

# **PICKING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW**

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**A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ON NOMINATION  
COMMITTEES IN POLITICAL YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS**

**LEO RYSTAM (24233)**

**MARINA VERNHOLMEN (24191)**

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## Picking the Leaders of Tomorrow

**Abstract:** Nomination committees are a powerful, yet under-researched, institution in organizations throughout society. This becomes even more palpable in politics, and especially in political youth organizations, where nomination committees hold a central role in choosing future leaders and decision-makers. The subject of the thesis is nomination committees within two political youth organizations in Sweden; the Centre Party Youth (Swedish: *Centerpartiets ungdomsförbund*) and The Moderate Youth League (Swedish: *Moderata ungdomsförbundet*). The thesis aims to examine which characteristics nomination committees value in candidates for the nomination to board positions, and which factors influence the characteristics, on different levels of the respective associations. In a comparative case study, twelve interviews were executed within the two associations, composing the empirical material of the study together with additional internal and external material. The empirical findings are analyzed through the lens of governance theory and political theory. The findings show that in CUF, competencies and traits such as expert knowledge, organizational knowledge and marketing skills are highly valued, while in MUF valued competencies and traits are among others communicative skills, social skills and especially recruitment skills. Further, the findings show that two main factors influence the characteristics being valued by nomination committees. These are: the size of the organization, and the heterogeneity of the same, which both influence how nomination committees weigh between competencies and traits on the one side, and representation on the other. Together, these factors affect who gets nominated for an influential organizational position and, in turn, may become a future leader in society. On a more general level, the thesis hence contributes to an increased understanding of nomination committees in associations, an integral yet overlooked part in governance theory.

**Keywords:** Organizational Governance; Nomination Committees; Political Youth Organizations; Board Member Characteristics, Representation

**Supervisor:** Stefan Einarsson, Affiliated Researcher, Department of Management and Organization

**Examiner:** Laurence Romani, Associate Professor, Department of Management and Organization

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**Table 1: Definition list of commonly used terms**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Swedish term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Nomination committee	Valberedning	A committee that acts as part of an organization's organizational governance with the mission to optimize the board member nomination and selection process (as defined by Kaczmarek & Nyuur, 2016).
Nonprofit organization	Ideell organisation	An organization not intended to make a profit, but to make money for a social or political purpose or to provide a service that people need.
Association	Förbund	Membership-based nonprofit organization
National board	Förbundsstyrelse	Board of directors on the organization's national level
District board	Distriktsstyrelse	Board of directors on a district level in the organization
Advocacy	Opinionsbildning	To publicly support or suggest an idea, development, or way of doing something (Cambridge Dictionary).
The annual meeting	Förbundsstämma	The association's highest decision-making body. The assembly meets every year or every other year at the time and place decided by the board.
Characteristic	Egenskap	Used as a collective term for competencies and traits, as well as representational variables such as gender, age and ethnicity.
Competency	Kompetens	An important skill that is needed to do a job. Example: Managerial competencies (Cambridge Dictionary).
Traits	Personliga egenskaper	A characteristic, especially of a personality. Example: Patience is one of his best traits (Cambridge Dictionary).

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The political youth organization (Swedish: ungdomsförbund) is a starting point for the career of many Swedish politicians; at least 65% of all ministers in the current Swedish government started out in a political youth association (Regeringskansliet, 2020). Starting young is thus almost a need for a successful political career. Between 1990 and 2004, the main political youth organizations together lost around 60 000 members (Rydell, 2014). In spite of this, the political youth organization still act as the primarily pool for selecting future politicians. In his book *Broilers: De nya makthavarna och samhället som formade dem* (2014), Anders Rydell is pondering the careers of young politicians, and writes that the step from the political youth organization to the Swedish parliament seems to be shorter than ever. How political youth organizations organize themselves thus influences our everyday lives, as it deals with the selection of leaders and decision-makers of the future.

Here, nomination committees become interesting as they play a central role in the selection of candidates to different positions in Swedish political parties (Soininen and Etzler, 2006), and can be assumed to play the same central role in political youth organizations. After having conducted a literature review on the subject of nomination committees we assess that there is a lack of research on factors influencing which characteristics are valued by nomination committees in the nomination process. Further, concerning nomination committees in associations in a Swedish context, and not to mention political youth organizations, the area appears overwhelmingly uncharted. There exist to our best knowledge for example no examination of which characteristics that are requested in political youth organizations.

## 1.2 Expected Contributions

Two areas have been identified where our study may be of relevance. The first one relates to the fact that nomination committees, especially in associations, is an under-researched field. Secondly, the perspective on political youth organizations studies the selection of people that

are especially influential in society in the long run. In this thesis we therefore strive to contribute to the organizational governance theory on nomination committees, primarily on associations such as political youth organization. We intend to do so by crystallizing which board member characteristics are searched for by nomination committees in political youth organizations, and which factors that may influence these characteristics.

### 1.3 Aim and Research Question

The study aims to identify the board member characteristics that are valued by nomination committees in political youth organizations. The task of identifying these board member characteristics includes mapping out how they are interpreted by nomination committees and what factors affect the importance of each identified characteristic. The research question reads as follows:

“Which characteristics do nomination committees value in candidates for board member nomination, and which factors influence these characteristics?”

### 1.4 Delimitation

The nomination committees' working processes are not a main focus of the study since we are principally interested in what characteristics that nomination committees value and which factors that influence those characteristics. However, details of the nomination committees' working processes are explored with the purpose to gain a better understanding of how the requested characteristics of candidates are developed, discussed and evaluated during the nomination process. Understanding these details helps to interpret meanings of concepts for those involved in this form of work processes. Furthermore, the subject is studied from the nomination committees' perspective and regular members are therefore excluded. Furthermore, board members are excluded from the study since the subject of interest are the characteristics valued by nomination committees.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Previous Research

#### 2.1.1 Nomination Committees

The nomination committee is considered to have heightened importance with regard to effective board functioning (Brown, Steen, & Foreman, 2009), yet it is still a relatively underexplored area in organizational governance research. Especially nonprofit nomination committees remain more or less uncharted. Additionally, the nomination committee's work is central to the discussion on nomination and representation. The mission of the nomination committee, as described by Kaczmarek & Nyuur (2016), is two-fold. First, it is responsible for the professionalization and optimization of the director selection process. By managing its composition, the nomination committee can improve board efficiency. Secondly, it should regularly review the board performance.

#### 2.1.2 Board Characteristics in Nonprofits

The board of directors is a central mechanism of organizational governance and serves as the decision control system of nearly all organizations (Fama & Jensen, 1983). There are numerous management and practitioner-oriented papers and books that prescribe how nonprofit boards should operate. Regarding board composition and characteristics, the subject is often studied in relation to nonprofit performance (Olson, 2000; O'Reagan, 2005). "Performance" does not have an entirely clear-cut definition in nonprofit organizations (Miller-Millesen, 2003) and academic papers view nonprofit board performance through a variety of organizational governance perspectives. These perspectives include Agency Theory, Resource Dependence, Institutional Theory, and Transaction Cost models (Callen et al., 2010). Interestingly, there seems to be no agreed upon framework on how to analyze competencies or characteristics among nonprofit board members. We would also like to argue that the preoccupation with the effect of certain board characteristics on performance in research to some degree neglects how said characteristics emerge.

## 2.2 Governance in Membership-Based Organizations

According to Tricker (2009), organizational governance is about the exercise of power over corporate entities<sup>1</sup>. He acknowledges that there is no single definition of organizational governance. Some hold the belief that organizational governance mainly concerns shareholders, board and management, while others, such as the OECD, have come to embrace a wider definition, including for example stakeholders. A fundamental question for organizational governance is the agency dilemma, which originates from the separation of ownership and management. Agency theory deals with this dilemma, the starting point of which is the perceived governance relation as a contract between the owner (the principal) and the director (the agent). This can also be described as the principal-agent relationship (Tricker, 2009). The agency theory is the dominant theory within the area of organizational governance (Kaczmarek and Nyuur, 2016). The agency theory builds on the principal-agent problem, which arises as soon as the owner of an asset (the principal) does not manage the asset himself, but instead hires someone else to do it (the agent). This inclines the principal to use control mechanisms, in order to mitigate the information asymmetry between the principal and the agent.

Fama and Jensen (1983) argue that nonprofit organizations, just like for-profit organizations, are characterized by the separation of ownership and management. Thus, they argue that nonprofit organizations share the same agency problem as for-profit organizations, i.e. management does not bear the full consequences of its decisions. However, Renz and Andersson (2014) point out that there are problems applying the agency theory on nonprofit organizations since it is not always clear how the principal and the agent should be defined. The activities of a nonprofit organization can involve actors other than the owner and the manager, for example donors, volunteers, clients and board members (Jegers, 2011). Further, he agrees that in nonprofit organizations it is not clear which person is the principal. In fact, in a nonprofit organization, every stakeholder can act as a principal. In different relations the same stakeholder can act both as a principal and an agent, for example a manager which can

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<sup>1</sup> Since notions like “corporate entities” can be associated with corporations, the term “corporate governance” is not obvious in the context of membership-based organizations. Hence the equivalent term “organizational governance” is used for the purpose of the study.

be the agent in the relation to the board, but the principal in the relation with his employees (Jegers, 2011). Further it cannot be expected that different stakeholders share the same objectives (Balser & McClusky, 2005).

Stewardship theory treats the same principal-agent relationship as agency theory (Tricker, 2000), however, stewardship theory, in contrast to agency theory, takes the standpoint that management, in other words the agent, can act responsibly with the best of the shareholders in mind, instead of enriching themselves. Stewardship theory suggests that management can be trusted, and points at the separation of ownership and management as the cause of success of the limited liability company. Critics of this perspective argue that stewardship theory was built on the fiduciary relationship between a couple of shareholders in a company appointing a director and having good insight into the company. Nowadays, in contrast, shareholder capitalism renders this fiduciary relationship between principals and agent impossible. Also, anonymous financial institutions invest across the board, having little or no interest in the management of the company. Further, financial reporting has become a topic for experts, rendering insight and accountability even smaller.

### 2.3 Democratic Perspectives: Four Dimensions of Representation

The representation school is an orientation within democratic perspectives. Cornforth (2012) presents the four dimensions of representation defined by Pitkin (1967) in her classical work *The Concept of Representation*: formal representation, descriptive representation, symbolic representation and substantive representation. Formal representation deals with how leaders are selected, while descriptive representation treats how leaders mirror the characteristics of the member base of an organization. Symbolic representation handles the issue of gaining trust and being a legitimate representative in the eyes of the members. Finally, substantive representation describes how an organization acts in the interest of its members.

In board governance research, the descriptive dimension has received most attention. In terms of descriptive representation, a board can be seen as having either a weak or strong community representation, which may influence its functioning as an external representative

for the organization, and how successful the organization is at engaging its members in governing and political processes.

## 2.4 Political Theory

We turn to political theory to gain a deeper understanding of the recruitment function of political parties and the challenges it faces. There are certain system functions that are assigned to political parties in the literature (Möller 2018). One of them is the recruitment function where the parties face a number of challenges. Over time, the parties have found it more difficult to recruit candidates, at least at the local level where the basic activities take place. The proportion of local party organizations that state that they have enough candidates willing to stand for nominations for the municipal council elections has declined sharply since the 1970s. Although, the recruitment function's challenge is not only to attract candidates at a time when membership numbers are failing, but also to find suitable candidates. Partly in the sense that they can handle the tasks and are not easy to manipulate, and partly that they inspire confidence and help to increase the attractiveness of the party (Möller, 2018).

Another challenge for the recruitment function applies to aspects of representation. Good social representation has long been sought after in Swedish politics along with the demand for opinion representativeness (Esaiaßon & Holmberg, 1996). The role of social representation is explained and emphasized in the 2014 Democracy Report (SOU 2016:5):

"There are many indications that the political system would work better if people with disabilities, young people and foreign-born people were not under-represented in the chosen bodies."

The notion that social representativeness in a broad sense is the most important prerequisite for the legitimacy of the political system is the normative guiding principle of the inquiry (ibid.: 20-21). In order to obtain better social representativeness, the parties should, according to the inquiry, develop their recruitment work. Another aspect of representation is the representation of differing political views within a party. Möller (2018) writes that it is natural for differing views to exist within a party, especially if it is a large party. When it comes to

ideology, conservatism was toned down in 1970's Sweden and "liberal conservatism" became the Moderate party's official ideology. However, it is a hybrid concept that is problematic from a reconciliation point of view (Möller, 2018). In our study, this is relevant in MUF, where fragmentation issues similar to the ones of the Moderate party are assumed to be present. As long as the hybrid concept has been about freedom in an economic sense, it has worked smoothly. Over time, however, cohesion has become more difficult as liberal principles have been extended to free immigration, LGBTQ rights and norm criticism. Cohesion is threatened in these types of value issues, which have gained a prominent place in the debate. Differing views are not inherently problematic, however, and some opinion pluralism can even be positive. Since society is constantly changing, the parties must constantly renew their policies, and when it is done in a way that means that the political worldview must be re-examined, there must be room to openly express opinions. In that sense, internal contradictions are necessary for the dynamics of the parties; without a lively internal debate, Möller (2018) suggests that the parties risk becoming ideologically disillusioned and dysfunctional.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Method Selection and Research Approach

##### 3.1.1 Research Strategy

The study is based on an abductive approach. Based on existing theory in the organizational governance field, an interview guide was created, and as the empirical data was collected, the study's theoretical frame was adapted to central empirical themes that emerged. Furthermore, it made it possible to combine management theory with political science. We consider this a suitable approach for making sense of the interactive process of nomination committees, that have no definite rules or regulations. Our belief and hope is that the new theoretical and empirical insights that arose during the research process have opened up for a development of the research question, which has thus gone from unexplored to being demystified.

The study adopts the constructivist, interpretivist paradigm. We argue that board characteristics can and should be considered a social construction built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. Instead of taking the view that the characteristics in associations are pre-existing characteristics, we argue that the nomination committee together with the organization's members have a role in how the board member characteristics are formed. The competencies and characteristics are much less like spelled-out specific requirements and more like general understandings that are produced through social interactions. These understandings are continually being formed, renewed, reviewed, and revised. Furthermore, we as researchers inevitably present a specific version of their social reality. Given this, the study captures the subjective meaning of what characteristics are deemed as important in board candidates, which would not have been possible with an objectivist approach.

##### 3.1.2 Research Design

The study takes on a comparative research design using a qualitative research strategy, where some comparison is sought between the two organizations. We do not believe that a competency is always interpreted in the same way, hence there is a need to sort out what is

meant by a specific competency and how it manifests in practice. The key to the comparative design is its ability to allow the distinguishing characteristics of two or more cases to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections about contrasting findings (Bryman & Bell, 2013) which is why deem it as a suitable research design.

## 3.2 Sample Selection

### 3.2.1 Selection of Organizations

In order to get a nuanced view, two Swedish political youth organizations of differing size and ideological standpoints are compared in the study. This way, aspects connected to ideology can be separated in the empirics. To promote confirmability and prevent personal values from intruding, the interviews were divided in a way such that the interviewer asking the questions and the interviewee had no prior personal connection.

### 3.2.2 Selection of Interviewees

The selected interviewees were 12 members from nomination committees in CUF and MUF, eight members from CUF and four from MUF. The majority of the interviewees were selected from nomination committees on a national level, since their working process is more large-scale and extensive compared to those on a local level. However, two members of district-level nomination committees were interviewed as well, to include their perspective since their work is connected.<sup>2</sup> To include a broad range of perspectives, the members we have had the opportunity to interview in the study are six men and six women, between 19 and 27 years old, from six different counties of Sweden. In an attempt to reduce idealistic reasoning and instead gather empirics anchored in actual outcomes, the selected interviewees had served their role in the nomination committee for at least one operational year. Therefore, they could reflect back on the whole process from start to finish, that is, from being assigned the role to the presentation of their proposed candidates on the annual meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> For further detail, see section 4. Empirical Data

### 3.3 Qualitative Empirical Data Collection

#### 3.3.1 Pilot Study and Development of Interview Guide

In order to gain a better understanding of the subject, the thesis work began with attending the annual meeting of CUF Uppsala and making general observations about the working process and some formalities. Later, we attended a workshop held by Johan Sverker, business consultant at PwC specializing in nomination committees, about their role in organizations. Building on the insights from the pilot study and knowledge from organizational governance theory, an original interview guide was created. A pilot interview was then conducted (2020-03-06) with a member of the nomination committee of the Centre Party in Uppsala, and after that, the questions were refined so that they better yielded an answer to the research question. The areas involved in the interview guide are intended to cover the work of the nomination committees and their perspective on which characteristics the proposal and election of board candidates is based upon.

#### 3.3.2 Implementation of Data Collection

In order to get the full picture of each person's individual experiences in the respective organization, we conducted deep interviews. A critique that has been expressed towards qualitative methods is that they to some degree lack objectivity (Kvale 1997). To counter this, we used the semi-structured interview method, which allowed us to stick to a uniform arrangement of the interviews as well as asking clarifying follow-up questions (Bryman & Bell 2013). The semi-structured interviews also enabled the interviews to take other directions, which helped to identify relevant themes and thereby supported our abductive approach. While this may reduce the comparability of the interviews, it allows for a deeper understanding of nomination committee members' experiences. The interviews lasted for 30-60 minutes and were held over video calls on Zoom. Video calls may have some disadvantages compared to in-person interaction. However, due to the large geographical spread of interviewees, and the limitations of physical interactions imposed due to the coronavirus, video calls were judged to be the best approach. Even Stockholm-based nomination committee members were interviewed using Zoom in order to provide everyone with the same conditions. At the same time, the video calls made it possible to read body language and to interact in an environment comfortable for the interviewee, without any



distractions. The interviews followed an interview guide (see Appendix 2), which we constructed based on the theories derived from our literature search on organizational governance and nomination committees.

The interviews resulted in a transcription of about 85 pages of interview material which was analyze in order to find patterns in the responses. The analysis was initially done by the study authors individually to increase the interpretation range and reduce the risk of a too narrow analysis. Thereafter, empirics were coded on the basis of the identified empirical patterns and with the theoretical frame as support. The coding initially categorized similar quotes bound to the structure of the interview guide, to then identify from the quotes commonly occurring keywords that formed new categories above the original theme boundaries. This allowed for a desirable deep understanding of the empiricism when relationships between different categories could be identified.

### 3.4 Method Discussion

#### 3.4.1 Transferability and Dependability of the Thesis

We are fully aware that we are operating within the specific context of Swedish nonprofit youth organizations. In order for the findings to hold in some other context, or even in the same context at some other time, the gathered empirical data produce what Geertz (1973a) calls “thick description”, that is, rich accounts of the details of a culture. By including details of the associations’ challenges, how the nomination committees view their role together with the role of the board, we believe that the empirics provide a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieux, as suggested by Guba & Lincoln (1985: 316). We cannot guarantee the transferability of our findings to all nomination committees, but believe that, with the detailed empirics, one can make judgements about which findings are applicable to which specific contexts. The transferability is strengthened further by the fact that we base the analysis upon apparent patterns in the data collection. The findings from CUF are believed to have a relatively higher degree of transferability compared to the ones from MUF, due to the fact that they are based upon a larger sample.

Throughout the process of data gathering, complete records were kept of all phases of the research process, with the purpose to ensure optimal dependability. During the interviews, clarifying questions were asked to minimize misunderstandings. The supervisor and opponent groups can be seen as being part of the validation, as they helped establish whether proper procedures were being followed during the course. Furthermore, by using the comparative approach we examine perspectives from organizations that differ in terms of size and ideology, as well as nomination committees from different years and geographical areas. We thereby limit the risk of the result being affected by random events in unit-specific contexts. However, since before the start of the empirical gathering one of us had some personal experience and knowledge from being a member of one of the organizations, CUF, the interpretation of the empiricism may have been affected by this.

A possible method for this study could be observation, ie. to follow the nomination committees' work in real time in order to be able to take part in all the reasoning. However, it may be the case that parts of the process take place at other times than scheduled meetings. Election committees also work for a longer period of time, sometimes years, which would require to set aside a lot of time to follow. Another downside with an observational study is that in order not to influence the process, it would require the nomination committee to get accustomed to a "foreign" presence (Henriksson & Månsson, 1996).

### 3.4.2 Ethical Discussion

All interviewees gave their consent to participate in the study. They approved recording, and later deletion, of the interviews. The ambition has been to maintain the highest degree of anonymity possible, which is why the interviewees are referred to with indicators instead of names. The indicators are based on organization, level and interview order (see Appendix 1: Interview List). Personal data regarding age, gender and education, as well as data about when the interviewee has been active in their particular role have been excluded from the presentation of the empirics in order to preserve anonymity.

## 4. Empirical Data

### 4.1 CUF

#### 4.1.1 The Role of the Nomination Committee in CUF

CN5 claims that the role of the nomination committee is to boil down what are the most important challenges for the organization ahead, in what direction the members want to go and what is needed to reach the vision of the members of the association. CN7 emphasizes the importance of understanding, on the one hand, what the members and the districts want, and on the other, what the national board and the employees want. CN1 states that the role is to find a national board that can act upon what its members decide on the annual meeting.

#### 4.1.2 The Role of the Board in CUF

CN1 means that the role of the national board is exactly that, to do what it is told to do at the annual meeting, which most often is the same: advocating for the political views of the association and making sure that there is an active organization. CN5 means that the role of the national board is to be more strategic than operative and to create long-term strategies for the organization. In fact, the board should develop the strategies and then it is the role of the VU (the executive part of the national board in CUF) together with general secretary to concretize them and then pass it on to the rest of the RO (the employees at the central office of CUF) to act upon. However, this vision is not always acted upon, and the board is falling back on being more operative, though this must not always be bad since the board should not lose the connection with the organization. CN6 means that the national board historically has been more operative than strategic, for example putting emphasis on campaigning, while there has been a movement toward a more strategic role. CN4 says that the role of national board in a broader sense is to elevate the association, including ensuring that the association is developing, that there is political development on the national level, that members can learn new things on national courses, to provide support for districts and members, and finally, influencing the party in political standpoints.

#### 4.1.3 Challenges of the Association

CN7 expresses that the diminishing number of members is a national challenge for CUF that also was discussed in the nomination committee. CN7 further connects this to the challenge of rejuvenation of the organization, i.e. that the members are becoming increasingly younger. The career in the association is shorter, with short steps between being local chair, to district board member, to district board chair, which in the end decreases the attractiveness of the national board. This also means that the engagement within the association has become shorter, and that older members have become rarer, in comparison to 10 years ago. CN7 means that an underpinning of this may be the societal trend with short engagement, which is also seen in CUF. CN7 means that a strategic choice has to be done, whether following this trend, or trying to counteract it and if so, how.

Another challenge is that it has become increasingly difficult to get into schools to campaign and talk to students, according to CN4. This makes it hard to attract new members. CN4 also says that this has made digital communication more important than before, since much of the mobilizing is on the internet, and not physically, as before. Furthermore, CN4 also suggests that political youth organizations don't play the same role today as before, in the political environment, which also changes the role of the national board.

#### 4.1.4 Competencies in CUF

**Back-office and Front-office:** CN3 describes that there is a division of the board members into back-office and front-office, i.e., some are mainly concerned with how to structure the organization and define its political standpoints (back-office), and some are responsible for communicating the message of the organization through for example producing campaign material, and design social media campaigns (front-office). CN3 says: “we put forward a requirement profile with different... Well, the different people needed in back-office and front-office, that is, we need offensive people, and people that are workhorses [...] that could plan courses and had expert knowledge. Because we were quite visible in media”.

**Expert knowledge** (Swedish: sakpolitisk kunskap): Expert knowledge is a typical back-office competency. Characteristics such as expert knowledge has become increasingly important according to CN4. This is due to the evolving political landscape, where a lot of the political battle is taking place digitally, tilting the balance from physical campaigning into developing political niches. Thus, people with deep knowledge within an area have become increasingly important. Also, according to CN3, having a niche in a subject is important for winning debates. CN3 explains that expert knowledge in different subjects has been a characteristic specific to CUF in comparison with the Student association and the mother party, both of which have a more ideological approach. CN3 points out that this niche is important to maintain, while at the same time strengthening the ideological approach, and adds that having the expert knowledge based in an ideological position is important to be able to influence the mother party in political standpoints.

**Organizational skills:** This is a typical back-office competency. The team has to include people with organizational skills, according to CN5. Such skills include having an organizational understanding of how to build departments and districts, and how to create commitment. It can also be knowing how to organize national events and courses, says CN7. Also, campaigning is an important aspect, which however might have become less important due to an increased reluctance in schools for letting in political youth organizations, says CN4. CN2 says that a person with organizational skills shows an ability to think long term about goals regarding the whole association and its guidelines, as well as things that need updating, such as district handbooks, master plans and statutes, and working with those things that are not visible to others. Further, it includes someone taking responsibility for the economy, and arranging courses.

**Marketing skills:** Marketing skills, also expressed as communicative skills, is a typical front-office competency. Together with the organizational skills, CN5 describes marketing skills as a classic field that is often found in a political youth organization. Several interviewees (CN5, CN4) mention that there is a need for a few board members that have communicative skills in creating compelling material, including digital material, communicating the standpoints of the association. However, CN3 notes that there were too many

communicative people in relation to the board, and that more focus should be on recruiting people with expert knowledge or organizational skills. CN6 thinks that this problem still exists within the national board.

**Media skills:** This is no typical back- or front-office competency. Media experience is an experience that is searched for according to CN3. CN7 mentions the need of being able to express oneself in media and being present in media, both in social media and more traditional media. This experience is especially important for the chair of the board, who must be ready to participate in public debates on short notice. However, CN2 expresses that it is important not to only choose the people who are most visible in media, and also favor work that is less visible: “A 500-page organization handbook, for example, is not noticed and praised, and such [invisible] features are important to find.”

#### 4.1.5 Traits in CUF

**Reliability:** CN3, CN5 and CN6 define reliability as an important trait. When defining what the term means to them, CN3 and CN5 argue that career goals should not be the main interest of candidates for the national board. Instead, they should put the team before any self-interests. CN3 says: “[Being reliable means] that you should think about what is in the association’s best interests. That you give 100% as president. [...] That it is not mainly a stepping stone to something else, but that you want to sit for 4 years and you want to make the best of those 4 years.” In contrast to this, CN6 describes popularity as significant in order to become more reliable among members.

**Collaboration:** CN2 describes the role of the nomination committee as building a team that works for the best of the association. If conflicts arise within the national board, the work will be obstructed, according CN1. In order to put together a well-functioning team, and to ensure that each candidate is able to collaborate, CN5 describes a process similar to that of a classic hiring process: “We have some questions that we send to the various candidates. It’s not just questions regarding where they want the association to go and how they want to solve certain existing challenges, but also questions about how they work in a team, their

positive and negative sides”. CN2 adds: “A question we ask is ‘how are you to cooperate with?’ You do not have to be best friends with everyone, but if you are a conflict maker you will be difficult to deal with in the national board”.

**Meeting and organizational experience:** According to CN7, having an understanding for the Center Party is very important. Stepping into the National board without experience from the organization would be very strange. Adding to this, CN3 describes meeting experience as important. If a person lacks board experience from the regional level, together with the accompanying meeting experience and knowledge of how the board functions as a team, stepping into the national board would be hard.

**Ideology:** CN3 states that it is important that the political standpoints are grounded in an ideological position. CD1 further explains that it can be interesting to look at whether the political opinions of a candidate correspond to the opinions of the department or organization, which can be extra interesting for the president or vice president of a board. CN7 expresses that since all members are part of Centerpartiet, ideology is in general not a big problem, however, it may cause a division in a board, but most often difficulties in cooperation within a board do not depend on different ideological positions but rather on personal traits.

**Work ethic and delivery:** CN3 says that there is a need for candidates with high work ethic, and also people who work even without it being visible to everyone, for example arranging a course. Ambitions are often high among candidates, according to CN2. However, the nomination committees express a strong need to be able to determine whether work will actually get done and that deadlines are met (CN1, CN2, CN6). This trait is commonly described as delivery. CN6 explains: “a large problem has been that people are elected that say that they will or can do things, but in the end do not deliver on their promises. This is why delivery is important to look at.”

**Popularity:** CN6 means that being popular, or liked, is important in order to be chosen to the national board. Further, CN6 means that making oneself visible is also important. A member can show engagement by being active in, for example, debates on the annual meeting or at discussions in internal digital channels. CN1 remarks that it is not about how many people the person knows, but rather what perception they have about this person, and agrees that being active in internal discussion forums can make one more visible inside the association. CN6 adds that the probability of the candidate being elected at the annual meeting also influences the decision of the nomination committee, since they always want their nominations to be accepted. Thus, the popularity of a candidate can influence the decision of the nomination committee, depending on whether they believe the proposal will be accepted by the members or not.

**External network:** Not everyone in the national board needs to have a broad contact network inside or outside the organization, although there needs to be someone in the board who has a contact network. This is essential to enable the advocacy that a political youth organization should do to get attention for their political standpoints in debates, social media and opinion articles (CN1, CN5), and to mingle and influence the party (CN3). CN5 adds that an internal or external network is not a need for stepping into the national board but is something that can be established along the way. CN3 says that an external network can also add internal credibility among members, since it allows for getting into new contexts and can increase the political impact of the association.

#### 4.1.6 Representation in CUF

When asked what characteristics are important in order to represent the members, there is a split view among nomination committee members. Some argue that they have included gender and geography as parameters in their work (CN3). Others argue that representation should be considered only when there is no difference in competencies. Competencies are more important than representation according to CN1, CN5 and CN6. Yet, other things held constant, they all think spread in geography should be considered, as well as gender (CN1, CN6) and age (CN5).



Geography holds an important role in the considerations, which may be due to historical reasons. CN3 expresses that geography was important for the national nomination committee. Additionally, CN3 suggests that geography may have been more important for previous nomination committees, since in the Centre Party, with its roots among farmers in the countryside, it is important to represent the whole country. CN2 emphasizes the geographical representation and means that CUF has the purpose to not only be present on a national level, but in all 21 counties in the country. The candidates chosen for the national board should be present in the whole country, including campaigning in the whole country.

The perceived importance of gender representation in the national board differs from person to person. From the responses and the data gathered on previously picked candidates, there generally seems to be an even distribution among national board members<sup>3</sup> (CUF 2020). CN2 means that an appropriate gender distribution comes automatically when choosing candidates for their competencies, and that ethnicity is not very important to consider. CD1 means that there is an implicit understanding in CUF that there is no discrimination based on gender, resulting in that competencies are more important to consider. CN7 says that they consider gender and the geographical spread, and that the candidate should be able to represent the whole country, and not a certain ideology, faction or part of the country.

Ideology is not commonly mentioned as an aspect of representation. However, CN4 means that the ideological aspect is also important to consider; that the national board represent different parts of the association in terms of ideology, such as social liberals and libertarians. CN7 mentions that occasionally, there have been discussions about whether two candidates can collaborate based on different ideological standpoints. However, this is not a widespread problem.

Age is not commonly mentioned as an important aspect of representation. CN6 and CD1 means that an evenly distributed age usually comes by itself. CN2 says that there have been attempts to increase the average age of the national board. This is however due to other

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<sup>3</sup> The national board of CUF consists of five female and three male board members as of 2020.

reasons than representation, such as increasing the time members are involved in the association.

CN4 says that CUF is a homogeneous association with regards to socioeconomic background and ethnicity, but that it is beginning to change. CN5 remarks that the supply of candidates poses a problem to representation: “The problem with the guidelines is that we have nothing else to choose from other than the selection of candidates at our disposal. [...] Then it becomes even more important to look at the competencies perhaps rather than age, gender and geographical belonging”.

## 4.2 MUF

### 4.2.1 The Role of the Nomination Committee in MUF

MN2 describes the role of the nomination committee as dependent on both what individual positions a member has going into the process, and which district or who the person is representing. MN1 describes the role on a more individual level. The individual member in the nomination committee is representing a group, for example Stockholm. Although at the same time, the member should represent the interest of the whole association, so it is important to find good compromises within the nomination committee.

Many interviewees express that the role differed between different years, depending on the situation. MN3 provides an example of such a difference. During MN3's first year, the districts had already negotiated a team that would candidate. The role of the nomination committee is then to make sure there is no serious problems with the candidates, to make the candidates take the role more seriously, to conduct interviews, and to give legitimacy to the team if they find no serious problems. However, another year the negotiation between the districts failed, which put the nomination committee in the role of finding candidates in order to fill the positions in the board, since the districts had not done this beforehand: “[...] the process, the negotiations collapsed, some people who had stood as candidates suddenly

decided 'I am no longer available.' And then it is the nomination committee's job to actively look for new people".

MD1 means that the nomination committee must consider several aspects, such as a broad representation, gender balance and also people that fit the different roles within the board. It is important that there is a geographical spread, from different parts of the district. It is customary in the board to have different roles such as a person being responsible for campaigning, social media, political production or courses respectively. It is important to make sure that those roles are filled with fitting people.

#### 4.2.2 The Role of the Board in MUF

MN2 says that the role of the national board (in Moderat Skolungdom) is to help all districts with different tasks, such as political production, campaigning, arranging events and courses, for the younger members of MUF. MN3 describes MUF as a decentralized organization where most activity happens at the district levels. This means that the role of the national board is to help smaller districts and newer members that need help in their activities on the more local level.

MN2 describes the role of the board on different levels. The role of a local department board is to engage people in the area and be visible. Furthermore, they should maintain a good relationship with the local party branch, strengthening the image of the youth association as well as benefits such as obtaining some money for projects. On a district level, the role of the board is to maintain activity and a good internal culture among members within a certain area, provide education and grow its member base in order to make them good representatives of the moderate ideology. On a national level, the role of the board is to influence the public opinion in the appropriate area, for example Moderat Skolungdom primarily advocate in school-related issues.

#### 4.2.3 Challenges of the Association

MD1 describes that MUF has quite a lot of conflicts, which is why the national board is very careful in ensuring that all groups have a representative in the national board. MN3 agrees that the association at times has had problems with conflicts, which makes geographical representation important. Further, it is not always clear what a conflict is about originally. It may be a personal conflict, with ideological underpinnings, but it is often hard to discern what started the conflict. However, MN3 means that MUF is very good at handling conflicts.

Today, even before the nomination committee has started its process, some districts often go together informally and nominate a team. The team is a result of compromises ensuring that the different districts have representatives in the board (MN3). There seem to exist a norm that prevents other candidates from challenging this team. MN3 describes that members may not choose to candidate to the board if they perceive there is a better candidate, and that this is a sort of self-selection. However, MN3 says that the association is trying to increase the number of candidates to the board, so that there are more candidates than places to fill. This implies that they strive for more competition for board elections.

#### 4.2.4 Competencies in MUF

**Recruitment skills:** MN3 expresses that recruiting new members has been an important focus for MUF for 15 years, and that this skill is highly valued within the association. It is both about organizing campaigns and being good on a face-to-face basis to recruit new members. MD1 agrees with this and says that a lot of new members are recruited each month. MN2 also agrees that recruitment skills are important.

**Communicative skills:** MN2 describes that it is important to be able to communicate political messages through debates and debate articles. However, this seems to mostly be important for the president, whereas MN1 describes that a board member does not face the same demand for rhetorical and communicative skills.

**Expert knowledge:** MN2 says that having a niche in a subject is highly valued. It may be in an area that is respected within the association, such as doing a PhD in economics. But knowledge within a more politically distant area may also be valued, such as sociology, since this may broaden the party and facilitate reaching new members or voters. Expert knowledge is however not mentioned by the other interviewees, which may decrease its relative importance.

**Political development:** MD1 says that it is important to have a person within the board who is responsible for political development, political reports, evaluating the political standpoint that the district is pushing, and making sure the district is pushing what the annual meeting decided on. MN3 also mentions that someone in the board should be responsible for political development, while MN2 means that everyone on the board needs some sort of political consciousness.

**Competencies at the district level:** In Stockholm county, MD1 describes that there is a set of clearly defined roles in the district board that should be filled. There should be one responsible for education and courses. Another role is political development and producing political campaigns. A third role is campaigning/recruitment, ensuring new members are recruited. A fourth role is being responsible for the local departments in the district and providing support. There should also be someone who is responsible for social media. An optional role is having someone being responsible for the re-enlistment of members. which mostly involves calling people

#### 4.2.5 Traits in MUF

**Social:** Adding to the notion of recruitment skills, MD1 expresses that the board members responsible for campaigns and courses preferably should be extroverted and enjoy social contexts, as it requires a lot of contact with members. MN2 agrees that social skills are important in order to create good atmosphere internally in the organization. If a person exhibits many good competencies, but contributes to bad atmosphere, it will be taken into consideration.

**Ambitious:** MN2 expresses that career ambition within the association or party is good as it ensures that the person will maintain their engagement and prioritize the work within the board. It is hard to incentivize a person without ambitions.

**Respected:** MN1 describes that an important trait of the president of the board is being respected; that the board members should have confidence in this person: “[...] and then you try to have an independent president, who has had a leading position before, that clearly has the respect of the group, someone that all know: this is a great person”.

#### 4.2.6 Representation in MUF

MN3 describes that most often the districts compromise about the different roles in the board and selecting a team, already before the nomination committee has started working, while MN1 describes that most often the nomination committee has to compromise between different interests. MN3 says that geography and ideology are interests that must be taken into consideration in the compromise. MD1 mentions that sometimes geography and ideology coincide. Furthermore, MN3 states that this compromising becomes more important on a national level, whereas representation of for example a part of the country probably would be more important than selecting the most competent candidate. However, MD1 says that geographical distribution is also very important on a district level.

There is a widespread belief in the importance of geographical representation, since all interviewees state this. MN2 expresses: “Geography is important, all six should not come from the same city, for example, when representing the whole country”. MN1 means that a broad geographical spread is important to act toward the fundamental goal of the association: to spread the values and ideas in society. MN3 says that not taking geographical distribution into account would not be accepted by the members, for example in a situation where large districts go together and claim all board positions. MD1 adds that it is very important to have a geographical spread also within the district.

Both MN1 and MN3 argue that despite the importance of gender representation, the goal is not primarily to achieve an even gender distribution. MN3 says: “I would not express it as trying to achieve an even gender distribution, but rather avoiding a very skewed one”. This may be confirmed by the current gender distribution in the national board of MUF, which is fairly even<sup>4</sup> (MUF, 2020).

Age is not described as a very important characteristic to consider. MN3 describes the reasoning behind age representation: “[...] one would want to avoid a very young or very old board. It naturally becomes a fairly even distribution and one tries to avoid a very distorted distribution, a bit like gender”. MD1 means that in order to be in question for the board, a person needs to have spent some years doing hard work, to show the necessary engagement and skills. Therefore, the average age in the board is quite high.

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<sup>4</sup> MUF’s national board consists of five female and eight male board members as of 2020.

## 5. Analysis

In this section, the empirical data is analyzed with the theoretical framework as a foundation in order to present two factors, which influence the board characteristics in associations. Firstly, the characteristics valued by nomination committees in CUF and MUF are presented, respectively. The analysis is then developed further by examining what influences the aforementioned characteristics and how representation it relates to assessing the characteristics. Lastly, the analysis results into two factors that influence those characteristics.

### 5.1 Characteristics

#### 5.1.1 Competencies and Traits

In CUF, the competencies include having expert knowledge, organizational skills, marketing skills and media skills. Having an understanding for, and experience of, the organization is crucial in order to be part of the national board. The highly valued traits include being reliable, ability to collaborate, and having a strong work ethic. Being cooperative is valued higher than other characteristics such as having a particular ideological standpoint. When it comes to popularity and likeability, members' perceptions of a candidate are important in order for them to get elected. It is therefore inevitably important to be both visible and liked within the organization. Having an external network is not deemed as very important but could eventually be an advantage. Career goals should not be the main interest for the candidate, instead the team should be put before self-interests. Concerning the president of the national board, medial skills are regarded very favorably.

In MUF, the competencies include recruitment skills, communicative and rhetorical skills. The communicative and rhetorical skills are mostly important for the president of the board. When it comes to traits, political consciousness is important among everyone in the board, and ideally there should be one person who focuses on the organization's political development. Being social is important for some positions in the board that are related to



the member recruitment. Creating a good atmosphere is also crucial, without the ability to do so, the competencies are not worth as much. Career ambition within the association or party is good as it ensures that the person will maintain their engagement. Being respected is a crucial skill for the president.

### 5.1.2 Descriptive Representation

Competencies are more important than representation in CUF, but other things held constant, geographical spread, gender and age should be considered. Especially geographical spread is important which may be due to the history of the Centre Party (Centerpartiet) which has roots among farmers in the countryside and the associated intent to be present in the whole country. In MUF, however, descriptive representation seems more important to competencies. This is especially clear on the national level, where different districts demand representation, while on a district level, competencies become more important relative to representation, much like in CUF.

## 5.3 Factor 1: The Size of the Association

### 5.3.1 Representation is Relatively More Important in Large Associations

As Fama and Jensen (1983) describe, in nonprofit organizations it is not always clear who is the principal and who is the agent. In the case of youth organizations, however, members are the most obvious principal. It can be argued that in larger organizations, the agency problem will be even more obstructive, since the members are even further away from management, and have worse insight. This can also be assumed to be the case comparing MUF and CUF. MUF has approximately 9000 members, while CUF has around 3000 (SVT, 2018). This significant difference implies that the agency problem would be larger within MUF, which is also supported by the empirics that describe more conflicts within MUF than CUF. It can also be argued from the empirics that MUF has a broader ideological span within the association, ranging from liberals to conservatives, which the interviewees have pointed to can be a cause of division. This is consistent with Möller's (2018) argument that opinion pluralism is natural in large parties. In CUF, ideological differences have not been mentioned as a cause of conflict.

The broad ideological span, described by Möller (2018), together with the large size of the organization, seems to make descriptive representation (Cornforth 2012), more important in MUF than CUF, as described in the empirics. The widespread and emphasised representation of different geographical and ideological characteristics in MUF is explained by the interviewees as a means to gain acceptance and prevent conflicts. In CUF, the descriptive representation does not take a main role in the considerations of the nomination committee, but when considered, it is mainly in regard to geographical attributes. A possible reason for this difference is that representation in boards in MUF is a way of handling the agency problem, which is greater in MUF. Ensuring that different parts of the country, as well as the two main ideological orientations, conservatives and liberals, are represented in the national board and district boards will mitigate the agency problem, as it efficiently increases the insight into the board for members of different geographical location and ideology.

### 5.3.2 Competencies are Relatively More Important in Small Associations

Competencies generally appear to be important in the national board of CUF and the district board of MUF Stockholm. In CUF, the interviewees describe a set of competences and characteristics that are important in order to be a member in the national board, including organizational skills, marketing skills, collaborative skills and alike. This is a similar approach to that of the district board of MUF, which from tradition has some roles that are recurring every year such as campaigning, arranging courses, political production and social skills. It may be reasoned that the similar processes and emphasis on competencies and characteristics are due to the fact that CUF and MUF Stockholm have a similar size, both around 3000 members. On the national scale of MUF, which has about 9000 members, the agency problem becomes much larger, which tilts the emphasis towards representation more than competencies. However, the emphasis on geographical representation seem to be prevalent regardless of the size, though with less weigh. The district nomination committee in MUF Stockholm puts some emphasis on representation from different parts of the Stockholm area, while CUF national nomination committee has a focus on including people from the whole country in the board.

A further reason why competencies may be relatively more important than representation in smaller associations is that the candidate poll physically limits the possibilities of representation in smaller organizations, described by CN2, which then instead forces the nomination committee to look at the individual skills of the candidates.

#### 5.4 Factor 2: The Level of Heterogeneity

In the empirics, MUF seem to be more heterogeneous than CUF, primarily regarding ideology. But it may also be argued that MUF are more heterogeneous in other aspects than ideology. For example, CN7 says that CUF is homogeneous in aspects such as socioeconomic background and ethnicity. This is also supported by an investigation performed by SCB screening the background of all the candidates for the main political parties in Sweden for the 2018 election. The investigation showed that the Centre Party (the mother party of CUF, Swedish: *Centerpartiet*) had the lowest rate of 10% foreign background of all parties, in comparison to the average of 15%, and the rate of 16% for the Moderate Party (the mother party of MUF, Swedish: *Moderaterna*). Furthermore, MN2 explains that MUF has become more open to different types of people during their time in the association, further supporting the claim.

Hence, it can be argued that MUF is more heterogeneous than CUF both on the ideological aspect, but also on other aspects such as socioeconomic background and ethnicity. Since it can be assumed that different groups have different interests, this presumably increases the seriousness of the agency problem. This may increase the need or support for representation, as different groups or factions want to ensure that the district or national board act in their precise interest. This conclusion is also supported by the empirics as the interviewees from MUF state the importance of representing different ideologies and geographical backgrounds in the board. Thus, heterogeneity seems to tilt the balance from competencies and characteristics into descriptive representation, just as the size of the organization does.

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

### 6.1 Answer to the Research Question

Through a qualitative comparative study, we have studied the nomination committees in youth associations. The study was conducted with the aim to contribute to decreasing the research gap in the subject by answering the question:

“Which characteristics do nomination committees value in candidates for board member nomination, and which factors influence these characteristics?”

The analysis has provided us with a set of characteristics that are valued by nomination committees in political youth organizations. Furthermore, two factors were presented that together form and construe the choice of important characteristics in board candidates. We can conclude the following: competencies and traits such as expert knowledge, organizational skills, marketing skills, media skills, recruitment and social skills, communicative and rhetorical skill, are deemed important by nomination committees in political youth organizations. Furthermore, two factors have been identified that influence the relative weight given to those skills compared to descriptive representation, which include: size of the association, and the heterogeneity of the association.

### 6.2 Contribution and Practical Implications of the Study

We hope that our findings might facilitate the nomination process for future nomination committees in associations in general, and in youth political organizations in particular. Our findings show which characteristics that are commonly sought after in political youth organizations and can be seen as a benchmark for that particular type of organization. Furthermore, the factors identified, size and heterogeneity, may help guide the nomination committees in how to deal with different situations, such as a larger or smaller organization, or more or less diverse member base. We also hope that this can render some interest into

the exciting and important subject of membership-based organizations and youth politics, as well as encourage other scholars to explore these uncharted organizational landscapes.

### 6.3 Limitations of the Study

Since the above study takes on an interpretive approach, this may have affected the ability to present the empirical data in a fully fair and objective way. We as researchers are providing an interpretation of the nomination committees' assessments of board member characteristics and representation. Furthermore, our perceptions were further interpreted in terms of the concepts, theories, and literature of organizational governance and political science. Hence, there are many steps of information transmission, and therefore some noise may have affected the findings.

Since we conducted in-depth interviews and with a non-representative sample the findings are based upon a limited number of board member elections and mostly from the perspective of the nomination committee (although some nomination committee members had also been "regular members" or board members during other years). Because the respondents were members of nomination committees, this may also have made them hold back information, due to confidentiality or other reasons. In this study, the interviewed youth associations were liberal or liberal conservative. A differing political stance, such as social democrat or socialist view may have yielded different results in some aspects such as representation, which may have affected the conclusions that did and did not arise. Finally, the study is limited by the assumption that nomination committees' work processes are similar in political youth organizations and other associations. Although processes are assumed to be similar, political youth organization arguably have some inherent differences in organizational goals compared to other associations, which may affect the board member characteristics.

### 6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the limitations of the sample and the extent of the study, further studies could be conducted by interviewing or surveying a larger number of members from nomination

committees in associations to obtain a representative sample of the total population. Thus, increasing the sample, especially with regards to the number of organizations and their political views, would increase the transferability of the findings. The same interview guide can also be used to interview members of other similar organizations to see if the organization's size and political standpoint affect the results. As the thesis focuses on the nomination committees' perspectives of competencies and characteristics in board candidates, a study that could gain access to members' perspectives would be an interesting complement. Especially since, in the end, it is the annual meeting that decides whether or not to accept the nomination committee's proposal of candidates. Other theories could potentially also have yielded interesting findings and added relevance to the subject of board characteristics in associations.

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## 8. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview list

<b>Indicator*</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Date</b>
CN1	CUF	National level	2020-03-21
CN2	CUF	National level	2020-03-30
CN3	CUF	National level	2020-03-31
CN4	CUF	National level	2020-04-01
CN5	CUF	National level	2020-04-03
CD1	CUF	District level	2020-04-03
CN6	CUF	National level	2020-04-04
CN7	CUF	National level	2020-04-07
MN1	MUF	National level	2020-04-14
MN2	MUF	National level	2020-04-15
MN3	MUF	National level	2020-04-17
MD1	MUF	District level	2020-04-19

\* Organization is denoted as C for CUF or M for MUF and organizational level is denoted as D for district or N for national level. The number indicates the order of the interview in the respective organization and level.

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide

### Part 1: Background

1. Where are you from?
2. How old are you?
3. How long have you been part of the association and what is your current role?
4. What are some of your other interests?

### Part 2: Working process

Task => Analysis => Search for candidates => Choosing candidates => Presenting candidates (Sverker, 2018)

5. What did your working process look like?
6. How did you view your mission in the nomination committee? For example, from the organization's guidelines or members' norms?
7. What is the board's role in the organization?
8. Who did you interview in the evaluation process? Employees or the District Presidents' Association (Distriksordförandekåren)? Are there any other influential groups (the Mother Party, divisions, phalanges)?
9. How did you present your suggested candidates to the members?
  - a. How was the suggestion received by them?
10. Does it say in the nomination committee's guidelines that the committee should unanimously agree on the decision? If so, how did that affect the work?

### Part 3: Choice of candidates

11. What is your view of the relation between the board and RO (Riksorganisationen)?
12. (*Open question*) What competences, qualifications and characteristics did you value in candidates?
13. (*One by one*) How did you value the following aspects:
  - Geographical district
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Area of specialization in previous education or experiences
  - Network of contacts, within and outside the organization
14. Is it important that the board represents the members' characteristics such as gender, political views, geography, age, etc?
15. How did you value internal experience against external (i.e. other youth organizations)?
16. Is it hard to get elected as a new member?
17. Do the proposals of the nomination committee usually go through?
  - If not, then why not?