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► To cite this version:

Marius Perrin. Gamson's Law in the City Hall: The Populist Radical Right and the Dilemma of Allocating Municipal Portfolios in Sweden. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 2025, 49 (1), <10.1111/1467-9477.70031>. <hal-05382957>

HAL Id: hal-05382957

<https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-05382957v1>

Submitted on 26 Nov 2025

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Gamson's Law in the City Hall: The Populist Radical Right and the Dilemma of Allocating Municipal Portfolios in Sweden

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Correspondence: Marius Perrin (marius.perrin@sciencespo.fr)**Received:** 17 March 2025 | **Revised:** 14 October 2025 | **Accepted:** 15 November 2025**Keywords:** coalition government | local politics | mixed methods | populist radical right

ABSTRACT

Does the proportional distribution of office payoffs between coalition partners, known as 'Gamson's Law', hold at the local level? And can the inclusion of a populist radical right (PRR) party in a coalition lead to deviations from this law? This article addresses these two questions by examining municipal coalitions that were formed following the 2022 Swedish elections. I demonstrate that Gamson's Law proves relevant at the municipal level in Sweden but find that the PRR Sweden Democrats (SD) face, on average, a disproportional allocation unmatched by any other party. I find that the inclusion of SD is, by far, the most substantively significant factor driving disproportionality. I suggest that relinquishing office positions corresponds to a specific price that the PRR is willingly paying to facilitate inclusion within municipal coalitions. This article contributes to a growing body of literature examining the relevance of Gamson's Law at the municipal level. Furthermore, it identifies a new pattern of deviation relating to the inclusion of a PRR party, inviting researchers to further explore the PRR's impact on coalition politics.

1 | Introduction

The proportional distribution of cabinet portfolios among coalition parties represents one of the most established practices in coalition government. While proportional allocation is not a democratic requirement per se, strongly disproportional allocations are rare. We generally expect parties to receive cabinet positions in proportion to their share of seats within the coalition, a theory known as 'Gamson's Law' (Gamson 1961; Browne and Franklin 1973). This 'law' has proved remarkably consistent across time and space (Laver and Schofield 1990; Warwick and Druckman 2006). While theoretical justifications for it are limited, it is often understood as a form of convention (Bäck et al. 2009; Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013), suggesting that any breach could carry substantial consequences. It would effectively mean that a portion of the coalition renounces significant policy influence. This leads to a deviation from voters' choices and make the coalitional process difficult for the public

to comprehend. It also directly affects the orientation and management of public policies, since effective policy control depends on the ability to leverage key government positions. Furthermore, it could have repercussions for voting behaviour, as voters may sanction a party for being unable to exert sufficient influence (Falcó-Gimeno and Fernandez-Vazquez 2020). It is therefore usually assumed that parties seek a Gamsonian allocation (Bäck et al. 2009).

Yet, recent literature has shown that significant deviations to Gamson's law seem to appear when populist radical right (PRR) parties join coalition governments (Tan 2025; Sprang 2025). This seems to be particularly relevant in Sweden, where the PRR Sweden Democrats (SD) achieved a rapid - and to some extent unexpected - growth (Rydgren 2002). Indeed, despite their success in the 2022 elections and their participation in a national coalition, they failed to secure any portfolio. A brief glance at their municipal coalitions indicates that the situation

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seems to extend locally. This deviation from theoretical expectations is puzzling and warrants further exploration. Provided that Gamson's law holds locally in Sweden, how can we explain this potential phenomenon?

The success of SD reflects a broader European trend but exemplifies a new critical issue for the party family: gaining coalition potential to access executive positions (De Lange 2012; Twist 2019). Indeed, in most European countries, the PRR has had to adapt both nationally and locally to the dynamics of coalition governance (Bäck et al. 2024). Recent studies have emphasised how local politics has become a key arena for the party family (Paxton 2023; Bellè and Faury 2024). In Sweden, after the 2022 municipal elections, SD participated in coalitions in 39 of the 290 municipalities.¹ This marked a stark contrast to the previous period when the party was ostracized and joined only a handful of coalitions. Indeed, since its foundation as an extreme-right movement in 1988 (Jungar and Jupskås 2014), it had systematically been ruled out as a potential partner (Leander 2022). Yet, while it gained 14.5% of the votes in 2022, sometimes becoming the largest coalition member locally, it accepted in a vast number of places to relinquish leading positions.

Important attention has already been devoted to deviations from Gamson's Law. Factors like the 'small party bias' (Browne and Franklin 1973; Warwick and Druckman 2006; Cox 2021), the formateur advantage (Warwick and Druckman 2001; Chaisty and Power 2024), or differences in bargaining power (Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013; Tan 2025) have been identified. Yet, they tend to point towards slight deviations. The potential role of the PRR as a disturbing force has only recently started to be explored (e.g. Twist 2019; Tan 2025; Sprang 2025). As recent studies point towards the relevance of Gamson's Law at the local level (Ecker and Gross 2024; Olislagers and Steyvers 2013; Meriläinen and Tukiainen 2022), the Swedish setting could contribute to explaining the puzzling allocation of portfolios to the PRR. The article will therefore address the following question: does the inclusion of the PRR in Swedish municipal coalitions lead to a specific pattern of deviation from Gamson's Law?

In the next section, I will discuss the theoretical framework surrounding Gamson's Law and its deviations. I will present my expectations regarding how PRR inclusion relates to coalition proportionality. The third section will introduce the data, the mixed methods design, and the settings of municipal politics in Sweden. I will underscore that municipal coalitions in Sweden offer great opportunities for generalization. The fourth section will present the results, emphasising a significant disproportion in portfolio allocation for coalitions including SD, while also highlighting the clear relevance of Gamson's Law in Swedish municipalities overall. This discrepancy appears to considerably favour the mainstream right when forming coalitions with the far right. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork, I explore the origins of this phenomenon, suggesting that the PRR has clear agency in this process. Overall, my research enriches our understanding of how the PRR attempts to gain access to coalitions, emphasising that it can accept minimal payoffs to enhance initial integration. However, I conclude by arguing that this position is unlikely to remain stable in the long

term, as the PRR should eventually attempt to revert to a Gamsonian allocation.

2 | Deviations in Portfolio Allocation: Theoretical Expectations and the Role of the Populist Radical Right

2.1 | Established Factors Contributing to Deviations in Portfolio Allocation

Referring to Gamson's definition, "coalitions are temporary, means oriented, alliances among individuals or groups which differ in goal" (Gamson 1961, p. 374). They do not necessarily entail government participation but can be based on negotiated parliamentary support (Müller and Strøm 2000). Yet, most coalitions involve a distribution of cabinet seats among parties (Laver and Schofield 1990), and an agreement on the policies to be implemented (Klüver et al. 2023).

Typically, the allocation of office payoffs in a coalition follows the principles of 'Gamson's Law' (Gamson 1961; Browne and Franklin 1973). The law posits that the allocation is proportional to the share of seats in the coalition controlled by each party. Gamson's theory has proven highly relevant empirically (Warwick and Druckman 2006, 658), at least for Western European and parliamentary cases (Chaisty and Power 2024). Yet, the allocation is seldom perfectly proportional (Browne and Franklin 1973; Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013; Chaisty and Power 2024). Several accounts have been proposed to explain these deviations.

Firstly, deviations often occur due to the inclusion of small parties (Laver and Schofield 1990, p. 172; Warwick and Druckman 2006, p. 660), which tend to receive a slightly higher share. This small party bias was generally attributed to the bargaining power of these parties (Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013, 242), the indivisibility of portfolios, and the minimum threshold of positions required to wield minimal influence. In Sweden, four small parties typically participate in coalitions and are frequently over-represented in national government (Hellström and Lindahl 2021). Therefore, we could expect them to drive disproportionality locally.

Secondly, recent studies have identified a link between disproportionality and bargaining weights (i.e. when a party's bargaining power differs from its proportion of seats) (Chaisty and Power 2024; Tan 2025). Bargaining power is often measured through the power index (Shapley and Shubik 1954), which assesses the pivotality of a party to form a coalition. This means that a party's power index can exceed its share of seats if it frequently holds the decisive vote to form a coalition.² However, measures of bargaining power do not adequately account for SD's specific situation, which is affected by remnants of ostracism. This means that many potential coalitions are completely impossible for the party.

However, these factors have only been identified for causing slight disproportionality (Chaisty and Power 2024). The case of SD, where they appear to be willing to relinquish all positions, calls for further consideration. A third and potentially more substantial element would relate to the nature of the party

family. The PRR would produce a particular deviation from Gamson's law once integrated (Twist 2019, p. 24; Tan 2025; Sprang 2025). Few studies have tested this hypothesis. While initial publications found little evidence (Twist 2019), most recent ones suggest otherwise (Tan 2025; Sprang 2025). Tan systematically explores the allocation of ministerial portfolios for PRR parties in coalitions in Europe, demonstrating that these parties "receive a smaller ministerial portfolio share than their seat share would suggest" (Tan 2025, p. 13). Furthermore, the findings reveal that they "often fail to secure the specific ministerial portfolios they prioritize" (p. 13). Finally, the author underscores the significant differences across Europe, calling for a closer examination of national cases to provide a detailed explanation of the observed deviation. Contrary to this large scale study, the local level allows the hypotheses to be tested on a greater number of cases while keeping most parameters constant.

2.2 | Gamson's Law and the PRR: Explaining Deviations

First, this deviation could relate to the nature of the law. While this law proves empirically relevant, it lacks solid theoretical foundations (Chaisty and Power 2024). Even if proportionality may appear as the 'fair' option, there is no evident motive to distribute payoffs proportionally. To address this puzzle, research suggested that Gamson's law is best conceptualized as a 'focal point' (Bäck et al. 2009; Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013), a form of convention facilitating the bargaining process. The distortion of coalition rules stemming from PRR's success could thus affect this conventional practice.

Indeed, while, early coalition theories assumed that parties negotiated without limitations, later scholars challenged this idea (Strom et al. 1994), arguing that the set of available coalitions was restricted by ideological constraints. This applied to the PRR in recent years, which extensively faced a *cordon sanitaire* (Van Spanje 2011). As the *cordon sanitaire* has been described as a social norm (Axelsen 2023) it could well distort conventional practices of portfolio allocation. Indeed, integrating the PRR in a coalition for the first time represents a norm breaching behaviour. To attenuate its negative impact on voters, mainstream actors might choose to deviate from conventional practice to indicate that they do not regard the PRR as just another party. Indeed, recent studies have shown that when PRR parties engage in coalition bargaining, the process does not follow the traditional lines of coalition formation (Bäck et al. 2024).

Second, the mainstream right enjoys a specific agency when bargaining with the PRR. Mainstream right parties can alternatively choose to form grand coalitions: ones comprising them and the mainstream left and commanding a substantial majority in parliament. As the PRR usually cannot form coalitions with the left, the mainstream right benefits from an important blackmail potential, strengthening its bargaining position. Unfavourable portfolio allocation to the PRR could therefore be explained by the agency of the mainstream right, able to constrain the PRR to accept fewer positions. However, grand coalitions have proven detrimental to mainstream

parties, which struggle to maximise their payoffs due to the dilution of their influence. They also typically result in significant electoral losses (Morini and Loveless 2021) and tend to reinforce support for the PRR (Arzheimer and Carter 2006).

This first set of explanations underscore the agency of mainstream right actors. These would want to signal respectability by treating the PRR outside of conventional practices while maximising simultaneously office payoffs by utilizing leverage gained from their pivotal position.

An alternative account may lie with PRR parties themselves, who may wish to remain out of office to maintain their distinctiveness. Since populist parties oppose mainstream elites, participating in government could undermine their credibility as outsiders. Indeed, coalition participation makes parties appear closer to one another (Fortunato and Stevenson 2013). Moreover, since Heinisch (2003), scholars have suggested that the "nearly insurmountable problems" PRR parties face upon entering government are likely to result in electoral losses and cause them to lose their *raison d'être* (p. 91). Coalition participation can also engender internal tensions and policy frustrations (Heinisch 2003). Recent publications support this view, emphasising that coalition participation may benefit the PRR's mainstream right partners more than the PRR itself (Riera and Pastor 2022). Although research has shown significant variations in the cost of governing for the PRR (Akkerman and De Lange 2012), some unsuccessful electoral outcomes for PRR parties may have impacted the perceptions of the party family, prompting them to greater caution in coalition formation. In that sense, their coalition participation could follow a 'half in, half out' strategy (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005; Akkerman and De Lange 2012), allowing them to leverage some policy influence while keeping themselves distanced from the mainstream. This resembles the strategy identified twenty years ago regarding the Italian Lega's participation in government (Albertazzi and McDonnell 2005).

However, for a PRR party, entering a coalition for the first time can also represent a milestone in its development. Given the extensive power granted by office positions, it would be surprising if the PRR did not seek offices. In this regard, Sprang recently demonstrated that increased radicalism does not appear to lead to reduced office claims (Sprang 2025). Therefore, an alternative hypothesis would centre on the mainstreaming strategy of PRR parties, aimed at enhancing their legitimacy to facilitate inclusion (Akkerman et al. 2016; Moffitt 2022). As Paxton demonstrates in his book on PRR parties in local government, this strategy is particularly evident at the local level (Paxton 2023, p. 85). His study shows that in coalitional settings, PRR parties tend to engage far more smoothly with the mainstream right. His analysis of the Swiss case reveals that a PRR party can relinquish some positions associated with its core policies to facilitate coalition formation. Therefore, I expect PRR parties to forgo office positions as a means of facilitating the bargaining process by signalling a willingness to collaborate under favourable terms. In this case, they would not actively seek proportional allocation but would be satisfied with initial integration. This pattern should therefore not persist once the PRR has achieved integration.

A fourth mechanism may contribute to explaining the deviation. As SD rose rapidly, they may lack the experience needed to

TABLE 1 | Potential mechanisms explaining non-proportional allocation to the PRR.

Mechanism	Idea	Agency	Lasting effect
N°1a	The mainstream right treats the PRR outside of conventional allocation practices to send a signal to voters	Mainstream right	Not necessarily
N°1b	The mainstream right uses its pivotal position to blackmail the PRR into a non-proportional allocation	Mainstream right	YES
N°2	The PRR wishes to remain out of office to cultivate its distinctiveness from the mainstream	PRR	YES
N°3	The PRR wishes to enhance initial integration by streamlining negotiations through forgoing office positions	PRR	NO
N°4	The PRR does not have enough qualified and experienced personnel to fill in office positions	PRR	NO

efficiently leverage office positions. Municipal portfolios usually require precise knowledge of the area of oversight, which can be acquired through experience. In most municipalities, the party has only been elected recently and was long excluded from decisive bodies. Furthermore, previous research showed that SD politicians tend to be less qualified and score lower on a series of valence traits than their mainstream counterparts (Bo' et al. 2023). Consequently, the party could seek initial integration to gain experience before claiming portfolios.

These four mechanisms have different implications (Table 1). If SD' non-proportional allocation rests primarily on the mainstream right's agency, we should expect this deviation to last over time, and potentially to weaken the law overall. Assuming that SD will not be able to form alliances with the left-wing bloc, they will constantly be exposed to blackmail, and will struggle to gain more positions. This should also hold if SD place their outsider status before their office interests. However, if this deviation comes from a mainstreaming strategy, it should only be temporary. As the party integrates, it will be less willing to pay a price for it. In the meantime, it will have more experienced politicians at its disposal, able to fill office positions.

To summarize, I expect to observe a rather proportional allocation of portfolios between coalition partners at the local level in Sweden. While small deviations could be explained by the small party bias or differences in bargaining weights, I expect that the inclusion of the PRR in coalitions will lead to a new pattern of deviation. I suggest that this deviation could be explained by four different mechanisms: a transformation of conventional practices driven by the mainstream right's agency; a 'half-in, half-out' strategy of the PRR to cultivate distinctiveness; a mainstreaming strategy of the PRR to gain initial integration by facilitating bargaining; and an inability of the PRR to fill up portfolios with trained politicians. These should have varying implications on the future of Gamson's law.

3 | Cases, Data, and Methods

3.1 | SD in Local Coalitions

Before 2022, the Sweden Democrats had long been rejected as coalition partners, based on the perception that they represented

a threat to democracy (Leander 2022). Yet, their growth led to a progressive dissolution of the *cordon sanitaire* when it became apparent that a right-wing government would not be possible without their support. It culminated in 2022 when a coalition agreement was signed between SD and three of the four mainstream right parties.³

Despite this national success, SD have had difficulties engaging with local politics and they tend to receive a smaller share of the votes locally.⁴ In 2018, they gained entrance for the first time in seven local coalitions⁵ but these remained clear deviations and 2022 visibly marked a rupture. Indeed, SD managed to secure coalition participation in 39 municipalities (Appendix FA3), which represents more than one coalition out of ten (13.1%, see Appendix FA4). Yet, their partners remain restricted: 89.7% of their coalitions include the Moderates, 76.9% the Christian Democrats, 38.5% the Liberals and 30.8% a local party. Coalitions with the Centre Party remain extremely rare and concerned only 4 cases⁶ in 2022. Cross-bloc coalitions between SD and the left are still impossible, significantly reducing the pool of potential combinations.

3.2 | The Relevance of the Municipal Level in Sweden

A Swedish municipality (*kommun*) counts on average 36,000 inhabitants and is expected to provide many public services, regardless of its geographical position. Municipalities are responsible for local facilities, including part of the roads, water supply, and local planning. In addition, they also enjoy welfare-related competencies. Consequently, municipalities are massive public organisations and political control over them has a significant impact on the direction of public policies. Furthermore, as they follow a quasi-parliamentarian system (Bäck 2003), traditional coalition theories function well to explain their power dynamics (Bäck 2008). Elections to the municipal councils are proportional and it is necessary to obtain a majority of the votes in the council to rule. Coalitions are usually majoritarian, based on an agreement and include a distribution of committee portfolios. They can be toppled if a new alliance forms. Likewise, the national party system is mimicked in most municipalities (Dahlström and Sundell 2012). However, coalition patterns tend to vary more extensively. While grand

coalitions between the Moderate and Social Democratic parties never happen at the national level, they are quite common at the local level, alongside multiple forms of cross-bloc agreements.

3.3 | Institutional Dynamics and Local Portfolio Allocation

The highest municipal body is the municipal council (*Kommunfullmäktige*, KF), which is presided over by a chair. Yet, this remains mostly a symbolic position. The most central assignment is to chair the executive board (*kommunstyrelsens ordförande*, KSO). The KSO is rather equivalent to a mayor: it is one of the few full-time positions, responsible for the day-to-day handling of municipal affairs.

In addition to the Executive Board, the KF can decide to appoint municipal committees (*nämnder*), responsible for specific policy arenas. One of the intricacies of Swedish local government rests in the significant autonomy of municipalities to organise themselves. Apart from the executive board, municipalities have the liberty to determine the scope and nomenclature of their *nämnder*. They can opt to establish sub-committees (*utskott*), placed under the oversight of a *nämnd*. Some municipalities decided to reduce the number of *nämnder* and substituted them with *utskott* placed under the executive board (Appendix FA1).

Each *nämnd* is overseen by a *praesidium* and the chair of the *nämnd* wields significant authority within their area of oversight. Moreover, they receive greater compensation for their municipal duties, at times equivalent to full-time positions. Coalition bargaining is therefore heavily focused on the allocation of these payoffs. Moreover, some committees, like those dedicated to social issues and education, hold greater importance. While coalition parties take control of all chairmanships, the opposition is conventionally included in the *presidia* to facilitate information transfer.

3.4 | Data Collection

The absence of formal municipal government can complicate the identification of coalitions (Bäck 2003). However, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SKR) which monitors municipal activities closely, has now collected this data by gathering all the agreements that followed the 2022 elections.⁷ To complement it, I identified the distribution of committee payoffs. The information was available for all but three cases.⁸ The data set includes the number of committees per municipality and the number of chairs obtained by each party. Additionally, it includes the party controlling key positions, such as social, education, urban planning, and culture committees when they existed locally.⁹ These are the positions that appear most frequently and relate to the core competencies of the municipalities. In particular, the Social and Education Committees are tasked with crucial policy areas in terms of budget and responsibility.

This data offers precious insights but suffers from a few limitations. Firstly, it does not capture the monetary

compensation associated with each function, as this information varies and is not easily accessible. Secondly, other forms of payoffs exist locally. These can include positions in the sub-committees or in the board of municipal companies. However, these tend to vary extensively across municipalities and for comparative purposes, the study is limited to the distribution of committee chairs. This unit of analysis was also selected previously in a similar case of Denmark (Serritzlew et al. 2010).

3.5 | Methods

I measured disproportionality both at the party and at the coalition level. The *party-based* measure focuses on which parties gain and lose in the payoff allocation. On the other hand, the *coalition-based* measure assesses the proportionality of the coalition overall, allowing to bring in more factors to explain disproportionality.

The party-based measure builds on Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason (2013). In each municipality, it assesses the difference between the expected distribution for a party based on pure proportionality and the observed distribution:

$$DIS = p_i - s_i$$

Where p_i represents the share of portfolios for party i and s_i its share of seats in the coalition. This yields a measure for each party in a coalition, with positive values indicating an allocation superior to proportionality and negative values indicating an allocation inferior to proportionality.

At the coalition level, I build upon the proportionality index (Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013, p. 12). This index subtracts the sum of the differences to the expected Gamsonian allocation to one:

$$PROP = 1 - \sum |p_i - s_i|$$

The closer it is to one, the more proportional the allocation. Overall, we do not seem to observe major regional differences but notice some variance of the variable (Appendix FA2).

Based on these measures, I conducted two series of OLS Regressions. First, to evaluate how party affiliation predicts portfolio allocation, I analyse 907 individual parties within coalitions:

$$DIS_i = \beta_0 + \sum_j \beta_j \cdot (\text{Party Dummy})_i + \gamma_i X_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where i represents each individual party within a coalition, j represents the different party types, and the Liberals serve as the baseline category. Standard errors are clustered at the coalition level to account for within-coalition correlation.

Second, to examine the relationship between coalition type and proportionality at the coalition level ($N = 286$), I used the following equation:

$$PROP_m = \beta_0 + \sum_k \beta_k (\text{Coalition Type}_k)_m + \gamma_m X_m + \varepsilon_m$$

Where m represents each individual coalition, k represents the different coalition types and left-wing coalitions serve as the baseline.

Control variables were included to examine how the association between party type and office allocation varies when conditioning on municipality size, organizational settings, and coalition size. These provide a descriptive account of patterns net of these structural features, without implying causal claims about how party type affects allocation. Following previous research (Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013; Warwick and Druckman 2006) I included models with a weighted dependent variable that accounts for the varying salience and qualitative nature of different portfolios (Tan 2025). In these models, the weight of the most prominent positions (KSO, Social Committee, Education Committee) was augmented, as SD might potentially be compensated with portfolios of higher importance. All other model specifications remained unchanged. Finally, following Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason (2013) I also included models where the *PROP* index is divided by the number of parties within the coalition. Additional robustness checks were conducted testing different model parameters (Appendices TA4, TA5, TA6, TA7, TA10, TA11, TA12, TA13), and modifications of the dependant variable (Appendices TA2, TA3).

This quantitative dimension was complemented by 18 semi-structured interviews with municipal politicians (Appendix TA8), aimed at testing the four hypothesised mechanisms. Interviewees were selected to capture a diverse range of profiles and the perspectives of various actors involved in coalition formation. These ranged from chairs and deputy chairs of executive boards, chairs of municipal committees, group leaders from both opposition and majority to members of SD local leadership. Participants were initially recruited via email, with additional participants subsequently identified through referrals during fieldwork. All major local parties were systematically contacted, along with some smaller parties, and response rates were relatively consistent across groups. There was no difficulty to access SD politicians. I conducted these interviews both in municipalities where SD were excluded and included. To avoid response bias, interviewees were not directly asked about the specific mechanisms. Instead, they were questioned about inclusion criteria and how they determined payoff allocation. The mechanisms were identified before the fieldwork but were later refined based on the results. Finally, more general questions were included to understand inter-party dynamics, and interviewees were presented with viewpoints from colleagues identified in previous interviews.

4 | Results

4.1 | Overall Proportionality at the Party Level, Apart From the Sweden Democrats

Looking at the *DIS* measure, the results indicate that Gamson's law tend to apply at the municipal level in Sweden. As shown in Figure 1, coalition parties tend to receive a portfolio allocation that is close to their share of seats in the coalition. While there are variations, the regression line aligns closely with the line representing the Gamsonian expectation. To confirm these results, we

performed fractional logit and beta regressions to assess the relationship between the Gamsonian expectation and the observed outcome. The results of the different models show a very strong relationship that is close, but not perfectly aligned, to Gamsonian proportionality (Appendix TA9, FA5). This is consistent with previous research (Falcó-Gimeno and Indridason 2013; Tan 2025; Sprang 2025). Figure 1 shows that some of the deviation appears to be driven by small parties participating in coalitions without holding office positions. This suggests the existence of parliamentary coalitions, in which supporting parties, most often very small, formalise an agreement but do not participate in the executive.

Nonetheless, we observe significant differences among parties. As expected, the case of SD clearly stands out, with a strikingly disproportional and unfavourable allocation of portfolios (Figure 3). This degree of disproportionality is unmatched by any other party, in any other coalition configuration. On average, when included, SD receives an allocation that is extremely far from proportionality (a measure of -22.75 , Appendix TA1). The situation is much different for the other parties. At the general level, some of them benefit from a more favourable allocation, such as the Social Democrats or the Moderates. Interestingly, we hardly seem to observe a small party bias, as all small parties (Christian Democrats, Liberals, Centre, Greens) suffer from slight disproportionality on average (Appendix TA1).

A preliminary exploration of specific coalition sets already provides greater insight into the conditions under which Gamson's Law tends to be broken. First, examining grand coalitions (comprising both the Moderates and the Social Democrats) reveals more mixed results than theory would suggest (Appendix TA1). Social Democrats gain significantly (averaging $+7.4$) while Moderates suffer disproportionate losses (-4.4), suggesting they have little to gain from them in office terms. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which they accept such a distribution, it is reasonable to assume that they face tougher bargaining conditions when negotiating with the Social Democrats. This suggests that the blackmail they might exert on SD must remain limited due to the obvious cost of the alternative.

Moving on to the subset of coalitions that include SD, the picture changes dramatically. In this setting, the Moderates benefit from an exceptionally favourable allocation ($+17.96$).¹⁰ Interestingly, the inclusion of SD seems to have a more nuanced influence for smaller right-wing parties. As shown in Figure 2, the mean for the Christian Democrats and the Liberals are not statistically different from zero (see Appendices TA14, TA15, TA16, TA17). Overall, this suggests that the additional payoffs resulting from the integration of SD and its under-allocation are not distributed evenly, but primarily benefit the Moderates. Figure 3 illustrates these party-based outcomes in relation to the proportional allocation.¹¹ The case of SD clearly stands out. While the party's share of portfolios increases with its share of seats, it clearly results in a non Gamsonian allocation. This suggests that the greater SD's weight within the coalition, the more portfolios it tends to receive, yet not on a one-for-one basis.

The results of the first regression models, displayed in Table 2 clearly confirm initial observations. SD affiliation is significantly

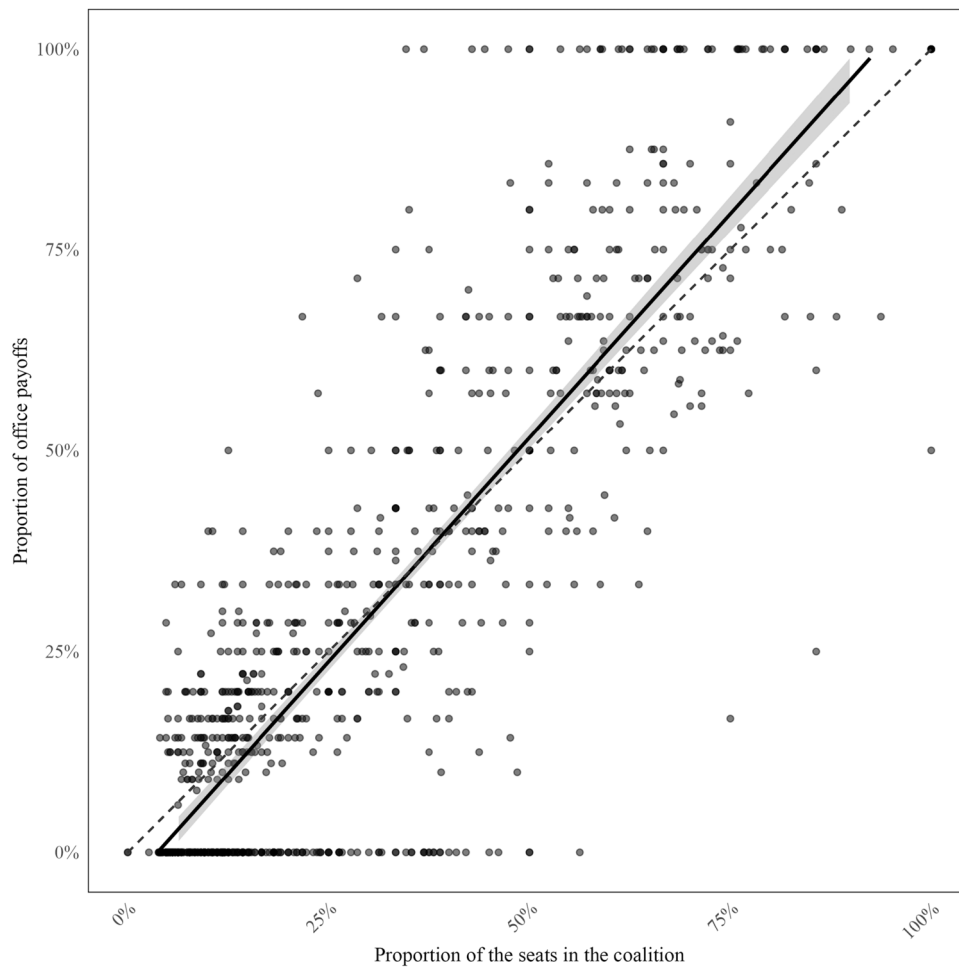


FIGURE 1 | Relationship between seat share and office payoffs for municipal coalition parties in Sweden. *Note:* Each point represents a party in a coalition. The dashed line indicates the proportional (Gamsonian) allocation, while the solid line represents the regression line with a 95% confidence interval. The analysis includes 907 parties in coalitions.

and strongly associated with disproportionality across all models, this party type shows the strongest relationship with underrepresentation. I also find a consistent association for local lists, although with a smaller coefficient. Being the formateur also tends to be associated with higher allocation. Yet, it is difficult to disentangle this relationship from that of electoral results.¹²

4.2 | Incorporating the PRR Into Coalitions: The Primary Force Behind Disproportionality in Sweden

I shift my focus from a party-based approach to a coalition-based one, explaining what predicts disproportionality at the coalition level. This allows for the inclusion of other variables, such as the presence of small parties or the structure of the coalition. As can be observed in Table 3, SD inclusion shows the strongest association with disproportionality among all predictors. In every model, it exhibits the strongest negative relationship with proportionality. Furthermore, it is the only coalition type whose association is statistically significant (in five of the six models). Models with weighted dependent variables reveal an even more pronounced pattern, suggesting that the gap in office positions obtained by SD is not offset by

the significance of the positions they hold, but rather the opposite.

Factors traditionally identified as leading to deviations from the law are surprisingly weak predictors of observed deviations. Quite logically, increasing the number of committees is associated with improved proportionality, with a statistically significant relationship in four of the six models. This pattern holds when accounting for the weight of the portfolios. However, it remains relatively moderate in substantive terms.

In addition, we find a small party bias at the coalition level, negatively associated with proportionality. However, the findings presented above suggest that this is not driven by these parties reaping more benefits but rather the opposite. This pattern may relate to the structure of municipal payoffs. Since there are, on average, far fewer committees than ministerial portfolios in a government, achieving proportionality becomes harder as the number of small parties increases. Therefore, this relationship is difficult to disentangle from that of the number of coalition parties.

Overall, these results confirm my findings. They indicate that the inclusion of SD is the primary predictor of deviation from

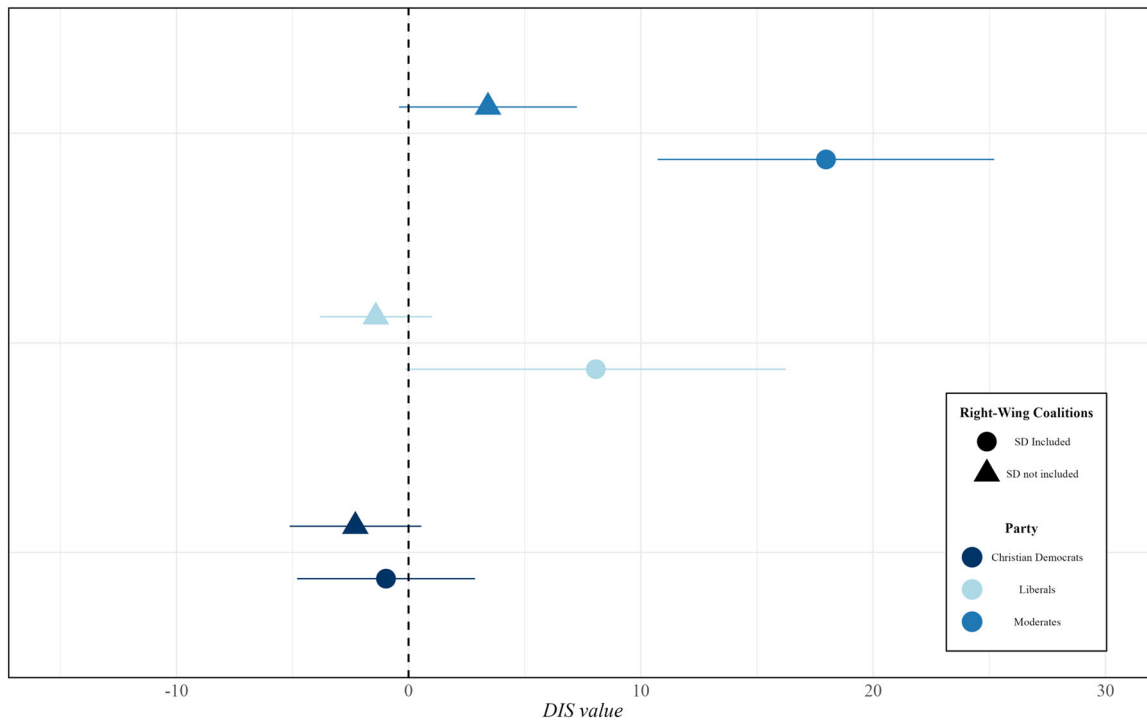


FIGURE 2 | Mean DIS values per party among Right-Wing coalitions. *Note:* The figure displays the difference in means per party for the DIS measure of proportionality among Right-Wing coalitions, with 95% confidence intervals. Positive values indicate an allocation superior to proportionality whereas negative values indicate an allocation inferior to proportionality. The Centre Party is not included due to insufficient number of coalition cases with the SD.

Gamson's Law among Swedish municipal coalitions. This pattern reflects the unfavourable allocation of SD, as no other party nor type of coalition shows such a strong negative association with proportionality. While these results indicate which factors predict disproportionality, we still know little about why actors accept such an unbalanced allocation. If Gamson's law applies locally in Sweden, why are SD treated so differently? Since coalitions including SD remain limited over time, it is not possible to quantitatively identify the factors that exacerbate disproportionality within SD coalitions. I therefore address this question using a qualitative approach, based on semi-structured interviews with local politicians.

4.3 | Beyond the Deviation: Tracing the Actors' Motives

In the following section, I explore the relevance of the mechanisms presented in Table 1. Firstly, the Moderates occupy a unique bargaining position, which could enable them to secure gains through blackmail. Secondly, SD might seek to remain out of office to cultivate its distinctiveness. Alternatively, SD might choose not to actively pursue these positions to smooth bargaining and enable initial integration. Lastly, SD may lack experienced local politicians to fill committee posts, which could also contribute to the deviation.

First, my findings suggest that while the Moderates capitalise on the ostracism of SD to strengthen their bargaining position, their room for manoeuvre remains limited. Indeed, although bargaining power can be understood quantitatively through the proportion of winning coalitions that a party can

form, ostracism disrupts this logic, as PRR parties with potentially high bargaining power are excluded ex ante by left-wing parties from any form of political collaboration. In qualitative terms, this strengthens the bargaining position of centre-right parties, as they become the only actors able to form coalitions with both the left and the PRR, granting them considerable blackmail potential. Nonetheless, Moderate officials often deny exerting blackmail, instead citing SD's securing of deputy positions to justify deviations from proportionality. However, they still acknowledge that they can exploit the situation to some extent. One Moderate leader, leading a coalition in which SD were unfavourably allocated, framed the situation as follows:

"Of course, it was a very good negotiation, SD are bigger than us and I have all the big important chairmanships [...]. But then again, I also had a quite frank discussion about this. [...] SD have never been in charge, they have always been in opposition so to say, so they don't have the knowledge about it."

(2024-3)

SD officials are aware of the Moderates' blackmail potential and express their concerns about it. If they prove difficult to negotiate with, the Moderates retain the option of turning to the left. As one SD leader explained, this blackmail often centres on securing the KSO position:

"The KSO is always the big discussion. [...] The question is, what do they do [the Moderates] if we don't agree to leave them the KSO? They can go to S [the Social

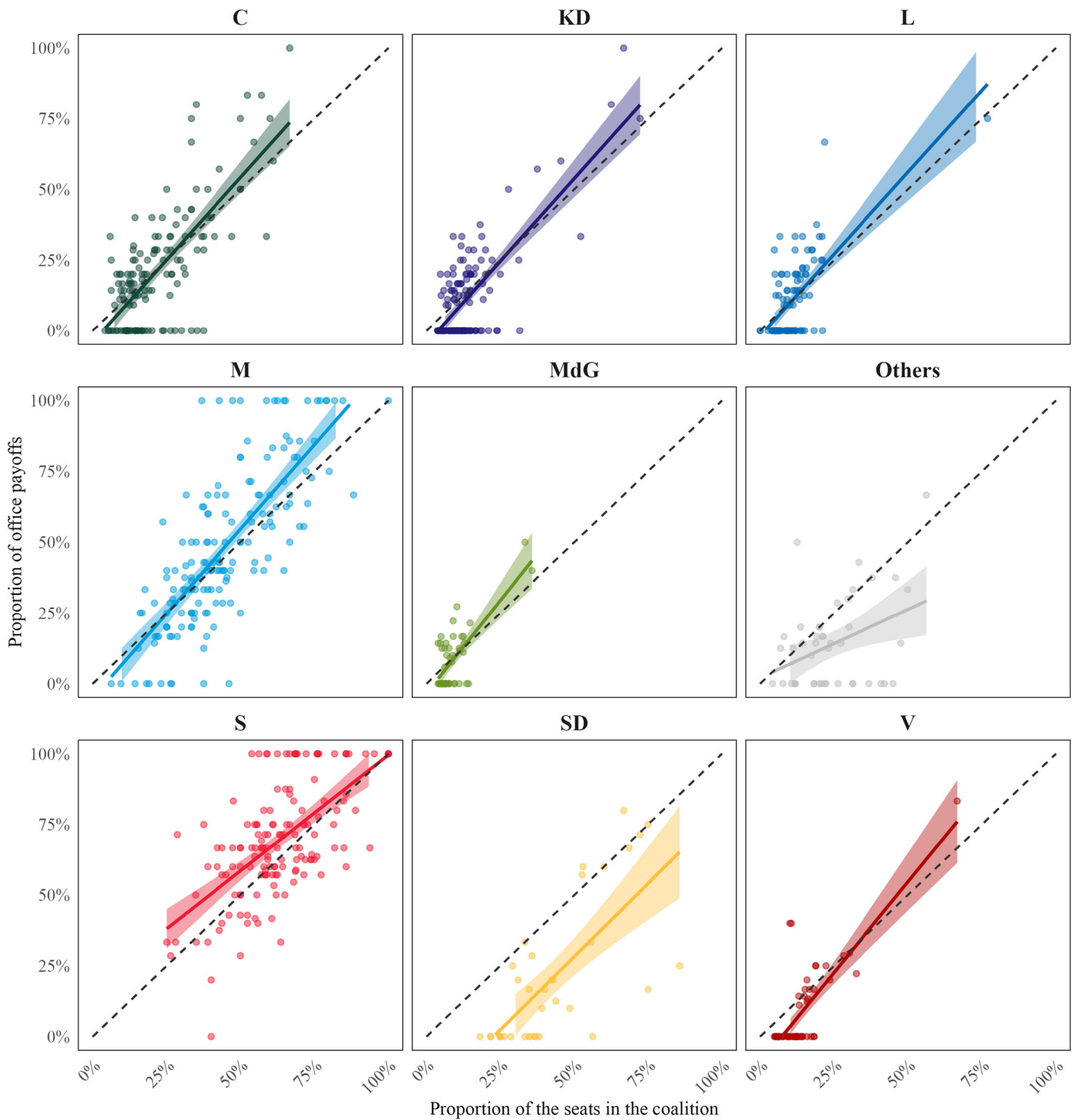


FIGURE 3 | Relationship between seat share and office payoffs for individual parties in Swedish municipal coalitions. *Note:* Each point represents a party in a coalition. The results are grouped by party. The dashed line indicates the proportional (Gamsonian) allocation, while the solid line represents the regression line with a 95% confidence interval. The analysis includes 871 parties in coalitions (municipalities where the number of committees is below three have been filtered out).

Democrats] and then, they give the KSO position to the Moderates. For us, it's delicate, you never know if the personal interest in the Moderates is bigger than the concern about the party and the politics. In a municipality around here, the Moderates went to the Social Democrats and the Social Democrats sold themselves very cheap so they could keep the Sweden Democrats out.”
(2024 - 5)

Nonetheless, this leverage remains limited as alternatives to SD prove costly for the Moderates. As noted above, Moderates tend to suffer from an unfavourable allocation in grand coalitions with the Social Democrats. In interviews, Moderates typically portrayed Social Democrats as skilled and experienced negotiators. They also underscored that grand coalitions tended to undermine their policy objectives. A municipal Moderate leader shared his view on the detrimental impacts of a previous grand coalition in which he participated:

TABLE 2 | Party-based regression models.

	Unweighted models		Weighted models	
	DIS (1)	DIS (2)	DIS (4)	DIS (5)
Intercept	-0.004 [0.010]	-0.082*** [0.021]	-0.014 [0.010]	-0.102*** [0.017]
<i>Parties (baseline L)</i>				
Centre party	0.002 [0.017]	-0.013 [0.015]	0.005 [0.017]	-0.023 [0.013]
Social democratic party	0.061** [0.018]	-0.038 [0.025]	0.095*** [0.017]	-0.072** [0.021]
Moderate party	0.042 [0.019]	-0.030 [0.020]	0.066** [0.019]	-0.055* [0.018]
Sweden democrats	-0.224*** [0.031]	-0.250*** [0.029]	-0.204*** [0.032]	-0.249*** [0.026]
Christian democrats	-0.022 [0.014]	-0.022 [0.013]	-0.022 [0.013]	-0.023 [0.011]
Left party	-0.044 [0.019]	-0.037 [0.018]	-0.044 [0.018]	-0.036 [0.015]
Local lists	-0.099** [0.026]	-0.107*** [0.026]	-0.099*** [0.025]	-0.111*** [0.026]
Green party	-0.002 [0.015]	0.004 [0.015]	-0.007 [0.014]	0.003 [0.013]
<i>Controls</i>				
Bargaining gap		0.014 [0.135]		-0.105 [0.121]
Number of coalition parties		0.018*** [0.004]		0.021*** [0.003]
Formateur		0.147*** [0.022]		0.243*** [0.019]
Number of committees		0.000 [0.001]		0.000 [0.001]
Sample size	907	907	907	907
R ²	0.14	0.25	0.17	0.44
Adjusted R ²	0.13	0.24	0.17	0.43

* = 0.01.

** = 0.001.

*** = 0.0001.

“We decided to take it from there with the Social Democrats, they were the biggest opposition party. It was more than enough to get 50%. The Social Democrats took the KSO position, but well, they used that to their advantage, and they drove 200 kilometres in the wrong direction, as far as we were concerned. But I sat there, I could not do much.”

(2024 - 7)

While grand coalitions may offer stability and streamline decision-making, the ability of Social Democrats to enforce their

decisions poses a harsh challenge for the Moderates. The party is accustomed to negotiating with small centrist parties and the shift to bargaining with the left can be daunting. Furthermore, many Moderates consider these coalitions to be unpopular among their voters. Of the Moderate leaders we met, two-thirds opposed it completely. While they may recognise that compromise can benefit policymaking, they believe that their supporters are firmly hostile towards left-wing policies.

“We promised the electorate we will not again ever seat with S, unless there is a war or something, that was a one-time thing. We will never ever do that again. Our

TABLE 3 | Coalition-based regression models.

	Unweighted models			Weighted models		
	PROP (1)	PROP/N (2)	PROP (3)	PROP (4)	PROP/N (5)	PROP (6)
Intercept	0.462*** [0.057]	0.249*** [0.055]	0.795*** [0.068]	0.416*** [0.056]	0.238*** [0.056]	0.730*** [0.068]
<i>Coalition types (Baseline Left-Wing)</i>						
Right-Wing (without SD)	-0.002 [0.031]	-0.042 [0.023]	0.050 [0.029]	0.013 [0.031]	-0.041 [0.023]	0.062 [0.029]
Right-Wing (with SD)	-0.196*** [0.050]	-0.088** [0.025]	-0.163** [0.049]	-0.217*** [0.047]	-0.099*** [0.025]	-0.186*** [0.046]
Grand coalition	0.024 [0.037]	-0.001 [0.026]	0.021 [0.033]	-0.007 [0.036]	-0.017 [0.026]	-0.010 [0.032]
Other	-0.054 [0.154]	-0.001 [0.142]	-0.009 [0.134]	-0.053 [0.157]	-0.003 [0.143]	-0.010 [0.138]
<i>Controls</i>						
Number of municipal committees	0.036*** [0.005]	0.006 [0.003]	0.038*** [0.005]	0.039*** [0.005]	0.006 [0.003]	0.041*** [0.005]
Small party included	-0.165*** [0.029]	-0.165*** [0.021]	-0.018 [0.031]	-0.146*** [0.028]	-0.157*** [0.021]	-0.008 [0.031]
Bargaining gap	0.242 [0.108]	0.365* [0.126]	-0.022 [0.109]	0.316* [0.107]	0.390* [0.124]	0.067 [0.106]
Number of coalition parties			-0.127*** [0.016]			-0.120*** [0.016]
Sample size	283	283	283	283	283	283
R ²	0.31	0.35	0.42	0.33	0.34	0.43
Adjusted R ²	0.29	0.33	0.41	0.31	0.33	0.42

* = 0.01.

** = 0.001.

*** = 0.0001

electorate is not that keen on us ruling with S, [...] they don't like their policies. But personally, it was pretty good."

(2024 - 7)

In summary, when grand coalitions are shaped to avoid SD, they could result in fewer offices, fewer policies, and fewer votes for the Moderate party. Additionally, they are viewed by the party as an opportunity for the left to enforce its policies. In the medium term, this suggests that the realignment of the right within the Swedish party system is set to continue. The increase in grand coalitions after the 2022 elections was partly in response to SD's electoral success. Accordingly, our results suggest that coalitions with SD are likely to increase in the coming years at their expense, as this would better reflect the Moderates' policy and office priorities.

Reinforcing this observation about the limited agency of the mainstream right, I encountered a case where SD did insist on obtaining proportional payoffs. In this instance, they succeeded without extensive difficulties, as the Moderates considered this option to remain more favourable than forming a grand

coalition. This case was characterised by a relatively strong local Social Democratic Party and a historically weak Moderate leadership, without a long local ruling history. Interestingly, SD did not hold a particularly dominant position. This suggests that the Moderates do not easily go to the left, except if their crucial interests (such as keeping the KSO) are threatened. A Moderate KSO explained that securing this position was one of the two red lines the local party had set before starting the negotiations with SD. SD are aware of this situation and it is therefore necessary to examine their own agency in the process.

Indeed, it is clear in many cases that they did not actively pursue office positions. Was this to cultivate a 'half-in, half-out' strategy, or was it a means of facilitating initial integration? My findings lean towards the second hypothesis. It is true that SD often portray themselves as primarily policy-seeking and uninterested in holding office. One interviewee described the party's stance as follows:

"We say here, as we say at the national level, that we are not after positions; we are after getting Sweden great again. If we can get our politics through, it's good enough"

for us. We don't need to be KSO or Chairman of anything of our political values go through."

(2024 - 5)

Yet, such claims are classic for political parties, as office-seeking attitudes can be negatively perceived by the voters. In practice, in the municipalities visited, SD sought positions during bargaining time and accepted those that were offered to them. Had they been solely interested in policies, they could have easily abandoned all of them. A SD leader explained that he initially went after the KSO, but abandoned the claim when the other coalition parties opposed it:

"I want to be KSO, and when I did the negotiations in 2022, I did bring it to the table, but I also understand that if I am going to be in government position, I have to have more parties around, and this time, the majority was on [their] side. [...] Then I had to choose, leave because I did not get the title or make the best of the outcome [...]."

(2024 - 41)

In all interviews conducted with SD politicians, being included for the first time was put forward as a crucial success for the party. Indeed, joining local executives, even in unfavourable conditions, was seen as a symbol of greater normality. Therefore, trying to be smooth bargaining partners by relinquishing office positions certainly contributed to facilitating the agreements. The same politician presented the strategy in these terms:

"I know that we are a new player, we have to prove ourselves. We have to show the other ones that we are respectable [...]. These 4 years are the first time my party has power in this municipality. [...] To me it's more important that we make our policies and also that we prove [...] that we are serious, we are not only here because it is a fancy title. We have to prove to ourselves and the others that we are a serious partner and want to govern for many more years. Next time, who knows, maybe we will do it differently."

(2024 - 41)

This appears to be particularly true in municipalities where centre-right parties have held power for a long time and including SD could imply diminishing their own payoffs. The accumulated experience granted them additional influence, a factor that SD acknowledge. A SD KSO explained that he would have accepted to relinquish the position if the Moderates had been in office for a long time before, as this would have been necessary to smoothen the negotiations:

"Often, we may be bigger, but the Moderates have the record of actually leading coalitions, and that will, in many places have a big value. [...] Here, it could have been another thing, if a Moderate had been seating as KSO for twelve years before me, I don't believe that my party would have insisted on us taking the chair. In many other cities we don't make that claim because we

know that the other parties have someone with long experience."

(2024 - 6)

The party articulates this strategy with a clear ambition of gathering experience, giving credit to the fourth mechanism. Indeed, while deputy positions may seem rather secondary, they still give access to decision-making and information. Therefore, they are valued by SD, who lack such experience more than any other party. As an interviewee emphasised:

"We never had such high titles before [...] we had never had a vice mayor, a vice chairman of any board."

(2024 - 41)

Indeed, it is uncommon for SD politicians to have been elected for a long time. They also often lacked the opportunity to exert responsibilities in opposition. Therefore, refusing a top position can be a pragmatic decision. Chairmanships demand technical competencies and are scrutinised by local media. Local SD leaders are aware of the risks posed by accepting offices that they cannot leverage and refrain from hastily agreeing to such positions. One of them emphasised:

"Basically, we got the posts we could feel. You can say that they [the Moderates] got higher posts than we did, but it's not really good to get a post than you can't really fill. You must have experienced people also. Next time we will be more capable of that."

(2024 - 5)

SD chairs are under specific scrutiny as local incidents can swiftly escalate into national news. This was evident in one of the municipalities visited, where the sole SD chairman caused an uproar after issuing an inappropriate instruction to the administration that violated conventional practices—specifically requesting the cancellation of a public event organized by the municipality. While this was seen as an intrusion into civil servants' affairs, it also highlighted the party's lack of familiarity with communication and procedures. Coalition inclusion is therefore a necessary preliminary step to be able to train and educate party members to the responsibilities of office.

Contrary to the first narratives, the willingness of SD to smoothen negotiations and their lack of experience imply that the deviation from Gamson's law should be temporary. Local leaders view the current situation as transitional and assert that they would not accept it in the future. However, this does not mean they will succeed. Without extensive data, it is difficult to assess this claim. Yet, examining the evolution of the few cases of coalitions with SD before 2022 may provide valuable insights (Table 4).¹³ Unfortunately, we lack data on the allocation of chairmanships before 2022. Yet, we can observe the allocation in the successor coalitions. Of the six coalitions in place before 2022, four continued with SD, while two were stopped despite the possibility of it. In all but one municipality, the senior position remained unchanged after the elections. As noted earlier, this underscores the complex role of the KSO compared to other committee payoffs.

TABLE 4 | Coalitions including the SD: before and after 2022.

Municipality	Coalition before 2022	Coalition after 2022	KSO before 2022	KSO after 2022	SD coalition continued	Majority with SD in 2022	DIS measure for SD	DIS measure for M
Sölvesborg	SD + M + Other + KD	S + M + C + Other	SD	S	NO	YES	—	+9.52
Bjuv	SD + M + L	SD + M	SD	SD	YES	YES	-0.79	+0.79
Hörby	SD	SD + M	SD	SD	YES	YES	0	0
Staffanstorps	M + SD	M + SD	M	M	YES	YES	-18.18	+18.18
Svalöv	SD + M + KD	SD + M + KD	SD	SD	YES	YES	-1.75	-4.39
Surahammar	M + SD + C + L + KD	M + S + C + KD	M	M	NO	YES	—	-13.33

Interestingly, the DIS measure for SD in these municipalities after 2022 is significantly higher than SD's average. In only one case did SD continue to face an unfavourable allocation, though it was still better than average. By comparison, the Moderates in these coalitions did not enjoy a much stronger advantage. In the two cases where they formed alternative alliances with the centre left, the outcome in terms of payoffs varied significantly (positive in one case and negative in the other). Overall, it is noticeable that these coalitions survived the test of time in most cases and anchored SD in the local executive landscape. While these few cases are insufficient to draw definitive conclusions, they suggest a possible resorption of the pattern in the future.

In the end, these results underscore that while SD remain in a challenging position, their prospects are clearly favourable. From a short-term standpoint, we can expect the number of coalitions with them to grow after 2026 as the *cordon sanitaire* continues to erode. Yet will the Moderates accept to revert to Gamson's law, or will deviations expend and transform the conventional patterns of payoff allocation? While I argue for a potential resorption of the pattern, this will need to be explored in future research.

5 | Conclusion

This article makes a novel contribution to the expanding literature on coalitions involving PRR parties in Europe. Focusing on Swedish municipalities, I observed that the allocation of office payoffs in coalitions with the Sweden Democrats deviates from the traditional expectations of Gamson's law, even though Gamsonian expectations prove relevant at the local level overall.

Building on new data, I showed that SD were structurally under-allocated in terms of office positions in the coalitions and that no other party was as distant from Gamsonian expectations. Furthermore, I underscored the important benefits that the centre-right Moderate party was extracting from these alliances. Focusing on the coalitions themselves, I demonstrated that the inclusion of SD was the strongest predictor of disproportionately among a diversity of factors traditionally identified in the literature.

To explain this puzzling phenomenon, I complemented my study with semi-structured interviews with local politicians.

Focusing on a series of mechanisms that could explain this deviation, I underscored that while mainstream right parties could use their central position to blackmail SD, the success of this strategy was only made possible by the willingness of the latter to abandon these payoffs. Rather than adopting a 'half-in, half-out' strategy to cultivate their distinctiveness, I argued that this was mostly the consequence of an incremental approach to accessing office. SD agreed to relinquish their positions to facilitate bargaining and demonstrate their willingness to collaborate. Meanwhile, they will use these new offices to gain the experience they lacked. I therefore expect this deviation from the law to be temporary, as the party will seek to revert to a traditional allocation once integration has been achieved.

These findings contribute to a growing body of literature on PRR parties in government. They expand our understanding not only of their strategies to gain integration, but also of the difficulties they face when bargaining and accessing office. My results confirm recent findings on the allocation of the PRR in coalitions (Tan 2025; Sprang 2025) and add to our theoretical understanding of the mechanism by suggesting that such deviations may only be temporary. However, the limitations of this study's generalisability should be emphasised. Firstly, SD have historically been subject to a strong *cordon sanitaire*, which undoubtedly contributes to this pattern. Such deviations may not be observable for PRR parties that have not experienced ostracism to the same extent. However, this pattern may prove relevant in the future for parties rising electorally and currently experiencing a strong but progressively declining *cordon sanitaire*, such as the German AfD. Secondly, the specificities of the local level should be emphasised. While the quasi-parliamentarian nature of Swedish local politics increases the generalizability of the findings, the smaller scale certainly affects coalition dynamics. Local party branches may be more susceptible to issues of competence and may lack experienced politicians. Furthermore, the dynamics of smaller parties are significantly affected by this scale dimension, as many of them have very few local members, which limits their ability to leverage their votes. Nevertheless, this offers interesting opportunities to understand other local contexts in which Gamson's law applies (e.g. Ecker and Gross 2024), but caution should be exercised, as institutional dynamics are known to extensively influence the behaviour of the PRR at the local level (Paxton 2023).

Finally, future research should explore how this imbalance evolves after the PRR has been integrated into several coalition cycles. It should also examine how PRR voters respond to their party being allocated fewer portfolios. This reaction will undoubtedly have significant implications for the strategies of mainstream parties and the potential reactions of the far right. Consequently, the outcome of coalition negotiations following the 2026 Swedish municipal elections should be observed closely.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Nicolas Sauger for his helpful comments and suggestions for improving the manuscript. I am also grateful to the two anonymous reviewers who helped significantly improve the initial version of the manuscript. I would also like to thank the participants of the 'Political Parties and Politics at the Local Level' workshop in Prague during the ECPR Joint Sessions for their useful comments and suggestions on the manuscript. This study was partially funded by Sciences Po's doctoral research support fund.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Endnotes

¹This figure has evolved slightly since then.

²The measure reflects the fraction of votes in which a party is pivotal to win a majority, taking a value between 0 and 1, where 0 means that the party has no impact on the outcome of the votes and 1 means it has all power (an absolute majority of seats). As with seat share, the sum of all parties' power indexes is equal to 1.

³The Liberals, the Moderates, and the Christian Democrats.

⁴In 2022, SD received 14.5% of the votes in the municipal elections but 20.5% in the simultaneous parliamentary elections.

⁵Including two that were formed later on during the period and one that was dissolved before 2022.

⁶Among which two have collapsed since 2022.

⁷<https://skr.se/kommunerochregioner/valochpolitiskastyrenikommunerochregioner.8381.html>

⁸Håbo, Skurup and Härjedalen.

⁹I also identified the *kommunalråd* and their party affiliations. *Kommunalråd* are full or part time politicians. They usually include the KSO as well as a member of the opposition. In larger municipalities, it is also common that the majority gets more than one *kommunalråd*. Yet the allocation of this payoff to the opposition limits its usefulness in the present case.

¹⁰The measure for SD is similar to the one exposed above as the party is only included in right-wing coalitions.

¹¹Some extreme outliers can be observed in the case of SD, where the share of seats in the coalition is particularly high. In four cases at the time of the study, the party controlled more than 70% of the seats in the coalition. One of these cases, Skinnskatteberg, is a temporary deviation due to the instability that followed the 2022 election; the coalition is now more balanced with the inclusion of a third party. The other three cases, Hörby, Bjuv, and Klippan, are all Scanian municipalities and are considered SD strongholds. The situation in some of these municipalities has evolved since then.

¹²Formateur is deduced from the party controlling the KSO.

¹³These municipalities are characterized by the much higher results of SD. It should be noted that they succeeded in obtaining the senior position in four of the six cases.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section.

Supporting Figure A1: Municipalities excluded in robustness checks.

Supporting Figure A2: PROP Index values across Swedish municipalities.

Supporting Figure A3: Municipalities where the SD is included in the coalition.

Supporting Figure A4: Coalition evolution from 2018 to 2022.

Supporting Figure A5: Portfolio Share Predictions: Exact vs. Integer-Adjusted Seat Proportions.

Supporting Table A1: Mean DIS Measures Across Parties and Coalition Types.

Supporting Table A2: Mean DIS measures recalculated with the Power Index instead of the share of seats in the coalition.

Supporting Table A3: Average DIS measures recalculated by excluding municipalities with less than 3 committees.

Supporting Table A4: Party-Based Regression Models with adjusted weights and clustered standard errors.

Supporting Table A5: Party-Based Regression Models with interactions and clustered standard errors.

Supporting Table A6: Coalition-Based Regression Models with different weights.

Supporting Table A7: Coalition-Based Regression Models (More than two committees).

Supporting Table A8: List of interviews.

Supporting Table A9: Model Comparison with Average Marginal Effects.

Supporting Table A10: Regression Party-Based - Modified Dependant Variable.

Supporting Table A11: Regression Coalition-Based - Modified Dependant Variable.

Supporting Table A12: Regression Party-Based with Additional Control Variables.

Supporting Table A13: Regression Coalition Based - Additional Control Variables.

Supporting Table A14: Average Deviation from Gamsonian Allocation - All Municipalities T-test results for difference from Gamsonian representation.

Supporting Table A15: Average Deviation from Gamsonian Allocation - Right-wing Non-SD Municipalities T-test results for difference from Gamsonian representation.

Supporting Table A16: Average Deviation from Gamsonian Allocation - SD Municipalities T-test results for difference from Gamsonian representation.

Supporting Table A17: Electoral Representation Bias Analysis - Grand Coalition Municipalities T-test results for difference from proportional representation.