider model. That’s the direction it is going /.../ and all organisations try to, otherwise they will not survive, unless they go that direction, so to that extent the politicians govern. /.../ The next step is the municipality director who decides how many units he wants, and how many unit managers. And then, on all levels you can influence a little, the unit managers can also to some extent influence how they want things to be in their groups. And I think you must be able to do that if you are to be a good manager. You must feel that you at least have that tool in your hand. (M6, third tier)

In the municipality that this manager worked in, several managers were preoccupied with the (at the time) recent merging of two districts and of two formerly separate social services organisations. This was a political decision in which the managers themselves had no say – instead all managers had to reapply for their positions. In the quote above M6 also spoke of the introduction of a purchaser-provider model, which the politicians had initiated. Also in another municipality several managers spoke of a recent reorganisation into a NPM inspired purchaser-provider model which was portrayed as a political decision:

M3: It's been a lot with that purchaser-provider [model] that has not really worked. But it was the politicians who decided that we should have that [type of] organisation. And it has taken much time and many discussions./.../
I: And in this reorganisation, what would you say your role was?
M3: No, I do not know, my role? It was probably just trying to get in line. /.../
And it is like if my role has been everything from being a puppet; to do what [the superior managers] decides, to all of a sudden they can [ask]; well, so what do you think [M3s name]. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

The two types of organisational changes described above (the merging of two districts and the implementation of purchaser-provider models) can be described as comprehensive and resting on political ideologies or organisa-
tional trends. The managers described that the changes were initiated after elections and (at least partial) change of political government. With respect to these changes, the managers perceived themselves to be powerless (third tier and frontline alike). There was however also statements that implied a more active role for managers, indicating that managers may suggest organisational changes for the politicians, who afterwards make the formal decision.

It's the politicians that decide in the end, it is, but they get the idea, they get the idea from somewhere. /.../ Well, it's not as if it comes from the grassroots’ level, but it probably comes from a slightly higher level and I think /.../ I don’t want to say that it comes from above, sometimes it will probably come from the managerial levels, managers from all levels, it doesn’t have to be the social service managers or from the unit managers. I think, I believe that we as frontline managers also are very much involved. (M9, frontline, child welfare)\textsuperscript{lxvi}

M9’s statement concerned a less comprehensive organisational change than the ones described above, although it refers to a quite a large internal reorganisation (i.e. the creation of a new unit and reorganisation of the old units). Organisational changes involving the particular units for which the managers are responsible, appear to be possible for the managers themselves to initiate (see also M6 above):

M4: Well, this thing with team leaders is pretty new for us. And in that respect we have made a small organisational change in the groups /.../
In: Whose initiative was that?
M4: Ours.
In: From you managers?
M4: Yes. (M4, second tier, social assistance)\textsuperscript{lxvii}

This manager described the creation of frontline management positions that the personal social services in her municipality had not had before. This change was described as solely a managerial decision.

When it comes to new methods/ways of working, the managers attributed the ideas to many different actors in the organisations, such as themselves, the social workers, superior and subordinate managers and in some instances the politicians. All in all, the introduction of new methods/ways of working appeared in the interviews to be perceived as often coming from lower managerial levels:

I: Where do these methods come from? /.../
M7: Well, it’s not from me; I can say that because I don’t come up with any methods and say that you should work with this. No, I don’t think I’ve ever done that actually, it would be alien for me I think. /.../ I think they come from the staff, I think they come from the frontline managers, because there is a big
discussion among them on what it is good. Now it's very much though our intervention consultant who encourages this. (M7, third tier)\textsuperscript{lxviii}

In the everyday work, I can govern quite a lot. How I think they should work with clients, I can also decide that this is a highly prioritised group, and this group you don't need to work with more than quite administrative, this is a group you should work with. /.../ So such things I think, such things I can do. (M10, frontline, social assistance)\textsuperscript{lxix}

It interesting to note that the survey depicted a slightly different picture than the interviews. In the survey, third tier and second tier managers appeared more likely to perceive that they came up with the ideas for new methods compared to the frontline managers, which is quite the opposite to what M7 describes.

There were also indications of instances when the politicians had very specific ideas on methods/ways of working:

I: Where do the ideas come from, for example that 12-step is the method of choice?  
M16: Well, 12-step was a political decision from 95; this is how we do, and that's that.  
I: So, it was the politicians who decided that?  
M16: Yes, at that time they did. It was a very driven chairperson who pursued it. People got the choice, you either work with this, or you resign. /.../  
I: But is it common for politicians to, well, to decide which methods,  
M16: No, something like that will never happen again, but it was 95, and it was a very dynamic chairperson, but otherwise it's not like that. (M16, second tier, substance abuse)\textsuperscript{lxx}

This is a radical and probably quite unusual example, but also other managers stated that politicians had decided to implement certain methods or ways of working:

Save The Children goes around and speaks of children’s houses [Barnahus]. It began in Malmö and it's about children who are exposed to crime. To have investigations from the police and from health care and from the social services and the prosecutor under one roof. And then you work with this, and it's a sort of method. In this case, the politicians are very persistent. I can say that it is unusual. Our politicians are very little into determining how we should do, instead they are for determine what we should do, and I think that's great, but this case is an exception. And that is because Save the Children pursues this as a political issue. They turn directly to the politicians and say; you must do this. So, it is unusual. (M7, third tier)\textsuperscript{lxxi}

This situation is an example of external organisations bringing pressure on the politicians which in turn caused the politicians to react. The change in itself is perhaps to be seen as a combination of organisational and methodological change. Nevertheless, this quote and the former can be seen as exam-
ple of politicians intruding on what may be perceived as mainly professional areas.

Another example of external pressure is that from the National Board of Health and Welfare. Several managers mentioned that ideas of using certain methods or instruments came from this source. This can be attributed to the state’s will to implement what is often termed evidence based social work (see Lundström & Shanks 2013 for an extended discussion on this).

I: If you think of some pretty recent change or method or something that was introduced can you remember any?
M6: BBIC, it went, they’re in training now during the autumn, and we have a goal that 75% of all investigations should be made according to it, so that’s something new.
I: And how was it decided to use precisely that,
M6: The National Board of Health and Welfare decided.
I: And then, 
M6: Then we do as they say. (M6, third tier)

Like all organisations, the personal social services are susceptible to external pressure. In fact, it has been argued (see chapter two) that HSOs are even more susceptible to external pressure than other organisations due to their moral work and lack of a strong technical knowledge base (Healy 2009; Hasenfeld 2010). This may be one explanation for the readiness to change in accordance with suggestions from other, sometimes superior organisations.

In Johansson’s (2012) research, it is indicated that the influence of different groups depends on what could be described as closeness to operational level. While policy issues, organisational issues and delegation of authority to a great extent appear to be domains for higher levels, working methods and operational procedures appear to be domains for frontline managers. These findings were in large parts validated in this study. When it came to organisational changes, the discretion was perceived by the managers as quite circumscribed. To have influence over methods and working procedures may be described as professional discretion, which many managers perceived themselves to have (at least to some extent). In the interviews, there were however indications of politicians intruding on the professional discretion and as we shall see below, there are perhaps also examples of managers trying to influence policy in an unorthodox fashion.

How to exert influence

In the interviews, the managers were asked questions regarding how they would go about initiating change in their organisations. The general impression that could be gathered from the statements was that formal decision-making paths appeared to be important:
I: If you want to influence something, where do you turn then?
M13: Well, I turn to my manager, I do. /.../ It is natural to me, I never go past her. Never go past her because it will, you don’t do that. I don’t think, it’s a part of the game. So if I'm going to influence the higher levels I always go to my manager first. (M13, second tier, mental health)

The attitude of the manager quoted above was common among the managers. Most managers stated that they would turn to their immediate superior manager, and not bypass her/him, if they wanted to change something in their organisation.

Also third tier managers appeared to follow the formal decision-making paths, but due to their positions, the situation was a bit different for them. The third tier manager quoted below gave a reasonably informative answer on how she went about initiating change/exerting influence:

It can involve collaboration between different units, and then I turn to my manager, because it is he who can influence that, the social welfare board’s chairperson cannot influence that in the same way. Additionally, there are quite a lot of things that I want to change that has to do with the administration, and that is nothing that concerns the social welfare board’s chairperson. /.../ But when it comes to how I want us to change the organisation, how we do our work more directly, that I always inform the politicians about. If something has happened in the individual cases, for example, I can not inform my manager. It is the secrecy, we have secrecy between our levels, him and me, so that is none of his business. (M7, third tier)

This manager had direct contact with the governing politicians and turned to them regarding social work matters. Regarding organisational questions, she would turn to her superior manager. As this manager had a high position, she could access both top level politicians and managers. It is also interesting to note that this manager used the word “inform”, indicating that she perceived that she had discretion to decide but was obliged to inform her superiors of her decisions.

However, a few managers had more unconventional views on how best to influence, like this third tier manager:

M1: This is a politically governed organisation and that is where I turn, to the politicians. The first step is a debate with the social welfare board, and after that the next level. Because that is where the dialogues are, they are the ones who have to answer for the organisation to the public. If a municipal director thinks one thing or the other I don’t give a shit about it. It sounds crazy, but that’s how it is.
I: Yes, but it can be very different in different municipalities.
M1: That may be the case, but that’s how it is here, that’s where the battle is; with the politicians.
I: Do you have access to them?
M1: Oh yes.
I: You can call them and say I want to meet you.
M1: Yes I can, I have. I don’t need to go through [social services managers’ name] to meet them.
I: And there won’t be any hard feelings, you can just do that if you have a question that is important enough, or big enough /.../
M1: No, none [hard feelings]. (M1, third tier)

This manager made it very clear that the civil servants in the highest positions in the municipality were uninteresting for her, as she perceived that the real power lay with the politicians. Again, this manager had a high position, making direct contact with the politicians easier. However, also among the lower levels there were managers who appeared to be able to access alternative paths to exert influence:

M23: Through the informal channels you can influence very much. If I want something I can influence through, that’s a difference in a small municipality, I mean everybody knows each other and you probably know a lot of the, I know many politicians. If I would like, I could get something specific through just by using the informal channels. Raise the question to someone in private, saying something in a café /.../ and that person could pursue it, and then all of a sudden it could come up as a motion or something like that somewhere. In that way I could influence and I have done that too. That’s the wrong way of doing it maybe, but well, if it’s something you really, if you want something to be done, something to be put on the agenda, or suggestions for improvement and you have had difficulties the formal way, then I have taken this informal way. /.../
I: What if you want to influence the formal way?
M23: Then I go through my immediate superior, in that case it’s supposed to go the hierarchical path, up to the managerial group, to the municipality management and then to the board. (M23, frontline, social assistance)

M23 spoke of the informal means of exerting influence as a possibility she would consider if influencing the formal way did not lead to the desired result. Most of the managers who spoke of alternative means to exert influence stated that they would turn directly to the politicians. In this aspect, higher levels of civil servants appeared less interesting to the managers who wanted to exert influence though other paths than the conventional. Access to politicians may not be a certainty for all managerial levels in all municipalities; few managers on lower levels spoke of this as a possibility. As the quote from M23 indicates, her access to politicians was a result of living in a small municipality where people knew each other. Managers in larger municipalities may not to the same extent see this as a possible way to exert influence.

As touched upon above (see p. 89), some interviewed managers spoke of resigning from their positions as a last resort. A few managers had already taken this step while others spoke of it as an available option, if other efforts to influence did not work.
Well, I’ll have to fight for what I believe in. And would it be so bad that I feel that this won’t work, then I’ll have to resign because then, otherwise it's just about fighting yourself, what you believe in. (M21, second tier, mental health)\textsuperscript{lxxvii}

To resign appeared to be a thinkable alternative for several managers if their voices were not heard when trying to influence (if the question was perceived as important enough), or if they were forced to do things that conflicted with their professional – or perhaps civil servants’ – ethos (cf. Lundquist 1998).

**Interactions with politicians**

It is suggested above that managers who have access to politicians may have more possibilities to influence the organisation. This constitutes one reason for investigating how the managers in this study experienced the relations with local politicians. It may be suspected that within the personal social services, where politicians are responsible not only for policy matters but also for decisions in individual cases, there are reasonably frequent meetings between politicians and managers on all levels. Probably more than otherwise would be the case, at least drawing on Forsberg Kankkunen’s (2009) conclusions that managers in the care/educational services have fewer arenas for contact with politicians than managers in technical services. However, as we have seen in Table 8, meetings with politicians are not perceived to take a lot of time. Yet the relations are probably of importance for opportunities to exert influence, make strategic levels aware of needs etc.

In the survey, the managers were asked to appreciate how often they met with politicians from the social welfare board (or equivalent) and also to rate how they perceived the communication with the politicians (Table 14).\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{36} In the question regarding how often the managers met with politicians, the managers were given five alternatives: daily, once or twice per week, every second week, once per month and more seldom. In the question regarding communication with politicians, the managers were given five alternatives: very good, relatively good, acceptable, relatively bad, and very bad. In Table 14, the proportion of managers who perceived the communication as very good or relatively good are presented.
Table 14. Meetings with politicians from the social welfare board and proportions of managers who perceive the communication as good, n=396-386 (per cent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Frontline</th>
<th>Second tier</th>
<th>Third tier</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly or more often</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every second week or more often</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly or more often</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with politicians is good</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01, *** = p < 0.001

On a general level, third tier managers had more frequent contacts with politicians than did the lower levels. According to the survey, relatively small proportions of managers on all levels had weekly contact with the politicians. However, almost all third tier managers had contacts with the politicians at least monthly, compared to about half of the managers on the other levels. The third tier managers were also more pleased with the communication between themselves and the politicians than were the other levels.

When the interviewed third tier managers were asked how often they met with politicians in the social welfare board or the working committee\(^{37}\), they appeared in general to have reasonably frequent contact, more frequent in fact than the Table 14 would indicate. The contact appeared to take place not only in formal meetings but also in more informal settings.

I have meetings with the chairperson once a week /.../ because it's important for me to check my work with the chairperson all the time, and I do, I inform him, and we reason and he tells me about his thoughts and so on. It is an extremely important part of my work, so it is. (M7, third tier)\(^{lxviii}\)

The manager quoted above did not only have frequent interaction with politicians; she also considered it to be an important part of her work to reason with the chairperson of the social welfare board. Having good contacts with the politicians appeared to be considered beneficial, which was also indicated in the managers’ statements regarding how they exerted influence.

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\(^{37}\) “Sociala utskottet” a committee with fewer delegates, appointed by the social welfare board.
While the correlation between managerial level and interaction with politicians was expected, the interviews and further analysis of the survey suggested that other factors apart from managerial level also were of importance for the interaction between managers and politicians. The second tier managers’ interactions with the politicians appeared to be more varied than the third tier managers’, judging from the interviews. The impression was that the differences could depend on several things, e.g. the type of unit (purchaser/provider, assessment/treatment) or field of social work in which the managers worked, the size of the municipality and naturally how the managers had arranged the managerial presence in the formal meetings with the social welfare board (i.e. which managerial level should attend). The importance of type of unit is perhaps to be expected considering the politicians involvement in individual cases – if the unit exercises authority and is responsible for assessments that may lead to coercive action, the politicians are obliged by law to be involved. If the unit instead delivers service in form of treatment, the situation is different. As one manager in a provider unit expressed it: “as a provider you are quite uninteresting for the politicians” (M13, second tier, mental health).

Unfortunately, the survey contained no information about whether or not the managers worked in provider units. However, the results from the survey indicated that managers within social assistance met politicians less frequently compared to managers within child welfare or substance abuse (15 % of the managers within social assistance, 31 % of the managers in child welfare and 30 % of the managers within substance abuse met the politicians once every second week or more often, p < 0.05, not in table). This is quite possibly a result of the same circumstances as described above. Unlike decisions regarding coercive action, decisions concerning social assistance may be delegated to the social workers or managers, meaning that politicians are not obliged to be involved.

Frontline managers appeared in both interviews and survey to see relatively little of the politicians. Their interaction with the politicians appeared mainly to be related to individual cases, when decisions could not be/were not delegated:

Yes, exactly when we need to make an acute placement [of a child] for example, then we have more direct contact. /.../ But [otherwise] it is our, my senior managers that have the direct contact with the politicians. And that is

38 Regarding the other variables (weekly, monthly and communication) no statistically significant differences between the three fields of social work could be found. Managers who stated that they worked within two areas or more or those who stated that they worked in another field were excluded from this analysis.

39 If the social services finds that there is substantial risk of harm, this is brought to the attention of the social welfare board, which decides whether to apply to the Administrative Court for a care order.
regarding the budget and how we work, it is very much them that have [that contact]. (M2, frontline, child welfare)

According to the quote above and others that were similar, the frontline managers appeared not to be involved when the more strategic questions were discussed; this was viewed as a task for higher managerial levels.

Interaction with superior managers

About the interaction with immediate superior managers it could be said that managers on all levels appeared to see their superior manager often (78 % saw them weekly or more often) and the majority appeared to be pleased with the communication (79 %). There were some statistically significant differences between managerial levels, indicating that a larger proportion of frontline managers saw their superior managers weekly or more often than the rest (84 % of the frontline managers saw their superior managers weekly or more often compared to 69 % of the second tier managers and 74 % of the third tier managers, p < 0.01). Also, comparisons between the fields of social work indicated that there were some differences; managers in social assistance appeared to have most frequent contacts with their superior managers (89 % of the managers in social assistance met their immediate superior managers weekly or more often compared to 79 % of the managers in child welfare and 69 % of the managers in substance abuse, p < 0.05). Considering that the social assistance managers’ interaction with politicians were quite the opposite, this indicates that social assistance to a higher degree is managerially governed (probably for the reasons mentioned above; i.e. delegation). There were however no statistically significant differences in how the managers appreciated the communication.

In the interviews, several managers spoke of different types of interaction with their immediate superior managers; formal managerial meetings (‘ledningsgrupp’), formal individual meetings and more spontaneous interaction. Some managers highlighted support from and teamwork with their immediate superior managers:

She and I have been working quite a lot in, supporting each other also in the actual management. Of course she has not always had the time, but I've been able to go to her if something was the matter. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

Very easy to cooperate, but we can have different, /.../ We can think a bit different sometimes, but it's nothing. Essentially we have the same vision; we have exactly the same view on social work /.../ So that makes it very easy. (M8, frontline, child welfare)
There was little in the way of direct criticism towards the immediate superior managers, although it was indicated that the relations did not always live up to the managers’ expectations:

We are supposed to have meetings once a month, but sometimes it has been cancelled. I can say that the way it looks now, we are supposed to have these meetings once or twice a month, but because her assignment has grown, become so big, I can’t say that she can manage. So for the most time I take care of myself, which isn’t good, and I have said that, but I can’t put more, she, no I can’t. /…/ She is an old social worker so she really has the heart in the right place, but I don’t think I have that support, not all the time. (M13, second tier, mental health)\textsuperscript{1xxii}

This particular manager described a situation in which she perceived that her superior manager did not have enough time to see her or to support her. Another manager stated that her organisation had problems with a previous manager: “it has become fun since we changed manager if I may say” (M14, second tier, social assistance). Overall, the statements indicate that relations with the immediate superior managers were perceived as important. In other analysis on the quantitative data, lack of support from the immediate superior manager has been shown to be an important factor for experiencing high strain at work, which is in line with this finding (Elofsson et al. 2015).

Even if few managers criticised their immediate superior manager, there were several statements indicating that some perceived their own role as unclear in relation to other levels and that they experienced conflicting demands. Several frontline managers spoke of difficulties with an undefined role:

[It] is a bit of an undefined role in some way, or you need to be aware of being in both camps, so to speak /…/ I have no budgetary responsibility but, but I am thought of as a manager. At the same time, I am not in the managerial group and, and I don’t hear the discussions that they have. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's not good because many [people] think that you know a lot more than you actually do. (M15, frontline, social assistance)\textsuperscript{1xxiii}

The manager quoted above described that she was perceived as a manager by her subordinates, yet she was cut off from the strategic discussions in managerial meetings and had less information than the subordinates expected her to have. Other managers described almost the opposite situation; they have difficulties living up to higher managers expectations of participation in strategic work:

And I also think that we have a social services manager who thinks that we should join most things and have opinions and think and well. And she wants us to join, but she doesn’t really understand that we don’t have time because I have to be here, too. So you become a little squeezed. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)\textsuperscript{1xxiv}
This manager described instead that the top manager sometimes wanted her to participate in (or at least have opinions on) strategic matters to an extent that she found difficult to combine with her operational work (see also quote on p. 94). These two quoted managers described different situations and demands from superiors and subordinates, but both experienced pressures that they felt they could not live up to. However, not all managers described their role as unclear or 'squeezed'; there were also managers who opposed the idea of the ‘squeezed’ middle manager:

I: But do you feel /.../ pressure from different sides, pressure from your managers and other demands from, from your,
M19: No, I do not think that has been a problem. Sometimes, you just have to accept things. Like; now the superiors say this /.../ we can’t do anything about it. /.../ Because the thing is that sometimes, I would like something else, and everybody would like something else, but the management says that it’s not possible, now it's like this, and that’s not a big deal, I think. (M19, frontline, child welfare)xxxv

All in all, the managers in the interviews and in the survey appeared to meet regularly with the immediate superior managers. It seemed to be important to have support from and to be allied with the immediate superior manager, who was seldom explicitly criticised by the managers. However, some managers (although not all) expressed that they felt irreconcilable demands from their superiors and their subordinates. This experience of conflicting demands and need to be loyal both to higher and lower levels in the organisation has been highlighted before (e.g. Wolmesjö 2005; Antonsson 2013).

Discussion
This is the last empirical chapter in this thesis and here, the managers’ descriptions of the conditions for management in a politically governed HSO (i.e. the personal social services) have been discussed. Several aspects of this have been investigated. The managers’ ideas about differences between management in the personal social services and management in the private sector were explored. Also, the managers’ perceptions of the influence of different groups was discussed and it was shown that more than one third of the managers were dissatisfied with the influence of the social workers and middle managers (which was perceived to be too low) and a bit less than a quarter were dissatisfied with the influence of politicians (which was perceived to be too high). Also, only about half of the managers had high confidence in the government of the organisation. Social workers and middle managers were perceived to have more influence regarding methods and working procedures than regarding organisational structure. Strategies for
exerting influence were also examined which showed that the managers normally followed formal hierarchical paths, although some managers used more unconventional strategies. Finally, the managers’ perceptions of their relations to higher levels of the organisation were investigated.

**Organisation matters**

Despite the influence of managerialism, which could have been suspected to influence the managers into thinking that management is/should be the same in all types of organisations, the general impression of the statements regarding differences between management in the personal social services and in the private sector was that the managers thought that the type of organisation had relevance for management. The managers identified characteristics that were perceived as specific for human service management and social work management, but also discussed characteristics that were perceived as shared in different public sector organisations but different from the private sector. Several of the statements concerning the characteristics of and conditions for management were in line with ‘theory’ (see chapter two, Ivarsson Westerberg 2013), i.e. research on the field of public sector management and social work management. For example, the specific conditions for social work management mentioned by the managers resembled those discussed in research on HSOs (e.g. client-worker relations, specific laws, difficulties measuring results) (Hasenfeld 2010; Johansson et al. 2015). Likewise, some statements regarding the conditions for management in the public sector (political government, democratic foundations, not-for-profit services, law etc.) were similar to conclusions in the literature on public sector management (Lundquist 1998; Ivarsson Westerberg 2013).

There were no statements that indicated that the managers thought that the conditions for/characteristics of management would be the same regardless of organisation. However, some statements (e.g. “municipal coma”) resembled the common criticism of public sector organisations as ineffective and overly bureaucratic (cf. ‘rhetoric’ in Ivarsson Westerberg 2013). Likewise, some statements concerning leadership resemble the rhetoric that during later years has surrounded the idea of leadership. Leadership is, according to this rhetoric, generic and not coupled to the organisations’ more mundane activities. The general motto is that if you can lead one organisation you can lead any. Such ideas form a sharp contrast to the theoretic notion that organisations are unique (cf. Ivarsson Westerberg 2013) and have more in common with managerialist ideas. Interestingly, the managers’ statements on this issue also form a contrast to their own ideas about the necessity of (or at least the advantages with) having a social work background (see p. 77).
Politics and administration - muddled relations

In a public sector organisation, the political governance naturally plays an important role. This was noted by the managers whose statements were not always positive regarding the amount of influence of the politicians. Apart from the dissatisfaction among some managers regarding the amount of political influence, there were also indications that the roles of politicians and civil servants could be rather unclear or muddled.

The politicians (in this case the social welfare board) are by law responsible for and cannot delegate decision-making concerning the “goal, focus, scope or quality of activities” (KL 6:34). There are also decisions concerning individual clients that cannot be delegated, but in general, decisions that concern the operations of everyday work are delegated to the professional social workers or their managers. The typical idea of the relationship between administration and politics is that the politicians decide the goals, and the civil servants realise the political decisions in an exact and neutral manner. There are however researchers that question if this is possible, and also if it is at all desirable (Lundquist 1991; 1998; Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013). Regarding the possibility of such exactness and neutrality, it is often highlighted that when civil servants implement political decisions they have the discretion to form the content of the political decisions since these often are vague and unclear (Lipsky 2010; Casula Vifell & Ivarsson Westerberg 2013). The question regarding whether or not neutrality is always desirable is related to ethos (our public ethos and professional ethos) and the responsibility of guarding democratic values which includes an obligation to act if these values are overruled (Lundquist 1998).

In the interviewed managers’ descriptions, there were indeed indications of instances when both managers and politicians intruded on what could be viewed as the other part’s sphere, or at least when managers or politicians tried to exert influence using unconventional paths. There were for example indications of managers who tried to influence the politicians in a fashion that went outside the frames of bureaucracy, for example by approaching the politicians in private, bypassing the hierarchical paths of the organisation. Also, the managers sometimes voiced protests or chose to resign as a result of dissatisfaction with the organisation or with political decisions. There were also examples of managers perceiving that the politicians intruded on spheres that could be regarded as professional; sometime it concerned individual cases, sometimes methods and sometimes matters that were in the borderland of both organisation and method (e.g. barnahus). Whatever the intentions (e.g. rightly interfering to guard democracy or just overstepping boundaries), it shows that the relations between politicians and civil servants can be muddled and that it may be unclear to both parts what their role is in relation to other’s.
Contacts with higher organisational levels

While it appeared as if most managers were relatively happy about their relations with their immediate superior managers, it was shown that lower managerial levels were less happy about their contacts with politicians. Frontline and second tier managers had less contact with the politicians than third tier managers and some frontline managers expressed that they were excluded from more strategic discussions with politicians (and sometimes also higher managerial levels), and that their contacts with politicians almost exclusively concerned decisions regarding individual clients.

In previous research it has been indicated that personal interaction between managers and higher organisational levels is important for the managers’ possibilities to make strategic levels aware of the needs of their units and to influence decisions (Forsberg Kankkunen 2009; Björk 2013). It has also been indicated that social workers experience that attempts to voice criticism regarding adverse working conditions does not reach above the frontline or second tier managerial level (Astvik et al. 2014). If this is the case, it may be related to the lack of strategic discussions between lower and higher organisational levels and the mainly hierarchical structure of communication. If the frontline managers’ contacts with the politicians solely concerns decisions in individual cases, they may have few possibilities to inform the politicians about adverse conditions, and the information may be lost along the way.
In this thesis, the managers of the personal social services have been in focus. The aim has been to analyse the organisational conditions and everyday content of social work management. Throughout, the ambition has been to combine an individual perspective, which focuses on the managers’ understanding of their work and working conditions, with a structural perspective building on theoretical assumptions about organisational conditions and the effects of contextual changes for social work management. Hence, in the four empirical chapters, I have discussed different aspects of these themes. At the end of each chapter, the results have been analysed in relation to theoretical concepts and against the background of e.g. NPM related reforms, specialisation and/or the consequences of political governance. In this last chapter, I intend to further develop some themes, primarily relating to the triumphs and shortcomings of managerialism’s influence on the social services. Additionally, I intend to return to the question posed in the introduction about what social work management should or should not be. Firstly though, I will present a short summary of the empirical findings:

- In general, the managers of the personal social services were women with extensive social work experience, indicating that managers are recruited from within the profession.
- Most managers in frontline and second tier positions were responsible for one single field of social work, indicating that they worked in organisations that were (at least) specialised on basis of problem.
- Many managers described their promotion as a result of circumstances, and some managers depicted a difficult transition from social worker to manager.
- The majority of managers had undergone some type of post-qualifying training; most commonly in-service training.
- Despite the high prevalence of managers who had undertaken managerial training, many managers viewed practice oriented sources of knowledge (e.g. social work experience, on-the-job learning and support from colleagues and superiors) as more important for acquiring managerial competences.
The managers’ everyday work was often described as containing constant interruptions and acute situations, and the managers perceived tensions between different tasks.

The managers spoke of several changes that could be related to NPM. These changes appeared to have been particularly noticeable for second tier managers, whose role appeared to have become increasingly administrative.

Substantial proportions of managers were dissatisfied with the levels of influence of social workers and their own managerial level, as compared to that of politicians.

Concerning their own possibilities to exert influence, the managers perceived themselves to have more influence regarding aspects that were operational (such as methods and working procedures) compared to aspects related to organisational structure.

Although the ways of exerting influence in the personal social services appeared mainly to follow hierarchical paths, the managers described instances when managers and politicians went beyond their own sphere and into that of the other’s, indicating muddled relations between politicians and civil servants.

Organisational affiliation – does it matter?

All of the empirical chapters contained attempts to investigate possible differences and similarities between managers on different levels and in different fields of social work. Through these analyses it could be concluded that there were several differences between levels, but fewer between fields.

Many of the identified differences between the managerial levels had been indicated in previous research (e.g. Berg et al. 2008; Patti 2009; Johansson 2012) and were therefore quite expected; for example the differences regarding sex, experience, age, assignments and possibilities to exert influence.

With regards to the different fields, some differences were found; child welfare had a smaller proportion of men as managers, and managers within child welfare perceived themselves to be more practice oriented and to have fewer possibilities to influence methods compared to the other managers. The managers in social assistance appeared to meet politicians less often and superior managers more often than the other managers, which may be linked to the possibility of delegating all decisions regarding social assistance to civil servants, lessening the political involvement in casework.

Additionally, in the interviews a few differences between municipalities were implied. It appeared for example as if one of the municipalities had been hit hard by economic cutbacks and as if there was a more widespread dissatisfaction with the governance in that municipality, due to the economic
situation and political decisions regarding large organisational changes. In this municipality the third tier manager was described as squeezed and powerless, while the same level of manager in another municipality – that had not recently undergone such major reorganisations and that appeared less constrained with regards to budget – was perceived as dynamic and influential. These results indicate that there may be some variations in how the conditions for management are shaped in different municipalities, and that political influence plays an important role.

However, despite the variations, the general impression of the managers was one of uniformness, particularly in relation to loyalties and commitment. Drawing on previous research, one could have expected more differences between the fields (Bergmark & Lundström 2002)\(^\text{40}\), and more differences regarding loyalties between levels (Evans 2011). However, there may be several explanations to this uniformness. Firstly, almost all of the managers had a common professional background, consisting of a generalist education that grants social workers and managers mobility within the personal social services. Besides standing on the same professional foundation, this may mean that the managers could have been active in more than one field (and naturally also on more than one level) during their carriers. Secondly, the similarities may also be connected to the close contact and cooperation between managers both in different fields and on different levels. Lastly, it may be a result of a seemingly strongly retained professional identity among all managers (see below).

Interestingly, while the managers in the personal social services appear to have similar conditions regardless of field, findings in other studies indicate that the conditions for management in another field of the social services – namely eldercare, are quite different to those in the personal social services. One obvious and concrete difference is the number of subordinates, which appears to be significantly higher in eldercare organisations. The large span of control and other unfavourable conditions of eldercare managers (see chapter two) have often been interpreted as a result of the gendered character of the eldercare organisations. It is therefore interesting to note that the personal social services – also a female dominated human service organisation within the municipality – appears more similar to technical services (which have a domination of men) regarding the number of subordinates. This may suggest that the explanation based on the organisations as gendered is not sufficient to explain the variation in organisational conditions for management, even if the gendered character is likely to be a contributing factor.

\(^{40}\) This study regards social workers and not managers. Nevertheless it points towards differences that could potentially also have bearing on managers (see chapter 3).
Contextual changes due to the influence of NPM

Much space in this thesis has been dedicated to putting the managers’ experiences into context by relating them to changes affecting public sector services. I have for example suggested that managerialist ideology and NPM has influenced both the overarching concept of what management in the personal social services should be (which for example has affected the choice of managerial training and the expectations of the managers) as well as the more technical side of management (resulting in decentralised budget responsibility, increased focus on cost effectiveness and downsizing of support functions, etc.). In highlighting the reforms and the managers’ perceptions of the consequences, I have proposed that there is a mismatch between NPM and the politically governed human service work in the personal social services.

However, it may be of importance to once again contemplate the risk of exaggerating NPM’s influence. The concept of NPM has been used to describe a broad range of changes and there is no real consensus on what the concept actually entails. These circumstances may allow all sorts of changes to be attributed to NPM. To avoid that pitfall, my thesis has in this respect a more narrow focus, highlighting primarily the effects of managerialism. Managerialism is strongly connected to the internal organisation and the ideals of management, whereas the other main foundation of NPM (i.e. ‘new institutional economics’, building on ideas from agency theory, transaction cost economics and rational choice theory) is more connected to wider societal changes (e.g. marketisation). The latter changes have received less attention here. The explicit focus on managerialism and managerialist reforms rather than marketisation/privatisation is new in social work research in Sweden. The same can be said about the focus on social work managers’ attitudes and perceptions of these changes.

Despite the many indications of changes that may be attributed to NPM, an important result in this thesis is that NPM does not appear to have permeated social work to the degree that might have been expected. Rather, although the managers described conditions and ideals that had changed as a result of NPM/managerialism, I have shown that there are clear indications of a remaining professional identity among managers on all managerial levels as well a continuing bureau-professional regime within the social services. Managers are sometimes demonised by the opponents of NPM, who may depict them as the beneficiaries of managerialism, interested only in gaining more control and increasing the organisations’ efficiency. I find it important to contest these ideas with my results, by showing that managers in the personal social services still to a great extent are professionally oriented.

Apart from managerialism, the trend towards greater specialisation has had a large impact on the social services. As discussed previously, speciali-
sation may be connected to NPM, but it may also have other driving forces (see p. 24). Specialisation on the basis of problem is not subjected to a great deal of questioning in the interviews, which may indicate that it is taken for granted by many managers. To the extent that critical comments occur with regards to specialisation, they generally concern the separate budgets for the different units (which may make cooperation more difficult), and/or the implementation of purchaser-provider models (which are viewed by some managers as less than optimal for social work). Interestingly, these particular aspects of specialisation are the ones that are easiest to link to NPM.

Professional managers or professionals as managers?

One example of continuing bureau-professional tendencies in the social services is that managers are still recruited from within the profession and often promoted as a result of their abilities as practitioners. According to managerialist ideology, organisations should be led by professional managers rather than professionals. Although a tendency of remoulding professionals to managers (Evetts 2009) could be detected in my material, it appeared rare for municipalities to go the whole hog by employing managers from other sectors/disciplines. There are a number of reasons why this is of importance. One of these is the belief that certain values should guide work in the public sector (i.e. our public ethos, Lundquist 1998) and social work (e.g. SSRs code of ethics for social workers). Our public ethos and the ethics of social work have several common features, for example the obligation to endorse democratic ideals and human rights. There are however also differences; the code of ethics for social work also emphasises the advancement of social welfare and advocacy for vulnerable groups while our public ethos contains economic values as well as democratic (Lundquist 1998).

A manager recruited from within the profession is presumably socialised through education and practice (where the code of ethics/set of values probably are communicated, see Brante 2014), and therefore social work values and an orientation towards occupational professionalism are likely to be of greater importance for a professional working as a manager, than for a professional manager. In line with this, all levels of managers in this study demonstrated several indications of commitment to social work values. This was revealed in interview statements regarding the trade-offs between economic considerations and the rights of the clients, in statements regarding the importance of advocacy and having a social work background, as well as in statements where the managers referred to ‘social worker conscience’ and the like. There were also examples in the interviews of managers who had taken action as a result of ethical considerations (by leaving their position).

However, having managers that are recruited from within the profession is no guarantee of keeping managerialist influence from devaluing social
work values. Also managers with roots in the profession may be moved towards organisational professionalism as a result of the NPM/managerialist influence, for example in the form of an increased focus on economic matters and a generalist view on management that manifests itself in the governance of the organisation and in managerial training. For example, some interviewed managers’ statements suggested that the ‘rhetoric’ (Ivarsson Westerberg 2013) regarding the superiority of private sector management had made an impression. This was evident in statements suggesting that private sector managers were more ‘straight forward’ and that the municipality in comparison to the private sector was ‘comatose’. Also, in some statements regarding generic managerial training, there were indications of excitement over the fact that the training was aimed at public and private sector managers alike, as if attendance of private sector managers somehow increased the status. Through the interviews therefore, I could discern on one hand a strong loyalty towards the social work profession and its values, but also that the social work managers in no way are immune to the common rhetoric regarding the public sector as inferior.

Moreover, loyalty conflicts are more or less inevitable for middle managers (Hagström 2003) who have to balance loyalty between at least three parties: the organisation/superiors, the social workers and the clients/citizens. Although no such tendencies were revealed in the managers’ statements, the managers may sometimes put loyalty to the organisation in front of loyalty to other parties, i.e. incline towards organisational professionalism. An example of this was illustrated in another study which indicated that criticism from social workers was sometimes silenced by managers (Astvik et al. 2014). In general, it has been argued that silence has become an increasing problem in the public sector. Lundquist (2001) relates this to the increased focus on economic values at the expense of democratic, but it may also be seen as an increased focus on economic values at the expense of professional. Nevertheless, I would like to maintain that employing managers from within the profession may be a prerequisite for professional values keeping a central place in social work, albeit not a guarantee.

The importance of having managers from the profession is also accentuated by the managers’ closeness to the operational work. For example, frontline managers are responsible for the supervision of the social workers and are often involved in decision-making regarding clients. Supervision has been an important part of social work for its entire existence, and is associated with professional guidance, which requires knowledge and experience of social work practice, something that has been noted also by the managers in this study. Supervision is quite different from managerial governance, which is more focused on efficiency and monitoring worker performance. Several sources have discussed the risk of supervision being replaced with managerial governance, as a result of for example an increased focus on economy and an increasing amount of managerial tasks for supervisors – or employing
managers that come from outside the profession (Noble & Irwin 2009; Har- 
low 2013). Although supervision now mainly appears to be a task for front-
line managers, second tier managers still are delegated responsibility for 
certain decisions regarding clients. Likewise, managers on all investigated 
levels have quite some influence regarding the implementation of new meth-
ods/working procedures. All of these aspects require expert knowledge and, 
I would argue, commitment to social work ethos.

Discretion

According to managerialist ideology the managers should be granted the 
‘right to manage’. In line with this is the upgrading of the managerial role in 
the form of gaining budget and personnel responsibility. Although a reform 
appreciated by many managers, it is debatable whether or not it actually has 
given the managers more power since it appears to have been accompanied 
by increasingly restricted economic resources. The managers’ ‘right to man-
age’ has also been thought to cause curtailment of the professional discretion 
(of social workers) by increased managerial control, which poses a risk of 
undermining the bureau-professional regime (see Evans & Harris 2004). 
Whether or not the managers’ control of the social workers has increased is 
impossible to say with the data from this study but, as argued above I have 
been able to show that the managers identify with the professionals and ap-
pear to have kept a professional identity. It is therefore unlikely that the mis-
givings of a complete break between professionals and managers have been 
realised in the Swedish personal social services.

In general, the managers’ ‘right to manage’ appeared to be rather circu-
scribed in the personal social services. I have shown that the organisational 
structure and overarching economic framework appeared to be outside of the 
sphere of control for many managers, at least those in frontline and second 
tier positions. However, managers in all investigated levels appeared to have 
greater possibilities to influence operational work (i.e. methods, ways of 
working and decisions regarding clients). It is possible to speak of this in 
terms of a professional discretion for managers, meaning the possibility to 
relatively autonomously make decisions regarding aspects that are closely 
related to operational work – within the frames of economic resources and 
organisational conditions. In contrast, influence over the other areas, i.e. 
organisational structure etc. may in that case be termed managerial discre-
tion. This type of discretion appeared in this study to be reserved mainly for 
higher organisational levels (cf. Johansson 2012).

Nevertheless, despite the managers perceiving that they have a reasonable 
degree of professional discretion, it may be important to once again bring to 
attention an organisational condition that curtails also this discretion; namely 
the great involvement of politicians, not only in policymaking but also in
casework. The practice of politicians (in this case acting as laypersons) making decisions that directly affect individuals differentiates social work from other public sector activities, and the great involvement of laypersons also differentiates Sweden from other countries to the extent that Liljegren et al. (2014) have described the Swedish model as ‘deprofessionalised’ or ‘laypersonalised’ (p. 10). Given the overall trend of de-politicisation (see Montin 2007) in the public sector – which is in line with managerialist ideals – the deprofessionalised model in the social services appears to be an exception. This situation is possibly also a contributing factor towards the reasonably widespread dissatisfaction regarding the influence of politicians among the managers in this study.

Pushing the envelope or holding the fort?

After having discussed the conditions for management, it is time to turn the focus towards the managers’ everyday work. Although management must be considered as coupled to its organisational base, some features of management appear to be similar regardless of organisational type. For example, the managers in this study experienced a heavy workload and found their work to a great extent reactive. This description of managerial work is similar to descriptions in several studies within the managerial work tradition, where different sorts of management is studied (e.g. Mintzberg 2009; Tengblad 2012; Antonsson 2013). The reactive nature of management appears therefor to be a widespread phenomenon. It is also one of the most prominent features of the personal social service managers’ everyday work, and I have suggested in this thesis that the nature of social work (with acute and potentially life-threatening situations for clients) adds an extra dimension of reactivity to its management. According to the managers, the unplannable character makes the work interesting and varied, but it leads to a situation where the deliberate work – particularly the work that involves development and strategic planning – does not get prioritised. The perception of not having enough time for strategic work is common to all managerial levels, although it appears as if higher managers are able to spend a little more time on strategic work.

According to the ideals of managerialism, the model-manager is a visionary leader and a strategist. This is not only far from the reality of social services, but appears to be far from reality also in other public sector organisations and in business (Tengblad 2012). Perhaps this is an indication that the ideals of managerialism are based rather on wishful thinking than on knowledge of corporate managerial work. In general, there is a great discrepancy between what managers actually do at work (a.a.), and the (normative) theories of what managers should do (conveyed in management training, classic theories and popular ideas about management). Despite the idea
of the manager as a boundary-pusher or a visionary possibly being a figment of imagination, it appears to have shaped the social work managers’ ideas of what good management is. Taking care of the everyday acute situations and handling constant interruptions appears sometimes to be perceived as disturbance rather than managerial work. I have argued in this thesis that this may be a misconception. Perhaps it is important for the manager to be operationally oriented – concerned rather with holding the fort than with strategy. Perhaps the expectation of the manager as a dynamic force simply is unrealistic, particularly for lower levels of managers in politically governed organisations where it may be somewhat unclear whether the responsibility for strategic planning lies with the politicians, quality developers, higher managerial levels or with the middle managers themselves.

This being said, some time and space to consider possible improvements to the organisation must be granted even lower levels of management. If it is not, there is a risk that all changes and new ideas may be perceived as very much top-down and not primarily as a response to the needs of the practice. This is particularly evident in relation to the pronounced pressure from for example the National Board of Health and Welfare to implement what is often termed evidence based social work. In this endeavour, the managers are expected to take a leading role (Björk 2016). This requires time, effort and expert knowledge, and also necessitate that the managers keep up to date with research in the field, which I have shown many have too little time for (see also Lundström & Shanks 2013). I would argue that the aforementioned discrepancy between ideals and reality poses a clear problem in this instance when the expectations from the National Board of Health and Welfare meet the reality of many social work managers.

Implications and suggestions for further research

So, what are the implications of this study? Well, first and foremost I have questioned if the outlook on management and governance that the ideology of managerialism provides is beneficial for the management in human services. This question has been discussed throughout the thesis, and with support of my findings and previous research, I have proposed that that it is not. Apart from this more general conclusion, the results that I have presented throughout the thesis may have some more concrete implications.

In my attempts to discuss what management in social work should and should not be, I have argued for the importance of having professionals as managers rather than recruiting professional managers. However, I have also shown that the managers (former social workers) sometimes feel unprepared when entering managerial positions and that they often rely on on-the-job learning. This may indicate that managerial training is an area in which improvements are possible, and where changes could make a lasting difference.
In general, there is a lack of academic post-qualifying training aimed specifically at social work managers. I would argue that it would be beneficial if the schools of social work could engage more in providing research-based further education designed for current and future social work managers. This could serve as an important complement to the short in-service training provided to managers today, where perspectives related to human service, public administration, democracy and public/professional ethos not always get the attention they deserve. A more critically oriented training may also help managers stand up against some of the more unsuitable reforms in line with NPM, and some of the more unreasonable ideas about leadership. Additionally, since managerial training is a lucrative business and some actors on the market may be unscrupulous, managerial training provided within the social work discipline at the universities may counteract the risk of social work managers undertaking training that is provided by charlatans, or at least actors without any familiarity with social work, human services or public administration.

Moving on to some of the limitations of this study and some suggestions for further research, it may be concluded that this thesis has provided a broad account of management in the personal social services. However, there are some aspects that remain uncovered. The present data has allowed comparisons between managerial levels and fields of social work. In general, the impression of management in the personal social services is one of uniformness, although some differences are detected. In the qualitative material some differences between municipalities are indicated even if the similarities again came out as more prominent. Unfortunately, the data does not allow further comparisons between municipalities, for example between municipalities with different degrees of adaptation to NPM reforms, to investigate municipal uniformness and/or local variations. This deserves further attention. Also, given the uniformness of management within the personal social services, the indication of differences with eldercare management is intriguing and would be interesting to investigate further. Lastly, the possible discrepancies between what people say that they do and what they actually do leave scope for further research. This thesis analyses the managers’ perceptions of what they do, as described in the interviews and in the survey. It would be interesting to combine this with another perspective, for example one gained from observations.
Sammanfattning

Socialtjänsten har under de senaste decennierna genomgått stora förändringar, bland annat som ett resultat av inflytandet av New Public Management (NPM) och den ökade specialiseringen. Detta har påverkat de organisatoriska förutsättningarna både för chefskapet och för det praktiska sociala arbetet. Arbetsförhållandena för socialarbetare har uppmärksammat både inom forskningen och från fältet, men mindre ofta har chefernas arbetsförhållanden och villkor diskuterats.

Överlag kan det sägas att den empiriska forskningen om chefskap inom socialt arbete är ganska sparsam, trots ett ökat intresse för chefskap och leddarskap. I Sverige är empirisk forskning om chefskap inom socialtjänstens individ- och familjeomsorg i princip obefintlig, förutom när det gäller äldreomsorgens chefer. Internationellt finns mer forskning, men fortfarande beskrivs forskningsfältet som under utveckling och chefernas egna beskrivningar av sitt vardagliga arbete och sina organisatoriska förutsättningar har inte fått något större utrymme. I den här avhandlingen är det just cheferna inom individ- och familjeomsorgen och deras egna beskrivningar av sitt arbete och sina villkor som har stått i fokus.


Avhandlingen har inspirerats av en ’mixed methods’ approach. Kvalitativa intervjuer med 24 chefer har kombinerats med en nationell enkätundersökning som riktat sig till ett representativt urval av chefer inom individ- och familjeomsorgens alla delar. De fyra empiriska kapitlen i avhandlingen har fokuserat på olika aspekter av chefskapet och låter sig sammanfattas på följande sätt:

I det första empiriska kapitlet låg fokus på chefernas individuella karaktäristika. Kapitlet var i huvudsak beskrivande och avsåg att presentera cheferna. Det framkom att majoriteten av cheferna inom individ- och familjeomsorgen var kvinnor med omfattande yrkeserfarenhet inom socialt arbete.
som också var lojala med sin arbetsplats: generellt hade de arbetat inom sin kommun i många år. De flesta arbetare inom ett specifikt fält av socialt arbete (barnavård, missbrukarvård eller ekonomiskt bistånd), vilket indikerar att de arbetade i organisationer med en hög grad av specialisering på basis av problem (klientgrupp).

Med kunskapen att cheferna inom socialt arbete i Sverige, till skillnad från flera andra länder i huvudsak rekryterats inom professionen, fokuserade det andra empiriska kapitlet på chefernas väg till chefskap och deras beskrivningar av hur de lärt sig att vara chefer. Många chefer beskrev sin befattning som ett resultat av tillfälligheter och vissa beskrev övergången från socialarbetare till chef som svår. Majoriteten av cheferna hade genomgått någon typ av ledarskaps-/chefsutbildning efter grundutbildningen. Den vanligaste formen av utbildning var en av arbetsgivaren bekostad kurs. Trots den höga andel av chefer som hade gått någon form av ledarskaps-/chefsutbildning ansåg majoriteten att praktikorienterade kunskapskällor (t.ex. erfarenhet av socialt arbete, ’on-the-job learning’ och stöd från kollegor och överordnade) hade varit viktigare för att erhålla chefs kunskaper än teoretiskt orienterade kunskapskällor (utbildningar/läsning av litteratur och forskning). Detta diskuterades i termer av en möjlig divergens mellan de (ofta generiska) chefsutbildningarna och cheferna behov.

Det tredje empiriska kapitlet förflyttade fokusen till chefernas vardagliga arbete. Kapitlet hade två huvudsakliga avsikter: dels att beskriva hur cheferna upplevde sitt arbete och sina uppgifter, dels att undersöka hur cheferna förstod de organisatoriska förändringar som ägt rum under deras tid i social tjänsten. Vad gäller det vardagliga arbetet kunde det konstateras att cheferna i hög utsträckning beskrev det som reaktivt med ständiga avbrott och handterandet av akuta situationer. Vad gäller förändringar beskrev cheferna flera som kan relateras till inflytandet från NPM. Dessa förändringar tycks ha varit särskilt märkbara för andra linjens chefer, vars roll tycktes ha blivit mer administrativ. Cheferna upplevde spänningar mellan olika uppgifter, vilket kan förstås som ett resultat av ett ökat antal ansvarsområden. Strategiskt arbete sågs av en majoritet av cheferna (framförallt de på lägre positioner) som ett område som det var svårt att prioritera.

I det sista empiriska kapitlet undersökte olika aspekter av inflytande, politisk styrning och chefskapets organisatoriska bas. Det påvisades att en betydande andel av cheferna var missnöjda med socialarbetarnas och sin egen chefnivås inflytande över organisationen jämfört med det inflytande som politikerna hade. När det gällde de egna möjligheterna att utöva inflytande, uppfattade sig cheferna hår större inflytande vad gäller aspekter nära det operationella arbetet (t.ex. metoder och arbetssätt) jämfört med sådant som rörde organisationsstrukturen. Även om chefernas sätt att utöva inflytande främst verkade följa hierarkiska/byråkratiska vägar, beskrev cheferna tillfällen då både chefer och politiker gick utanför de givna ramarna, vilket indikerar att rollerna inom politik respektive förvaltning är oklara. Slutligen,
när det gäller chefskapets organisatoriska bas framkom att cheferna identifierade ett antal karaktäristika som beskrevs som specifika för chefskap inom socialt arbete/människobehandlande organisationer, samt gemensamma för chefskap inom den offentliga sektorn men olika jämfört med chefskap inom den privata sektorn. Resonemangen liknade tankegångarna i den teoretiska litteraturen (som ofta betonar att organisationer inom olika sektorer skiljer sig åt och därmed också förutsättningarna för chefskap), vilket innebär att chefernas uppfattningar i många avseenden skiljer sig från managerialismens som betonar ett generiskt chefskap.

I samtliga kapitel undersöktes huruvida det fanns skillnader mellan olika chefnivåer och/eller mellan de tre traditionella fälten inom socialtjänstens individ- och familjeomsorg (dvs. ekonomiskt bistånd, missbrukarvård och barnavård). Överlag kan det konstateras att trots att det fanns ett antal skillnader mellan de olika chefnivåerna vad gäller individuella karaktäristika, arbetsuppgifter och möjligheter att utöva inflytande, var likheterna mellan chefernas attityder och lojalitet påfällande stor. Skillnaderna mellan de olika fälten var betydligt färre än de mellan chefsnivåer. Likheten mellan cheferna förstås som ett resultat av chefernas gemensamma professionella bakgrund, deras relativt tät kontakt med varandra och deras till synes stabila professionella identitet.

De empiriska resultaten har genomgående diskuterats med utgångspunkt i organisationsteoretiska begrepp och i relation till kontextuella faktorer, främst inflytandet av NPM/managerialism. Stort utrymme har ägnats åt att relatera chefernas erfarenheter och villkor till de förändringar som inflytandet av NPM/managerialism har medfört. Det tycks som om inflytandet av managerialism har förändrat såväl de övergripande ideéerna om vad chefskap inom individ- och familjeomsorgen skall vara (vilket kan spåras i valet av utbildningar för chefer samt förväntningarna på cheferna) som den tekniska sidan av chefskapet (vilket har resulterat i nedflyttat budgetansvar, ökad fokus på kostnadseffektivitet och nedskärningar vad gäller administrativa stödfunktioner). I samband med att NPM inspirerade reformer och deras konsekvenser har belysts har jag föreslagit att det finns bristande överensstämmelse mellan NPMs ideal och den politiskt styrda människobehandlande organisationen som individ- och familjeomsorgen utgör. Men, ett viktigt resultat i avhandlingen är att trots de många tecken på reformer och förändringar som kan härledas till NPM, har inflytandet inte förändrat cheferna och individ- och familjeomsorgen i den grad som man kunde ha antagit. Även om cheferna beskrev villkor och ideal som förändrade, fanns tydliga indikationer på en företrädevis professionell identitet hos cheferna liksom en fortsatt byråprofessionell regim inom individ- och familjeomsergen.


Stranz, H., Wiklund, S. (2013). One for All or All for One? The Collaboration of Swedish Personal Social Services with Regard to Lone Mothers on Social Assistance. British journal of social work, 45(2), 549-567.


Appendix 1

Den här enkäten riktar sig till dig som arbetar som chef/arbetsledare inom socialtjänstens individ- och familjeomsorg.

Arbetar du som chef/arbetsledare (dvs. från 1:e socialsekreterare eller motsvarande till IFO-chef eller motsvarande) inom socialtjänstens individ- och familjeomsorg?
Ja □
Nej □

Om svaret är nej behöver du inte fylla i resten av enkäten. Vi ber dig ändå skicka in enkäten i det bifogade frankerade svarskuvertet så att vi vet att du svarat och så att vi inte behöver skicka påminnelser.
Tack för din medverkan!

Inledningsvis ber vi dig fylla i några uppgifter om dig och ditt arbete:
1. Är du:
   Kvinna □
   Man □

2. När är du född?
   År: 19____

3. Vilken grundutbildning har du? (Välj den högsta avslutade grundutbildningen av nedanstående alternativ.)
   Socionom □
   Annan universitetsutbildning □
   Gymnasium eller motsvarande □
4. Har du, efter din socionomexamen (eller annan akademisk examen), gått några kurser/utbildningar i chef-/ledarskap vid universitet eller högskola?
   Ja ☐
   Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 5

   a) Om ja, vilka kurser/utbildningar har du gått?
      Magister-/masterexamen med inriktning mot chef-/ledarskap ☐
      Enstaka kurser på magister-/mastersnivå med inriktning mot chef-/ledarskap ☐
      Andra universitetskurser med inriktning mot chef-/ledarskap ☐
      Andra, vilka?

5. Hur många högskolepoäng har du totalt tagit efter din socionomexamen? (Inkludera även kurser som inte är inriktade mot chef-/ledarskap.)
   _____poäng (kurser tagna före den 1 juli 2007)*
   _____högskolepoäng (kurser tagna efter den 1 juli 2007)*


6. Vad kallas din tjänstebefattning?

7. När anställdes du i din nuvarande befattning?
   År____

8. Hur många år har du arbetat inom individ- och familjeomsorg (oavsett kommun och arbetsuppgifter)?
   _____år

9. Hur många år har du arbetat som chef/arbetsledare (oavsett kommun och nivå)?
   _____år
10. Hur många år har du arbetat i nuvarande kommun (oavsett arbetsuppgifter)?
   _____år

11. Vilket är ditt huvudsakliga arbetsområde? (Ange ett alternativ.)
   Barnavård (barn, ungdom, familj) ☐
   Ekonomiskt bistånd ☐
   Missbruk ☐
   Missbruk och barnavård ☐
   Missbruk och ekonomiskt bistånd ☐
   Barnavård och ekonomiskt bistånd ☐
   Alla tre områdena ☐
   Annat, vad?

12. Hur många invånare har den kommun du arbetar i?
   Mindre än 25000 invånare ☐
   Mellan 25000 och 50000 invånare ☐
   Mellan 50000 och 100000 invånare ☐
   Mer än 100000 invånare ☐

13. Vilken är titeln på din närmast överordnade chef?

14. Har du chefer under dig?
   Ja ☐
   Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 15

   a) Om ja, vilken titel har din närmast underställda chef? (T.ex. enhetschef, gruppledare etc.)

15. Har du chefer som är på samma nivå som dig (inom IFO)?
   Ja ☐
   Nej ☐

16. Hur många personer är underställda dig?
   Antal i ledarposition_____
   Antal totalt_____
Kontakter inom individ och familjeomsorgen

17. **Hur ofta träffar du din närmast överordnade chef?**
   - Dagligen □
   - En eller ett par gånger per vecka □
   - Varannan vecka □
   - En gång per månad □
   - Mer sällan □

   a) **Hur tycker du att kommunikationen fungerar mellan dig och din närmast överordnade chef?**
   - Mycket bra □
   - Relativt bra □
   - Acceptabelt □
   - Relativt dåligt □
   - Mycket dåligt □

18. **Hur ofta träffar du de andra cheferna (inom IFO) på din nivå?**
   - Dagligen □
   - En eller ett par gånger per vecka □
   - Varannan vecka □
   - En gång per månad □
   - Mer sällan □
   - Det finns inga andra chefer på min nivå □ → gå till fråga 19

   a) **Hur tycker du att kommunikationen fungerar mellan dig och de andra cheferna på din nivå?**
   - Mycket bra □
   - Relativt bra □
   - Acceptabelt □
   - Relativt dåligt □
   - Mycket dåligt □

19. **Hur ofta träffar du dina närmast underställda medarbetare?**
   (Räkna både med enskilda träffar och träffar med hela gruppen.)
   - Dagligen □
   - En eller ett par gånger per vecka □
   - Varannan vecka □
   - En gång per månad □
   - Mer sällan □

   a) **Hur tycker du att kommunikationen fungerar mellan dig och dina närmast underställda medarbetare?**
   - Mycket bra □
Relativt bra □
Acceptabelt □
Relativt dåligt □
Mycket dåligt □

20. Hur ofta träffar du politiker från socialnämnden (eller motsvarande)?
Dagligen □
En eller ett par gånger per vecka □
Varannan vecka □
En gång per månad □
Mer sällan □

a) Hur tycker du att kommunikationen fungerar mellan dig och politikerna?
Mycket bra □
Relativt bra □
Acceptabelt □
Relativt dåligt □
Mycket dåligt □

Kontakter utanför organisationen
21. Samverkar din enhet för närvarande med någon myndighet/organisation utanför socialtjänsten? (Här avses regelbundna formaliserade kontakter, ej sporadiska kontakter i enskilda ärenden.)
Ja □
Nej □ → gå till fråga 22

a) Om ja, ange vilken/vilka av följande myndigheter/organisationer som din enhet för närvarande samverkar med. (Du kan ange fler än ett alternativ.)
BVC/MVC □
Skola/barnomsorg/öppen förskola □
Psykiatri (vuxen/barn/ungdom) □
Polis □
Kriminalvård □
Landstingets beroendevård □
Primärvård □
Arbetsförmedling □
Försäkringskassan □
Frivilligorganisationer □
Andra, vilka?
22. Ingår du i något nätverk för chefer?
Ja □  Nej □ → gå till fråga 23

a) Om ja, vad är det för nätverk?


De viktigaste och mest användbara kunskaper som jag besitter som chef är ett resultat av:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uttryck</th>
<th>Din rangordning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Det jag lärt mig själv genom mitt arbete som chef.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Färdigheter som förmedlats genom kollegor/överordnade chefer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det jag lärt mig på chefsutbildningar (ej universitet/högskola).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det jag lärt mig genom universitets-/högskolestudier.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det jag lärt mig genom att läsa litteratur/forskning om chefskap.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erfarenheter av arbeten jag haft innan jag blev chef.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annat, vad?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternativ</th>
<th>Din rangordning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Möten med andra chefer inom organisationen (över- och underordnade)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Möten/handledning med socialsekreterare/personal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammanträden med politiker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samverkan med omvärlden, t.ex. andra myndigheter/organisationer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klientarbete (dvs. träffar klienter/handlägger enskilda ärenden)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategiskt arbete/planering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annat,vad?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Försök nu att uppskatta hur mycket av din arbetstid som generellt går åt till de olika alternativen. (Vissa alternativ i tabellen kan överlappa varandra vilket kan innebära att antalet timmar här blir fler än det faktiska antalet arbetade timmar.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternativ</th>
<th>21 timmar/vecka av arbetstiden eller mer</th>
<th>11-20 timmar/vecka av arbetstiden</th>
<th>5-10 timmar/vecka av arbetstiden</th>
<th>4 timmar/vecka av arbetstiden eller mindre</th>
<th>Ingen tid alls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Möten med andra chefer inom organisationen (över- och underordnade)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Möten/handledning med socialsekreterare/personal</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammanträden med politiker</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Samverkan med omvärlden t.ex. andra myndigheter/organisationer

Klientarbete (dvs. träffar klienter/ handlägger enskilda ärenden)

Administration

Strategiskt arbete/planering

Annan, vad?________

26. Är du nöjd med hur din tid fördelas mellan de olika uppgifterna?
Ja ☐ → gå till fråga 27
Nej ☐

a) Om nej, vad är det du framförallt inte hinner som du önskar att du skulle hinna?

27. Hur ofta träffar du klienter?
Dagligen ☐
En eller ett par gånger per vecka ☐
Varannan vecka ☐
En gång per månad ☐
Mer sällan ☐

28. Har du gått någon av kommunen bekostad utbildning/kurs i chef- eller ledarskap? (Utbildningen skall vara längre än en dag. Räkna ej med universitets-/högskoleutbildning.)
Ja ☐
Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 29

a) Om ja, vad hade kursen/kurserna för inriktning?

b) Vem arrangerade den senaste utbildningen/kursen?
Kommunen
Privat företag/konsult
Sveriges kommuner och landsting (SKL)
Facket
FoU
Annan, vem?

29. Har du läst några böcker som behandlar chef-/ledarskap?
Ja ☐
Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 30

29a) Om ja, vilken var den senaste boken med sådan inriktning som du läst? (Om du inte kommer ihåg exakt så ange titel/författare eller andra "nyckelord" så gott du kan).
Författare: ____________________________________________
Titel: ________________________________________________

30. Har du regelbunden handledning som är inriktad på ditt chef-/ledarskap?
Ja ☐
Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 31

30a) Om ja, anser du att handledningen har varit till nytta i ditt arbete?
(Gör en samlad bedömning.)
Ja, absolut ☐
Ja, till stor del ☐
Ja, till viss del ☐
Nej, knappast ☐
Nej, inte alls ☐

31. Har du någon mentor som du diskuterar ditt chef-/ledarskap med?
Ja ☐
Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 32
b) Om ja, anser du att mentorskapet har varit till nytta i ditt arbete? (Gör en samlad bedömning.)
Ja, absolut □
Ja, till stor del □
Ja, till viss del □
Nej, knappast □
Nej, inte alls □

Olika gruppens inflytande
32. Vad anser du om följande personers/gruppers inflytande över individ- och familjeomsorgen i din kommun? Kryssa i det svarsalternativ som stämmer bäst med din uppfattning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Borde ha mindre inflytande</th>
<th>Har lag-stort inflytande</th>
<th>Borde ha större inflytande</th>
<th>Finns ingen sådan person/grupp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politiker inom kommunen</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kommundirektören (eller motsvarande)</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialchefen</td>
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<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chefer inom IFO</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medarbetare inom IFO</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medborgarna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Klienterna</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chef-/ledarskap


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternativ</th>
<th>Din rangordning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kunnig vad gäller den egna verksamheten (metoder, insatser, lagar etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Våga fatta beslut även om det ibland blir obekvämt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunnig vad gäller forskning/nya idéer etc. inom det egna området</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bra på att förmedla information mellan olika nivåer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategisk, dvs. bra på att planera, prioritera, utveckla etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bra på ekonomiskt tänkande</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bra på att ge feedback till medarbetare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunna entusiasmera personal och driva verksamheten framåt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tillgänglig/närvarande</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Förmåga se medarbetarnas behov, dvs. vara empatisk, lyhörd etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annat, vad?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organisationen/arbetsplatsen

34. Följande påståenden handlar om din inställning till organisationen du arbetar i. Ange i vilken grad du personligen instämmer i eller tar avstånd från vart och ett av påståendena.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Påståendena</th>
<th>Totalt avstånd</th>
<th>Viss avstånd</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Totalt Instämmer</th>
<th>Viss Instämmer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>För mina vänner berättar jag att orga-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nisationen är ett mycket bra ställe att arbeta på.

| Mina egna värderingar är mycket lika organisationens. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Organisationen inspirerar mig verkliggen till att göra mitt bästa. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Jag har goda möjligheter att påverka beslut som fattas i organisationen. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Jag upplever att organisationens ledning är engagerad i min verksamhet. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Jag har stor tilltro till ledningens sätt att styra organisationen. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Organisationskultur

35. Kryssa i det svarsalternativ som stämmer bäst med din uppfattning.

| Har du märkt någon ojämlikhet i behandlingen av män och kvinnor på din arbetsplats? | Mycket lite eller inte alls | Ganska lite | Något | Ganska mycket | Väldigt mycket |
| | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

| Har du märkt någon ojämlikhet i behandlingen av äldre och yngre anställda på din arbetsplats? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

36. Tror du att kvinnor och män har samma karriärmöjligheter (möjligheter att avancera) i din organisation?
Ja
Nej, kvinnorna har bättre karriärmöjligheter
Nej, männen har bättre karriärmöjligheter

Budgetansvar

37. **Har du budgetansvar?**
Ja □
Nej □ → gå till fråga 38

a) **Om ja, hur ser du på att ha ansvar för budgeten? Kryssa i det svarsalternativ som stämmer bäst med din uppfattning.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tar totalt avstånd från</th>
<th>Tar i viss mån avstånd</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Instämmer i viss mån</th>
<th>Instämmer totalt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Det ger ökad tydlighet åt mitt uppdrag.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det ger ökat influensta och möjlighet att påverka.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det ger makt över verksamheten.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det tar mycket tid.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det ger inget egentligt influenter eller möjlighet att påverka.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det genererar stress.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annat, vad?____________</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidensbaserad praktik

38. **Något som på senare tid har börjat diskuteras relativt ofta inom socialt arbete är evidensbaserad praktik. Är det något du har hört talas om?**
Ja □
Nej □ → gå till fråga 38b
a) Använder ni idag några evidensbaserade metoder i din verksamhet?
Ja □
Nej □

Om ja, vilken/vilka?
____________________________________________

b) I vilken grad stämmer följande påståenden med din uppfattning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tar totalt avstånd från totalt</th>
<th>Tar i viss mån avstånd</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Instämmer i viss mån</th>
<th>Instämmer totalt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vid min arbetsplats behöver verksamheten få en tydligare koppling till metoder som är vetenskapligt utprövade.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forskning i socialt arbete har bidragit till att förbättra det sociala arbetets praktik.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidensbaserad praktik hör inte hemma i socialt arbete.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det vore önskvärt med tydligare riktlinjer från socialstyrelsen om vilka metoder som skall användas i socialt arbete.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Det sociala arbetets insatser utvärderas i tillräcklig utsträckning.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Socialt arbete handlar i huvudsak om unika möten mellan människor vilket gör vetenskapligt utfördade metoder mindre användbara.

Socialt arbete styrs i allt större utsträckning av ekonomi och besparingar.

En viktig del i min uppgift som chef är att följa upp resultatet av mina undertäldas arbete.

Nya idéer och förändringar

39. **Har det genomförts någon genomgripande organisationsförändring som påverkat din verksamhet under den tid som du arbetat som chef?**

   Ja ☐
   Nej ☐ → gå till fråga 40

   a) **Om ja, vad innebar den senaste genomgripande organisationsförändringen?**

   ______________________________________________________________

   b) **När genomfördes den senaste organisationsförändringen?**

   För ____ år sedan.

   c) **Hur anser du att organisationsförändringen påverkade verksamheten?**

   Till det bättre ☐
   Varken till det bättre eller sämre ☐
   Till det sämre ☐

   d) **Från vem kom ursprungligen idén till organisationsförändringen? (Ange ett alternativ.)**

   Dig själv ☐
   Politiker inom kommunen ☐
   Kommundirektören (eller motsvarande) ☐
e) **Hade du möjlighet att påverka organisationsförändringen?**

Ja, absolut □
Ja, till stor del □
Ja, till viss del □
Nej, knappast □
Nej, inte alls □

40. **Har det införts någon ny metod/nytt arbetssätt i din verksamhet under de senaste tre åren?**

Ja □
Nej □ → gå till fråga 41

a) **Om ja, vad var det för metod/nytt arbetssätt som senast infördes i din verksamhet?**

b) **Hur anser du att den nya metoden/arbetssättet påverkade verksamheten?**

Till det bättre □
Varken till det bättre eller sämre □
Till det sämre □

c) **Från vem kom ursprungligen idén till införandet den nya metoden/arbetssättet? (Ange ett alternativ.)**

Dig själv □
Politiker inom kommunen □
Kommundirektören (eller motsvarande) □
Socialchef □
Chef inom IFO (annan/andra än du själv) □
Medarbetare inom IFO □
Annan, vem?__________________________ □
Vet ej □

d) **Hade du möjlighet att påverka införandet av metoden/arbetssättet?**

Ja, absolut □
Ja, till stor del □
Ja, till viss del □
Nej, knappast □
Nej, inte alls □

Din arbetssituation

41. **Här följer ett antal frågor som har med din arbetssituation att göra. Kryssa i det svarsalternativ som stämmer bäst med din uppfattning.**

### Arbetskrav

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mycket sällan eller aldrig</th>
<th>Ganska sällan</th>
<th>Ibland</th>
<th>Ganska ofta</th>
<th>Mycket ofta eller alltid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Är din arbetsmängd så ojämnt fördelad att arbetet hopar sig?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Måste du arbeta övertid?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Måste du arbeta i mycket högt tempo?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Har du för mycket att göra?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Är dina arbetsuppgifter för svåra för dig?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utför du arbetsuppgifter som du skulle behöva mer utbildning för?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Är dina kunskaper och färdigheter till nytta i ditt arbete?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innebär ditt arbete positiva utmaningar?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tycker du att ditt arbete är meningsfullt?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kräver ditt arbete att du skaffar dig nya kunskaper och färdigheter?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utför du arbetsuppgifter som du skulle behöva mer erfarenhet för?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Rollförväntningar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mycket sällan eller aldrig</th>
<th>Ganska sällan</th>
<th>Ibland</th>
<th>Ganska ofta</th>
<th>Mycket ofta eller alltid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finns det klart definierade mål för ditt arbete?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet du vilket ansvarsområde du har?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet du precis vad som krävs av dig i arbetet?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Måste du utföra saker som du tycker skulle göras annorlunda?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Får du arbetsuppgifter utan att få de resurser som behövs för att utföra dem?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ställs det oförenliga krav på dig från två eller flera personer?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innefattar ditt arbete arbetsuppgifter som är i konflikt med dina personliga värderingar?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Socialt stöd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mycket sällan eller aldrig</th>
<th>Ganska sällan</th>
<th>Ibland</th>
<th>Ganska ofta</th>
<th>Mycket ofta eller alltid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Om du behöver, får du då stöd och hjälp med ditt arbete från din närmaste chef?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om du behöver, är din närmaste chef då villig att lyssna på problem som rör ditt arbete?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Får du uppskattning för dina arbetsprestationer från din närmaste chef?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kontroll i arbetet</td>
<td>Mycket sällan eller aldrig</td>
<td>Ganska sällan</td>
<td>Ibland</td>
<td>Ganska ofta</td>
<td>Mycket ofta eller alltid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om det finns olika sätt att göra ditt arbete på, kan du då själv välja hur du skall göra det?</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan du påverka mängden arbete du får?</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan du påverka beslut som är viktiga för ditt arbete?</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Här kan du slutligen ange synpunkter på de frågor vi ställt:

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________

TACK FÖR DIN MEDVERKAN!
Appendix 2

Bakgrund

Hur länge har du arbetat som chef?
Vad gjorde du innan du blev chef (arbete som socialsekreterare)?
Har du varit chef inom något annat område (inom socialtjänsten eller annat)?

Chefskap/Ledarskap

| Hur är det att arbeta som chef här? Kan du berätta om ditt jobb? | • Hur ser din vardag ut? Vad ägnar du din tid åt (klienter, socialsekreterare, administration)? Vad gör du på jobbet?  
• Vad skiljer din roll från din närmaste chefs roll?  
• Från socialsekreterarnas?  
• Vad är roligast/viktigast/svårast? |
| --- | --- |
| Hur kom det sig att du blev chef? | • Förebilder  
• Kollegor |
| Var har du lärt dig att vara chef? Har du gått någon utbildning etc.? (bra dåliga utbildningar?) | • Kunskap/expertis  
• Egenskaper  
• Finns det något du skulle vilja lära dig mer om? |
| Vad är det som utmärker en bra chef? | • Vad spelar det tex för roll att socialtjänsten är en politisk organisation? |
| Vad skiljer en chef inom socialtjänsten från en chef i ett företag? | • År det viktigt att ha socialarbetarbakgrund som chef?  
• År chefskunskaperna överförbara till någon annan verk- samhet/skulle du kunna jobba som chef i någon annan verk- |
| **Har chefsrollen förändrats över den tid som du har arbetat som chef?**  
(Prata en stund om)  
(Även andra chefer under din tid etc. Hur har den förändrats för överordnade) | samhet?  
• På vilket sätt?  
• Synen på cheffskapet  
• Marknaden etc |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisationen</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Hur är organisationen/enheten uppbryggd?**  
(män/kvinnor etc.) | **Hur många personer är du arbetssedare för?**  
• Hur stor är enheten?  
• Hur många chefer finns på din nivå?  
• Vem är din närmaste chef? |
| **Den senaste omorganisationen – vad har cheferna betytt för den?**  
Vem bestämmer hur organisationen ska se ut? | **Vad har din roll varit?** |
| **Förändringar och nya idéer** |  |
| **Använder ni några särskilda metoder?** | **Var kommer metoderna ifran?**  
• Vem har bestämt att ni ska använda dem? (politiker/socialarbetare/chefer) |
| **Vilken var den senaste förändringen (metod etc.) som infördes?** | **Var kom den ifran?**  
• Vem har bestämt att ni skulle införa den?  
• Vilka konsekvenser fick den? |
| **Har ni/du gått några utbildningar?** | **Vem har bestämt att ni ska gå den/dem?**  
• Vilka var mest betydelsefulla?  
• Hur har utbildningen påverkat ditt/ert arbete? |
| **Har du kommit i kontakt med det som brukar kallas evidensbaserat arbete?** | **Vad innebär det för dig/er?**  
• Använder ni någon sådan metod?  
• Hur påverkar metoden ditt |
| Dagliga arbete/klienterna? | • Tex. effektivisering, minskade resurser.
     • Varifrån kommer kraven?
     • Hur märks dessa krav? |

| Upplever du att krav utifrån har påverkat din organisation? | • Är det mest för syns skull eller har det en faktisk betydelse? |

| Vilken betydelse får de förändringar som införs? Hur mycket förändras i grunden? | • År det mest för syns skull eller har det en faktisk betydelse? |

(Om makt/) Vem bestämmer på arbetsplatsen?

| Vad bestämmer politikerna? | • Hur ofta träffar du dem? |
| Vad bestämmer dina chefer? | • Hur ofta träffar du dem? |
| Hur mycket inflytande har du över organisationen? | • Hur upplever du din förmåga att påverka? |
| Om du vill förändra något, hur gör du då? |  |
| Vilken betydelse har budgeten? | • Hur mycket har du budgeten i åtanke i ditt dagliga arbete?
     • Hur mycket betyder budgeten för dina beslut? |
| Hur är det att vara kvinna/man och chef på en kvinnodominerad arbetsplats? | • Har det någon betydelse att det är i huvudsak kvinnor som jobbar i socialtjänsten? |
| Ingår du i något närverk? |  |
Ja, det kan man ju verkligen undra, jag hade aldrig några planer på att jag skulle bli chef /.../ jag tror att det var en slump faktiskt, väldigt mycket slump, för jag har aldrig varit särskilt intresserad av att bli chef egentligen. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

Hon [överordnade chefen] ringde en dag och frågade om inte jag ville bli, bli det. Och då sa jag ja. (M4, second tier, social assistance)

Det var någon som skulle behöva göra det där och då var vi fem stycken och då gjorde jag det /.../ så att jag var väldigt dubbel under en väldigt lång tid till att bli chef. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

Det var en första socialsekreterare som fick annat jobb som sa upp sig och jag gick direkt till min chef och sa: jag hörde att hon ska sluta, jag undrar om man ska gå ut och annonsera det här, för jag tror att jag väldigt gärna skulle vilja pröva det. (M11, second tier, child welfare)

Efter att ha lessnat på att jobba med försörjningsstöd /.../ var det dags att flytta på sig. Sen blev avdelningschefen sjuk och så gick jag in för det, det var ju bara kort, och så blev det bara längre och längre, och sen kom hon aldrig tillbaks, och då fick jag det jobbet och sen fastnade jag där. (M6, third tier)

Ja alltså på ett plan är det väl så att jag har alltid haft det beteendet, var jag än har varit nänstans från skolan och framåt tror jag... Säkert från lekis höll jag på att säga [har jag] hållit på och bestämt över mina kompisar. /.../ Jag tar den positionen ofta i grupper. (M14, second tier, social assistance)

I: I det här andra? Administration och det här.
M1: Ja, i det här andra. Det var en mycket, mycket medveten tanke från honom alltså. /.../ Han var socialchef och tidigare var han personalchef i kommunen och sedermera blev han kommunnedirektör alltså, men /.../ han kunde inte IFO. Eller alltså kunde och kunde, men han kunde inte hantverket, han var inte specialist.
I: Så han pekade på er för att ni var ämneskunniga, och bäst i klassen eller något sådant där?
M1: /.../ Jag kom från IFO, som hantverkare. (M1, third tier)
När jag började för två och ett halvt år sen så /…/ det var bara att byta hatt på nåt sätt, jag fick inte nån, jag fick inte, /…/ det bara förväntades att jag skulle veta allting och kunna allting och kan fortfarande inte allt tycker jag, alla mina uppdrag men så jag försökte lite, eller jag höll på att gå lite in i vägg- gen, nå, jag ska inte säga gå in i väggen för jag tycker inte om det ordet men jag, jag, jag kände att jag liksom tappade, jag visste inte riktigt min roll så. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

M15: Jag var livrädd och det tog jättelång tid innan jag hittade min roll. Och jag tror att man i gruppen också hade nån annan, som man kanske hade tänkt från början, så att, nej, det, det va jättetufft.
I: Hur länge var det tufft då tycker du?
M15: Ja, några år nästan måste jag säga, innan jag riktigt liksom kände mig hemma /…/ ja, det tog säkert 2 år. (M15, frontline, social assistance)

Nej, alltså jag tyckte att det liksom föll sig ganska naturligt för /…/ jag kände liksom att jag hade ett ganska stort ansvar. Och det var väl bra att man formaliserade det. /…/ Så att det blev tydligt att jag kunde göra vissa saker. Det blev, och då tyckte jag också att då hade jag jobbat så länge, då kände jag liksom att det var ett ganska naturligt kliv att få ha mera ansvar. Jag kände att det var liksom bra för mig och för gruppen. (M2, frontline, child welfare)

Men sen har vi fått, alltså jag har gått flera utbildningar genom, alltså, efter-hand här, bl.a. provins 5. Där har varit [chefer] från hela kommunen, man har blandats med andra enhetschefer /…/ i min grupp så var det någon från Miljökontoret, rektorer, LSS, missbruk. (M19, frontline, child welfare)


Jag har gått en utbildning sen, på Svanbergs och partners. En chefsutbildning, men det var senare, undrar hur mycket senare det var, kanske varit chef 1 år eller något sådant där, innan jag gick på den utbildningen. (M10, frontline social assistance)

Man åker på internat och så lever man ihop och sen så blir man utsatt för en massa tester höll jag på och säga, nej men, grupparbeten och sådant. Och sen så reflekterar ledarna på det man gör i grupp. (M23, frontline, social assistance)

Det är ju militären som har utvecklat detta och det var militärer som höll utbildningen. De är ganska duktiga på ledarskap. /…/ Vi jobbade med grupproces- sorer, att man förstod sig själv i grupprocessen. /…/ du vet att det var nog bara jag från socialtjänsten nästan, de andra var från IT-sidan eller banker el- ler /…/olika om, läkare och. Det var liksom chefer i samhället på olika, både privat och statligt och kommunalt. Så det var jättetunk och ha, och se hur lika
det var och vilket utbyte vi hade av varandra. (M14, second tier, social assistance)

xvii M1: Sen har vi ju haft en stor chefsutbildning här de senaste åren, som anordnas kommuncentralt. Det handlar ju mer om personlighetsutveckling och ledarskap.
I: Som inte är socialt arbete specifikt på något sätt utan som är mer övergripande, men åt relationshållet och inte åt administrationshållet?
M1: Nå, relationshållet. Men det här chefsutbildningspaketet kan man säga innehåller olika delar. Så vi har dels relationshållet, och det var ganska omfattande, och sen har vi ganska mycket arbetsmiljöfrågor och nu är vi inne på ekonomi /.../ hur man kan tänka smartare och billigare. Och det är alla chefer i [kommunnamn].(M1, third tier)

xviii Jag tänker, det är liksom en hel del utbildning handlar liksom om handfåst saker, eller hur man ska jobba med vissa saker. Det kan handla om hur man ska jobba med arbetsmiljöfrågor, hur man ska jobba med rehabilitering, arbetsrättsliga frågor. (M11, second tier, child welfare)

xix Jag har lärt mig massor men jag tror att jag har lärt mig det mesta själv. /.../ Det har varit en satsning på chefer här i [kommunen]. Och, när gick jag den då? kanske två år sedan. /.../ Då hade jag varit chef i många år. Utan att ha någonenda dags utbildning. (M4, second tier, social assistance)

xx Fast när jag, först när jag började som chef fick jag ingen utbildning. Annars får man ju väldigt dålig introduktion som chef, eller fick jag i alla fall. Jag fick ju lära mig själv på något vis och lära mig förstå vad var det jag skulle göra. (M18, third tier, child welfare)

xxi Jag har gått chefutvecklingsprogram och utbildningar och sådant under åren /.../ så tror jag att jag har lärt mig en hel del själv också, man lär sig på de misstag man gör, man lär sig utav de bra saker man gör och drar erfarenheter utav det. (M9, frontline child welfare)

xxi Vi är tre gruppledare här, alltså arbete och försörjning, familjegruppen och, vi träffas. Och pratar kring vår roll utifrån jämfört med våra handläggare då och även kanske emot våra chefer. För att tydliggöra oss vilka vi blir och också vilka behov vi får. (M2, frontline, child welfare)

xxii Sen har jag ju haft [namn på överordnad] som chef ända sen 95. /.../ Jag tycker att hon har varit bra chef, närvarande, jag gillar hennes chefskap. /.../ Hon och jag har ju jobbat rätt mycket i, stöttat varann då också i det här med chefskapet också. Sen har ju inte hon haft tid alltid men jag har ju kunnat gå till henne om det skulle vara något. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

xxiii Och jag har haft mentor som har vart en, en privat mentor, så det är ingen betald mentor på det sättet. Och sen har vi haft handledning, alltså man lär sig då tycker jag. (M13, second tier, mental health)
Ja, för det första hade jag, när jag blev arbetsledare så skaffade jag mig en mentor, och han har jag haft kontakt med i alla år sen 99. (M24, second tier, child welfare)

Men jag är inte säker ändå på att man måste ha det, men man måste ha ett intresse /.../ Jag tror att när man har kunskap till att ha tillit till medarbetare och /.../ litar på att de har en specialistkunskap så behöver man som chef inte ha det. Men jag vet inte hur det är att vara chef utan att ha det. /.../ Jag är glad att jag har jobbat som socialarbetare innan, det tror jag har varit bra för mig, men jag är inte säker på att man måste vara det. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

Man kan inte vara expert och man kan inte vara duktigast, för det åldras, på några år så känner man att, så men kära någon, går det till sådär idag? Där hinner jag inte, inte en chans i världen att hänga med. Men jag vet ungefär hur det känns i magen, vilket dilemma de står inför, vilka beslut de måste ta, om de ska omhänderta ett barn till exempel, jag vet vad det innebär, för jag har provat några gånger och så tror jag att på någon nivå så måste man veta ändå vad det är de tampas med, det tror jag. (M6, third tier)

Det ju varit en fördel för mig att ha jobbat som socialsekreterare inom området. Jag är ändå säkert tryggare i mig själv då. Och jag tror att jag kan förstå enhetscheferna bättre, vad de sitter i och medarbetarna också. /.../ jag tror att det tar längre tid annars att komma in och bli accepterad som chef. (M18, third tier, child welfare)

Vi hade en personalstrateg här innan som tyckte att vi behövde en chef mer än vad vi behövde en socialarbetare som var chef. Och jag tror att inom vårt område är det omöjligt, det går inte. Du måste kunna vad rättssäkerheten innebär för den enskilde, du måste kunna juridiken. (M22, third tier)

Det finns en risk med om vi inte anställer, om vi anställer mer jurister och ekonomer /.../ jag tror att det är viktigt för att de här människorna som vi ändå har valt att arbeta med, de har ingen röst, de är inte konsumenter på det sätt som man pratar om i andra verksamheter. Och därför så tror jag... man blir... jag som chef är en del av deras röst när jag har den här utbildningen och själv har jobbat i den. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

Alla som har sociala utbildningar är inte ekonomer. Ska man gå in och ha budgetansvar så ska man läsa mer ekonomi. Konstigt med socialtjänsten egentligen /.../ alltså hela kommunala sektorn är så /.../ de är ju inte vana hålla stora ekonomiska, det är ju miljontals kronor. Och samtidigt ska de väl inte ha ekonomier till det heller utan då måste man väl utbilda folk då i ekonomi /.../ Man lär sig ledaruppgifter /.../ men själv hantverket kring ekonomi, /.../ vad innebär budgetansvar, lite också fakta kring den lagstiftning som finns. (M8, frontline, child welfare)

Det är mycket, mycket roligt. Trivs med det. Men det är ju en vardag som är rätt kaotisk. Det är sällan jag hinner göra något klart. Jag har väldigt lite tid när jag kan sitta och skriva något som jag behöver skriva eller, mailen till exempel är alltid överfylld så att jag inte kan skicka några mail, för att jag
måste radera och det gör jag ofta på övertid. /.../ Sen går jag ju ständigt med dåligt samvete över saker som jag inte har gjort eller inte ringt eller alla papper som kommer och mail /.../. Alla viktiga dokument som kommer som man ska läsa och så, nå men det är liksom allting efter. Allt är efter. (M4, second tier, social assistance)

xxxii I: Hur är det att arbeta som chef här då, kan du berätta lite om ditt jobb? M12: Ja, det är bra läge att berätta om det nu när jag har sagt upp mig, det finns ju skäl till det liksom. /.../ Jag har ju alltid gällt att jobba som chef, jag gillar det jobbet och att ha personal och budget och verksamhetsansvar och jobba med verksamhetsutvecklingsfrågor och så, det är ju därför jag har stannat./.../ Men att jobba som chef på den här förvaltningen gillar jag inte. /.../ Dels är jag inte förtjust i den här beställare-utförare-modellen, jag tycker inte att den lämpar sig för individer och familjeomsorgsarbete, /.../ Sen är jag inte van vid sättet att leda och styra som man har i den här förvaltningen, jag tycker att det är för toppstyr, för kontrollinriktat, det passar inte mig, det är inte min ledarstil. Jag har ett annat sätt och leda. (M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)

xxxiii Jag går från det ena till det andra, och jag menar, man kan säga att man sitter bort möten, men möten är ju mitt sätt att styra, det gör jag ju i dialog, olika dialoger, så är det. (M6, third tier)

xxxiv Sen är det mycket möten du vet med de här, alltså chefsmöten och det är, alltså det är ju förfärligt mycket möten inom socialtjänsten kan jag tycka. För mycket möten. År det effektivt med alla de här mötena tänker jag? (M19, frontline, child welfare)

xxxv I: Ja, om du skulle beskriva en vardag /.../ hur skulle den kunna se ut då? M24: /.../ Ja, det är jättesvårt och beskriva, det är så olika, men alltså man kommer hit på morgonen, jag kommer ner kvart över 7, halv 8 brukar vara här. Öppnar mailen, jag tror att jag som mest har haft 67 mail på en dag. Så att det tar en stund att man, att kolla mailen /.../ Vi attesterar fakturor också via datorn, och hela personalssystemet också via datorn, så det är de här uppgifterna, de försöker man ju liksom och bita av, kanske inte varje dag, men, ja, mailen varje dag, de andra uppgifterna varannan dag. (M24, second tier, child welfare)

minuter så kan man inte sätta sig i lugn och ro och så. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

M6: Jag skulle definitivt behöva lära mig mycket mer om att organiserar min egen dag, att vara mycket mer systematisk än vad jag är. Nu rycks jag än hit och än dit. Ibland dyker jag i svårigheter som jag måste lösna, sen ibland är det något roligt som drar iväg mig också. Jag hinner inte sitta många minuter förrän det står någon ny i dörren. Kan jag svara snabbt så gör jag det förstas, andra kan ju stänga dörren och sätta upptagetskylten på också men jag, nå då har jag glömt bort. Så visst det är mycket med jobbet, det är mycket med jobbet, det är det. (M6, third tier)

Men det tänker jag att så är det väl ofta när man jobbar på socialkontor att liksom att fast man försöker att ha en plan, fast man tänker att man vill jobba på ett visst sätt så är det väldigt akutstyrt. Som gör att man kanske inte alltid liksom kommer dit man vill. (M5, frontline, social assistance)

I: Om du skulle beskriva en vardag hur skulle den se ut då?

M13: Alltså ja... vad kan jag ta... Om vi tar bara idag... Jag hade ett kristmöte kring en situation som hade uppstått som jag kallade till ett obligatoriskt möte för alla de som var inblandade och försöka hantera det. Först hade jag gruppmöte och sen tog jag ut några individer som jag gjorde individssamtal med för att förstå varför det hade gått över styr, och sen erbjöd jag dem också till enskilda samtal inom företagshälsovården därför att jag tror att de behövde det, så då ringde jag ordnade det. Ja, så ser mina dagar ut, jag kommer till jobbet och jag har aldrig en paus. Alltså jag försöker ha, ta tid till det strategiska det är därför jag har tre biträdande som ska vara mer operativa. Det tar för mycket tid att handleda dem som den här konflicten, eller situationen i morse, det skulle inte jag behövt. (M13, second tier, mental health)

Det har dragits in på det administrativa stödet, så att man, nu sköter man ju även de delarna, sitter ju med mycket administrativt arbete som man har haft assistenter som har gjort förut. Så jag tycker nog stor del av mitt arbete går ju åt till sådant som jag egentligen inte behöver vara högskoleutbildad för kan jag nog säga faktiskt, det finns mycket postöppning och sortera post, se till att det kommer rätt. Alla de delarna. Skriva rent och, ja. (M23, frontline, social assistance)

Det har ju hänt otroligt mycket på chefssidan sen, sen jag började vara chef även de delarna, sitter ju med mycket administrativt arbete som man har haft assistenter som har gjort förut. Så jag tycker nog stor del av mitt arbete går ju åt till sådant som jag egentligen inte behöver vara högskoleutbildad för kan jag nog säga faktiskt, det finns mycket postöppning och sortera post, se till att det kommer rätt. Alla de delarna. Skriva rent och, ja. (M12, second tier, substance abuse)

I: Du har ju jobbat nu som chef i 11 år sa du. Kan du se att chefsrollen har förändrats över den här tiden?

M9: Mm, det har den, eftersom det har skett förändringar under den här tiden med både ansvar och befogenheter också. När jag började så var vi, så hette
det gruppledare tror jag, om jag inte minns helt fel. Och då, då hade jag inte vare sig budgetansvar eller personalansvar. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

xliv I: Men hur, har kraven på chef, på cheferna förändrats över tid?
M14: Ja, det tror jag att det har blivit inom, inom socialtjänsten så tror jag att det här med uppföljningar, att man ska kunna svara för ekonomin och kunna redovisa, ge statistik exakt liksom hur många ärenden som kommer in och som kommer ut och vad försörjningsstöd kostar per månad och, alltså det är en uppföljning som hela tiden blir tätare. (M14, second tier, social assistance)

Budgeten är allt. Och det är väl också det som är trist. Jag är inte, jag tycker att jag ska ha koll på pengarna och att pengar är jätteviktigt. Men jag, jag har svårt för det här resonemanget att, alltså det övergripande uppdraget är ju: håll budget, håll budget, håll budget, håll budget /.../ Då tänker jag att om man ska hålla budget då måste man ha förutsättningar för att hålla budget. Och om man ska hålla budget får det konsekvenser för kvalitén. /.../ Och det är väl det svåraste som chef tänker jag, när man hamnar i det här att man måste spara pengar och ändå ser alla behoven. Och där tänker jag att där är det jätteviktigt och ha liksom koll på var ens egna gränser går, för det är viktigt att liksom, att man trubbas av. /.../ Men att, om man då som jag är socialarbetare i botten, så är liksom, det är min, det har liksom varit min devis att jag om jag kommer i det läget att jag känner att jag måste bryta mot lagen, det gör inte jag. /.../ Så där måste man ha någon egen koll på, var går min gräns /.../ Hur mycket är man beredd att dagtinga med sitt socialarbetarsamvete? (M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)

xlv Jag tycker också att det har blivit bättre när man har budgetansvar och själv gör sina budgetuppföljningar och får ansvara för det, det blir tydligare helhet. Fast man säger, nackdelen är, det är ju att det, det tog mer tid, åtminstone i början, det gör det nog nu också, fast man märker det inte på samma sätt (M9, frontline manager, child welfare)

xlvi Det har blivit en tydligare roll och, och jag menar allting har skärpts och det ställs krav. Fast jag vill att det för det blir också tydligt: det här är mina arbetsuppgifter, de ska jag göra helt enkelt. (M19, frontline, child welfare)

xlvii M9: När jag började så var vi, så hette det gruppledare tror jag, om jag inte minns helt fel. Och då, då hade jag inte vare sig budgetansvar eller personalansvar. Fast ändå hade jag ansvar för personalen, så det var rätt komplicerat tycker jag. Så det är klart att det har förändrats. /.../
I: Har det förändrats till det bättre eller till det sämre?
M9: Jag tycker ju att det är bättre. Jag tycker att det är bättre med tydighet /.../ Det tyckte jag var väldigt svårt när man var en mellanhand, man hade inte ansvar, men ändå hade ansvar. /.../ Att presentera mer mitt beslut, oavsett om det är svårare beslut /.../ är det ändå lättare tycker jag, på det sättet har det ju blivit bättre. (M9, frontline manager, child welfare)

xlviii Chefsrollen har blivit mer tydlig, man understryker chefsrollen på ett annat sätt än vad man gjorde tidigare. Förut så var det mer samordnare och arbetsledare, till och och orden har ändrats en del, nu är det mera: enheter, che-
fer, enhetschefer, så att den har blivit mera mycket mera fyrkantig om man säger så, den har blivit mycket mera avgränsad kring sitt eget, chefsrollen har stärkts. /…/ Annars var det liksom att man var mer en röst för sin arbetsgrupp medan nu ska jag ha åtgärder, jag ska veta vad jag ska göra /…/ så pratade man inte tidigare, utan då byggde det på samarbete på olika nivåer och möjliggörande kring olika saker, nu handlar det mer om att jag ska leverera och åtgärda. (M8, frontline manager, child welfare)

**xlis** M16: Det har varit från auktoritär till någon slags delaktighet som ett tag var nästan något slags flum bara, då man bestämde lika mycket, nu tror jag att det vänder igen.
I: Till att chefen ska ha mer,
M16: Precis, att mera vara tydlig chef, och då är det mycket i fokus det här med ledarskap, och det pratas ofta om ledarskap i alla sammanhang, det måste vara ett gott ledarskap/…/
I: Vad beror de här, liksom, svängningarna på, tror du?
M16: Om det är på något sätt tidens anda. Nej, jag vet inte, det är väl så där, allting har väl kanske sina cykler, fram och tillbaks. (M16, second tier, substance abuse)

1 Sen är det ju moden så här, nu är det ju LEAN som är på tapeten. /…/ Nej men det är väl det med att man, att det är olika svängningar, olika moden i ledarskapet och, hur ledarskapet ska vara. Det är ju, ett tag skulle man verkligten vara chef, chef, och ett tag skulle man ju vara ledare för verksamheten, och sen skulle man mera vara coach. (M14, second tier, social assistance).

li Det ska införas ett pengssystem utifrån valfrihetstanken, så då ska man få en peng och så ska man köpa sin insats /…/ Man vill ha flera aktörer på en marknad, marknaden är människor som ska köpa sociala insatser. Just det, så ska det se ut från 2010. Det blir intressant att se, var man går med sin peng och vem är det som gör valet. Så handläggarnas jobb ska ju förändras också mycket mera. (M13, second tier, mental health)


liii M8: Det kan ju vara positivt med att sin egen grupp får specialisera sig /…/ men nackdelen är ju det att jag ser, min syn på sociala arbetet, det är ju att vi har samma uppdrag medan det ser inte ledningen för de säger: du har ditt uppdrag och det är öppenvård medan försörjningsstöd har sitt. Jag säger att vi ska alla ha samma uppdrag, vi jobbar utifrån socialtjänsten och vi ska möjliggöra saker för klienterna, men det är underordnat nu, så att min grundsyn är att det är sämre men det finns positiva delar i det./…/ Enhetschefen [har det] totala budgetansvaret som gör att /…/ man själv har ansvar då för sin egen del
så totalt. Håll ifrån blir det ju då. /.../ Gör man inget jobb så, så är man ju jätteeffektiv tänker jag. Man har inte gjort av med en spänn. (M8, frontline, child welfare)


Man är kanske lite mer rak [i privat verksamhet], att så här och så här är det, och fixar du inte det så letar vi något annat jobb till dig inom organisationen tex. /.../ men jag tänker när man jobbar med utsatta människor i sitt jobb, och man ska alltid vara så himla snäll och omhändertagande och det känns som om man måste vara väldigt omhändertagande här [som chef] också. /.../. Och sen tänker jag att det finns både för och nackdelar med det. /.../ Jag tänker man har ju liksom lärt sig, i o m att man jobbar med det här och man har gått utbildningar och så, så kanske man också har mycket större förståelse för varför det är si eller varför det är så, än man har inom andra branscher där man kanske mer du fixar inte det här eller varför har du gjort så medan här förstår man att ja, det var därför, man liksom förstår kedjan på ett annat sätt. (M5, frontline, social assistance)

Eftersom vi är politiskt styrd, så har vi ju inte mandat ibland att göra de sakerna som vi känner som nödvändiga. Och sen blir det väldigt kortsiktiga politiska beslut, man skulle kunna ha mycket längre planering för verksamheten om, om vi fick bestämma själva. /.../ Så det, vi är ju definitivt en mycket trögare organisation och en mer splittrad organisation utifrån att chefsmandaten är egentligen på en, en andrahandsnivå. (M22, third tier)

Hur skall man hantera sina arbetskamrater och hur skall man hantera, vara mot sina klienter, och hur ska man se på... det är samma, samma. Alltting handlar om relationer och det gäller att skapa ett bra arbetsklimat (M1, third tier).

Socialtjänsten blir ju mer och mer som privata företag /.../ och det blir ju lite ologiskt /.../ det går ju egentligen inte att jämföra men, men det finns någon strävan dit, och jag är inte särskilt förtjust i den för jag tycker att det är idiottänkt. Men det finns ju mycket bra som har kommit från privata jag menar hela det här med, med kvalitetsutvecklingsarbetet, alltså, det kommer ju ifrån privata sidan från början /.../ Så det är klart att det finns skillnader. Fast samtidigt så tror jag om man ska prata ledarstil och den forskning som finns ju liksom vad utmärker bra ledaregenskaper så tror jag inte att det skiljer så himla mycket. Men jag tror inte man kan applicera privat företagande på offentlig sektor, jag tycker att man gör det alldeles för mycket nuftiden. (M12, second tier, substance abuse and mental health)
I: Vad bestämmer politikerna egentligen?

M7: Ja de formulerar mål och det är naturligtvis fel och säga att de bestämmer vad vi ska göra för vi har en jätteklar lagstiftning /.../ men varför jag säger det, för att det känner ju politikerna till, det är liksom deras uppdrag också, se till att vi jobbar på ett bra sätt efter lagstiftningen, så att de formulerar mål, de ger oss resurser, de avsätter resurser, de följer upp vår verksamhet och ser att vi gör det som vi är satta och göra, och det är väl i princip de, de saker de gör. (M7, third tier)

De har lite svårt att förstå att de är politiker och inte tjänstemän emellanåt /.../ Nej, de har inte riktigt förstått att de får inte gå ner och prata med socialsekreteraren om vad nämnden tänker göra, att föregå beslut, eller skvallra. Det är inte bra, ställer till det. (M22, third tier)

Det har hänt också att de blandar ihop sina roller, det händer ganska ofta. De kanske jobbar i vår verksamhet på något sätt och att de då blandar ihop det där då och använder sig av att de är politiker i nämnden, och kanske nästan, ibland har det varit socialsekreterare som har blivit nästan, ja inte hotade men så: ja det här ska jag ta upp med… och jag sitter faktiskt som nämndpolitiker. (M23, frontline, social assistance)

Och sen så socialchefen är en väldigt, väldigt drivande socialchef här med jättemycket tankar och idéer som har gjort om väldigt mycket också. /.../ Men hon är ju liksom väldigt drivande och har gjort stora förändringar här. Och som jag tror, alltså min uppfattning är att det mesta hon gör uppfattas väldigt positivet. (M5, frontline, social assistance)

Hon ska bestämma, alltså det blir lite otydligt /.../ det är så mycket andra krav som kommer från [namn], alltså från stadsdelsdirektören och så ska hon bara se till att det blir gjort, så att ibland undrar jag vad de här stackars avdelningscheferna hamnar i, i den här hierarkin /.../ (M13, second tier, mental heath).

Jag tror ju att de [politikerna] angör tonen. Det har ju med den borgerliga regeringen varit väldigt tydligt med beställare och utförare. Det är ju ditat det går /.../ och alla organisationer försöker väl, för annars kan man ju inte leva kvar, om man inte går i den riktningen så, så långt styr politikerna. /.../ Sen är det ju nästa steg, direkterna som talar om, hur många avdelningar vill han ha och hur många avdelningschefer. Och sen, på alla delar kan man ju påverka lite, enhetscheferna kan ju lite också styra hur de vill ha det under, i sin grupp, och det tror jag man måste kunna om man, om man ska vara en bra chef så måste man känna att det, det verktyget har man i alla fall i sin hand. (M6, third tier)

M3: Det har varit mycket med det där beställar-utförar som inte riktigt funkat. Men det var ju politikerna som bestämde att vi skulle göra den organisationen. Och då har det tagit mycket tid och mycket diskussioner /.../

I: Och i den här omorganisationen, vad skulle du säga att din roll har varit?

M3: Nä, jag vet inte, min roll? Det är väl bara att försöka ställa sig in. /.../ Och sen är det väl så att min roll har väl allt från att vara en marionettdocka, alltså
att utföra det som [de högre cheferna] bestämer, till att helt plötsligt så kan de liksom mm så vad tycker du då [namn]. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

lxvi Det är väl politikerna sist som bestämmer är det ju, men de får ju hint, de får ju underlag någonstans ifrån.../... Ja det är ju inte så att det kommer från gräsrotsnivå, men liksom, det kommer nog lite från högre nivå och jag tror.../... Jag vill inte säga att det kommer ovanifrån, det kommer, ibland så kommer det nog från chefsnivå, chefer från alla nivåer om jag säger så, det behöver inte vara från socialchef eller från alla verksamhetschefer utan jag tror, jag tycker att vi som sektionschefer är väldigt mycket involverade i det. (M9, frontline, child welfare)

lxvii M4: Ja, alltså det här med gruppledare är ju ganska nytt för oss. Och där har vi ju gjort en liten organisationsförändring i arbetsgrupperna /.../
I: Vems initiativ kom det från?
M4: Från oss. Själva.
I: Från er chefer?
M4: Ja (M4, second tier, social assistance)

lxviii I: Var kommer de metoderna ifrån?/.../
M7: Jaha, ja inte var det genom mig, det kan jag ju säga för jag hittar inte på några metoder och säger att det här ska ni jobba efter, nej, det tror jag aldrig att jag gjort faktiskt, det skulle vara mig främmande tror jag. /.../ Tror de kommer väldigt mycket utifrån personalen, jag tror att de kommer jättemycket ifrån sektionscheferna, för där finns en stor diskussion om vad det är för bra, nu handlar det naturligtvis väldigt mycket om våra metodstödjare som stimulerar till det här. (M7, third tier)

lxix I vardagsarbetet kan man ju styra ganska mycket. Hur jag tycker de ska jobba med klienter, jag kan också säga att här är en mycket prioriterad grupp, de här behöver ni inte handlägga mer än ganska administrativt, det här är en grupp som ni ska jobba med /.../ Så att sådana grejer tycker jag, sådana grejer kan man göra. (M10, frontline, social assistance)

lxx I: Varifrån kommer, var kommer idéerna till att liksom, ja det ska vara 12-stegsinriktad som gäller,
M16: Ja, 12-stegs det var ett politiskt beslut 95, här kör vi så punkt slut, tror det var,
I: Jaha, det var politikerna som bestämde det?
M16: Ja, då gjorde de det. Det var en väldigt drivande ordförande här som drev igenom det. Folk fick välja, ska du jobba med det eller så får du sluta. /.../
I: Men är det, är det, är det vanligt att politikerna liksom, bestämmer så där att de här metoderna,
M16: Nej, något sådant där kommer ju aldrig mer att inträffa, men det var då 95, och det var en väldigt dynamisk ordförande som satt i ledningen, men annars är det inte alls något sådant. (M16, second tier, substance abuse)

lxı Rädda barnen åker runt och pratar om det här med barnahus och det började man med i Malmö och det handlar om att när barn är utsatta för brott så

lxxii I: Om man tänker på någon ganska nylig förändring eller metod eller liknande som infördes kan du tänka på någon?
M6: BBIC, det gick, de är ju på utbildning nu under hösten, sen har vi ett mål att 75 % av alla utredningar ska göras enligt det, så det är något nytt.
I: Och hur kom det sig att man beslutade att just det,
M6: Det bestämde Socialstyrelsen.
I: Och då,
M6: Då gör vi så. (M6, third tier)

lxxiii I: Om du vill påverka någon någonting, var tänd du dig då?
M13: Ja... jag vänder mig till min chef, det gör jag. /…/ Det är självklart för mig, jag går aldrig förbi henne. Aldrig förbi henne, därför det blir, så gör man inte. Det tycker inte jag, det ingår litegrann i spelet. Så om jag ska påverka uppåt så går jag alltid till min chef först. (M13, second tier, mental health)

lxxiv Det kan handla om samarbete mellan olika förvaltningar och då går jag nog till min chef, för det är ju han som kan påverka det, det kan inte socialnämndens ordförande påverka alls på samma sätt. Dessutom är det ganska mycket saker som jag vill förändra har med förvaltning och göra och det har inte socialnämndens ordförande heller med och göra. /…/ Men når det gäller hur jag vill att vi ändrar på organisationen, på hur vi utför vår verksamhet direkt, då, det informerar jag alltid politiken om. Om det har hänt någonting i enskilda ärenden tex, det får jag inte informera min chef om. Så där finns en sekretess, vi har ju en sekretessnivå mellan oss, han och jag, så att det har han inte ett dyft med och göra. (M7 third tier)

I: Ja, sen kan det vara väldigt olika i olika kommuner.
M1: Ja, så kan det vara, men här är det så, att det är där striden tas alltså, med politikerna.
I: Har du tillgång till dem?
M1: Jaja.
I: Du kan ringa upp och säga att nu vill jag träffa dig.
I: Och det är inte några hard feelings utan det är bara för dig att göra det om du har en fråga som är tillräckligt viktig eller stor måste den vara naturligtvis. 

M1: Men nej, nej inga. (M1, third tier)


I: Om du känner att du vill påverka någonting den formella vägen?

M23: Nej, då går jag via min närmsta chef, då ska det ju gå linjevägen då, upp på ledningsgruppen, förvaltningsledningen då och sen till nämnden. (M23, frontline, social assistance)

Ja, jag får ju strida för det jag tror på. /…/ Och skulle det vara att det är så pass illa att jag känner att det här kommer inte och funka då får jag hoppa av för då. Annars blir det ju bara och strida mot sig själv och vad man tror på. (M21, second tier, mental health)

M7: Jag har möten med ordföranden en gång i veckan /…/ för det är ju viktigt för mig att stämma av mitt arbete jämnt med ordföranden och det gör jag, jag informerar honom och vi resonerar och han resonerar med mig vilka tankar han har och så vidare. Så det är en oerhört viktig del i mitt arbete, så är det. (M7, third tier)

Ja, precis i omedelbara omhändertaganden och så, så där har vi direktkontakt mer. /…/ Men det är ju våra, mina högre chefer är ju de som har den direkta kontakten med politiker. Och det är ju liksom kring budget och kring hur vi jobbar, alltså det är ju vildigt mycket som de har. (M2, frontline, child welfare)

Hon och jag har ju jobbat rätt mycket i, stöttat varandra då också i det här med chefskapet också. Sen har ju inte hon haft tid alltid men jag har ju kunnat gå till henne om det skulle vara något. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

Väldigt lätt och samarbete, men vi kan ha olika, /…/ Vi kan tycka lite olika ibland, men det är ingenting. I grunden har vi samma syn, vi har precis samma syn på socialt arbete, alltså samma grundsyn /…/så det gör det väldigt lätt. (M8, frontline manager, child welfare)
Vi ska ha sådana där samtalar en gång i månaden fast det är ibland att det blivit inställt. Jag kan säga att det som det ser ut nu så ska vi träffas på de här mötena en eller två gånger i månaden men det är för att hennes uppdrag har utvecklats, blivit så stort, så att, jag kan inte påstå att hon mäktar med, så jag sköter mig nog för det mesta själv vilket inte är bra, och det har jag sagt men jag kan liksom inte belasta, alltså hon, det går inte. /.../ hon är en gammal socialarbetare så hon har hjärtat verkligen på rätt ställe, men jag tycker inte riktigt att jag kan känna det stödet, alltså inte, inte alla gånger. (M13, second tier, mental health)

[Det] är ju lite odefinierad roll på något sätt men, eller man måste vara medveten om att man liksom befinner sig i båda lägren /.../ Jag har ju inget budgetansvar eller så men, men jag uppfattas ju som chef. Samtidigt så sitter jag inte med i ledningsgrupp och, och hör de diskussionerna som förs där, och ibland är det bra och ibland är det inte bra för många kan tro att man vet mycket mer än vad man faktiskt vet. (M15, frontline, social assistance)

Och jag tycker också att vi har en socialchef som gärna tycker att man ska vara med på det mesta och tycka och tänka och ja. Och hon vill ha med oss men hon riktigt förstår inte att vi faktiskt hinner inte med för att jag måste finnas också här. Så man blir liksom lite i kläm. (M3, frontline, substance abuse)

I: Men upplever du /.../ tryck från olika håll, alltså tryck från dina chefer och sen så andra krav från, från dina... M19: Nej, jag tycker inte det har varit [något] problem. Det som, ibland är det ju bara så här att man får gilla läget. Alltså nu är det uppifrån så här /.../ vi kan inte göra någonting åt det. /.../ för så är det ju ibland att, att jag skulle vilja något annat och alla skulle vilja något annat men ledningen säger att det här går inte utan nu är det så här, det är liksom no big deal, tycker jag. (M19, frontline, child welfare)