



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET



# How do you know you are doing a good job?

A research project in progress

Stockholm Summit 2010

Lars Svedberg – Associate Professor, Uppsala University, Centre for Educational Management

Bo Nestor – Associate Professor, Stockholm University

[Lars.Svedberg@rut.uu.se](mailto:Lars.Svedberg@rut.uu.se)



**Divided  
loyalties**



**Management  
by suffering**



Why: The questions of the project

How: Method

What: Data – some examples

Results: Tentative analyses



1. Creates a "culture of positive expectations"
2. Strong desire to achieve top results in school
3. Motivate teachers to have high standards for pupils
4. The principal lifts her/his nose above the desk, has a proactive environment focus and attends to core values



## ANALYS Öppna jämförelser

*Konsten att nå resultat – erfarenheter från framgångsrika skolkommuner*



*SALAR represents the governmental, professional and employer related interests of Sweden's municipalities, county councils and regions*

1. Leadership in balance on all levels – clear roles and distribution of responsibility
2. Develop teacher competencies
3. High expectations that all will succeed
4. Follow-up & feed back
5. Staff shares core ideas and directions for activities

# How do you know you are doing a good job as superintendent?



- **Points of departure – Where to look?**
  - Superintendents & “images of success”?
  - A professional, impartial *judgement* (in professions such as doctors, lawyers and psychologists) builds upon the existence of a *professional consensus* on what is “a job well done”. How and on what grounds is this judgement exercised?
  - Or...?: My boss said “... this job is exactly what you make of it”.  
(SI 9)

# How do you know you are doing a good job as superintendent?



- **Data collection**

- October 2009 about – 40 superintendents – by e-mail
- “Internaire” = Interview + Questionnaire

# How do you know you are doing a good job as superintendent?



”For me it's the total picture I have based on the feedback / response from my boss, politicians, principals and parents.” (SI 2)

# Interpretation

A key competence when information (and disinformation) is in abundance



**Sense making:** Understand the situation

**Sense giving:** Provide a comprehensible image of where to go and communicate that image

# How do you know you are doing a good job?

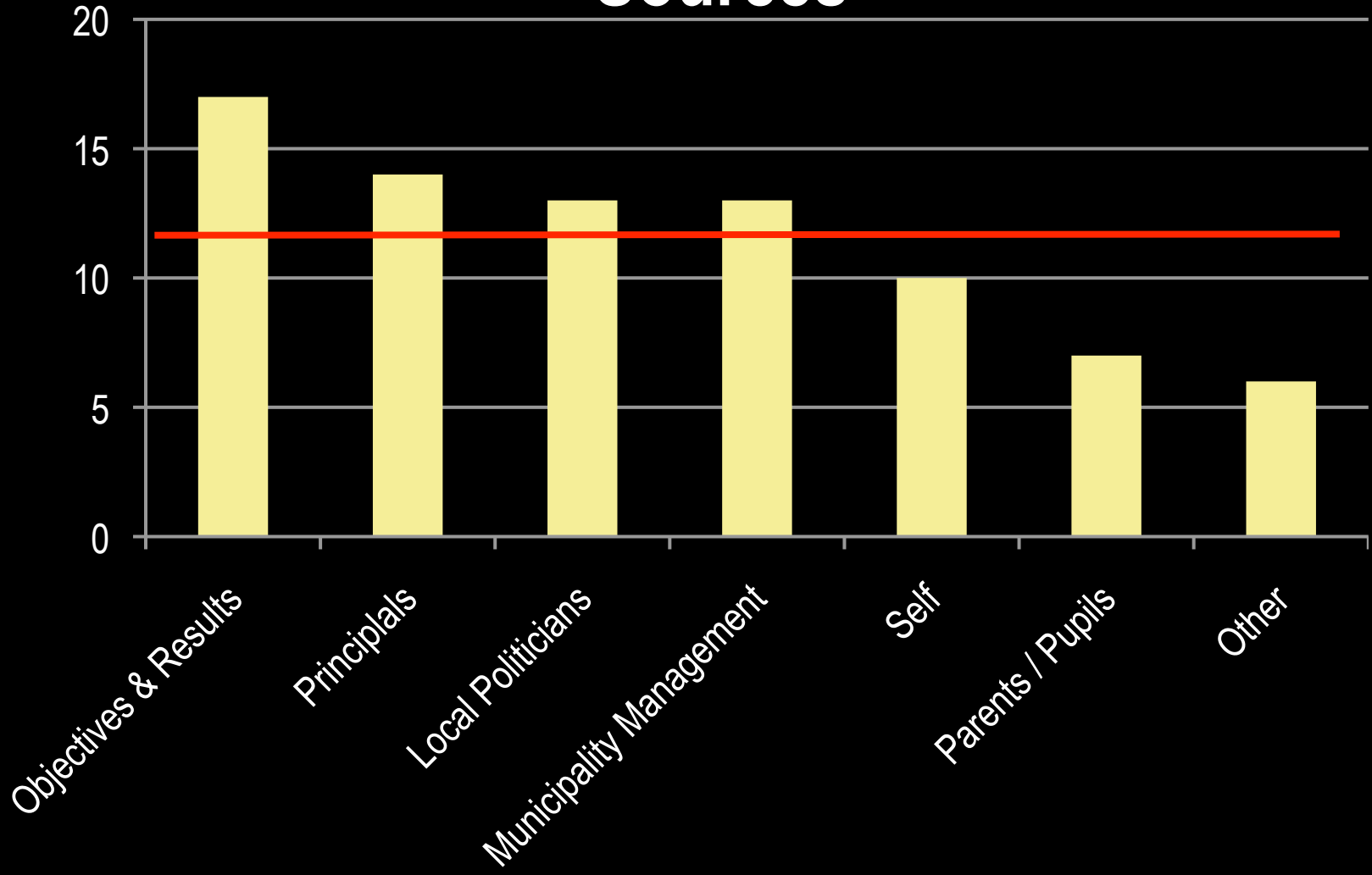


“When I got the question I became inspired but also thoughtful. Does my image of myself and my leadership match the image other people hold of me? How do they really see me? Are the local politicians pleased with how I work with my assignment? What are my imprints in my municipality? Do I make a difference or am I just doing my job?” (SI 5)

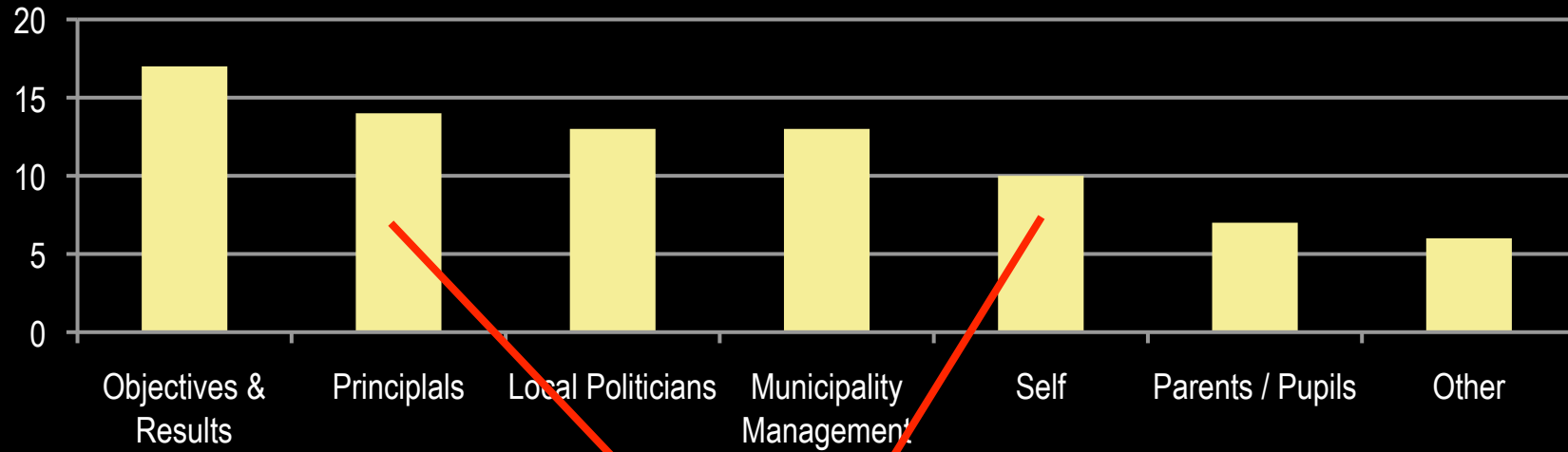
“No one has with words or insinuations questioned my competence or position as superintendent. Why is that? Is it because I scare people into silence? Is it because I have no significance? Does a lot of things happen behind my back?

I need to find channels for honest answers. In addition, it is important to listen to what is being said and not said in different contexts.” (SI 9)

# Sources



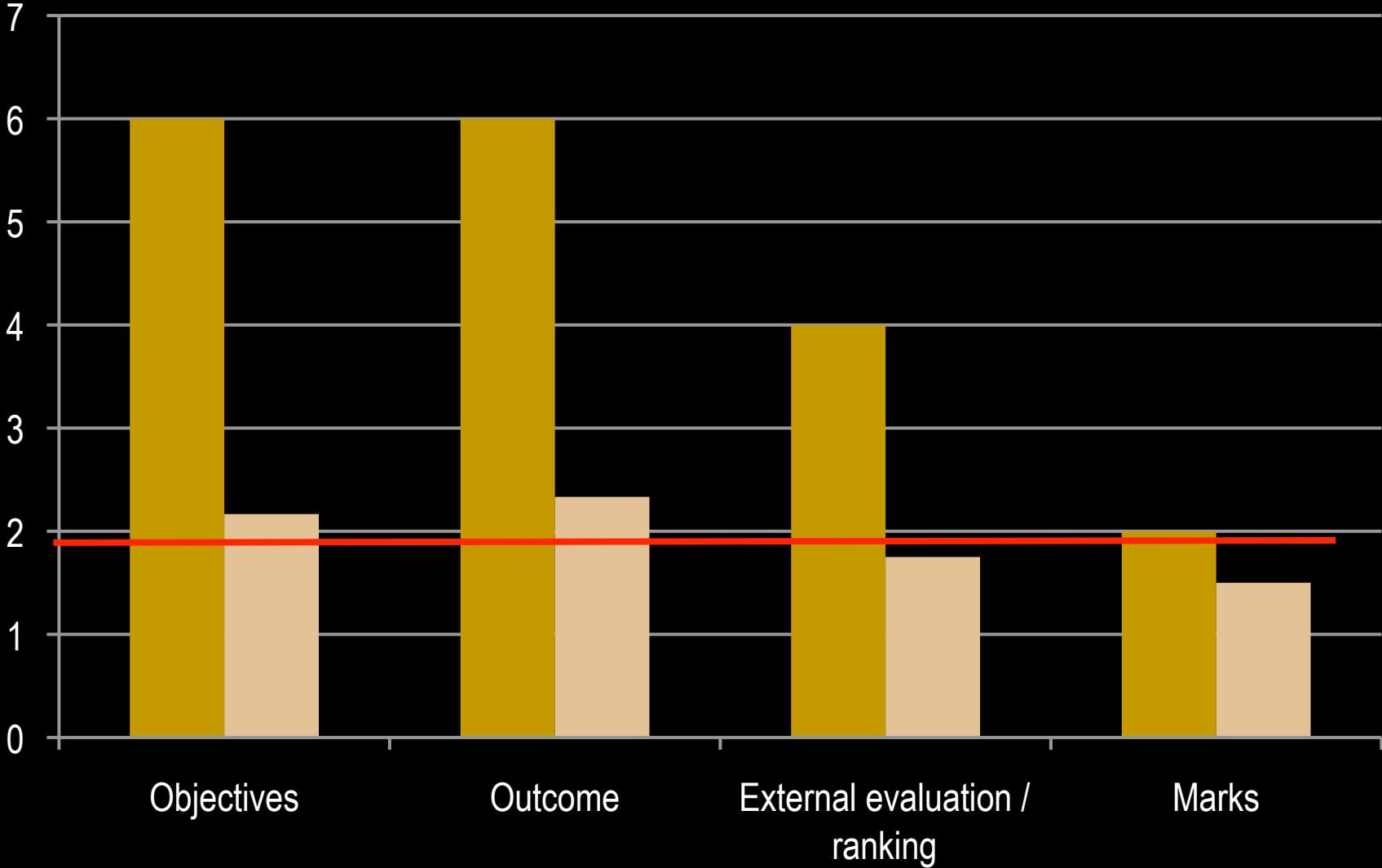
## Sources

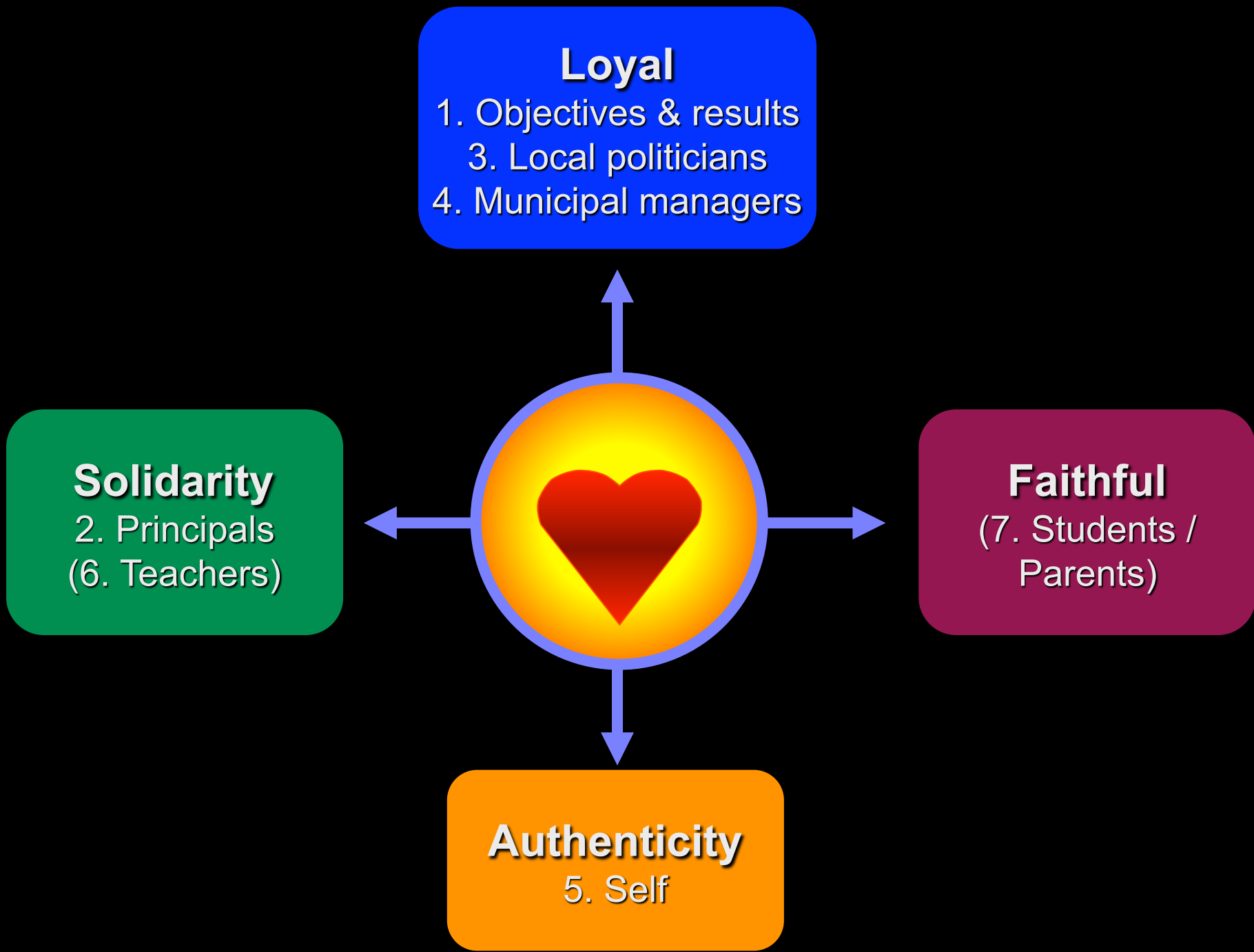


## Order – Importance?



# Objectives & results specified – Sources & Order





## Loyal

- 1. Objectives & results
- 3. Local politicians
- 4. Municipal managers

## Solidarity

- 2. Principals
- (6. Teachers)

## Faithful

- (7. Students / Parents)

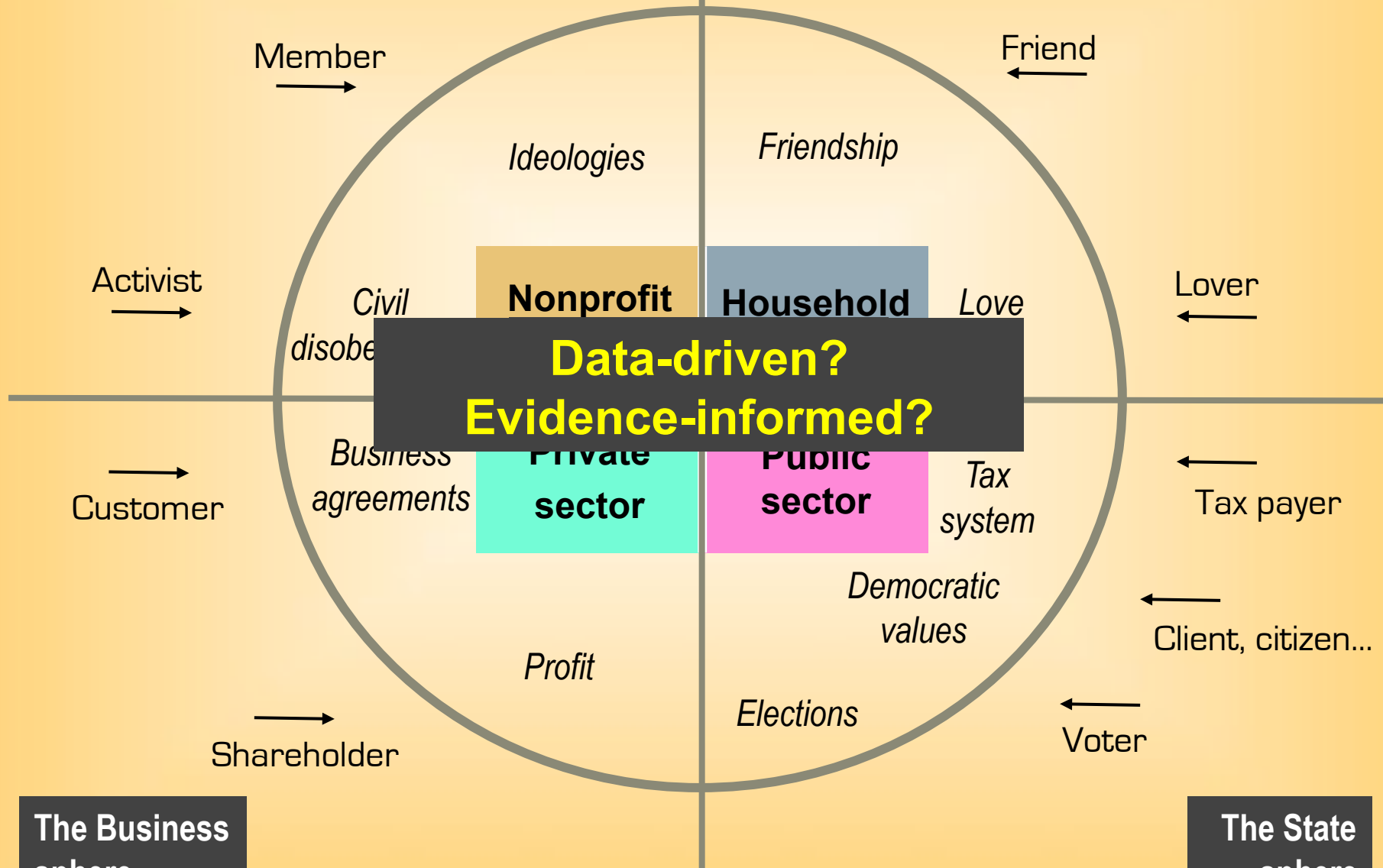
## Authenticity

- 5. Self

# A Model of Society

The Civil Society sphere

The Family sphere



The Business sphere

The State sphere



# New Public Management

“The state should steer – not row”

- NPM – a cluster of ideas borrowed from business practices
- NPM-movement has its origin in a critique of the 'traditional' way to exercise control and management in public organizations
- Key-concepts in NPM:s global reform movement is 'better performance', 'more value for (tax) money' and 'better management and follow-up'
- Methods advocated are competition, privatization, decentralization and management by objectives
- Buy & Sell models, Performance management, Business units and Business areas are organizational solutions that have a substantial impact in the Swedish public sector

# New Public Management Critical comments



- Focus on Results → You measure what you can measure
- The yardstick for operational performance determines what the organization will do
- Quality = High throughput?
- The core of professional judgement is the ability to decide what is “a job well done”!
- Examiners run a risk to become the tools of the method

## Questions for further studies



- Are outcomes gradually becoming ends in themselves, rather than means?
  - ✓ “When student performance improves in all my schools. Example: Higher average merit rating, higher minimum level, the group with excellent results increase.”
- Are the traditional hierarchical management mentality is being abandoned in favour of an openness or exposure to more and more control sources?

# Questions for further studies



- Is NPM becoming a belief system (religion?) with aspirations to define what “a good job” is?
  - When I get information from comparisons with other municipalities. Particularly I think Dagens Samhälles list “cost per merit point” says a lot. It shows price as well as quality which is what I as a superintendent have to give taxpayers. As a contrast the ranking list from the Teacher Association is a catastrophe – it says most expensive = best!
- Where are the counter discourses?



Thank you!